B. PROCLAMATION AND SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

5.4 SÚRA AL-A’RÁF

"Then We sent after them Músá with Our signs to the Pharaoh and his chiefs, but they unjustly rejected them, so look what was the end of those who rebelled" [Qur’án 7:103].

This elaborate sûra discusses one prophet after another starting with Núh and terminating with Músá bin ‘Imrán as the sixth prophet. The others discussed in between include Húd, Sálih, Lúd and Shu‘ayb [peace be upon them all].

The in story is a reference to the afore-mentioned prophets from the beginning of this sûra right to the present verses. The emphasis of this particular story is of - "elucidation and detail" [al-Rází n.d:14/189]. The intensity of prophet Músá’s struggle against an ignorant and foolish people is best exemplified by "....they unjustly rejected them {Our signs}.

Wrongdoing and infidelity are put on equal terms as are polytheism and infidelity. In this way polytheism is viewed to be a great wrongdoing

الشرك لظلم عظيم [al-Zamakhsharí 1966:2/100]. This is substantiated by al-Tabari’s interpretation:

فظموا بهما، بمعنى: كفروا بها، لأن الظلم: وضع الشيء في غير موضعه.

It would be appropriate to say because {in this instance} the term means placing a thing in the wrong position [al-Tabari 1968:9/13].
According to al-Rází [n.d:14/190] the Pharaoh and his allies substituted denial in place of acknowledgement and infidelity in place of faith.

"So look what was the end of those who rebelled" [7:103].

Allah Almighty says to His Messenger Muhammad [p.b.u.h]: "Look! O Muhammad with the eye of your heart (i.e. your soul) what was the result of those who rebelled on earth" [al-Tabarí 1968:9/13].

This is a reference to ruin and destruction which will be the fate of a corrupter associated with "polytheism, infidelity and disobedience" [al-Jazá'írí 1987:2/60].

Prophet Músá’s proclamation as a messenger and the subsequent statement justifying his status evince interesting insights from our selected commentators.

[And] Músá said: " 'O Pharaoh! I am a messenger from the Lord of the Worlds. Proper it is for me that I say nothing about my Lord, but the truth. I have come to you with clear proof from your Lord. So let the Children of Israel depart with me.' He [i.e. Pharaoh] said: 'If you have come with a sign, bring it forth if you are sincere' " [Qur'án 7:104-7].

It appears that the above statement is placed in systematic order of speech in which the prophet says "I am a messenger of Allah and a messenger of Allah does
not speak, but the truth." The first premise is a mystery whereas the command is obvious. There is no evidence to suggest the veracity of the first statement, however the order is evident in مُعَيَّن مِن إسْرَائِيلِ.

The authenticity of prophet Músá's statement is based on the following premises:
- the existence of the deity;
- the fact that he was sent to show the miracle in accordance with his call;
- fulfilling the command would prove his honesty and sincerity.

If one can assume that the Pharaoh had not challenged Músá [p.b.u.h] on any one of these premises, except in requesting a miracle, this would be a grave error on his part and would contribute to the veracity of the above-mentioned premises.

Pharaoh’s awareness of Allah is mentioned in سُرَا ﴿ةُ Há as well. If the display of the miracle indicates Allah's existence at first and then verifies Músá’s authenticity as the messenger, then Pharaoh’s ignorance is justified. But the fact that he first requested a demonstration and evidence of the above-mentioned factors leads to the conclusion about his awareness of Allah [al-Rází n.d:14/191].

فلأَلْقِي عَصَاٰهُ إِذَا هُوَ مُبِينٌ (۱۰۷) وَ نُزُّ إِذَا هُوَ بَيِّنٌ لِلنَّظَرٍ (۱۰۸) قال المالاً مِن قُوَّمٍ فَرَعُونَ إِنَّ هَذَا لسَحْرٌ عَلِيمٌ (۱۰۹) يُرِيدُ أَن يَخْرِجَكُم مِن أَرْضَكُم فَمَا ذَٰلِكَ تَأْمُرُونَ (۱۱۰)

100."Leave them until they depart with me, we will then return to the holy land which is their homeland and that of their fathers." Similarly on the death of Yúsuf [p.b.u.h] the Asbáṭ dispersed and became extinct as they were enslaved by the Pharaoh [al-Zamakhshari 1966:2/101].

111. Sources reveal that he was aware of Allah’s existence, but it was his obstinacy and pride that marred him from accepting the truth.

112. The term ’naza’a’ in terminology is an expression indicating removal of a thing from its {original} position.
Then he cast his rod and it was a manifest serpent! And he drew out his hand, it was white for the onlookers. The leaders among the Pharaoh's people said: "'Indeed this is a well-versed sorcerer.' 'He wants to drive you out from your land, so what do you advise?' " [Qur’án 7:107-10].

This transformation has been denied by the naturalists who assume that the change increases reliance on a priori knowledge, which {they consider} to be groundless for what leads to falsehood is inevitably false. In al-Rází's [n.d:142-3] opinion if this transformation necessitates such reliance then we would agree that the huge serpent developed from the small rod. Similarly if we concur that a human, has emerged as a phenomenon at one stroke and not from two parents then by opening ourselves to these changes we subject ourselves to ridicule by the rationalists. Factors which nullify a priori knowledge draw one into sophism which in itself is futile.

This extraordinary transformation has been discussed by the following:

- The Ash'arites endorse the idea that humans, animals and plants develop all at once without previous constituents. They also maintain that the atom is characterised by knowledge, intelligence and power.
- Mu'tazilites oppose this by denying that atoms are characterised by knowledge and life.
- Philosophers refute the Ash'arite view entirely, alleging that it is not possible for things to occur and penetrate existence, except by a special and determined method.

Al-Rázi [n.d:14/196] poses the following question:
One miracle was sufficient, would a combination of the two seem futile?
Most of the evidence is designated to increase certainty and eliminate doubt. Heretics view both miracles as being one. In a sense this was a proof of prophet Músá's strength and also a nullification of the view of the opposition.
The hand was endowed with transcendent luminosity in token of his prophethood and not "leprous as snow" [Asad 1980:219].
"Indeed this is a well-versed sorcerer" [7:109].

Al-Tabarî [1968:9/16] compares sorcery to the rain of the earth. When rain pours heavily it uproots the plants and turns the earth upside-down causing confusion. Sorcery is similar as it deludes one from perceiving a situation from what it actually is.

Al-Zamakhsharî [1966:2/102] states that these words can be traced to the pharaoh in sûra Shu'arâ':

قاله إبتداءً فتلقته منه الملا، فقالوه لأعقابهم

He said it at the beginning so the leaders learnt from him and related it to their successors.

"He wants to drive you out from your land, so what do you advise?" [7:110].

Al-Jazâ'irî in Sûra Baqara (2:61) and Sûra Shu'arâ' (3:302) interprets this as Pharaoh "levelling a charge" against the prophet. He is employing diplomatic delusion to agitate the people against Músâ [p.b.u.h] creating a scenario in which Músâ wants to occupy his land and cause the expulsion of his people.

This question was set forward by the Pharaoh as a response to the leaders' statement, يريد أن يخرجكم with the address in the plural form. Had this statement been from the people they would not have referred to him in the plural unless they were emphasising his importance or were referring to a group of senior members in his service. That this was a continuation of their speech is highly unlikely which is substantiated by al-Tabarî's [1968:9/16] view: the subject refers to the Pharaoh without direct mention of him.

قالوا أرجه و أخاه و أرسل في المدائن حشرين (١١١) يأتوك بكل سحر علمي (١١٢) و جآ السحرة فرعون قالوا إن لنا لأجرا إن كنا نحن الغالبين (١١٣) قال نعم و إنكم لمن المقربين (١١٤)

113. This is stated in the Bible (Exodus iv:6).
They said, "'Delay him and his brother, and send crowds to the cities, that they bring to you well-versed sorcerers.' And so the sorcerers came to the Pharaoh. They said: 'Indeed there will be a reward for us if we are the victors.' He [i.e. the pharaoh] said, 'Yes and you will be of those who will be close {to me}' " [Qur’an 7:111-14].

According to researches this connotation is weak: in language the hasis is تأخير, and not إرجاء [al-Rází:14/198-9]. Reciters differ in the recitation: Madinan and Iraqi reciters read it as أرجاء, Kufans as أرجعة and Basrans as أرجعة. The delay has been reiterated in sūra Shu’ará’ and is interpreted as a ploy for alleviating suspicion among the people as well as hindering Músá [p.b.u.h] from providing any proof. The sorcerers should emerge from the Egyptian areas.

In this statement there is elision whose manifestation with proof suffices, and that is: he sent people into the cities to gather the sorcerers, so the sorcerers came to the Pharaoh...[al-Ṭabarí 1968:9/18].

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114. There were seventy sorcerers [primarily from Upper Egypt], excluding the chief sorcerer. The one responsible for teaching them the art of sorcery was a Magian from the people of Naynawi-the town of prophet Yúnus [p.b.u.h] in the proximity of Mosul. This verse also refers to Allah's having made miracles available to every prophet of a category that was generally applicable to the people at the time e.g. during the Músá [p.b.u.h] era his miracle was similar to sorcery, though totally divergent from it [al-Rází n.d:14/200].
115. This is the reading preferred by al-Ṭabarí [1968:9/17], although other readings are permissible.
116. The pharaoh’s intention was to kill prophet Músá [p.b.u.h] and this would arouse suspicion among the people.
Their speech reflects great certainty and confidence. "The preceding la indicates emphasis which gives to this combination the meaning of a 'great reward' " [Asad 1980:219].

Its co-ordination is to an omitted particle which is replaced by a particle of affirmation. To illustrate this al-Zamakhshari [1966:2/102] renders the following:

"I will not confine you to recompense solely, but what is connected to it and that is closeness and honour..." [al-Zamakhshari 1966:2/102].

Al-Rázi [n.d:14/201] argues that this reward would elevate the pharaoh’s status as well.

They said: " 'O Músá! Cast or will we be the [first] to cast?' He said: 'Cast!' " and when they cast they bewitched the people’s eyes and frightened them and produced a great spell [Qur’án 7:115-17].

The above reflects their observance of Músá [p.b.u.h]’s refined character when he accorded them the right to cast first. According to mystics when they observed this there was no question that Allah had granted them faith. It was not their intention to begin casting their rods.

117. The is for emphasis.
They mention their hesitation by means of the pronominal suffix and emphasise it with a detached pronoun, thus making the predicate definite [al-Zamakhshari 1966:2/103].

The sorcerers displayed cordiality, humility and openmindedness in their interaction at this point, but Músá [p.b.u.h] was aware that once they had exhausted their strength the miracle would gain mastery [al-Zamakhshari 1966:2/543].

The relevance of prophet Músá’s permitting them to cast their rods whilst knowing that it was much the same as infidelity has been discussed in Súrá á há as well. The underlying reasons reflected in both súras are as ff:

- they should be aware that what he was going to do was real;
- he wanted to prove that it was sorcery as opposed to the miracle he was about to present and thus eliminate doubt.

"When they cast they bewitched the people's eyes" [7:116].

This sorcery was an incitement to distortion. Clearly, they had distorted the situation by staining the ropes with mercury. And when the sun’s rays touched them there was a spontaneous movement and the onlookers were disillusioned [al-Rází n.d:14/203].

And We inspired Músá saying: "Cast your rod and it swallowed up what they had been lying." The truth was confirmed and that which they were doing was to no avail. Thus they were defeated there and disparaged [Qur'án 7:117-19].

In throwing the rod the only fear was on account of the delay in demonstrating the proof.
(ألف) ظهور: الظهور الشيء بوضوح نازل إلى مستقره...
قال الفاضل قوله (وقوع الحق) يقيد قوة القوى و الظهور بحيث لا يصح فيه البطلان...
Lexicographers define وقوع as the appearance of a thing by virtue of its existence which descends to its place of rest...
Al-Qádí ‘Abd al-Jabbár says وقوع الحق highlights the intense certainty and manifestation in which there is no space for falsehood... [al-Rází n.d:14/205].

And down fell the sorcerers prostrating. They said: "We believe in the Lord of the worlds. The Lord of Músá and Hárún" [Qur'án 7:120-22].

The above verses constitute an unconventional feature of the sorcerers and the subsequent strained conversation between them and the Pharaoh.

Their immediate prostration and the declaration of faith is interpreted as follows:
قال بعض السحرة لبعض هذا خارج عن السحر
Some of the sorcerers said to others: "This is beyond sorcery."

118. The term is read with the tasheed on the قاف, in contrast to its readings in both tá há and shu‘ará'.
Our Companions say: "This verse indicates that some one else had thrust them into prostration, it was none other than the Lord of the worlds."

The Mu'tazilite say: "The fact that they had witnessed the great signs and the cogent miracles was such that they could not refrain from going down to prostration, it appeared as though they were cast into that position" [al-Rází n.d:14/206].

Al-Rází [n.d:22/86] states that they remained in that position until they caught a glimpse of paradise which would be their abode. But al-Qádí ‘Abd al-Jabbár opposes this view as they would not ask for refuge if they knew their fate.

Co-extensive with the above is al-Rázi’s concern of the sequence of the verses

The declaration of faith should precede the actual act of prostration. But the sorcerers were so overwhelmed and grateful that their immediate reaction was going down into prostration [al-Rází n.d:14/206].

They declared their faith in Allah by and completed it by 

Prophets Músá and Hárún were distinguished in terms of honour as in Allah’s statement [al-Rází n.d:14/207]. They wanted to eliminate the deception and so they chose this expression

119. This interpretation is discussed in súra tá há.
In *sūra Ṭā hā* there is a reversal of the name order "Lord of Hárún and Músá" [20:70].

Pharaoh said: "Have you come to believe in him before I give you permission. Indeed this is a plot which you have deceitfully contrived in the city to drive out its inhabitants. Soon you will know! Certainly I will cut off your hands and your legs from opposite sides and then I will crucify you all!" [Qur’án 7:123-24].

The Pharaoh instilled doubts in the minds of the people in two ways:

1) Their faith in Prophet Músá [p.b.u.h] was on account of the strength of the evidence;
2) he is playing on the people’s emotions as departure from their homeland distressed them.

The Pharaoh’s threat has been mentioned in *sūras Ṭā hā* and *shu’arā’* as well. The fact that he would cut off the hands and feet is self explanatory, but how the task would be executed is speculative. There is no indication to suggest that he would carry out either of the two tasks [this includes the crucifixion]. According to sources the following two statements verify that he did pursue them to a certain extent.

According to Asad [1980:220] the grammatical forms of *لَعَمْتُمْ* and *لأَصْلِبْنَكُمْ* indicates that the repentant sorcerers were many or they had a large following.
among the Egyptian people. The latter assumption seems to be corroborated by the Biblical reference [Exodus 12:38] to the fact that many Egyptians joined the Israelites in their exodus from Egypt.

قالوا إنا إلى ربنا منقلبون (١٢٥) و ما تنقم منا إلا أن آمنا بأيات ربنا لما جاء لنا ربنا أفرغ علينا صبرا و توفنا مسلمين (١٢٦)

They said: "Verily unto our Lord we do return. And you do not avenge us except that we believe in our Lord's signs as soon as they came to us. Our Lord shower us with patience and make us die as those who have surrendered themselves to you!" [Qur'án 7:125-26].

They adopt this nonchalant attitude towards death إنا إلى ربنا منقلبون as their primary concern was liberation from the Pharaoh [al-Zamakhsharí 1966:2/104].

According to al-Qádí ‘Abd al-Jabbár [al-Rází n.d:14/209] they asked Allah for benevolence which would lead them to steadfastness and patience.

"Shower upon us abundance of patience until it is in surplus as the outpouring of rain" [al-Zamakhsharí 1966:2/104].

The term مسلمين is interpreted as follows:

- for the Ash'arites Imán and Islám cannot be acquired, except when produced by Allah,
- for al-Qádí ‘Abd al-Jabbár this verse suggests that Islám and Imán are one.

This is substantiated by their first statement إنا إلى ربنا أمانا بأيات ربنا followed by و توفنا مسلمين [al-Rází n.d:14/210].

By morning they were sorcerers and by the end of the day believers [al-Tabarí 1968:9/24].
The leaders of Pharaoh’s people said: " 'Do you want Músá and his people to spread corruption on earth and forsake you and your gods?' He said: 'I will kill their sons and spare their women and we will be the conquerors over them' " [Qur’án 7:127].

is linked to signifying the Pharaoh’s leniency towards Músá and his people in abandoning both him and his gods.

is the pharaoh's threat to Músá and his people and a means of displaying his courage and strength. Commentators are of the opinion that he did what he was doing at the time of Músá’s birth [i.e slaying of children] [al-Rází n.d:14/212].

Músá said to his people: " 'Turn to Allah and have forbearance. Indeed the earth belongs to Allah. He gives it as a heritage to whom He wills of His servants, and the end belongs to the godfearing.' They [i.e. the Children of Israel] said: 'We have been hurt before you came to us and since you came to us.' He said: 'Perhaps your Lord will destroy your enemy and appoint you to inherit the earth, and He will look how you act' " [Qur’án 7:128-29].
Prophet Músá had commanded them to turn to Allah for assistance and warned them of two things inheritance\(^{120}\) of the earth and punishment of the enemy. It is the land of Egypt that is alluded to here.

"This is the first hint of the inconstancy and weakness of faith for which the Qur'án so often blames the children of Israel" [Asad 1980:221].

is a reference to Músá's assistance to them in terms of moral weakness, yet it serves as a warning as well [Asad 1980:221].

And We overwhelmed Pharaoh's people with drought and scarcity of fruit, so that they may heed. But whenever benefaction alighted upon them, they would say: "This is surely ours," and whenever affliction befell them they would see it as an evil misfortune from Músa and those who followed him. Oh, verily their [evil] misfortune had not been decreed by Allah, but most of them do not know it [Qur'án 7:130-31].

- the purpose of this verse is for them to heed, not to display their infidelity [al-Qádí ‘Abd al-Jabbár].

Al-Wáhidí adds that the fact that trials and tests are mentioned in the Qur'án does

\(^{120}\) It was prophet Músá’s desire for his people to inherit the earth after Pharaoh’s destruction.

The heritage: it is making a thing available for posterity after progeny.

Punishment includes the affairs of this world and the hereafter.

\(^{121}\) There was a period when there was a scarcity of date palms [al-Tabarí 1968:9/28].
not imply that Allah had subjected them to these trials, but He had treated them in a manner comparable to these trials [al-Rází n.d: 14/215].

The Jews in Madina levelled a similar charge against the Prophet of Islám on his arrival, pertaining to revenues and paucity of rain.

How could it be said that "" is liked to the definite form of "good" while "" is linked to the indefinite form of "evil"? Because the species of good and its occurrence is obligatory on account of its abundance and pervasiveness. But evil only occurs rarely [al-Zamakhsharí 1966:2/106].

"The reason for their good and bad is from Allah as He decrees it and wills it..." [al-Zamakhsharí 1966:2/106].

There are two factors associated with (طائر) :

1. it is synonymous with - Arabs attach significance to it as an augur caused by the flight of birds;

2. it is read as - the تاء is assimilated to the طاء as both are enunciated from the edge of the tongue.

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122 It is based on an Arab pre-Islamic custom of divining the future or establishing an omen from the flight of birds. The noun التاير (lit. "a flying creature") is often used in classical Arabic to denote "destiny" or "fortune", both good and evil [Asad 1980:221].
"But most of them do not know" [7:131].

Everything is from Allah and by attributing it to any other than Allah would tantamount to ignorance of His perfection" [al-Rází n.d:14/216].

And they said to Músá: "Whatever sign you may produce in order to enchant us we will not believe in you" [Qur'án 7:132].

The sorcerers use two very contradictory terms in the above verse. They are "sign" and "enchant" and the interpretation is as follows:

They did not refer to it as a sign in which they believed it to be such, but {instead} they referred to it with a view to calling Músá and their aim was to ridicule and rejoice" [al-Zamakhsharí 1966:2/107].

Then We sent upon them the floods, locusts, lice, frogs and blood as detailed signs, but they were proud, for they were a people lost in sin. And whenever punishment befell them, they would say: "O Músá, pray for us to your Lord on
account of the covenant [of prophethood] which He has made with you. If you remove this punishment from us, we will believe in you and let the Children of Israel go with you.” But when We removed from them the punishment for a term which they must reach, they broke their covenant [Qur‘án 7:133-35].

About حضرت آیشہ [R.A] is reported to have said that the Prophet of Islám said: "العذاب الموت" in which he is referring to mass deaths [الTABARÍ 1968:9/31]. This statement is vague, if the floods produced death, then sending the other calamities would be futile, but by transposing the expression of death to the causes of death such as the violent rain one can grasp the meaning of the prophetic saying.

يمتى is the accusative state. مفصلات are explanations not constituted in the intellect because they are not possessed by any person except Him and serve as examples to people.

And whenever punishment befell them... [7:134].

الرجز constitutes the five types of punishment mentioned above. It is synonymous with الطاعون. Each time they would call for assistance and revert to their former ways, thereby contradicting themselves. The ما is مصدرية meaning by His promise to you and that is a reference to the prophethood. The باء is attached to ادرع لنا ربك as is a request to موسى [P.B.U.H] بعهدك [al-Zamakhshari 1966:2/108-9].
We took vengeance on them, then We drowned them in the sea because they denied Our signs, and were mindless of them. And We caused the people who were weak to inherit the eastern parts of the land, and the Western parts which We had blessed. And the sincere word of your Lord was fulfilled for the Children of Israel because of their endurance, and We annihilated what Pharaoh and his people had done, and what they had constructed [Qur’an 7:136-37].

And We passed over the Children of Israel across the sea, and they came unto a people who were devoted to idols which they had. They said: ‘O Músá! Make for us a god as they have gods.’ He said: ‘You are a people who are ignorant.’ As for

in language is deprivation of blessings for punishment [al-Rází n.d:14/220].

is a reference to Syria and to Egypt.

is a reference to Syria and to Egypt.

Palestine is spoken of as "blessed" because it was the land in which Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had lived, and because so many other prophets were to appear there [Asad 1980:222].

The suffering of the Israelites, their bondage in Egypt, their deliverance through Músá, their crossing of the Red Sea [today known as the Gulf of Suez] and the destruction of the Pharaoh is mentioned in detail in the Bible (Exodus i-xiv). The Qur’án does not give a consecutive narrative: for historical narrative as such is never its purpose. Whenever the Qur’án refers to past events—whether recorded in the Bible or alive in Arabian tradition— it does so exclusively with a view to bringing out elements that are relevant to the ethical teachings which it propounds [Asad 1980:222].
These their way will be destroyed and all that they are doing is in vain. He said: 'Shall I seek to attain for you a god other than Allah when He has favoured you above all creatures?' [Qur'an 7:138-40].

The people were from the tribe of Lakhm or from Canaan and the idols they were worshipping were in the shape of cows [al-Rází n.d:14/223].

أجعل لنا إلهاً كما لهم آلهةٌ, whether this statement emerged from all of the Baní Isrá‘íl or some of them has been explained by al-Rází [n.d:14/223] that seventy of them were in the company of Músá [p.b.u.h] and many among them had remained aloof from posing such a baseless question.

قوم تجهلون, here Músá [p.b.u.h] is expressing his amazement at their total ignorance.

ان هؤلاء متبرِّر صحتهم باطل ما كانوا يعملون.

Al-Zamakhsharí [1966:2/110] uses the terms - "it is dwindling falsehood and they will not benefit by it" to describe their actions.

قال أغير الله أبغيكم اللهًا

معنى الهمزة الإنكار والتعجب من طلبهم ...

"The meaning of the hamza is denial and surprise at their request ...
[al-Zamakhsharí 1966:2/111].

أن الآله ليس شيئاً يطلب و يلتمس و يتخذ

"The deity is not a thing that can be requested, searched for or adopted" [al-Rází n.d:14/224].

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128 - refers to a lack of something, either a lack of His essence or His intention/design.
"He has favoured you above all creatures"...[7:140].
Allah had selected them with cogent signs which had not been acquired by any other worldly creatures.

And (remember) when We rescued you from the Pharaoh's people who were imposing upon you with dreadful torment, slaughtering your sons and sparing your women and therein was a gruesome trial from your Lord. And We appointed Músá for thirty nights and added to them ten, and he completed the time appointed by his Lord of forty nights, and Músá said to his brother Hárún: "Take my place among my people. Do right, and do not follow the way of the corrupt" [Qur'án 7:141-42].

Al-Zamakhsharí [1966:2/111] indicates that the function of يسومونكم is possibly a state of the people addressed or a reference to Pharaoh's people.
ذلكم refers to the deliverance or the punishment;
بلاء refers to the blessings or the tribulations.

Prophet Músá [p.b.u.h] had promised the Children of Israel the destruction of the enemy as well as his return with the book from Allah. After their disastrous fate he requested the book, for which he was commanded to fast for a period of thirty days. It was the month of Dhu 'l Qa'da. On completion the angels requested:

129. The difference between ميقات and وقت is that the latter is decreed, the former is not.
"We have smelled the fragrance of musk from you, so you spoilt it with brushing of your teeth with a miswaak" [al-Zamakhshari 1966:2/111]. This is substantiated by Allah’s statement:

"The smell of the mouth of a fasting person is better to Me than the fragrance of musk" [al-Zamakhshari 1966:2/111].

This is why he was commanded to fast for a further ten days and on the tenth of Dhu 'l Hijja, the Torah was revealed.

And when Músá came to Our appointed meeting and his Lord spoke to him, he said: "'My Lord! Show me Yourself that I may glance at You.' He said: 'You will not see Me, but glance at the mountain! If it is firmly embedded in its place, then you will see Me.' And when his Lord revealed His Brilliance at the mountain He brought it down crashing. And Músá lost consciousness. And when he awoke he said: 'Praise unto You! I turn unto You in repentance, and I am the first of true believers' " [Qur'an 7:143].

130. It is a twig.
There are differences in opinion as to the actual speech. Some say it consisted of methodical sounds, others say:

"His speech is a true quality which differs from letters and sounds" [al-Rázi n.d:14/228].

It can be established by way of supposition that Allah’s speech consisted of pure letters and sounds. Al-Máturídí maintains that like all other attributes His speech is also eternal; this is the view of the Ash’arites as well.

He also spoke to Músá [p.b.u.h] alone, but the seventy selected people heard the speech as well because the objective was for them to inform the others as to what had transpired at the time [al-Qádí ‘Abd al-Jabbár as quoted by al-Rázi n.d:14/229].

5.4.1 Vision of Allah

On the question of vision the Ash’arites once again faced the extreme Mu’tazilite views who denied the possibility of seeing Allah as this would imply His bodily existence which is absurd. The former believed it possible to see Allah for Músá [p.b.u.h] would not have said "رب أرئي أنظر اليك " had it been impossible.

The Mu’tazilites furthermore contend that Músá [p.b.u.h] was not unreasonable to his people nor was he committed to them in any way, but the request for something of such a magnitude seemed excessive.

Al-Zamakhsharí [1966:2/113] substantiates that Músá [p.b.u.h] would not have requested a "vision" but the people were still in doubt as is evident in he therefore had to eliminate this doubt.

131. This is validated by and Músa [p.b.u.h] was accredited with this honour.

132. They had heard Allah speak to Músá [p.b.u.h] and they wished to supplement this with a view of Him as well.
'You will not see Me, but glance at the mountain! If it is firmly embedded in its place, then you will see Me' [7:143].

The "لن" is for emphasis of prohibition. "No mortal human would be able to endure having a view of Me in this world" [al-Tabari 1968:9/50].

If the antecedent i.e the firm embedding of the mountain is possible then the consequent i.e vision of Allah must also be possible [al-Razi n.d:14/228-30]. However ينظر إلى الجبل is related to the preceding statement because a vision of Allah is not possible and Músá should divert his glance to the mountain. "The Arabic construction expresses the impossibility of man's seeing Allah" [Asad 1980:223].

would depend on the presence of the vision, a presence which would be aided by the stipulation that the mountain remains firmly embedded in its place [al-Zamakhshari 1966:2/114].

And when his Lord revealed His Brilliance at the mountain He brought it down crashing [7:143].

Only the size of the little finger of His appeared and the mountain sunk [al-Tabari 1968:9/53].

"Músá lost consciousness" [7:143].

This was out of fear of what he had seen and he fell to the ground as though he was dead [al-Zamakhshari 1966:2/115].

Músá [p.b.u.h] requested the vision whilst not fully in his senses, but yet he repented for it. His request was on his own accord, but the sequence of events that ensued reflect the glory of Allah. He did not offend nor deny Him in any way, but Músá exalted his Lord and sought refuge with Him and his repentance was linked to this rather than to what he had requested [al-Zamakhshari 1966:2/115].
The *Ash‘arites* maintain that a vision was possible, but because Músá [p.b.u.h] had requested it without consent and the reverence that was required, his repentance was linked to this rather than to the actual request [al-Rázi n.d:14/234].

He said: "O Músá! I have preferred you above mankind with My messages and My speaking [to you]. So take what I have given you, and be grateful. And We wrote for him on the tablets the exhortations to be drawn from all things, and the explanation of all things. Hold onto it with vigour and command your people (saying): Take the better course therein, I will show you the abode of sinners" [Qur‘án 7:144-45].

The tablets were of emerald, brought by the angel Jibríl [p.b.u.h]. According to al-Hasan they were of wood and send down from the sky, containing the *Torah* [al-Rázi n.d:14/236].

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133. The tablets were of emerald, brought by the angel Jibríl [p.b.u.h]. According to al-Hasan they were of wood and send down from the sky, containing the *Torah* [al-Rázi n.d:14/236].
is a kind of explanation for the clause that has preceded
من كل شيء، that is why Allah has divided it into two categories:

1. موعظة refers to principles which would encompass doing good and abstaining
from evil; and
2. تفصیلاً is an explanation of all things [al-Rází n.d:14/237].

Denying this would land one in دار الفاسقین, which is hell.

Asad [1980:224] says "Some commentators are of the opinion that the sentence
concludes Allah's admonition to Músá, but the plural object of 'I will show you'
makes it possible that it is the beginning of a parenthetic passage.

"I will turn away from My signs those who display arrogance on earth without
right, and if they see every sign they do not believe in it, and if they see the way of
righteousness they do not choose it as a path, and if they see the way of error they
choose it as a path. That is because they deny Our signs and are heedless of them"
[Qur'án 7:146].

Allah will deprive them of an understanding of the Qur'án and turn them away
from His signs which are not only applicable to Músá [p.b.u.h]'s people, but to
people of all times [al-Tabárí 1968:9/60].

134. Referring to the proof of Allah pertaining to His oneness and his deity.
135. Madinan, Makkan and Basran reciters read ﺃرک ﺃرک with damma on the راء, whilst Kufan
reciters and some Makkans read it with fatha on the راء. The term is equivalent to
- the path of right guidance and the true religion.
- the path of ruin which they would inevitably pursue.
The Ash’arites suggest that Allah had denied them Imán. This is contrary to the Mu’tazilite view of people like al-Jubbá’í who states that Allah had not turned them away from His signs because the سين indicates a future action and they had already denied and rejected the signs prior to that [al-Ráźí n.d:15/2].

The Prophet of Islám is reported to have said:

"إذا عظمت أمتي الدنيا نزع عنها هيبة الإسلام، و إذا تركوا الأمر بالمعروف و النهي عن المنكر حرمت بركة الوحى"

"When my people glorify the world, the prestige of Islám is removed from them, and when they abandon ordering virtue and forbidding evil the blessings of inspiration are denied" [al Zamakhsharí 1966:2/117].

يتكلرون في الأرض are a people who think that their judgement as to what constitutes right and wrong is the only valid one and they refuse to submit to the criterion of absolute moral standards [Asad 1980:224]. The meaning of تكلرون is that they perceived themselves to be the 'best of creation' [al-Ráźí n.d:15/3].

بغير الحق is a condition: meaning they were arrogant without justification because justifiable glorification is for Allah alone or it is co-ordinated to the verb تكير [al-Zamakhsharí 1966:2/117].

ذلك بأنّهم كذبوا بآياتنا و كانوا عنها غافلين

It is possible that the sinners disputed the level of punishment that would be meted out to them for there were amongst them those who did some good. Allah erases this doubt by elucidating the situation of all of them, except the arrogant, the humble or those endowed with good or even those bereft of it [al-Ráźí n.d:15/4].

The insertion of "ذلك" in the text is a replacement of the nominative or the
accusative, meaning that the 'turning away' is the reason for their denial [al-Zamakhshari 1966:2/117].

Those who deny Our signs and the meeting of the final day, their works are futile. Are they requited with anything except what they used to do? [Qur'an 7:147].

In it is possible that the verbal noun stands as object [meaning they deny their meeting in the hereafter] or that it stands in relation to the place, meaning the meeting of which they had been promised by Allah [al-Zamakhshari 1966:2/117].

5.4.2 Story of the cow

And in his absence the people of Mūsā, had adopted the effigy of a calf [for worship] made out of their trinkets which gave a lowing sound. Could they not

136. This is an expression denoting the descending of a thing from its highest to its lowest position.
137. The golden calf of the Israelites was a result of centuries-old Egyptian influences. The Egyptians worshipped at Memphis the bull Apis which they believed to be an incarnation of the god Ptah. A new Apis was born the instance the old one died. The lowing sound which the calf emitted was caused by wind effects [Asad 1980:224].
see that it did not speak to them, nor did it guide them in any way? They chose it and became wrongdoers. And when they would smite their hands in remorse and saw that they had gone astray, they would say: "Indeed unless our Lord have mercy on us and grant us forgiveness we will most certainly be among the lost!" [Qur’an 7:148-49].

And in his absence the people of Músá, had adopted the effigy of a calf [7:148].

According to al-Zamakhsharí [1966:2/117-8] Allah has attributed the act of worshipping the calf to all the people and they all followed in its worship as though they were unanimous in the decision.

All of Músá [p.b.u.h]'s people worshipped the calf with the exception of Hárún [p.b.u.h], this is substantiated by .

The  views are rendered as follows:

According to the former one who cannot speak nor guide cannot be a deity, for a deity is one who can command or prohibit and that cannot be attained if it is incapable of speech. The "calf" is powerless and thus cannot be a deity. The Mu'tazilite contend that a precondition for a deity is that it guides to the true righteous way and one who misguides from such a path cannot be a deity [al-Rází n.d:15/16-7].

"And when they would smite their hands in remorse" [7:149] is an idiomatic phrase denoting intense remorse.

Regretting intensely and biting one's hand in sorrow and سقط في أيديهم is an example of or vague expression. The purpose of in this verse is to highlight a person's ability to "take", "hold" and "retain" things and the remorse was to try and rectify their wrong ways [al-Rází n.d:15/8].

They realised their errors as though they could literally see them with their eyes
According to al-Qádí ‘Abd al-Jabbár [al-Rází n.d:15/8-9] the latter should precede because the 'remorse' and the 'confusion' should occur after the knowledge as though it should be stated as follows:

ولما رأو أنهم قد ضلوا سقط في أيديهم

"Indeed unless our Lord have mercy on us and grant us forgiveness we will most certainly be among the lost!" [7:149].

These words are acknowledged with great importance as to the repentance and the request for forgiveness in which they confirm that they will absolve themselves from a sense of loss if Allah forgives them. This remorse and pardoning emerged after the return of Músá [p.b.u.h] [al-Rází n.d:15/9].

و لما رجع موسى إلى قومه غضبان أسفا قال بنسمة خلفتمني من بعد أجعلتم أمر ربيكم وألقي الألواح وأخذ برأس أخيه يجره إليه قال ابن أم أن القوم استضعفوني و كادوا يقتلوني فلا تشمط بي الأعداء ولا تجعلني مع القوم الظالمين (150) قال رب اغفرلي ولأخي وأدخلنا في رحمتك وأنت أرحم الراحمين (151)

And when Músá returned to his people, enraged and grieved, he exclaimed:

"Wretched is the cause which you have followed in my absence! Have you hastened your Lord's command?" And he threw down the tablets and seized his brother's head, dragging him towards himself. Cried Hárún: "O my Mother's son! The people deemed me weak and almost killed me, so do not let my enemies rejoice at my misfortune and do not place me among the evil doing people.' He said: 'My Lord! Forgive my brother and I and let us in Your Mercy, for You are most Compassionate!" [Qur'án 7:150-51].

Prophet Mûsá was not taken by surprise on his return to his people as he was aware of the situation {though differences of opinion do exist}.

138. Its grading surpasses that of anger expressing the intensity of his emotion at the time.
This sura indicates that Músá [p.b.u.h] was aware of the situation prior to meeting his people, whereas sura à há suggests that he became conscious of it at the time of meeting them [al-Rází n.d:15/10]. The importance of من بعدی signifies Prophet Músá's already having showed them the Oneness of Allah as well as his transformation of the Baní Isrá'íl. This includes their prevention from cow worship as well.

Have you hastened your Lord's command? [7:150].

They wanted Músá [p.b.u.h] to return promptly even though it was Allah's command that he should return at the appointed time. Also they were impatient for the meeting with Allah. They believed that Músá had passed away as they were misinformed by the Sámirí.

And he threw down the tablets and seized his brother's head, dragging him towards himself. Cried Hárún: "O my Mother's son! The people deemed me weak and almost killed me, so do not let my enemies rejoice at my misfortune and do not place me among the evil doing people' [7:150].

He hurled the tablets as he was overcome with surprise and displeasure. There is no evidence to suggest that they broke on impact.

The reference to 'my mother's son' is to instill compassion and tenderness [al-Zamakhsharí 1966:2/119].

"The people deemed me weak" means he could not prevent them either by admonition or warning and should he exert his strength against their antagonism they would have killed him.

Músá selected himself and his brother for this particular invocation and excluded those who were indifferent to them [al-Rází n.d:15/6].
Then We sent after them Múṣá and his brother to the Pharaoh and his people with Our signs, but they were arrogant and a people [immersed] in sin. When the truth came from Us', they said: 'This is a manifest sorcerer Múṣá said: 'Do you say of the truth when it has come to you, this is sorcery?' And the sorcerers will not prosper' [Qur'án 10:75-77].

This sûra as well as sûra Tá hâ commence with Allah’s directive to both prophets Múṣá and Hárún [p.b.u.t] to proclaim the message to the Pharaoh.

Prophet Múṣá’s actual departure to the Pharaoh with Hárún [p.b.u.h] can dispense without a tafsír. The substantial question posed by Múṣá [p.b.u.h] in response to the indiscreet statement by the Pharaoh’s supporters is of particular importance. Would it be correct to assume that Múṣá [p.b.u.h] had said - "Are you saying that which you are saying", in this construction the [main object] has been eliminated which is a means of interrogation? It appears as though he said - "أَ تُقُولُونَ مَا تُقُولُونَ' And the sorcerers will not prosper" [Qur'án 10:75-77].

139. Allah has depicted them as مجرمين as they had distorted minds and hearts, shed blood and oppressed the weak [al-Jazá’írì 1987:2/299].
140. Similar objections and accusations were raised against Prophet Muhammad [p.b.u.h].
141. اذهب أن تَفْعَلْ بِنا فِي ذَكْرِكَ (42).
143. Proponents of the Arabic language differ in the insertion of the أنف of inquiry. Some

"and the sorcerers will not prosper" [10:77].

The implication is that sorcery cannot achieve more than ephemeral phenomena lacking any spiritual content...the sorcerers' conversion is told in greater detail in al-A’ráf and ū hā both of which were revealed before the present sūra [Asad 1980:304].

They said: " 'Have you have come to turn us away from that which we found our fathers following] and that you two will have glory on earth, but we will not believe you.' The Pharaoh said: 'Bring to me every well-versed sorcerer.' When the sorcerers came, Músá said to them: 'Cast what you want to cast!' When they cast Músá said: 'What you have brought is sorcery, Allah will make it untenable, indeed Allah will not prosper the deeds of the corrupt.' And Allah will establish and make apparent the truth by His Words, however much the criminals may hate it' " [Qur’án 10:78-82].

When Músá [p.b.u.h] silenced them with proof they said cunningly, "You have come to turn us away from that which our fathers believed and you are arrogant on earth and we will not believe you."

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1 Basrans indicate that it is included as a means of relating what they had said. Kufan grammarians say it is read without the ānāf [al-Ṭabarí 1968:11/145].

144. According to al-Wáhidí in Arabic usage is a diversion from a command.
This refusal to accept is based on two factors:
1) They would not renounce the religion of their forefathers and they adhered to blind imitation;
2) Prophets Músá and Hárún [p.b.u.t] were censured for seeking power:

لَكَماَّ المَكَّ وَ الْعَزُّ فِي أَرْضِ مَصْر

"for you is dominion and glory in the land of Egypt") was addressed to both brothers. A king is synonymous with pride as he conducts the affairs of the world. Similarly a prophet once acknowledged by his people for his truthfulness becomes the key figure in their affairs [al-Rází n.d:17/142].

وَلَقَامَ مَلَقُونَ الَّذِينَ طَلَّبُوا عَلَى مَوسَىٰ

was Prophet Músá’s response to the gathering, but to judge it as being tantamount to infidelity and sorcery is unfounded.

It was a means to determine their unscrupulous attitudes. According to al-Tabarî [1968:11/147] certain words have been eliminated which are as follows:

فَآتِنَا بِالسَّحْرِاءَ، فَلَمَا جَاءَ السَّحْرَةَ، وَلَكَنَّ اكْتَفَى بِدَلَّةٍ قَوْلُهُ (فَلَمَا جَاءَ السَّحْرَةَ)

[Indication of "when the sorcerers came" suffices to explain the omitted text].

فَلَمَا أَلْفَنَا قَالَ مُوسَىٰ مَا جَنِتَّمَ بِهِ السَّحْر

The ِّّّْاَما is an indefinite relative pronoun and its predicate is السَّحْر. It assumes the definite form, for when an indefinite noun returns [in the form of a reply], it assumes definiteness [al-Zamakhsharî 1966:2/247-48 & al-Rází n.d:17/143].

"And Allah will establish and make apparent the Truth by His words, however much the criminals may hate {it}" [10:82].

وَ يَقِلُ بَمَا سَبِقَ مِن فَضْلِهِ وَ قُدْرَتِهِ، وَ فِي كُلَّ مَآمِلِ اللَّهِ أَحَبَّاتٌ غَامِضَةَ عَمِيقَةٌ عَاليةٌ ...

"And Allah causes the truth to prevail" meaning He manifests and strengthens it.

As for ِّّّْاَما it is His promise to Músá [p.b.u.h], it's been said with His preceding
decrees. Regarding "the words of Allah" cryptic, in-depth and sublime researches have been done [al-Rází n.d:17/142].

None believed in Músá, except a small group of his people out of fear of the Pharaoh and their great ones, unless they should persecute them, for Pharaoh was arrogant on the earth and among the unrestrained. And Músá said: " 'O People! If you believe in Allah, then place your trust in Him if you are Muslims.' They said: 'In Allah we place our trust, do not make us a trial for an unjust people' " [Qur’án 10:83-85].

The transformation of the staff is not mentioned here [directly], but Allah has elucidated that what had transpired was among the great miracles. This statement serves as a consolation to the Prophet [p.b.u.h] as well as a model example for other prophets.

The term  is interpreted as follows:

- It refers to people few in number. It is used with قوم as a means of belittlement [Ibn-‘Abbás as quoted by al-Tabárí 1968:11/149].
- They were a people whose fathers were Coptics and mothers of the Baní Isrá‘îl [al-Rází n.d:17/144]. The Qur’án mentions in sûra al-A‘râf [v.120-6] that some Egyptians too believed in Músá’s message, so then by "his people" is meant both Israelites and Egyptians. This assumption is strengthened by the reference in the next clause "to their great ones" [Asad 1980:304].
The fear that the people harboured was on account of the following:

- they feared the Pharaoh due to his strength and cruelty;
- مالائهم refers solely to the Pharaoh with the use of a plural expression for glorification. Asad [1980:304] adopts this rendering and also indicates that because of the fear of the Pharaoh the majority did not declare their faith openly.

The reward depends on two conditions: one that precedes and one that succeeds. Jurists suggest that the one that succeeds should precede and vice versa. Their being Muslims is a precondition [i.e. the succeeding statement] as Músá [p.b.u.h] says to them that if you believe in Allah then place your trust in Him [i.e. the preceding statement] because Islám is equivalent to surrender and this is indicative of compliance to the pronounced commandment of Allah; it denotes humility and relinquishes disobedience. Imán relies on the development of the spirit. When one has attained these two conditions then he or she commits all his or her affairs to Allah. Prophet Músá [p.b.u.h] says because the former comprises a self contained meaning in which they are commanded to place their trust in Allah. The command is such that Allah has mastery over everything and all is at His disposal. This logic prevents one from trusting any except Allah. This is why the words are expressed thus. A stipulation of is total submission to Allah [al-Rází n.d:17/145 & al-Zamakhsharí 1966:2/249].

The implication of this prayer is: "If You give them authority over us they will be deserving of a severe punishment in the hereafter and that will be a trial for them" [al-Rází n.d:17/146].
5.6 SÚRA TÁ HÁ

The focal point of this piece of Qur’ánic narrative is the human being’s conceited nature and the subsequent results which culminate from this unyielding behaviour. The proclamation commences with Allah's command to prophets Músá and Hárún [p.b.u.t] about approaching the Pharaoh coupled with guidance on how to conduct themselves when they do so.

اذهب أنت و أخوك يا موسى ولا تنيا في ذكرى (٤٢) فإذنا إلى فرعون إن إنه طغي (٤٣) فقولا له قولنا لعله يذكروا أو يخشى (٤٤) قالا ربنا إننا نخاف أن بفرط علينا أو أن بطلغي (٤٥)

" 'Go forth you and your brother with Our signs and do not slacken in My remembrance! Go to the Pharaoh, indeed he is oppressive. Speak to him in gentle words so that he may take heed or fear.' They said: 'Our Lord, we fear that he will be insolent with us or oppress us' " [Qur'án 20:42-45].

A lucid starting point is the term áyát and its appearance in the plural form when it is in essence a referral to two signs:

The transformation of the staff into a creature, its varying magnitude and its movement as a serpent together with its subsequent transformation into wood all represent distinct miracles. Similarly, the brightness of the hand, its rays and its disappearance after attaining the desired purpose also represent unique signs.

The purpose of idhhab after idhhab anta wa-ahlika is according to al-Qaffál [al-Rází n.d:22/58] a means of reiterating the command - [at first they were addressed individually]. Notwithstanding, a command to both brothers was

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146. It is read with the kasra as a particle of similarity for phonetic corroboration. The wisdom encompassed here is that the one who remembers Allah fears none. Consequently his heart is strengthened and he does not slacken in his desired intention [al-Zamakhsharí 1966:2/538].

147. The staff's many signs have far-reaching implications, e.g, its transformation is suggestive of Allah's existent mastery of the whole world, Músá's prophethood and the conceivability of the Last Day.
highly improbable as Hárún was not present at the time, it was a means of honouring him during his absence. An example of such veneration is Prophet Músá’s acknowledgement of fear "our Lord we fear" as a response to Allah’s command "speak to him in gentle words."

Allah ordered Músá [p.b.u.h] to be lenient towards the Pharaoh because:
1) the Pharaoh had brought him up and should be accorded the rights of a parent;
2) to subdue the tyrant, for harshness would only increase his intolerance [al-Rází n.d:22/58].



indicates that the primary aim was to remove him from a state of denial to one of acknowledgement.

According to Asad [1980:474] every Qur’ánic narrative aims to elucidate eternal truth or a universal principle of human behaviour so it is evident that Allah’s command to Músá to speak to one particular sinner retains its validity for all times.

They said: 'Our Lord, we fear that he will be insolent with us or oppress us' [20:44].

Prophet Músá [p.b.u.h] was still embodied by fear after Allah had expanded his breast and eased his task. The expansion of the chest was to strengthen it for the accomplishment of tasks, whilst not subjecting it to distortion and change which could impede the elimination of fear [al-Rází n.d:22/60].

Prophet Músá’s reluctance to approach the Pharaoh does not make him disobedient, because Allah had not asked him to carry out the task with immediate effect [al-Rází n.d:22/60].

قال لا تخافا إنّى معكما أسمع و أرى (67) فأتيوا فقولا إنّا رسولا ربك فأرسل وعنا بنى إسرائيل ولا تعذبهم قد جنّنك يا بابين إبن ربك و السّلام على من اتبع الهدى (74) إنّا قد أوجي

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He said: "Do not fear, I am with you two, Hearing and Seeing. Go then you two to
him and say, we are messengers of your Lord, so send the Children of Israel with
us and do not torture them. We have come to you with a message from your Lord
and peace will be on those who follow guidance. It has been revealed to us that
punishment will come to those who delude the [truth] and turn away from it"
[Qur'án 20:46-48].

is equivalent to protection and security which is further intensified by
the assurance of . It is as though Allah is saying:

"I am a Protector and a Helper of you two seeing and hearing. And when the
protector and the helper is like this, protection is complete and help is actualised.
Concerns for the enemy are eliminated" [al-Zamakhsharí 1966:2/539].

Al-Jazái'ri [1987:3/54] substantiates that this is a reassurance from Allah to the
two brothers that they should "not be doubtful" for Allah will assist them.

In relation to the first statement, i.e "we are messengers from your Lord", it is a
clarification and an explanation because the call to the message could not be
verified except by evidence which could emerge by means of a sign....
[al-Zamakhsharí 1966:2/539].

Co-extensive to al-Zamakhsharí's view al-Ráží [n.d:22/59] questions the logic
behind being mellow at first and then being harsh. The reason is that when a
person is obstinate adopting a harsh attitude is {often} necessary.

The dialogue between Prophet Músá [p.b.u.h] and the Pharaoh.

قال فلمن ربكما يموسى (۴۹) قال ربي الذي أعطى كل شيء خلقه ثم هدى (۵۰) قال فما بال القرن الأولى (۵۱) قال علمها عند ربي في كتاب لا يضل ربي ولا ينسى (۵۲)

He said: " 'Who is your Lord, O Músá?' 'Our Lord is He Who gave His creation everything, then He guided'. He said: 'What of the previous generations?' 'Knowledge of it is in a book, my Lord neither leads astray nor does He forget' " [Qur'án 20:49-52].

ما رب العالمين من ربكما. In this súra Pharaoh is enquiring about the qualities of Allah and in súra Shu’árá’ more about the nature of Allah.

خليقه is an object of أعطاء: Allah gave His creation everything that was essential and that could be utilised. The distinctive features and shapes of things corresponds to their usefulness, e.g the eye has a particular form which facilitates sight - these usages are applicable to animals as well [al-Zamakhsharí 1966:2/539].

"All things are distinguished according to their distinct characteristics and Allah gives to all of His creatures sustenance in various ways" [al-Jazá'írí 1987:3/56].

"This sentence appears in the past tense ("has given" and "has guided")148, but as it obviously relates to the continuous process of God's creation, it is independent of the concept of time and denotes, as in so many other places of the Qur'án, an unceasing presence" [Asad 1980:474].

ما بال القرنون corresponds to the above-mentioned verse in the following two ways:

☐ fearing that Músá was going to show convincing evidence, the Pharaoh interrupted him;

☐ Pharaoh wanted to occupy him by posing other questions. [Al-Jazá'írí 1987:3/56] states that he enquired about the people of Nūḥ, Húd,

but Músá [p.b.u.h] was aware that - "the Cursed one" was trying to divert him from the truth.

refers to knowledge which rests solely with Allah and this knowledge of Allah characterises Him.

According to some authorities the two terms and are synonymous. Al-Qaffál indicates that the former refers to Allah's existence as the Possessor of all knowledge whilst the latter is the eternal continuation of that knowledge [al-Rází n.d:22/67].

which is possibly a description of which means that Allah has made the world comfortable to enable humans to move freely and continue their daily activities. Prophet Músá's speech {temporarily} stops at and Allah's continues .

149. It is an independent attribute of "my Lord."
150. The plural is which is possibly a description of.
It is a shift from a narration to an address in which Allah describes His bounties to His creation [al-Zamakhsharí 1966:2/540]. This statement from Allah is a continuation of Músá [p.b.u.h]’s speech and is a reminder to the Makkan people who were ignorant of the Oneness of Allah [al-Jazá’írí 1987:3/56].

"Eat then of the produce of the soil......" [20:54].
"From it We have created you......" [20:55].

These words were not uttered by Músá [p.b.u.h] because it was not within his capacity to produce them, for example Allah has produced various kinds of vegetation, some of it for eating and others as livestock for cattle. He also mentions the uses of the earth, the sky and soil as Adam was created from it and its significance is illustrated by the Prophet of Islám:

بروا بالأرض فانها بكم برة

"Show reverence to the earth, it will show reverence to you" [al-Rází n.d:22/70].

The reference to a "people of discernment" is explained by al-Tabarí [1968:16/175] as "people of understanding and reasoning." The plural is "نهية" as the plural of كشى is كشى. Abú Ja’far says: كشى is a piece of fat in the belly of a lizard which bears resemblance to the umbilical cord. Allah specifies it because in it are signs for a people who understand.

نخركم تارة أخرى refers to the scattered limbs that are combined with soil and then returned to a state of life.

This return signifies the "dissolution of this body, after death, into the elementary organic and inorganic substances of which it was composed" [Asad 1980:475].

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151. According to al-Rází [n.d:22/68] the dialogue between Músá [p.b.u.h] and the Pharaoh stops here and verses 53-5 represent a direct discourse addressed to man in general.
152. A person’s sustenance, his time of death and the ground in which he is to be buried are recorded by angels, the soil is extracted from that ground, smeared on the sperm and placed in the womb [ibn Mas’úd in al-Rází n.d.22/70].
Reward or punishment will be in accordance with one’s deeds [al-Jazá’irí 1987:3/57].

And indeed We showed him all of Our Signs, but he denied and refused. He said: 'Have you come to drive us out of our land by your sorcery, O Músá? Then we will produce sorcery like it! Make an appointment for a meeting between us and you in which we will not break our promise nor you in an equal place’ ” [Qur’an 20:56-58].

According to some authorities آیات is associated with monotheism [Oneness of Allah] or to prophethood [referring to the nine signs153].

He (Allah) had already showed him His signs and enumerated that what had come to him was different to that which had come to other prophets in terms of their signs and miracles [al-Zamakhsharí 1966:2/541].

As regards the statement لتخرجننا من أرضنا, it signifies pharaoh’s fear as he was trembling dreadfully as to what was going to be produced for "the truth when it wills can steer mountains to a point of submission" [al-Zamakhsharí 1966:2/541]. Al-Rází [n.d:22/71] considers this as a ruse by the Pharaoh to cause dissension among the people.

It can be interpreted as a time or a place. If one views it as a time then it is in harmony with the statement موعدكم يوم الزيتون. If interpreted as a place it corresponds to مكانا سویه.

153. The nine signs include the rod, the hand, splitting of the sea, stones, locusts, lice, frogs, blood and and the crashing of the mountain.
"He (i.e. Músá) said: 'Your appointed meeting will be the day of the Festival and let the people assemble when the sun is risen high.' The Pharaoh turned away and contrived a plot, then he came. Músá said to them: 'Shame on you, do not invent lies against Allah, for fear that He will destroy you with punishment, for he who fabricates [such a lie] has already failed.'" So they disputed with one another as to what they should do and kept their conversation secret [Qur’án 20:59-62].

There is a difference of opinion as to who had proposed the time and place of the appointed meeting. The following reflects the views of al-Qádí ‘Abd al-Jabbár in contrast to that of al-Rází [n.d:22/72]:

According to the former the words were issued by the Pharaoh, whereas al-Rází views it as Prophet Músá’s statement and cites the following reasons:

1) it is a response to the Pharaoh's statement
2) the address was in plural form and had the Pharaoh uttered it he would be showing reverence to them which was not expected of him. So the addressee was the prophet.

ياو بنا و بنيك موعداً is read with تاء and .

و ها بحش الناس ويلكم لا تفتروا على الله كذباً, Allah had ordained destruction upon them.

The affliction is read as السحت in the Hijází dialect and as إسحات in the Najdí dialect.

154. A Coptic festive day on which they would adorn themselves; a Persian New Year’s Day or the tenth day of Muharram.

155. He arrived with seventy-two sorcerers, each equipped with ropes and rods. They formed a dome shaped edifice for him of a length of 70m.
So they disputed with one another as to what they should do and kept their conversation secret [20:62].

They argued with some claiming that it was the speech of a magician, whilst others thought it to be that of a prophet.

They said: "These two are sorcerers intent on driving you from your land by their sorcery and on doing away with your most distinguished nobility.' [O sorcerers of Egypt] decide upon which scheme you will pursue, and then come forward in one single body, for indeed he who prevails today will prosper indeed" [Qur'án 20:63-64].

Ibn Kathîr and Hafs read it as ان هذا لساحران, the لام is the particle which distinguishes between the conditional ان and the abbreviated form of إن. Other readings are إن هذا ساحران and ان هذان ساحران. It is human nature that when one does not believe in a thing he does not adhere to it rigidly as is evident in the sorcerers' declaration in which they said to Mûsá [p.b.u.h] that they will not follow him in religion or principle. This is further corroborated by طريقتكم المثلى, a reference to the noble men who served as model examples consisting primarily of the باني إسرائيل (evidence of this is Prophet Mûsá's statement: أرسل معي بنى إسرائيل.)

Al-Tabari's [1968:16/184] preferred reading of فئجمعوا كيدكم is: hamza on the ألف in اجمع. This was contrary to the Basran reading which omitted the hamza.

156. Close together.
"He who prevails today will prosper indeed" [20:64] is a reference to the "challenge": meaning the one who succeeds will be the ultimate victor [al-Zamakhsharí 1966:2/543].

They said: "'O Músá, either you cast or let us be the first to cast! He said: 'No, you cast [first].' And Behold! their ropes and rods by their magic appeared to him as though they moved fast". And in his heart Músá became apprehensive. We said: 'Do not fear, it is you who will prevail' " [Qur’án 20: 65-8].

The implication of "fear" is that the feat of the sorcerers was based on "mass-hallucination" and Músá too had succumbed to this for a while [Asad 1980:476].

And cast what is in your right hand! - it will swallow up quickly what they have fabricated, that which they have fabricated is a sorcerer’s artifice, and the sorcerer

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157. These are words of extremity: words of assurance, repetition of the personal pronoun and the definite ال.

158. The text has been discussed in súra al-A’ráf.

159. It is read with a final vowelless letter.

160. The implication here is a categorical condemnation of all endeavours which fall under the heading of "magic" irrespective of what the aim of the person who devotes himself to it may be [Asad 1980:476].
will never prosper at whatever he may produce.' And down fell the sorcerers prostrating [themselves] and they said: 'We have come to believe in the Lord of Hárún and Músá.' He [i.e. the pharaoh] said: 'Have you come to believe in him before I have given you permission? Verily, he must be your senior who has taught you magic! But I will most certainly sever your hands and legs on opposite sides, and I will most certainly crucify you on trunks of palm trees, so that you might come to know as to which of us can inflict a more severe chastisement, and which is the more abiding. [Qur’án 20:69-71].

"And throw what is in your right hand" [20:69].

كلها ...

would possibly belittle it, meaning do not be concerned with the abundance of their ropes and rods, throw the small sized single piece of wood which is in your hand for by the power of Allah it will snatch [all their lies]. So do not be concerned with these huge pieces of wood, for what is in your right hand is greater than all of this... [al-Zamakhshari 1966:2/544-5].

Allah had asked Músá [p.b.u.h] - [20:17] and this was the appropriate time to display the wonder of the rod.

161. Refer to [7:124].
"We believe in the Lord of Hárún and Músá" [20:70].

The Pharaoh had declared his divinity by آمنتم له and by ماعلمت لكم من إله أن آرىكم الأعلى. Had the sorcerers said "Lord of the worlds" they would be accused of believing in the pharaoh, that is why they chose this expression.

The reasons for the reversal of the two names are Pharaoh's undue claims to divinity. This was based on his having raised Músá [p.b.u.h]. The sorcerers were aware of the pharaoh's pretences [al-Rázi n.d:22/87].

"Have you come to believe in him before I have given you permission?" [20:71].

- their declaration of faith was not intentional.

The Pharaoh accuses Músá [p.b.u.h] of teaching the sorcerers the art of sorcery as this is evident in "Verily, he must be your senior who has taught you magic!"

'I will most certainly crucify you on trunks of palm trees' [20:71] -

This served as a form of exemplary punishment [al-Jazá'irí 1987:3/62].

They said: "We do not prefer you over what has come to us from the proof and to Him who has created us. So decree what you want to decree, as you can only decree what pertains to the present world. We believe in our Lord that He may forgive our faults and from the sorcery which you coerced us.' " Surely, whoever comes to his Lord as an evildoer for him is hell, he will not die in it nor will he live. Whoever comes to Him as a believer and has done pious deeds for them are
the highest of ranks. Perpetual Gardens beneath which rivers flow, therein they will [live] eternally and that is the reward of those who are righteous [Qur'án 20:72-76].

The sorcerers outline the pharaoh's shortcomings in which he only conducts issues relevant to the world in contrast to the hereafter.

و الذي فطرنا is coordinated to ٍلما جاءنا.

So decree what you want to decree, as you can only decree what pertains to the present world [20:73].
The above-mentioned words are stated to display their firm resolve in adhering to their faith despite the pharaoh's threats [al-Rází n.d:22/89].

Al-Jazá'írí [1987:3/64] interprets this as an unwavering disposition on the pharaoh's part to eliminate them by killing and crucifixion. His dominance is only applicable to the present world, but in the hereafter he will experience a humiliating punishment.

'We believe in our Lord that He may forgive our faults and from the sorcery which you coerced us' [20:74].

It was common practice for the rulers at the time to compel their subjects to learn and cultivate the art of sorcery [al-Rází n.d:22/89]. The pharaoh was considered to be the "god-king" and thus the embodiment of the Egyptian religion in which occult practices played a major role, thus each of his subjects was duty-bound to accept magic as part of their lives [Asad 1980:477]. They were sent to al-Farámá.163

163. A fort on the shore of Egypt between al-‘Arish [a town in northern Egypt] and al-Fustát [an ancient Islámíc city south of present day Cairo].
The above statement is a response to the Pharaoh’s

The Mu’tazilite differ in the promise made to the (major sinners). A great sinner is an evildoer and every evildoer's abode is hell. informs people in general of those who are excluded from punishment and those who are not. [A right action is rewarded and a wrong one is punished]. Some of the Ash’arites oppose this indicating that they do not submit to the view that the great sinner is [necessarily] an evildoer, that Allah has made the evildoer in opposition to the believer is unquestionable but this is beneficial if it can be affirmed that the great sinner is a believer.

Another view is about the physical existence of Allah as though He were at a particular site. Allah had made His commitment to them in the place of the promise. The physical existence of Allah is metaphorical as Ibráhím [p.b.u.h] had said: - "I am going to my Lord for guidance."

Note the antithesis of the term with that of [al-Rází n.d:22/90].

A is one who does righteous deeds and has faith. [1987:3/64] describes a as one who executes his religious duties and refrains from that which is forbidden for which his reward is increased faith.

164 Asad’s [1980:477] translation is ‘one who is lost in sin.’
This verse highlights the acquisition of forgiveness for the major sinners as well because Allah has made the highest ranks of paradise for those endowed with faith.

The righteous are those who say - there is no god, except Allah - لا إله إلا الله - there is no god, except Allah [al-Zamakhshari 1966:2/546].

After Allah had rescued the Baní Isrá‘íl from the Pharaoh and his people, Músá [p.b.u.h] traversed with them across the sea and Allah caused the Pharaoh and his army to drown. Músá had notified them that his Lord had commanded him to bring the Baní Isrá‘íl as he was on his way to the appointed meeting at Mount Úr in order to give them the Torah which would contain laws and how to conduct their lives and religion and He had promised them this at the right side of Úr. Músá hurried en route for the appointed meeting. He had left his brother Hárrín with the Baní Isrá‘íl to travel slowly with them until they caught up with Músá at Mount Úr. It happened that the Baní Isrá‘íl had been enticed by the Sámirí to mould the calf and worship him and to discontinue the journey behind Músá and Allah said the following [al-Jazá‘írí 1987:3/69]:

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The following refers to Músá's ascent of Mount Sinai

و ما أعجلك عن قومك يموسى (3) قال هم أولاً، على أثرى و عجلت إليك رب لترضي (4) قال فإنما قد قنتم قومك من بعدك و أضلهم السامرى (5) فرجع موسى إلى قومه غضب أسفاً قال يقوم ألم يعدكم ربك وعدا حسنًا أطلال علكم العهد أم أردتم أن يحل عليكم غضب من ربكم فأخلفتم موعدى (6) قالوا مأخلصنا موعدك بملكنا و لكنا حملنا أوزاراً من زينة القوم فقد فذففها فكذك الله السامرى (7) فأخرج لهم عجلا جسدا له خوار فقالوا هذا إلهكم و إله موسى فنسى (8) أفلا يرون ألا يرجع إليهم قولآ ولا يملك لهم ضرا ولا فعاً(9) "'And what made you hasten from your people, O Músá?' He said: 'They are following me and I hastened to you my Lord, so that You may be pleased.' He said: 'We have already tried your people in your absence and Sámirí has led them astray.' Músá returned to his people angered and regretful, he said: 'O my people did your Lord not promise you a fair promise? Was the promise long in coming or did you wish that the anger of your Lord descend upon you as you broke your promise to me?' They said: 'We did not break our promise to you on our own accord, but we had to carry the heavy burden of the ornaments of the people, then we cast them and Sámirí did likewise.' Then [they told Músá] he took out for them the effigy of a calf which was mooing, then they said: 'This is your Lord and the Lord of Músá,' but he has forgotten. Could they not see that it did not return a word, nor could it harm or benefit them? [Qur'án 20:83-89].

The above is a disapproval in the form of an inquiry which encompasses two important issues:

☐ it is a disapproval of the haste itself;
☐ is an inquiry into the reason for advancing at this stage. The second issue is

165. Refer to 7:17
166. According to Asad [1980:479] this interpolation is necessary due to the change from direct to indirect speech.
of relevance as Músá [p.b.u.h] is presenting an excuse and forwarding a reason for his advancement - Músá [p.b.u.h] feared that he was going to be reproached by Allah, so he tried to create a diversion from the response by being consistent within the limits of the speech [al-Zamakhshari 1966:2/549].

فَنَّصَمْ تَكُونُ مِنْهَا قَلْبُهُمْ أَوْلََىَّ أَنْ أَثَّرْتُ الْمُسْلِمَةَ عَلَىٰ الْإِلَه. is a reference to the seventy leaders selected by Allah to accompany Músá [p.b.u.h] to Mount زُر or they are in general the بنی إسرائيل whom Músá [p.b.u.h] had left under the supervision of هارون [p.b.u.h]. He should not have left his people without his guidance at so early a stage in their freedom. In this elliptic manner the Qur’án alludes to the psychological fact that a community which attains to political and social freedom after centuries of bondage remains for a long time subject to the demoralising influences of its past and cannot all at once develop a spiritual and social discipline of its own [Asad 1980:478].

The classical commentators understand this in a physical sense of literally following him, Asad [1980:478-49] is of the opinion that his answer has a tropical sense. Músá [p.b.u.h] was expressing his assumption that the children of Israel would follow his guidance even in his absence, but this assumption proved erroneous.

'We have already tried your people in your absence and Sámírí has led them astray' [20:85]. Allah had informed Músá [p.b.u.h] of what his people had done during his absence.

The Mu’tazilites ascertain the impossibility of Allah's having created infidelity

167 فَنَّصَمْ تَكُونُ مِنْهَا قَلْبُهُمْ أَوْلََىَّ أَنْ أَثَّرْتُ الْمُسْلِمَةَ عَلَىٰ الْإِلَه. is a trial in a sense that once they realised that the calf would not fulfil the requirements of a deity this worship would place an intense burden on them [al-Rází n.d:22/100].
amongst them based on the following:

- rational evidence indicates that this is not possible of Allah;
- Allah's statement would be false which is impossible of Allah and
- on Músá's questioning as to the reason for the disorder they would have cited Allah having created infidelity amongst them, but they did not fail.

Sámirí is ascribed to a tribe of the Baní Isrá'íl called the Sámirah [a Jewish clan, some of whom still live in Nablus, in Palestine]. This tribe did not exist during the time of Músá [p.b.u.h] and it is possible that the individual in question was one of the many Egyptians who had converted to the faith of Músá [p.b.u.h] and joined the Israelites on their exodus from Egypt [Asad 1980: 479].

Músá returned to his people angered and regretful and said: 'O my people did your Lord not promise you a fair promise? Was the promise long in coming or did you wish that the anger of your Lord descend upon you as you broke your promise to me?' [20:86].

The promise of Allah is a reference to the Torah which includes guidance for mankind as there could be no better and more proficient promise than that. This includes benefits of religion and rewards in the hereafter. The other promise is that of worldly benefits in which they were promised land and homes prior to the destruction of the pharaoh [al-Rází n.d:22/102].

The term عهّد can be designated with time or a covenant.

The promise was long in coming as Músá [p.b.u.h] has promised them thirty nights, but Allah had increased it by a further ten.

The 'promise' was on Músá's behalf to the people that they would join him and

168. This was after the completion of the thirty days of Dhu 'l-Qa'da and the ten days of Dhu 'l-hijja [al-Zamakhsharí 1966:2/549].
169. "Are you determined to disregard the consequences of your doings?" [Asad 1980:479].
carry out his religion on his return from Mount Sinai [al-Rází n.d:22/102].

They said: 'We did not break our promise with you on our own accord, but we had to carry the heavy burden of the ornaments of the people, then we cast\(^{170}\) them and Sámírî did likewise [20:87].

They did not violate the promise freely, but were powerless as they feared they would cause further division and disturbance amongst the people [al-Rází n.d:22/102-3].

The ornaments were those of the pharaoh's people [Egyptian Coptics] which they had borrowed from them on their departure from Egypt. Prophet Músá [p.b.u.h] had already hurried off to Mount Sinai which gave Sámírî ample opportunity to cause havoc. He convinced the women of the Baní Isrá'îl that the jewels were of no use to them and by using them as easy prey he moulded the calf [al-Jazá’irî 1987:3/70].

Then he took out for them the effigy of a calf which was mooing, then they said: 'This is your Lord and the Lord of Músá,' but he has forgotten [20:88].

This is a complex statement based on the idea that the people through their sheer ignorance believed that the calf produced at the particular time was the creator of the heavens and the earth. Al-Rází [n.d:22/104] postulates it is possible that they were pantheists\(^ {171}\) by believing that the deity is an incarnation manifesting itself in that particular body.

The dust brought about life in the dead. Allah produced it by the miracle of the Holy Spirit and this was displayed by the dust under the horse's hoofs. When it came into contact with the inanimate body Allah created the animal. Miracles such as these include the creation of the Messiah without a father [al-Zamakhsharî 1966:2/550].

"but he has forgotten" [20:88], is Allah's statement referring to Sámírî having forgotten of the proof required for the occurrence of such bodies. Allah then

\(^{170}\) Into the pit of the fire or in a place which Sámírî had suggested.

\(^{171}\) Pantheism is a doctrine that the whole universe is God or that every part of the universe is a manifestation of God.
mocks at Sámirí with the following statement:

Could they not see that it did not return a word, nor could it harm or benefit them? [20:89].

This is adequate proof that their deity was nonexistent as Allah states in the story of prophet Ibráhím [p.b.u.h] -

"Why do you worship that which can neither see nor hear, nor can it avail you anything?" [19:42].

And Hárún had said to them before [the return of Músá], "’O my people, you are being tried by this and surely your Lord is the Most Gracious, so follow me and obey my command.’ They said: ‘We will not stop devotion to it until Músá returns to us.’ He (i.e. Músá) said: ‘What prevented you when you saw them astray? Did you not follow me, have you defied my command?’ He said: ‘O son of my mother, do not seize me by my beard, nor by my head for I have feared that you would say: ‘You have caused division among the Children of Israel and you have not respected my word’ ’” [Qur’án 20:90-94].

And Hárún had said to them before [the return of Músá], "’O my people, you are being tried by this and surely your Lord is the Most Gracious 172, so follow me and obey my command.’ They said: ‘We will not stop devotion to it until Músá returns 173 to us.’ [20:90-91].

172. This particular name of Allah­-الرحمن has been selected on account of His infinite Mercy on accepting their repentance.
Hárún [p.b.u.h] endeavoured to restrain them from falsehood firstly by reminding them that Allah had subjected them to a test in terms of their faith and in this way He would distinguish those endowed with faith as opposed to those devoid of it; then he requested them to acknowledge Allah, then to recognise his prophethood and finally to take cognisance of rightful laws. This is an excellent method of eliminating doubt [al-Rází n.d:22/106].

He (i.e. Músá) said: 'What prevented you when you saw them astray? Did you not follow me, have you defied my command?' [20:92-93]. There is no exaggeration, meaning what prevented you from following me whilst knowing the anger of Allah and the intense prevention against infidelity. al-Rází [n.d:22/107-8] concludes that disobedience is not characteristic of prophets.

is an inquiry intended as a means of disapproval [al-Rází n.d:22/107].

He said: 'O son of my mother, do not seize me by my beard, nor by my head for I have feared that you would say: 'You have caused division among the Children of Israel and you have not respected my word ' [20:94].

Fearing that the Baní Isrá‘íl had misunderstood him and they would not assist him against the anger of Músá [p.b.u.h] he elaborated as follows:

173. They would not abandon the calf and would continue in its worship until Músá’s return [al-Tabari 1968:16/202].
174. Refer to [7:150] . Note also the elision in this particular rendering, i.e Músá’s having approached his brother by seizing his beard and dragging him towards himself [al-Tabarí 1968: 16/203]. Prophet Músá’s anger against his people was directed towards his brother.
Here Hárún [p.b.u.h] is expressing his fear of causing dissension among the Children of Israel and being disobedient to Músá [p.b.u.h]. According to ibn ‘Abbás: "Hárún was respectful and obedient to Músá" [al-Tabari 1968:16/204].

He (i.e. Músá) said: " 'What is the matter with you, O Sámirí?' He responded: 'I see what they have been unable to see, so I took a handful of the messenger's print and cast it, thus has my mental attitude enticed me.' He said: 'Go! It will be upon you to say throughout your life, "Do not touch me!" and for you there will be an appointment for which there will be no substitute. And look at your deity which you have become so obsessed by, we will burn it and scatter it in the sea. Indeed your deity is Allah of which there is none other, He embraces all things with His knowledge!' " [Qur'án 20:95-98].

'I see what they have been unable to see' [20:96].

The Sámirí is referring to Jibríl's horse [al-Tabari 1968:16/205] or he is saying "I know what your people do not know [al-Jazá’írí 1987:3/73].

بصر has a tropical significance of 'he perceived [something] mentally' or 'he gained insight' or 'he understood' [Asad 1980:480].

There are several interpretations to this particular statement, but the most adequate interpretation is that of Abú Muslim al-Isfahání who renders it as follows: I realised that which they did not, and that is some of your beliefs are not correct [al-Rázi n.d:22/111].

175. It is an imperative as he is requesting a response from him.
It would appear that the Samaritan objected to the idea of a transcendental, imperceivable God and aspired for something more tangible [Asad 1980:480].

'I took a handful of the messenger's print and cast it, thus has my mental attitude enticed me' [20:96].

From under the hoof of Jibríl's horse, Sámirí then threw what was in his hand on the Baní Isrá'íl's ornaments which were molded in the shape of a calf. It made a bellowing sound [al-Tabarí 1968:16/205].

What is intended by رسول رسول is Músá [p.b.u.h] and his practices, sayings and his decrees [Abú Muslim al-Isfahání in al-Rází n.d:23/111].

Sámirí mentions the messenger without referring to Jibríl and the Holy Spirit because at the time of the appointed meeting at Sinai Allah had sent the angel Jibríl riding on a horse to Músá [p.b.u.h]. Músá [p.b.u.h] queried this with Sámirí to which he responded that on the day he witnessed this and took a handful of the print of the sender's horse. Perhaps he was not aware that it was Jibríl [al-Zamakhsharí 1966:2/551].

Asad [1980:481] considers Sámirí's rejection of Moses' teachings to explain the 'subconscious tendency underlying all forms of idolatry and of the attribution of divine qualities to things or beings other than God,' this is a futile hope of bringing the 'Unperceivable closer to one's limited perception by creating a tangible image of the Divine Being.' These endeavours 'destroy the misguided devotee's spiritual potential' and this he believes is the purport of the story of the golden calf as portrayed in the Qur'án.

He said : 'Go! It will be upon you to say throughout your life, "Do not touch me!" and for you there will be an appointment for which there will be no substitute [20:97].
Músá [p.b.u.h] ordered the Baní Isrā'il not to eat with him, nor associate with him or acknowledge him [al-Tabarí 1968:16/206].

"Do not touch me!" is a metaphorical description of the loneliness and the social ostracism in which he would find himself [Asad 1980:481].

His life will be full of fury, for when anyone touches him he will be ignited like an electrical wire [al-Jazá'irí 1987:3/74].

'for you there will be an appointment for which there will be no substitute' [20:97].

You will not be absent from it [al-Tabarí 1968:16/207].

Allah will not fail in His promise to you of the appointed meeting and as for your polytheism and corruption on the earth, He will implement [punishment] in the hereafter after your punishment in the world [al-Zamakhshari 1966:2/551].

And look at your deity which you have become so obsessed by; we will burn it and scatter it in the sea [20:97].

It will be burnt and made into sawdust and blown away into the sea until there is no trace of it [al-Jazá'irí 1987:3/74].

'Indeed your deity is Allah of which there is none other, He embraces all things with His knowledge!' [20:98].

5.7 **SūRA SHU'ARÁ'**

و ان نادى ربك موسى أن ائت القوم الظالمين (١٠) قوم فرعون ألا يتقوون

And when your Lord called upon Músá, "Go to the tyrannical people, the people of Pharaoh, who do not fear Me" [Qur'án 26:10-11].

This sūra commences with the Sunnī-Mu'tazilite discrepancy which is so characteristic of al-Rázís commentary. The point of dispute is the Voice heard by Músá [p.b.u.h]: was it eternal speech or a conglomeration of sounds? Abú

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al-Hasan al-Ash'ári considers it eternal speech which is determined and does not bear semblance to anything else. Al-Máturídí views it as sounds and letters and this was with Músá [p.b.u.h]'s knowledge [al-Rází n.d:24/121]. [This sûra serves as another example to the Prophet of Islám].

For al-Tabarí [1968:19/64], the accusative قوم in the second statement verifies the قوم in the first. For al-Zamakhsharí [1966:3/106], is the explicative clarification to القوم الظالمين, meaning it is the explicative clarifier of القوم الظالمين. Both phrases render one meaning.

He said: "My Lord I fear they will deny me. My breast straitens and I am not fluent [in speech], so send for Hárún. And they have levelled a charge against me, for I fear they will kill me" [Qur'án 26:12-14].

Músá [p.b.u.h] requested that his brother accompany him for the following reasons:
1) Pharaoh's denial which would cause straitening of his breast and an impediment in his speech;
2) Hárún's presence would serve as a barrier against any unfortunate incident with the Pharaoh [al-Rází n.d:24/122].

According to Asad [1980:561] stress is laid on the deep humility of Músá [p.b.u.h].

Al-Zamakhsharí [1966:3/106] says of Músá [p.b.u.h]'s plea to Allah:

This speech is in condensed form as it has already been expounded upon in
another place. It is best delivered in this form, i.e. when he said: "send for Hárún." It comes forth in such a {way} that the significance of appointing to prophethood is included, and this is an example of abridgement....

Prophet Músá [p.b.u.h] was hesitant in executing the command of Allah, knowing that Allah was with him. He had however conformed and accepted, but requested urgently from his Lord that his brother should strengthen him by executing the command, "he asked for assistance by means of consent, not by excuse" [al-Zamakhsharí 1966:3/107].

There was no prior contact between the two brothers and their union was not based simply on approaching the pharaoh, it was more so for the realisation of goals. Some are of the opinion that he was aware of the situation for Allah does not burden His servants with tasks that they are not capable of executing [al-Rází n.d:24/123].

He said: "No! Go you {two} with Our Signs, We are with you listening. Go to the Pharaoh, say we are messengers of the Lord of the Worlds. Send with us the Children of Israel " [Qur’án 26:15-17].

is an assurance against any harm to the two brothers;

shows that the request for Hárúns accompanying him was granted. This is verified by the whose attachment to the verb is a means of boosting his confidence, e.g- "You will be prevented from that which you think, so go you and your brother" [al-Zamakhsharí 1966:3/107].

"I am with you Listening and Seeing" [26:15].

This is a figurative expression signifying Allah's presence and support to the
prophet [al-Rázi n.d:24/124].

"We are messengers of the Lord of the Worlds" [26:16].

- the noun is dual;
- it is a noun of quality;
- it renders itself as meaning (sender) and (message).

They are united on account of being brothers, as though they are one messenger [al-Rázi n.d:24/124].

قال ألم نريك فينا وليدا وتبنت فينا من عمرك سنين (18) وفعلت فعلتك التي فعلت و你说 من الكفرين (19)

He said: "Did we not bring you up among us as a child and you stayed with us many years of your life. And you did your deed which you did, while you were one of the ingrates " [Qur'án 26:18-19].

The feature of abridgement is portrayed in the above verses, i.e. their actual advancement to the pharaoh.

The crime committed was the killing of the Coptic and indicates that it was one blow which was the cause for the killing. Asad's [1980:561] interpolation of the term "heinous" expresses the speaker's utter condemnation of the deed referred to above.

Al-Tabari's [1968:19/66] preferred opinion of أنت من الكفرين is that expressed by Ibn ‘Abbás and Zayd ibn Aslam as "one who denies favours."

قال فعلتها إذا و أنت من الضعالين (20) ففرت منكم لما خفتكم فوهد لي ربي حكما و جعلنی من المرسلين (21) و تلك نعمة تمنها على أن عبدت بنى اسرائيل (22)

178. Commentators are unanimous that he stayed for a period of thirty years.
Músá said: "I did it then when I was astray. So I fled from you when I feared you, but my Lord has granted me wisdom and made me one of the messengers. And this is the favour which you grant me - that you enslaved the Children of Israel." [Qur’án 26:20-22].

الله يعلم ما فعلتم بيوسف و أخبيه إذ أنتم جاهلون

"Do you know what you did with Yúsuf and his brother when you were ignorant?"
[12:89] or refers to those who kill unintentionally.

This act was a means of disciplinary punishment.

The plural pronoun in and are opposed to the singular because the fear was not of the Pharaoh only but of his leaders179 as well [al-Zamakhshári 1966:2/109].

Pharaoh said: "'And what is the lord of the Worlds? He said: 'Lord of the Heavens and the Earth and what is between them, if you need assurance.' Pharaoh said to

Pharaoh said: "'And what is the lord of the Worlds? He said: 'Lord of the Heavens and the Earth and what is between them, if you need assurance.' Pharaoh said to

179. This is expressed in súra [28:20]:

بعشة مبين (٣٠) قال فأت به إن كنت من الصادقين (٣١)
those around: 'Do you not hear [what he says]?' Músá said: 'Your Lord and the Lord of your ancient fathers.' Pharaoh said: 'Indeed, your messenger who has been sent to you is a madman! Músá said: 'Lord of the east and the west, and what is between them, if you do understand.' He said: 'If you take a deity other than me, I will place you amongst the prisoners.' He said: 'Even if I bring to you something evident?' He said: 'Bring it, if you are sincere.' " [Qur'an 26:23-31].

"What is the Lord of the Worlds?" [26:23].

This is not an isolated question but one which penetrates a wider spectrum that cannot be observed and known by virtue of other bodies or contingents. The question delves into a search as to the essence of a thing. A thing is defined by the Ash'arites as that which is existent. This existence, whether necessary or contingent is the thing or the essence of the thing and not a quality as defined by the Mu'tazilites. The thing itself is the object of knowledge and is thus an existent thing or a body. Everything that exists in the world has a contingent existence and is either a substance or a quality, therefore Allah cannot be a thing [al-Zamakhshari 1966:2/109 & al-Razi n.d:24/128].

رب السموت و الأرض-[the heavens and the earth], embraces the entire creation, and the reason for mentioning their fathers with the subsequent referral to the east and the west is as follows:

At first he generalises, then he specifies from the general in order to shed light upon themselves and their fathers because the closest perspective of a rational

180. "This is a rhetorical question meant to convey astonishment, indignation or derision" [Asad 1980:562].
being is himself and his offspring. And what he witnesses and observes constitute proofs for the Creator and one who transfers things from situation to situation and condition to condition from the time of his birth to the time of his death. Then [Músá] specifies the east and the west because the sun rises in one hemisphere and sets in the other according to a proper calculation...

[al-Zamakhsharí 1966:2/110].

The Pharaoh was alarmed at Músá [p.b.u.h]’s response:

"I queried from him about the essential nature and the special essence, but he responded to me with effectiveness and impact" [al-Rází n.d:24/129].

Prophet Músá [p.b.u.h] says, "if you believe," and then, "if you understand" because at first he was lenient but their unyielding resistance and the subsequent statement prompted him to say, "if you do understand."

Al-Rází [n.d:24/129] feels that the prophet is insinuating that this is not a response to the question, but to their request requiring specification of His essence.

can serve as an abridgement for لأسجنتك من المسجونين, but it cannot produce a significant result because as al-Zamakhsharí [1966:24/130] interprets it: "I will make you one of those who will know his condition in my captivity" [al-Zamakhsharí 1966:2/110]. It was customary for the pharaoh to capture whom he pleased by imprisonment and hurling him into an abyss.

Al-Rází [n.d:24/130-1] asserts that abridgement is not possible, because by saying لأسجنتك no real benefit is derived except declaring the outcome which is imprisonment.

فألفى عصاه فذا هو ظهاب من من مبين (27) ونزع يده فذا هي بيضاً للنظرين (28). قال للحلا حوله: إن هذا لسحر عليم (24) يريد أن يخرجكم من أرضكم بسحره فما دا
So he threw his rod and it was a manifest snake. And he drew forth his hand, and lo! it appeared [shining] to the beholders. [Pharaoh] said to the great ones around him: "Verily, this is a sorcerer of great knowledge who wants to drive you out of your land by his sorcery. What then do you advise?" They answered: 'Let him and his brother wait a while, and send into all cities heralds' "[Qur'án 26:32-37].

The transformation of the rod has been described as

فِإِذَا هِيَ حَيَةٌ، "ثَعِينُ مَبِينٍ "كَأَنَّهَا جَانٍ "سَعَى.

The Pharaoh intended to obscure the proof by mentioning:

إنّ هذَا لَسَحْرٌ مَبِينٌ during a period when sorcery was a common practice. Pharaoh's aim was to show that Músá [p.b.u.h] had attained the level of proficiency to the farthest limit.

يريد أَن يَخْرِجَكُمْ مِن أَرْضَكُمْ بِسَحْرِهَ here the Pharaoh is once again inciting the people with emotive terms such as يَخْرِجَكُمْ (estrangement) and مِن أَرْضَكُمْ (departure from their homeland) - [Qur'án 26:32-37].

By complying and yielding to what they had to say as evident in فِإِذَا تَأَمُّرُونَ he was trying to captivate their hearts [al-Ráí n.d:24/132].

مِنِ الْمُؤَامَرَةِ وَهُوَ الْمَشْأُوذِ أَوْ مِنَ الْأَمْرِ الَّذِي هُوَ ضِدُّ النَّهِيِ جِعْلُ العَبِيدِ أَمْرِنَ وَرَبِّهِمْ مَأَمُورًا لَّاَ مَعْلُوْلَ عَلِيَّهِ مِن فَرْطِ الْدَّهْشَةِ وَالْحِيَرةِ.

This word is from which is consultation, or it is an order which is contrary to a prohibition. He made the slaves commanders and their lord the commanded being on account of excessive astonishment and confusion he possessed [al-Zamakhshári 1966:2/111].

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"If you kill him you will instill suspicion among the people, but by delaying him and his brother till the appointed time he will not be able to provide any proof" [al-Rází n.d.:24/132].

There is a difference between بكل سحار and إن هذا لساحر علمم.

فجاءوا بكلمة الإحاطة وصفة المبالغة ليطامنوا من نفسه ويسكنوا بعض قلبه.

"They used a comprehensive word denoting excessive quality in order to pacify him and to remit some of his fear" [al-Zamakhshari 1966:2/112].

So the sorcerers were gathered at an appointed time on a fixed day. And it was said to the people: " 'Are you [too] going to gather? That we may follow the sorcerers if they are the victors.' " So when the sorcerers arrived, they said to the Pharaoh: "Will there really be a reward for us if we are the victors?"

He said: 'Yes, and you will be of those who will be close me' " [Qur'an 26:38-42].

The pharaoh goaded them and motivated them to which they responded:  لعلنا نتبع.

أي في دينهم إن غليبوا موسى ولا نتبع موسى في دينه وليست غرضهم باتباع السحرة وانما الغرض الكلى أن لا يتبعوا موسى ففسقوه الكلام مساق الكتابة لأنهم إذا اتبعوه لم يكونوا متبعين لموسى عليه السلام.

"Perhaps we will follow", meaning in their belief if they defeated Músá [p.b.u.h], "nor would we follow Músá in his faith" for it was not their intention for following the sorcerers {either}. Their total aim was not to follow Músá, so they continued the speech with an indirect declaration because if they followed them they would not be following Músá [p.b.u.h]" [al-Zamakhshari 1966:2/112].

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Al-Jazá’irí [1987:3/303] says: "We will adhere to our faith and will not follow Músá and his brother in their new religion."

Músá said to them: " 'Cast what you are going to cast!' So, they cast their ropes and their rods, and said: 'By the power of Pharaoh, it is we who will certainly be victorious.' Then Músá cast his staff, and consequently it swallowed up quickly what they had been lying. And the sorcerers fell down prostrate. They said: 'We believe in the Lord of the Worlds, the Lord of Músá and Hárún.' He [i.e. pharaoh] said: 'You believe in him before I give you permission, truly he is your senior who has taught you sorcery, soon you will know. I will sever your hands and your legs from opposite sides and I will crucify you all.' They said: 'No harm! We will return to our Lord. We seek that our Lord forgive our faults, as we are the first of believers' " [Qur’án 26:43-51].

"Cast what you are going to cast" [26:43].

The above-mentioned statement and its legitimacy are interpreted by [al-Rází n.d:24/134] as a means of eliminating doubt as well as a form of intimidation to establish the truth.

181. This is the belief of ignorance, as the Prophet of Islám has said the following: "Do not swear by your fathers, nor your mothers or by idols and do not swear by any except Allah" [al-Zamakhsharí 1966:2/112].
182. Refer to [7:117].
183. Refer to [7:124].
"By the power of Pharaoh, it is we who will certainly be victorious" [26:44].

The reason for this premature sense of triumph is in [7:116] "and when they cast they bewitched the people's eyes and frightened them and produced a great spell" as well as in [20:66-7] where "their ropes and rods by their magic appeared to him as though they moved fast, and in his heart Mūsā became apprehensive" [Asad 1980:563].

And the sorcerers fell down prostrate [26:47].

They were astonished and overwhelmed at the truth [al-Jazá'iri 1987:3/304]. They declared their faith in "the Lord of Mūsā and Hārūn" [26:48] which is an explicative apposition to رب العالمين because Pharaoh proclaimed divinity and they intended to isolate him.

You believe in him before I give you permission [26:49] is simply an exposed trick on the pharaoh's part to reveal their submissiveness to him [al-Jazá'iri 1987:3/304].

'No harm! We will return to our Lord. We seek that our Lord forgive our faults, as we are the first of believers' [26:50-1].

They had already acquired the love of Allah and desired nothing, except Allah's pleasure and absorption into the brightness of His knowledge and that is the highest rank of sincerity [al-Rází n.d:24/136].

"The first of believers" is a reference to either those present at the gathering among the sorcerers in particular as well as the pharaoh's subjects, or those living during that era [al-Rází n.d:24/136].

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184. Included within their ranks were infidels, sorcerers and other categories of disbelievers.
CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSION

A work of such a nature is bound to be marred by shortcomings, but tireless research has developed into what I hope to be viewed as a work of scholarly stature. The conclusions I have drawn from this exhaustive study of the views of selected commentators on repeated verses of the Qur'an are as ff:

- the views of commentators reflect certain similarities as well as differences;
- their lives and influences have a definite bearing on their views;
- commentators tend to be somewhat detailed in their explanations which makes comprehension difficult;
- various religious schools of thought that influenced the commentators is flagrantly evident in their renditions; and
- the schools of thought and their own opinions reflect a certain incomparability which has made their works unique.

In this research I have attempted to and I hope that I have succeeded in this endeavour to select the most authentic and consistent body of literature as a helping hand in the accomplishment of this task.

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