

# Al-A'rāf.

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*Al-A'rāf* used in Sura *al-A'rāf* is plural of 'arf or 'urf -- meaning height, top, tower and peak.

When it is derived from 'Urf it means to be recognized, to be known and to be introduced.

It also means tradition, convention and recognized virtue.

'Arf means prominent, distinguished and popular -- also used as 'arīf -- meaning representative figure of a group or a tribe.

Sura *al-A'rāf* in the verses, where it relates the life in paradise and life in the hell, reveals that there is a wall or veil between the hell and the heaven for the demarcation of their circumferences. The top of this wall is called *a'rāf*, which means heights.

These heights are inhabited by some people having the facility to observe the companions in paradise and those who are in the hell.

"The companions of the Garden will call out to the companions of the Fire, "We have indeed found the promises of our Lord to us true. Have you also found your Lord's promises true? "The shall say "yes"! But a crier shall proclaim between them "The curse of Allah is on the wrong doers! Those who would hinder (men) from the path of Allah, and would seek in it something crooked; they were those who denied Hereafter.

Between them shall be a veil, and on the heights will be men who would know every one by his marks. They will call out to the companions of the Garden, "Peace on you"

They will not have entered, but they will have an assurance (thereof).

When their eyes shall be turned towards the companions of the Fire, they will say "Our Lord! send us not to the company of the wrong doers."

The men on Heights will call to certain men whom they will know from their marks saying, "Of what profit to you, were your hoards and your arrogant ways? Behold! are these not the men whom you swore that Allah with his Mercy would never bless?"

Enter ye the Garden; no fear shall be on you, nor shall ye grieve."<sup>1</sup>

The veil mentioned in these verses is also described in Sura *Al-Hadeed* - (13) as *Sūr* meaning wall.

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1. *al-Qur'ān, al-A'rāf* / 44-49. (Translation by 'Abd Allah Yusuf Ali, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf Aibak Road, Lahore-1990)

34. Manchip White, *Ancient Egypt*, London, 1970, p.21.
35. Ayat No. 92 of the tenth Surah (Al-Yunus) is noteworthy. It lays down the verdict of Allah : "But this day We save thee in the body that thou mayest be a portent (example) for those after thee." This Quranic statement was made fourteen centuries ago about the preservation by mummification of the corpse of Rameses II, the Pharaoh of the Exodus (who was drowned about thirteen centuries before Christ). His mummy was recovered in 1881 A.D., and exhibited in Cairo Museum as mentioned at p. 482 of the *Egyptian Antiquities* by Baikie (London, 1932). This furnishes a still further sure proof of the Quran being a revealed book as contrasted with the existing Bible. Verses 6,8,10,23 of Chapter 14 of its Book of Exodus read with verses 11 and 15 respectively of Psalms 106 and 136 clearly state that pharaoh and his hosts perished by drowning. Allah in His Inscrutable Wisdom revealed the ultimate fate of the pharaoh's body not to his contemporary, Moses, the leader of Exodus, but reserved this Revelation to Muhammad (peace be upon him), as his greatest living miracle.
36. *Universal Jewish Encyclopaedia*, New York, 1948, Vol. IV. p.170.
37. *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, London, 1903, Vol. V, pp. 235, 236.
38. *Interpreters One Volume Commentary on the Bible*, London, 1972, pp.239.
39. *Interpreters' One Volume Commentary on the Bible*, London, 1972, pp. 233.
40. *The New Bible Dictionary*, Leicester, England, 1977, p.393.
41. *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, London, 1901, Vol. II, Columns 1400-1407.
42. *Universal Jewish Encyclopaedia*, New York, 1948, Vol.I, p.137.
43. Webster's Biographical Dictionary, Springfield, U.S.A, 1958, p.17.
44. De Bunsen, *Islam or True Christianity*, London, 1889, p131.
45. Thomas Carlyle, *Hero-worship*, London, 1889, p.48
46. Thomas Carlyle, *Hero-worship*, London, 1889, pp.40,41.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Verses 4 - 6 of Surah Al-Qasas (XXVIII) of the Qur'an
2. Verse 8 of Surah Al-Qasas (XXVIII) of the Qur'an
3. Verse 38 of Surah Al-Qasas (XXVIII) of the Qur'an
4. Verse 39 of Al-Ankabut (XXIX) Qur'an
5. Verses 23 - 25 of Al-Mu'min (XL) Qur'an
6. Verses 36 - 37 of Al-Mu'min (XL) Qur'an
7. Rev. Ludovico Marraccio, Arabic Text with Latin Translation of the Qur'an together with Refutations, Padua (Italy), 1698, p. 526. Rev. Marraccio was Confessor of Pope Innocent XI.
8. George Sale, Translation of the Qur'an London, 1825, p. 239 of Vol. II, and Rev. Wherry's Commentary. p. 154 of Vol. III, London, 1896.
9. Prof. Charles Cutler Torrey, *The Jewish Foundation of Islam*, New York, 1933, pp. 117 & 119.
10. Prof. H. Lammens, *Islam : Beliefs and Institutions*, translated into English from French by Sir S. Denison Ross, London, 1929, pp. 38 & 39.
11. Raphale Patai : *The Arab Mind*, New York, 1973, p. 71.
12. Maxime Rodinson : *Muhammad* : pp. 122-123 Pelikan Book, 1973.
- 12a. P.K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, London, 1964.
- 12b. Dr. Walter Kaufmann, *Religion In Four Dimensions*, New York, 1976, p. 186.
13. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 13, 1929, p. 483 and Vol. 13, 1960. p. 279.
14. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. II, 1927, pp. 244, 245.
15. *Shorter Encyclopadia of Islam*, by Gibb and Kramers, Leiden, 1961, p. 244.
16. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. III, 1971, p. 110
17. Prof. Sir Flinders Petrie, *Religious Life in Ancient Egypt*, London, 1924, p. 21
18. Prof. W.H. (Later Sir) Flinders Petire, *The Religion of Ancient Egypt*, London, 1908, p. 30.
19. *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Edinburgh, pp. 294, 295, Vol. X.
20. Sir Wallis Budge, *Egyptian Religion*, New York, 1959, pp. 105, 106.
21. Prof. Jaroslav Cerny, *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, London, 1952, pp.100 - 101.
22. The variants of the name Amen as Aman, Amon, Amun, Ammon have appeared in quotations given by authorities mentioned at 17 & 18 above. The initial vowel i.e. "A" in these names is interchangeable into 'Ha' so as to give the variants Hamen, Hamon, Hamun, Hammon, etc., as per illustrations given on pp.100, 101 of Wall's 'Proofs of the Interpolation of the Vowel Letters in the Text of the Hebrew Bible' published in 1857 in London indicating how Habel first became 'Habel' and ultimately 'Abel'. 'Harun' is similarly a variant of 'Aaron'. Page 223 of the Westminster Dictionary of the Bible, 1944, gives also the bariants Humman and Humban. p.44 of Smith's Classical Dictionary, London, 1858 may also be referred to.
23. Prof. James Breasted, *A History of Egypt*, New York, 1950, p.244.
24. Prof. James Breasted, *A History of Egypt*, New York, London & New York, 1950, pp.96 and 97.
26. Prof. Sir Flinders Petrie, *Religious Life In Ancient Egypt*, London, 1924, pp. 54, 55.
27. Prof. James Breasted, *Development of Religion & Thought in Ancient Egypt*, London, 1912, p.153.
28. Prof. Sir Flinders Petrie, *Religious Life in Ancient Egypt*, London, 1924, pp. 84, 208, 209.
29. Prof. George Rawlinson, *Moses : His Life & Times*, New York, 1887, p.90.
30. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1974, Vol. III, p.163.
31. John A. Wilson, *The Burden of Egypt*, Chicago, 1951, p.37
32. A.Lucas, *Egyptian Materials and Industries*, London, 1948, pp.63, 64.
33. Prof. George Rawlinson, *Moses : His Life & Times*, New York, 1887, p.88

'Oppression' of the Israelites in Egypt and also during their 'Exodus' from Egypt under the leadership of Moses. What is most remarkable is the fact that whereas the Old Testament makes mention of only the perishing of the Pharaoh by drawing, it is to the unique credit of the Qu'ran which revealed fourteen centuries ago that the Almighty Allah had that fateful day ordained the recovery of his corpse, its mummification and exhibition in Cairo Museum about thirty-one centuries after the memorable event. Of course, no human author of the Bible could have foretold so numerous centuries in advance as the revealed Qur'an did, about this significant event which is in fact most striking. Evidently, to say nothing of the rabbis or monks of old whose knowledge was confined to their scriptures, even the present day learned editors of the relevant articles on the subject appearing in Encyclopaedia Britannica as well as Encyclopaedia of Islam, and even eminent historians like Hitti have blundered in this respect.

It is remarkable that what the indefatigable labours of Western archaeologists of Egyptian antiquities and irrefutable researches of historians of ancient Egypt discovered in modern times, was already revealed in the Qu'ran fourteen centuries ago. That Christian and Jewish scholars or Scriptures had nothing of note to lend to or to teach Muhammad or Islam in this behalf, is absolutely clear as stated by Dr. Bunsen and Carlyle. We reproduce hereunder their views on the subject which form an interesting and enlightening reading :

- (a) "We cannot accept the vague and contradictory traditions about Mohammad having been instructed by a Christian monk alternatively called Bahira, Sergius, Georgius, and Nestor, or by a slave Jabr."<sup>44</sup>
- (b) "I know not what to make of that Sergious, the Nestorian monk whom Abu Thaleb and he (Mahomet) are said to have lodged with; or how much any monk could have taught one still so young."<sup>45</sup>
- (c) "The lies which well-meaning zeal has heaped round this man (Mahomet) are disgraceful to ourselves only. When Pococke inquired of Grotious, where the proof was of that story of the Pigeon, trained to pick peas from Mahomet's ear and pass for an angel dictating to him, Grotious answered that there was no proof. It is really time to dismiss all that."<sup>46</sup>

Thus is fully established historical proof of the genuineness of the Revelation of the by the All-Merciful Allah to His Prophet Muhammad. It would no doubt be appreciated that the Qur'an has been revealed essentially not as a book of history or a story book but as a religious Guide to mankind, and that whenever it makes mention of an historical event or person, the objective is to bring home to mankind religious teachings and articles of the Universal Faith, Al-Islam.

Artaxerxes III, Cambyses, or even Darius I. Hoshiander has made elaborate argument in favour of Artaxerxes II (404 - 309 B.C.E.) suggesting that the other name was used because the Jews did not want to offend the Greeks whom Artaxerxes had assisted.<sup>42</sup> This is a concrete case of deliberate anachronism and ahistoricity.

- (b) Webster's Biographical Dictionary contains the following note on Ahashuerus : "Name, as used in the Bible, of two unidentified kings of Persia : (i) the great king whose capital was at Shushan, modern Susa, sometimes identified with Xerxes the Great, but chronological and other data conflict ; (ii) the father of Darius the Mede."<sup>43</sup>

There is thus no denying the facts that :

- (i) the integrity of the text of the Book of Esther was violated by subsequent additions,
- (ii) Our worthy critics unjustifiably adopted the fictitious Haman of this Book of Esther as their model of historicity to adjudge historicity of the Haman of the Quran. And no wonder their judgement was grossly erroneous not only in the context of historicity but also of chronology.

### CONCLUSIONS

In the light of recent historical researches and archaeological discoveries made by independent and impartial world-famous authorities quoted above, we hope we have convincingly established historicity of the Haman of the Qur'an who enjoyed an eminent position in the court of the Pharaoh who was confronted by Moses (peace be upon him). In this connection, there is no question of any anachronism or ahistoricity. Statement made in the Qur'an as far as fourteen centuries ago are thus quite unassailable. Of course, Muhammad, the Unlettered Prophet ('An-Nabi-ul-Ummi, peace be upon him) was not the author of the Qur'an, which was, of course, revealed to him by the Omniscient and Omnipotent Allah.

In this connection verse No:99 of Surah Ta Ha (xx) states : Thus do We related to thee (Muhammad) some stories of what happened before; We have sent thee a Message from our Presence".

It will not be out of place to add that some orientalisists have been making groundless allegation about Jewish and Christian foundations of Islam or about the 'pretended inspiration' of the Prophet of Islam. This concrete instance of the Haman of the Qur'an as discussed above proves to the hilt the utter untenability of all such allegations. One is struck with wonder to find that the current Jewish and Christian Scriptures make not even a passing mention of the Haman in question, although he figures so prominently in the