Who Was Zulqarnain?

The Historic Personage Mentioned In The Holy Qur'an



Yusuf Nadabo

WHO WAS ZULQARNAIN?

In Memory of my Father

Sarkin Tudun Nupawa Abdullahi Yusuf

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The Historic Personage mentioned in the Holy Qur 'an

Yusuf Nadabo Abdullahi
Sarkin Tudun Nupawa,
Kaduna.

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PROLOGUE*

Who was Zulqarnain?
(xviii. 83-98)

As stated in my n.2428 to xviii 83, I do not consider that historical or geographical considerations have much bearing on a story treated as a parable, as Zulqarnain's story is... But a great deal of literature has been piled up among our writers on the subject, and it seems desirable to set down a few notes as to the different views that have been expressed.

What is the meaning of the name or title Zulqarnain – "Lord of the two Qarns"? "Qarn" may mean: (1) a horn in the literal sense, as in the case of a ram or bull; (2) a horn in a metaphorical sense, as in English, the horns of a crescent, or by a further metaphor (not used in English), the horns of a Kingdom or territory, two portions at opposite ends; (3) by another metaphor, a summit, a lock of hair, typifying strength, a crest such as typifying strength, a crest such as Eastern kings wear on their diadems; (4) referring to time, an Epoch, an Age, a Generation. Meaning (1) is inapplicable to a man or a great king: but see the next paragraph about Alexander the Great. The other three meanings may be applicable, as implying: (2) Lord of East and West, Lord of wide territory or of two kingdoms; (3) Lord of two crests on his diadem, typifying two kingdoms; (3) Lord of more than one "Epoch: one whose power and influence extend far beyond his life lime.

If we accept the popular identification of Zulqarnain with Alexander, all the three latter designations would be applicable to him, as he was Lord of the West and the East... He revolutionised the history of Europe, Asia, and Africa (Egypt), and his influence lasted for many generations after his death at the young age of 33. He lived from BC 356 to 323, but his name was one to conjure with for many centuries after him.

Now the generality of the world of Islam have accepted Alexander the Great as the one meant by the epithet Zulqarnain. But some of our *Ulama* have raised doubts about it and made other suggestions. One is that it was not the Macedonian Alexander the Great, but an earlier pre-historic king contemporary with Abraham; because, they say, Zulqarnain was a man of faith (xvii. 88, 98), while Alexander the Great was a pagan and believed in Grecian gods...

Another suggestion made is that Zulqarnain was an ancient king of Persia. A king of Persia is referred to as a Ram with two horns in the Book of Daniel (viii. 3) in the Old Testament. But in the same Book, the Ram with the two horns was smitten, cast down to the ground, and stamped upon by a he-goat with one horn (vii. 7-8). There is nothing in our literature to suggest that Zulqarnain came to any such ignominious end... If it is argued that it was some old pre-historic Persian king who built the Iron Gates (xviii. 96) to keep out Gog and Magog tribes (xviii. 94), this is no identification at all. There is no unanimity about the identity of the Iron Wall or the Gog and Magog tribes. Both these subjects will be referred to presently.

Another suggestion made is that it was some old pre-historic Himyarite king from Yemen, about whom nothing else is known. This again is no identification at all.

The question of Yajuj and Majuj (Gog and Magog) and the Iron Barrier built to keep them out is of some interest. If it is practically agreed that they were the wild tribes of Central Asia which have made inroads on settled kingdoms and Empires at various stages of the world's history. The Chinese Empire suffered from their incursions and built the Great Wall of China to keep out the Manchus and Mongols. The Persian Empire suffered from them at various times and at various points. Their incursions into Europe in large hordes caused migrations and displacements of population on an enormous scale, and eventually broke up the Roman Empire. These tribes were known vaguely to the Greeks and Romans as "Scythians", but that term does not help us very much, either

ethnically or geographically.

Western Culture had been with us all along; in the past, in the present and in the future. It, therefore, demanded a closer scrutiny now than ever before, because it appeared now more glaring that the political and intellectual emancipation of the Yajuj and Majuj would spell doom to this world. This culture must be put in the straightjacket of religion in order to save the world from the impending apocalypse. The latest scientific breakthrough at the time of writing this book, necessitated a concerted effort by the Muslim world to wake up from its slumber so that science is rightly guided.

The Barrier in the text must have been more in the nature of iron gates than an iron wall. Two Iron Gates, geographically far apart, have been suggested in the alternative. Sometimes they have been mixed up by writers not strong in geography. Both of them have local associations with the name of Alexander the Great. Both are near a town Derbend, and have borne the name of *Bab-ul-hadid* (Arabic for "Iron Gate"). Let us examine the case of each in turn.

The best known in modern times is at the town and seaport of Derben in the middle of the Western coast of the Caspain Sea. It is now in Soviet territory, in the district of Daghistan. Before the southern expansion of Russia in 1813 it belonged to Persia. A spur of Mount Caucasus here comes up north, close to the sea. The wall in question is 50 miles long, with an average height of 29 feet...

Personally, I have not the least doubt that Zulqarnain is meant to be Alexander the Great, the historic Alexander, and not the legendary Alexander... That story mentions three historical episodes incidentally, but draws our attention to matters of the weightiest spiritual significance, and that is the chief thing to note in the story.

* The views of Allama Abdullahi Yusuf on who Zulqarnain was (1934) from his translation and commentary, of the Holy Qur'an (1983), pp. 761-765.

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PREFACE

In 1989, I first saw and was captivated by Robert Rossen's film titled *Alexander the Great*. It was a film based on the historical account of Alexander of Macedonia, which was well produced, well directed and acted. A succinct historic account, which tallied with the most authentic history books about this great Conqueror. Since then I have always been interested in the literature of, and was fascinated by, Alexander, his cruelty and adventures, his arrogance, his valour and heroism in his bloody military campaigns and his burning ambition for eternal glory. The film had a profound impact on me as I often recollected some of the Alexander's wonderful imageries from that film. For instance, Alexander was born when his father Philip the King of Macedonia was out of Pella. When he returned to see his wife, Queen Olympias and his new born baby named Alexander he was greeted by an Egyptian soothsayer, who told him among other things that there were signs of greatness in his birth: "On the night of his birth, two eagles had perched on the roof of queen's chamber," said the soothsayer, "indicating that he was destined to rule two worlds." The Queen then told her husband point-blank that her son was a god. At the outset, Olympias did not hesitate to tell Philip about the divinity of her son. This was not a fiction but a historic reality.

With this background which I had obtained both in the film and numerous textbooks, you could then visualised my aversion for Alexander's choice as the Qur'anic Zulqarnain was intensified. I had initially wanted to write a concise book; but taking the stock of the enormity of Askandar's anomalous identification with the Qur'anic Zulqainain among the Muslims and its deleterious effects, I soon realised that without amassing enough evidence, it might be difficult to debunk the traditional choice and to dispel it completely from the Muslim world. Furthermore, the burden of proof for the falsity of this identification must rest on those who seek to disprove it. So I

have to prove my contention with a detailed and elaborate explanation of this obscure subject. This ordinate approach, therefore, became imperative and appropriate because as Horace put it: *brevis ess laboro, obscurus fio.*

Hence as the reader goes through the pages of this book, he will realise that a mere scratching the subject matter superficially will further mystify the problem even more. In order to keep the reader's awareness and judgements in perspective, many references from both modern and ancient writers are clipped throughout the pages especially on the much disputed issues of who were the Gog and Magog in contemporary history. Because as a renowned Chinese Scholar had succinctly put it: "the essence of history does not reside in recorded facts, but in the thoughts, emotions, ideas and aspirations of the human beings who made it. Facts are only the outer shell." This, therefore, is a good motive to expound on the identity of *Yajuj and Majuj* with European nations, juxtaposing their culture in the ancient world with the modern world and drawing up parallel motifs. This is with the view to letting the reader discern their similarity, a prelude to his acceptance of the identification.

Although it was not difficult to disqualify Alexander's choice as the Qur'anic Zulqarnain, what was really daunting at that time was who really then was the Qur'anic Zulqarnain? A search for a better candidate became very imperative. A detailed and exhaustive research ought, therefore, to be carried out to bring the right historic figure to fill in the vacuum. I have just expounded on the candidate earlier on introduced by Brother Ali Akbar in the person of Darius the greatest king of Persian World Empire. He equally shed more light on the subject of *Yajuj and Majuj*. Therefore, the question posed on the Apostle of God as to *Who was Zulqarnain*, was accurately answered by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) *Sallahu alaihi wassalam*, which means May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, through Divine intervention. And the

searchlight of his historic personage was focussed more on Darius. It then became very expedient to exhaustively elaborate on the historical account of Darius the Great.

Same with the identification of who really were the *Yajuj and Majuj*. In the ancient world, there were no wild tribes like this horde of cannibals whose mischief and notoriety were well known and terrified by all from Southern Russia to the Balkan Peninsula and across the Asian Continent as the Scythians. The Scythians were indeed the worst mischief-makers in the ancient world, fitting accurately the Qur'anic description of Gog and Magog. This view had equally gained the support of Syed Ala Maududi of blessed memory.

Sheikh Muhammad Mitwalli El-Sharawi's explications of some of the verses relating to the expeditions of Zulqarnain were very valuable, in fact, the erudite scholar's book the *Miracles of Qur'an* was a sea of knowledge from which I drank to the fullest of my satisfaction. As a result, this gave my book a kind of *Multum in Parvo*. In all the Qur'anic verses quoted, I have made use of Ustadh Abdullahi Ali's (of blessed memory) translations and commentaries of the Holy Quran freely in all, except where otherwise stated. Therefore, using the relevant historical materials mostly from classical historians and with the guidance of the Holy Qur'an and Hadiths of the Prophet, I was able to understand precisely the true Zoroastrianism as revealed to Prophet Zoroaster *alaihissalam* (a.s.) meaning may peace be with him, as an Islamic religion, which I described as the Early Revelation, the early revealed religion in the form of Islam. In fact, Islam is the first and the Last religion. I sincerely believe that the eschatological principles of this first and primary form of Islam was only a Portion of the Holy Qur'an, which was revealed to the ancient Prophet, to his Parsee brethren. It was a primary religion because it was a National Religion. Although the professors of this religion, notably Darius the Great had ruled the

entire world he was not ordained, by God, to proselyte his religion to other nationals because this was the principal duty of the office of the Final Islam or the Final Revelation under the Prophet of Islam. This important point became discernible as the trend of monotheism was scrutinised in history.

In fact, almost all the attributes of *Ahura Mazda,* the name of God in Zoroastrianism were essentially the same with the attributes of Allah *subhanahu wata ala* (s.w.t.) in the Final form of Islam. Thus, Zoroastrianism was essentially Islamic until when it was relegated to Mithraism and other forms of fire worship or *Atar* (the god of fire). I was able to appreciate the fact that all revealed religions, from the dawn of history were Islamic in form and content, they only varied according to the stage of the civilisation of the peoples. In like manner, all the human races were one family of *Homo sapiens,* which originated from Adam (a.s). They could only be black, brown and white depending upon their environment but they were essentially a single species. Islam, therefore, was the natural religion of Homo Sapiens.

Furthermore, if my insistence that Darius the Great and all other prophets of the various revealed religions were Muslims, seems forced, then Goethe, the celebrated German Poet and Philosopher put it in a much better way to be understood when he said: *Wenn Islam Ergebung in Gottes Willen heisset, in Islam leben und Steiben Wir alle.* Meaning: if Islam means submission to God's will, then we all live and die in Islam. The Holy Qur'an is for the knowledgeable and the well educated. Knowledge is of utmost importance to the modern man. Thus, it is easy to propound this theory that your attraction to the Holy Qur'an is directly proportional to the amount of diversified knowledge you could muster. This explains the reason why Scientists are magnetically attracted to this Living and Eternal Miracle. You don't have to be a genius to prognosticate that the number of the educated people increases

directly with time. Therefore, this simple logic verified the sacred statement of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) when he said:

> There has never been a Prophet who was not bestowed with sign among the signs, which were bestowed (on the earlier Prophets). Human beings became believers through them, and truly what I have been bestowed was a revelation (the Qur'an) which Allah revealed to me. I hope that I will have the most followers on the Day of Resurrection. (Bukhari and Muslim).

To make this sacred statement of the Apostle come to fruition, Allah (swt) said in His final Revelation:

> Soon will We show them our signs in the (furthest) Regions (of the earth), and in their own souls, until It becomes manifest to them That this is the Truth. Is it not enough that Thy Lord doth witness All things (Q.41:53).

Indeed, God's Truth always spread, in its own good time, across to the uttermost ends of the earth, as it did in the case of Islam, or as it is doing at present in our modern world. Undoubtedly, therefore, as the Qur'an swims into the countless Millennia ahead it would leave in its wake countless numbers of followers. With the simplest arithmetic projection, therefore, it could be estimated that Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) would have the largest number of followers at the end of time.

This issue of *Who was Zulqarnain?* as was expounded in the Holy Qur'an, with such diversity of knowledge that was known only recently to modern science, was indeed a potent Sign for man of understanding. Thus, the veracity and authenticity of the Divine Authorship of this Holy Scripture were proven beyond doubt not only to the seventh century critics but to all critics till the end of time. The Holy Qur'an answers each stage of human development its forms of critique and criticism. This makes Islam a living Faith today and of all days, and the Holy Qur'an an Everlasting Miracle.

Hence the pith behind Zulqarnain story; in its conception,

comprehensiveness and presentation was to authenticate the Apostleship of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w). In this compendious account, therefore, the reader was in addition well furnished with the European culture; its nuances, sensibilities, its pervading world-view and the plenitude of its power. Furthermore, to give a succinct account of this sweeping story in a book, a vast amount of material must be consulted. And in writing a historic account; covering at least three thousand years, of religious, political, intellectual and technological development of a race, aptly described, as the Great White Race the account would no doubt be voluminous.

So within the last ten years of my research on the historical Alexander and Darius I, over the issue of who was Zulqarnain, I was able to debunk Alexander's choice with facts both from Classical Historians and from the Scriptural references. I corroborated them with the records of the monumental achievements of Darius on the *Behistun Inscription,* carved records on his tomb – the *Naqsh-i-Rustum Inscription;* inscriptions at Persepolis and elsewhere. With these records carved on stones, I was not only able to understand the achievements of Darius the Great better, but these were enough evidence to show the Miracles of the Holy Qur'an, because of its accurate exposition of the subject. Otherwise, how was the Prophet able to know about Darius the Great who had lived one thousand one hundred years before him and the two were separated by hundreds of miles? Because some of the Qur'anic statements were in agreement with the records carved on these stones. Most of these records were buried in the earth or were inscribed on inaccessible cliffs of rock. Besides, they were written in trilingual cuneiform writings, which were meaningless to several generations after. Therefore, the Prophet could only have got this important story from Divine Inspiration but no other ways.

These monumental records of Darius only came to the modern world in 1947; when Sir Rawlingson discovered the inscriptions on the huge rock cliff at Behistun, in trilingual cuneiform writings the

Persian, the Elamite and the Babylonian. The great British scholar was able to decipher the Babylonian cuneiform inscriptions. Before then nobody in the world would read any meaning from them. So for the Prophet of Islam to give an account of a story of great historic personage, which tallied with these records, was an incontrovertible demonstration of Divine Revelation. If the Qur'anic story of Zulqarnain failed to prove this important point to the reader, as he goes through the pages of *Who was Zulqarnain?* It means he is impervious to reason because *Res ipsa loquitor* or the facts speak for itself.

Furthermore, the bedrock of our identification of who Zulqarnain was, is religion. Therefore, a study of Zoroastrianism became necessary so as to understand the faith of Darius the Great an utmost upholder of this ancient religion, *vis a vis* the Grecian gods of Alexander the Great. With this ordinate approach, it could be seen clearly that the former was a Muslim and the latter a Polytheist. It was then a contest between a monotheist and a polytheist to a coveted seat of Zulqarnain mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. In the realm of vastness of the empire they controlled, Darius had wielded enormous control over a wider empire. It included Alexander's Empire minus Athens. He also extended his control to Libya and Ethiopia in Africa. He had dwarfed Alexander over wide areas of *Satrapal* or Provincial control. The religion he professed was one of the most ancient in history, revealed to Zoroaster (a.s.).

Prophet Zoroaster's teachings had a positive impact on Darius the Great. Although the *Gathic* Commentaries had not mostly been in their original form, yet, from the fragments of the surviving sacred scripture, it was palpably clear that Zoroastrianism was a closest sister of Islam. It had a power and intensity in the Gathic verses, which radiated monotheistic teachings, as for example, Yasna 44:3-4:

This do I ask Thee, Oh Lord, tell me truly; Who is the Creator,

the first father of Righteousness? Who laid down the path of the sun and stars? Who is it through whom the moon now waxes now wanes? All this and more do I wish to know, or Wise One.

This do I ask Thee, oh Lord, tell me truly; who holds the earth below and the sky as well from falling? Who (created) the waters and the Planets? Who harnesses the (two) courses to wind and clouds? Who, Oh Wise One, is the Creator of Good Mind?

These verses replete with meanings and a reflection of monotheism, of course, showed Islam in action but in the pristine Zoroastrianism, of which Darius the Great was a true follower. The name of this Wise One was *Ahura Mazda,* which is synonymous with the name of Allah (swt). Thus, with Qur'anic descriptions and the laid down historic facts, I challenged Alexander's identification with authority. I had drawn my main inspiration from the Islamic sources; writers and commentators. But the expressed aim of this book goes beyond identification. The aim or pith, of this book *Who was Zulqarnain?* is simply to prove to the doubting but educated minds that Muhammad (pbuh) was a *Rasullahi* (an Apostle of God). Because this was what the Zulqarnain story was all about. The other more plausible identification with Cyrus the Great propounded by Syed Ala Maududi was treated in a similar manner, showing in detail, how Darius out class Cyrus in the race.

The living Eternal Miracles of the Holy Qur'an have all combined to give a testimonial evidence of this *Holy Kalima.* But the Zulqarnain story; like in many other instances in the Amazing Revelation was a scientific proof of this divine assertion: *La ilaha illallahu Muhammad ur Rasulullahi,* which means there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger. Had he not been so, he would not have known about Zulqarnain, in the first place, nor would he have expounded a story so pregnant with social and scientific knowledge known only recently to the modern world. This is the gist of the message in this book, *Who was Zulqarnain?*

This book is presented in chapters to make an easier reading,

with emphasis laid on Alexander and Darius who are then viewed in the context of their religious beliefs, and both weighed on the scale of the Holy Qur'an. And as a result, the shift of identification from the former to the latter both became desirable and necessary. In a similar vein, the issue of *Yajuj and Majuj*, as people who "Do mischief on earth', could easily be identified as the Scythians who were of European extraction. Thus, their identifications with the Europeans was appropriate both racially and culturally.

But I have to assert as important caveat that I am fully conscious of the frissons; which words like 'barbarians' and their derivatives; "cannibals," "savages" and "marauders" and so on and so forth could generate in the minds of the reader, especially where such terms were quoted with respect to the scythians. However, it must be emphasised that they were used in relation to the language of the seventh century BC, hence, they should be viewed in that context. Because scythian was a byword of barbarians in the first millennium BC, even then the writer did not downplay the scythian creative genius and technical skill in the same epoch.

The need for the use such of descriptive terms arose out of the desire to demonstrate the fact that these wild, lawless tribes had fitted perfectly with the Qur'anic description of *Mufsiduna fil ardhi* or mischief on earth. However, if such terms are taken out of context, I am bound to gore some people's ox even though, no malice or malignity is intended. The same caveat applies to the identification of European nations as the contemporary Gog and Magog or *Yajuj and Majuj*, such an identification, however, does not mean that as a people they are condemned by determinism to eternal perdition. People are, however, the architect of their own fate.

Finally, this book as a *volte face* is presented so as to stimulate fresh interests in this topic for reconsideration and re-evaluation of our current stand on *Who Zulqarnain was? vis a vis* who were the Gog and Magog. The Zulqarnain story showed that both the styles

and the gist of its content and furthermore, the degree of its exactitude had all indicated that such a knowledge was beyond the ken of man. Therefore, beyond reasonable doubt, Prophet Muhammad (saw) was indeed in controvertibly an Apostle of God that Almighty. I am always in short of words in describing the wonders of the Holy Qur'an. But Brother Khurram Murad, Deputy Director, Islamic Foundation, Leicester, United Kingdom captured a fine glimpse of the Qur'an Most Honourable, when he said:

> "...As you come to the Qur'an. You will come to a new world - a world of untold treasures of knowledge and wisdom to guide you on the pathways of life, of thought and action; of deep insights to capture your imagination, of radiant light to illuminate the deeper reaches of your soul, of profound emotions and glowing warmth to melt your great heart and bring tears running down your checks. It is the Qur'an, and only the Qur'an, which can lead you on and on to success and glory in this world and the Hereafter.

In paraphrasing my late Brother of blessed memory, Ustadh A. Yusuf Ali who said: *Blessed be youth for its energy and determination. Where others flinch, rash youth will dare!* Because of this, therefore, I accept any error either factual or interpretative to be my own responsibility, I hereby welcome corrections, and criticisms that will help make this book achieve its purpose. Nothing from me except with the help of Allah, Most High.

Alhamdu lillahi.

Yusuf Nadabo Abdullahi
Sarkin Tudun Nupawa,
Kaduna.

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INTRODUCTION

In the name of God, Most Beneficent, Most Merciful.

> Do they not then earnestly seek to understand the Qur'an, or is it that there are locks upon their hearts?
>
> - Surat Muhammad

Zulqarnain means many things to many people. The identification of this great personage mentioned in the Holy Qur'an with the appropriate historical figure in ancient history has, hitherto, remained an elusive one. As a result of a series of conjectures about the subject; a hasty inappropriate identification was made, which was fraught with dangers. When the Holy Prophet, peace be unto him (pbuh) was asked, who Zulqarnain was, the Holy Qur'an answered, nor by mentioning a name directly but by giving his title, faith and style of administration. The style of this Amazing Revelation, was God's style. There shouldn't have arisen either confusion or mistaken identity about who this towering historic figure was. This was because the vivid sacred descriptions had said all about him leaving no room at all for any wrong identification. This question posed to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was intended to be a tricky one because he had astounded the world both for his claim to Prophethood and his exposition of numerous and versatile fields of knowledge; a feat that was far unbecoming of an unlettered person in an illiterate society. People then out of curiosity started asking questions, about the source of his stupendous knowledge; was he plagiarising the Talmud or the Bible? The learned men of Arabia and far beyond started wagging their tongues as the fire of curiosity in their minds intensified.

It was reported in *Hadith* (the traditions of the Prophet) of how a very learned Jew from Syria framed and posed this question: *Who Zulqarnain was?* as a crucial desideratum in finding out the authenticity of his prophetic claim, and to ascertain whether the Bible or the Talmud was his source of knowledge. This was because

the story of Zulqarnain was not told in full in the Judaeo-Christian Scripture. Thus, the question was supposed to be a litmus test, which the Prophet passed with distinction. Because in a mastery of style, the Holy Qur'an related all one needed to know about Zulqarnain but without mentioning his name. But for any one, who knew the relevant facts about him would appreciate that the detailed descriptions referred to no one else but the man in question. The answer to this question was straight to the point and with the highest degree of exactitude. The learned Syrian Jew must have been fully satisfied with the answer proffered.

Using the Qur'anic descriptions of this powerful monarch as our guide, all that remained was to study all the known and celebrated Kings in the ancient world and among them to identify who these descriptions fit. This would help us to clinch our identification with absolutism, because Zulqarnain was not a myth but a historical reality. This simple approach was, unfortunately, not followed. Consequently, a wrong choice was made and was whole-heartedly accepted by almost all in the Muslim world. This wrong choice was that of Alexander the Great, as the Zulqarnain mentioned in the Amazing Revelation. The answer was specific to the question with no room for mistaken identity. The Holy Qur'an gave three very important points of reference which would help us in making the right choice: "his title, faith, and his leadership qualities." But unfortunately, they were glossed over when the hasty wrong identification was made.

But Syed Abul Ala Maududi, an illustrious son of Islam had applied this systematic approach to solving the dilemma in *The Meaning of Qur'an,* vol. vii. His analysis led him to identify Cyrus as the most likely personage to be the Zulqarnain. He wrote:

> The identification of Zul-Qarnain has been a controversial matter from the earliest times. In general the commentators have been of the opinion that he was Alexander the Great but the characteristics of Zul-Qarnain as described in the Qur'an are not

applicable to him. However, now the commentators are inclined to believe that Zul Qarnain was Cyrus, an ancient King of Iran. We are also of the opinion that probably Zul-Qarnain as was Cyrus, but the historical facts, which have come to light up to this time, are not sufficient to make any categorical assertion.[1]

Allama Maudadi's choice of Cyrus had brought the actual target nearer and within a shooting range but it could not be hit, owing to lack of sufficient historical facts. No doubt his selection was a reasonable one but the candidate so presented was superseded in the race by Darius, a Persian king of the same royal ancestry with Cyrus who came to the throne after eight years of Cyrus' reign.

The First important clue was the epithet "Zulqarnain." What did it mean? how would it lead us to the right man? The generally accepted meaning of this title Zulqarnain were: Lord of East and West, Lord of wide territory or Lord of two kingdoms. Lord of more than one Epoch: one whose power and influence extended far beyond his time." The latter was the most generally accepted. It meant one man in absolute control of the whole world, because then the world was divided into two kingdoms. Thus, Zulqarnain was like a ram with two horns, meaning just like a ram could effectively control and use any of its horns, so was he in absolute control of the Eastern and Western Kingdoms of the ancient World. This was an analogy and a metaphorical description of how he would rule his kingdoms absolutely and effectively. It was not used in the literal sense, because a man with two horns on his head was a monster and no longer a human being. Now, in the ancient world who were the men that could claim the title of Zulqarnain? There were three prominent personalities that were qualified for the title: Cyrus the Great, Darius the Great and, to a certain extent, Alexander the Great. The last of these great men could not be said to be Zulqarnain in the real sense of the word or a man who held the East and West like a ram in control of its two horns. Because he had conquered the East and West but had not knitted them together under his absolute

control. Ironically, he nearly put them under his dominion when he died in the attempt.

Cyrus emerged as the founder of the Persian Empire, when he succeeded in uniting the Persians into a nation. He, with extraordinary display of sagacity and overflowing energies, defeated the mighty Median King and made himself master of the Median territory in 549 BC. He conquered the West, as he gained the Southern coast of Asia Minor. Within five years, the power of his newly founded Persian kingdom had swept across to the Mediterranean, as the genius of Cyrus made it the leading nation in the World.[2] The Persians under Cyrus became so powerful and a threat to other nations. In 539 BC, Cyrus fought King Nabonidus, the fourth King after Nebuchadnezzar, and the last king of Babylonia in a place called Opis on the river Tigris. The Babylonian army was utterly defeated.[3] He then bestrode the East and West like a colossus. And within a year in the Babylonian capital, from where he ruled his empire, he made a decree (Ezra 5:1), which would benefit the Jews in exile in Babylon who had been languishing for years. The Hebrews in their Babylonian captivity were in constant grief, the Psalmist echoed this state of melancholy, thus:

> By the rivers of Babylon,
> There we sat down, yea, we wept,
> When we remembered Zion.
> We hanged our harps -
> Upon the willows in the midst thereof.
> For that they that carried us away captive required of us
> A song; and they that wasted us
> Required of us mirth, saying,
> Sing us one of the songs of Zion.
> How shall we sing the Lord's song
> In a strange land? (Ps. 137:1-4)

Having been forcibly evicted from Jerusalem a holy city; and feeling the pangs of servitude in a strange land, the Jews could only weep in sorrow, hence, they were not in a good frame of mind to

sing the Lord's song in joy and merriment anymore. It was indeed an all engaging state of anguish. The Amazing Qur'an also mentioned the terrible Babylonian conquest of Judea by Nebuchadnezzar as a punishment from Allah (s.w.t.) just as their Prophet Jeremiah had warned, that they must desist from making mischief on earth. They did not heed Allah's warning as a result of which they were punished:

> And We gave (clear) warning to the Children of Israel in the Book, that twice would they do great mischief on earth and be elated with mighty arrogance (and twice would they be punished) (Q 17:4).

The Jews due to their haughtiness and mischief on earth had received double punishment because they were heedless of the warning of Allah (swt). First, they were arrogant to Prophet Ishmael (a.s) and his mother Hajar (r.a.), and they called them names. In fact, Sarah and her son Isaac (a.s) derided Ishmael (a.s) boasting that they have never been in bondage to anybody, referring to Hagar, mother of Ishmael (a.s) the first born of Patriarch Abraham. She was a maiden given to the Prophet from the Royal house of Egypt. Upon the advice of Sarah who urged him to take the Egyptian helpmate as a wife (Genesis 16:3). And God said to Abraham (as) to hearken to the voice of Sarah, so he took the new member of his family as a wife. She bore him a son looking exactly like him, whom he named "Ishmael" meaning "God Hears." Because after many years of fervent prayers, Abraham's supplication was finally answered through his Egyptian wife.

No sooner this blessed child was born than the entire family became increasingly prosperous and whatever they prayed for God would hear and He always heard their prayer thereafter. For instance, Sarah who was elderly and in post-menopausal stage was also blessed with a child named Isaac (Genesis 21:1). The polygynic family of Abraham was supposed to be a peaceful home but it never was. As soon as Isaac was born then the table was turned against

both his brother and his step-mother. Eventually Hagar was expelled from the house of Abraham on Sarah's order (Genesis 21:10). Again God said to Abraham to hearken to the voice of Sarah. "So he took Hagar or Hajar (stone in Arabic) and her son Ishmael to the Mount Pharan (Deut. 32:2), which later became Mecca. Consequently, Sarah and her sons built the house of Abraham and usurped the rights of Ishmael and his mother. But the stone (Hagar), which builders (Sarah and her sons) rejected had now become headstone of the corner. This was indeed marvellous in our eyes as it was the Lord's doing.

So with Ishmael and his mother as two refugees in the desert, God then showered His blessings, both on them and their new environment. As a result the desert became enormously wealthy with the highest population density on earth. Mecca became synonymous with a teeming population, because Prophet Abraham (a.s) had prayed for his family in the barren desert and God 'heard'. A mighty nation evolved through the sacred loin of Ishmael (Genesis 21:13); these were the Arabs. Similarly, a mighty nation emerged through the sacred loin of Isaac, these were the Israelites. Unfortunately, the Israelites were moved to anger and jealousy due to the glaring prosperity of the people they considered their underdog or a foolish nation. They exploded with jealousy when the sacred history finally shifted to the nation with the Headstone of the corner. The Jews became so belligerent and arrogant and they intensified their scurrilous attacks, mudslinging the Ishmaelites and they were spiteful saying, "We were Abraham seeds and we have never been in bondage," thus elated with mighty arrogance. They were cultivated with pride and were scornful of the bondwoman and her generations. Thus, blinded with jealousy and hence heedless of all warnings, this action of Israelites against Ishmael and his children had embittered God Almighty, so among other things He punished the generations of Sarah with servitude in diaspora.

Hence in His retribution against the Jews, the Lord sent all of them to a humiliating servitude in the native country of Hagar (Deut. 28:68). And for 400 years they suffered many hardships and degradations in the hands of Pharaohs. In this first punishment, God Almighty had silenced the mouth of the arrogant people. Now could they have the audacity to look into the face of Ishmaelites and say: "We have never been in bondage?" No doubt the Lord with a humiliating servitude had humbled them. The Compassionate One, therefore, sent Moses (a.s) to liberate them from this degrading captivity. But unfortunately, with passage of time, the Jews returned to their evil ways, hence preparing ways for the second punishment. Alas, Israel never learnt from its history. No sooner had they come to the land of Canaan in Palestine their hubris nature flared off again. They became impervious to warnings, as they went about doing mischief on earth. Many prophets were raised among them to guide them to the ways of the Lord notable among them was Prophet Jeremiah who seriously warned them against the inevitable Chaldean invasion. The Prophet alerted his people to flee from the city of Jerusalem:

> Thus, saith the LORD, he that remaineth in this city shall die by the Sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence; but he that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live; for a prey, and shall live. Thus, saith the LORD, This city shall surely be given into the hand of the King of Babylon's army, which shall take it (Jeremiah 38:2-3).

God had removed His protection against the invaders to punish Israel. So there was no place to run to, even those who ran away were captured into slavery. Nebuchadnezzar came and unleashed terrible havoc onto the Jews; he destroyed Jerusalem and its Temple, killed many people and carted away all the treasures of the Temple. Thousands were taken into slavery. This was referred to as Babylonian captivity. The Holy Qur'an gave an account of this event, thus:

> When the first of the warnings came to pass, We sent against you our servants given to terrible warfare: They entered the very inmost parts of your homes; And it was a warning completely fulfilled (Q.17:5).

This was exactly what happened, the Powerful King of Babylonia came in 586 BC with armies, "given to terrible warfare", razed Jerusalem to the ground destroying everything within the city, the Jews were butchered in hundreds, and a large number carried off into captivity in Babylon. It was a pitiless sight as the foreign invaders chased the inhabitants of the town into the Temple and searching house to house looking for men and women, killing and looting their property. In fact, it was like hell was let loose on Israel; a judgement of God for the sins of the Jews, arrogance and backsliding. It was indeed a miracle how the Qur'an vividly described the Babylonian carnage on Israel, one thousand one hundred years after the event. More interesting the Holy Scripture also gave even the nature of the warfare of the invading armies. In fact, the Babylonians were second to none in pernicious conquest. It was with such barbarity that Israel was ravaged to the ground. Zedekiah, the King of Israel was captured and taken to Babylon, the eyes of his children were forcefully removed, they were tortured and killed at Riblah where Nebuchadnezzar had established his headquarters.

However, the lessons of Egyptian Captivity were forgotten by Israelites and the Lord's warning was unheeded as they still held their brethrens (Ishmaelites) in contempt and in derogation. Thus, a second and equally gruesome servitude, captivity was experienced by the Jews. But why did God choose slavery as a means of punishing the Jews? To bend their haughtiness and to make them swallow their pride in calling Hagar a bond-woman with contempt and ridicule. Obviously, by having them serve a derogating slavery in her own country the Land of the Pharaohs, the Jews could no longer say, "We were never in bondage to anybody." Although there

were many ways of punishing a nation, but the subjection to servitude of arrogant people was the most effective especially when an honoured slave of God was hurt in the process. In addition, God Almighty stripped them of His Kingdom and gave it to the Ishmaelites (Jeremiah 31:36) to anger them more because they had provoked Jehovah:

> They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation (Deut. 32:21).

Consequently, the Jews were dispersed into diaspora even after the Egyptian and Babylonian captivities. They were expelled from every country after living a disgraceful life as they became pet anathema. Examples abound within history:

> They were turned out of Portugal and Spain, they were driven out of England in 1290, they were twice pushed away from France, once in 1306 and again in 1394. They were exiled from Belgium in 1370 and from Czechoslovakia in 1380. Holland drove them out in 1444, and Italy turned them out in 1540. Germany pushed them out in 1551. Russia exiled them in 1510.[4]

Ever since they angered Jehovah and maligned His honoured servants Ishmael and his mother, servitude and exile had been their lot. The Jews were finally divested of their sacred history by the shift of the messengership to the Ishmaelite. It was consequent upon this action by the Lord that they were dispersed into diaspora. When from 1934 to 1945 Hitler gassed six millions Jews to death in a demonstration of *Mufsiduna fil ardhi* by the Germans, subsequently, they realigned with the Gog and Magog. They now sought shelter under the powerful protective roof of *Yajuj and Majuj*. In return, the Jews aided this evil people with their ingenuity and technical know how, and this was the unholy alliance ever since. The Jews rebelled against the commonwealth of the faithful, the Abrahamic faiths had

decided to team up with the Gog and Magog, out of anger. They were bitter with the shift of Sacred history. But it was *a fait accompli*.

The Lord fulfilled His promise and therefore, the rejected stone as quoted in Matthew 21:41-43 had become the head of the corner. Hagar (Hajar - meaning stone) and her son were rejected from the house of Abraham (a.s) so that Sarah and her son Isaac (a.s) could inherit the house of Abraham. Consequently, the Ishmaelites whom the Israelites considered a foolish nation had finally become the greatest nation in sacred history, because of the emergence of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) the greatest man in history and the saviour of human civilisation. Since then the bitterest attacks against Islam by the angered nation had continued unabated, yet, the living religion surges forward. These baseless attacks were like the barking of terrified dogs to a moving electric train. Perhaps, out of frustration, the Jews then finally pitched their tent with the Gog and Magog to establish *Mufsiduna fil ardhi* on a global scale as it would become obvious later in the book.

It was in the divine schemes of the Most High to use some people to check the excesses of others, if need be to serve as punishment or as deterrent. As we had seen Nebuchadnezzar was used by God to punish the children of Israel who suffered untold hardship in their 25-50 years of Babylonian captivity. The Most Compassionate One, then raised Cyrus the Persian King to liberate them from bondage. Similarly, Jehovah used Darius as a 'hook' to mitigate the anthropophogous and vandalistic activities of the Gog and Magog so that human civilisation could thrive. The Lord was indeed the Wise One.

Undoubtedly, the Prophet of mercy could not have known all these historic facts with infinitesimal detail without Divine Revelation. He could not have been any other personality other than a *Rasulullahi*. Therefore, the first major punishment to the children of Israel was the Egyptian captivity which was followed by Babylonian captivity so that the claim that they had never been in

bondage was silenced forever. So in the second captivity, God Almighty then sent Cyrus the Great to set them free. Hence he became well known in their Jewish history because he liberated them from the melancholy of denigrating servitude.

Because Cyrus' decree allowed those in bondage to return to Jerusalem, the Jews, according to him, should return to their country to rebuild the Temple and the wall of Jerusalem, which were all destroyed by the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC. This magnanimity shown by the Persian King was acclaimed by all. In fact, the Hebrew exiles greeted him as their deliverer. He was therefore, well known to the Jews and Christians. It was his kind gesture that caused the writers of the Old Testament to hail Cyrus as their deliverer, calling him the 'anointed' and 'the shepherd'. "The Lord hath done great things for us," exclaimed the Psalmist.[5] Cyrus the Great died in 530 BC and was succeeded by his son Cambyses. He ruled for eight years and he was succeeded by Darius I.

The greatest of the Persian King was Darius I, who succeeded Cyrus after a short space of eight years. He was often called Darius the Great, because he used his power mainly for the benefit of his people.[6] Darius kept peace throughout his empire. This man whose monumental achievements were the greatest of its time, for unknown reasons, however, paled into oblivion. References to his name were only made occasionally in association with the Cyrus decree in the Bible. As a result, not much could be gleaned about him from the Biblical Scripture. The Syrian Jew must have been quite aware of this surprising fact of history. But Alexander the Great who came about two centuries after him became well known all over the world. This ruthless Macedonian King won accolades from both modern and ancient historians. The tempo of his ruthlessness kept the psyche of the ancient world under constant siege and his name became a household name. He had no doubt received more than his fair share of publicity. Historians called him "the Great", his greatness really lay in his work for civilisation more

than in his military conquests, which in themselves were often cruel and short-lived.[7] No doubt his battles were devoid of religious motives but galvanised by patriotic zeal and fervour of Hellenism.

However, in the *dramatic personae* competing for the coveted title of Zulqarnain mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, Alexander the Great was the least qualified. Taking the scriptural references into consideration, the epithet scarcely fitted him as he was disqualified on the ground of Faith. He was a polytheist while the personage in reference was a Muslim. Another important point that ripped Alexander's qualification to shreds was his administrative qualities. He was a ruthless leader to the core while Zulqarnain was humane, just and ruled according to the laws of God.

But despite these glaring shortcomings of Alexander, nevertheless, he was identified as the Zulqarnain mentioned in the Holy Scripture by the Muslim world. Today, this is the most generally accepted identification even though it undermines the description of the Holy Qur'an very seriously. It is now a sheer bigoted attachment to one of the most ruthless and greatest military conqueror in history. This identification built on a faulty foundation, was fraught with dangers as it enabled a pagan polytheist to carve an important niche in the Sacred Empire of Islam. And this unwanted and reprehensible member had remained there ever since. Yet, it remained a faulty choice, which was unacceptable to the majority. Alexander the Great was commonly referred to as *Askandar*, a local variant of *Sha Sikander* in his new found empire.

Furthermore, the wrongful identification created more problems than it solved. The Holy Qur'an was right and succinct in the revelation of the answer but most writers on this subject were hasty and wrong in both their choice and identification of this Righteous man. To resolve this intricate problem is simple, let the Amazing Revelation call the man of choice, that is, one who vividly fits the Qur'anic descriptions like hand in glove. If this had been done with

ardent scrutiny, Darius the Great, would no doubt have clinched this coveted seat. This writer, hereby, uses this approach to answer, this celebrated question, which has tasked the sagacity of many scholars and historians for long.

But on passing by the account of a recent writer on the subject needed to be mentioned; Muhyi'-d-din Abd al Hamid's submission that Zulqarnain was a Yemini from Himyar tribe with a Greek mother. As a result he was called the son of philosopher, owing to his great intelligence. The writer claimed that even the Himayarites boast of his ancestry, saying:

> Dhul-Qarnayn was our Muslim ancestor, a king whom other kings obeyed and to whom they rallied. He travelled to the farthest east and to the farthest west seeking the means of command from a guided sage. He saw the place where the setting sun descended in the spring of Dhi Kalb and Tha't Harq. After him came Bilqis who was his aunt. She ruled over them until the hoopoe came.[8]

The account of Zulqarnain in this epic could neither stand on its own; nor could it be backed by historical facts. Thus, it was no identification at all. It was like the romances of Zulqarnain especially as Alexander, which still is the most prominent of all.

A great deal of literature had been piled up by our writers on this subject, thereby, making a simple understanding of it altogether very difficult. Consequently, we had witnessed a maze of hasty climbers with ultimate sudden falls. It then appeared to the Muslim World that all candidates with good credentials to compete with Alexander the Great were exhausted and this perhaps proved that his selection was perfect and beyond fault. For example, Zulqarnain was identified as one pre-historic King and a contemporary of Patriarch Abraham. And as a man of Faith he accepted the religion of the Prophet (s.a.). However, this identification with a supposed pre-historic King, unknown in the ancient world, was no identification at all because Zulqarnain was not a myth but a historic reality.

Another identification stemmed from the reference to Zulqarnain as the 'Two-Horned One'. So it was argued, he must be the one mentioned in the Book of Daniel in the Old Testament. But no sooner this choice was made than it was dropped like a hot ember. Ustadh Abdullahi Yusuf Ali had with good reasons jettisoned this identification; Daniel saw in his vision, a ram which had two horns' (Daniel 8:3). But this ram was smitten by a he-goat. And the great horns broken ."..and smote the ram, and broke his two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before him" (Daniel 8:7). This was no doubt inapplicable to Zulqarnain who Allah had given a means to all ends. So this identification was dropped so fast, as it was unsavoury even with a pinch of salt.

Syed Maududi's explication of "The Two Horned" gave us an interesting insight into its meaning, in consideration of the characteristics of Zulqarnain in the light of his story in the Holy Qur'an. The erudite Islamic Scholar said: "The title of Zul-Qarnain (The-Two-Horned) should have been quite familiar to the Jews, for it was at their instigation that the disbeliever's of Makkah put this question to the Holy Prophet. Therefore we must turn to the Jewish literature in order to learn who was the person known as the 'Two Horned.'"[9]

The Jews, who wanted to ascertain whether or not the prophet was plagiarising their scripture, coined and posited the question to prove otherwise. Obviously, the answer could not have been from the Jewish literature. This was how elusive and nebulous the subject had been. Thus, if we put our central focus on their history, as the learned scholar had suggested we were apt to be misled. Because the Jewish history was tied along with the Persian history both exilic and in post-exilic period. What further complicated the issue and made it even dicey was this metaphor 'The Two Horned'. What did it mean in the context of Zulqarnain story?

Fortunately, Ustadh Abdullahi Yusuf Ali had done justice to

this rather fluid meaning of the allegorical epithet. Yet, it could be applicable to two separate events that were mutual exclusive. The first application was used to describe the rise of King Cyrus to power particularly when he led Persia in the conquest of Media. In this context, the principal actor was King Cyrus. And this was where Allama Maududi made his corollary. It was a reasonable one because he said according to the Bible Prophet Daniel saw in his vision that the united King of Media and Persia was like a two-horned ram before the rise of the Greeks. But the rise of the Greeks meant of course Alexander's conquests. This would no doubt push us farther away from the right personage. It, therefore, meant not the rise of Greeks' as he suggested, but the conquest of Media by Persia, where Cyrus emerged as the "Two-Horned," master of the two kingdoms which he then united. Daniel's vision was specific to this historic event: "Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last." (Dan. 8:3).

In this vision, Prophet Daniel, saw the rising Persia which came up last, under Cyrus and subjugated its neighbour the Kingdom a Media, it was higher because King Cyrus kept conquering lands until he established a World Empire. He was the first in the dawn of recorded history to have achieved this feat. He was therefore, Zulqarnain in the real sense of the word but not the Qur'anic Zulqarnain for reasons that were explained later in the book. But unfortunately, Cyrus fell in battlefield, which again Prophet Daniel saw in his vision, Daniel 8:7.

The second interpretation of "the Two Horned," was wider in scope, involving the absolute control of the East and the West. Here again, the answer lied in the Persian history; not the Jewish or the Greeks. This was Darius the Great, he securely fitted the Qur'an description like hand in glove. The Jewish history in the exilic

period was laden with the accounts of activities of both Persian and the Median Kings with little or no attention paid to the Greeks. They held King Cyrus in high esteem and referred to him as "The Two-Horned One," whose victory first over Media and then over the kingdom of Babylon had led to their liberation from bondage. But the Jew who framed his question to ask the prophet did not have him in mind. Because it would be too obvious to test a prophetic claim.

Another important point was that the question, on Zulqarnain's was posed to the Prophet (pbuh), to ascertain among other things, whether the Bible had been his source of knowledge. He would surely have been dumbfounded if he had plagiarised the Christian Scripture, because the story of Zulqarnain was not contained in the Bible or Jewish Scripture. So identification with some historic figure from either the Jewish or the Christian Scripture was not feasible for obvious reasons. And more importantly, this metaphorical description of the, *Two-Horned One,* as explained previously, meant one man who was in absolute control of two kingdoms, like a ram in control of its horns. This view, fitted the choice of Darius the Great well enough.

In their choice of Alexander, the Muslim World, consequently, was boxed into a corner, left without any suitable choice or alternative other than Alexander the Great. Even a certain Persian Monarch earlier on proposed by some *ulama* (Islamic Scholars) was not accepted, perhaps, due to lack of corroborating facts and evidences. But what scared most scholars away from this Persian candidate was, perhaps, the worship of fire. Because Zoroastrianism, the dominant Persian religion, had degenerated to fire worship at a later date. These were the *Majus* and the Holy Qur'an spoke on them: "And the Sabians, Christian, Magians, and Polytheists, - God will judge between them on the Day of Judgement: for God is witness of all things" (Q.12:17). The

Magians *(Majus)* had a very ancient cult; they considered fire as the purest and noblest element, and had worshiped it as a fit emblem of God. The *Majus* were predominantly Persians and Medians and their Scripture *Zend-Avesta.* Today there are very few Zoroastrians left in Persia. Those who escaped the Islamic conquest settled in India. At present, they live in Bombay and its vicinity and are called *Persee* (Persians). No one could become a Zoroastrian or *Persee* who was not one by birth.[10]

But in its pristine form Zoroastrianism was a monotheistic religion; like Christianity both of which became polytheist as a result of innovations and modifications that crept into them. This was ineluctable because they were national religions so they had expiry dates as such they were not divinely protected against all corruption. However, most of the Persian Monarchs appeared to be the followers of Prophet Zoroaster in earnest because they were monotheists. Darius the Great had in fact demonstrated that he was a true Muslim as the true teachings of Zoroastrianism were co-terminus with Islam. And one could draw up parallel motifs between the two. For instance, in *Yasna* 31:5 we read:

> O Ahura Mazda
> Reveal unto me for enlightenment that
> Which Thou has ordained as the better
> Path for me to follow, so that I may join myself
> unto it?

Islam, which is now the purest and finest form of monotheism that is finally evolved has a similar type of prayer to Allah (swt) in Q.1:6-7:

> Show us the straight way
> The way of those on whom
> Thou have bestowed Thy Grace,
> Those whose (portion)
> Is not wrath
> And who go not astray.

Hence, it was most likely that one of these Persian Monarchs

either Cyrus or Darius the Great in particular must have been the Zulqarnain of the Amazing Revelation. Thus, the field of choice could subsequently be narrowed to King Darius. There was no better candidate than him as far as historical as well as Qur'anic qualification were concerned. He believed in the Absolute Unity of *Ahura Mazda* or the Wise Lord whose symbol was Light. He was not a *Majus* but the symbol of light of fire was only used as the attribute of this Wise Lord the Creator of the Heaven and Earth. *Ahura Mazda* was, therefore, the name of Allah (swt) and one of His attributes or names is *Al-Nur* or Light.

How Alexander the Great, a *Mushrik* came to be identified and accepted as a Muslim and the Zulqarnain of the Holy Qur'an could be said to be a quirk of history. I have delved to some extent and within my understanding of this important subject into how this came about. But this was only a tip of the proverbial iceberg, a lot was deeply buried beneath the sea. This meant a lot about Alexander the Great needed to be told, in a clear lucid exposition, with a view to rectifying this mistake. It then became very appropriate to know the person, the faith and the mission of Alexander the Great. Then, who was Alexander the Great? But it was equally pertinent to reiterate and elaborate certain facts about this important subject of Zulqarnain.

WHO WAS ZULQARNAIN?

We have explained in detail in this Qur'an, for the benefit of mankind, every kind of similitude.

- Surat al-Kahf

The genesis of the question was that a very learned Jew in Syria, as reported in a Hadith, heard that a Prophet had been raised in Arabia so he decided to test the authenticity of his prophetic claim. By so doing he, however, was not doubting the emergence of a Prophet from Arabia, since his advent had been foretold both in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. A prophecy of the advent of a great Prophet among the brethren of the Jews, that is, the Ishmaelites was well known among the learned clergy and this expectation was also high. His aim, therefore, was to ascertain that Muhammad (s.a.w.) was truly a Prophet of God. This learned Jew reasoned quite logically that if he were a true Prophet, the expected Holy One from Arabia, he would be able to expound in great detail the past historic events that were unpopular at that time. He, therefore, sent some people to put this Messenger of God to test with this question: "Who was Zulqarnain?"

This was not an easy question even though it appeared to be. It would task the sagacity of the most learned, the most educated person even among the High Priests of his time. This was because the story of this great man was not contained fully in both the Jewish and Biblical Holy Books so if these were the sources of his knowledge he would surely fail to answer this question. An accurate account of this historic personage would only come to him through divine inspiration. And more importantly; the background of this new Prophet as an unlettered person, from an illiterate society all have added to make this question a crucial desideratum. But why did this learned Syrian Jew pick on this topic of Zulqarnain? As a man well versed in knowledge in diverse fields, he must have

reasoned quite rightly, that there were many claimants to this title and among them, only one would fit the description. So, at the outset, the question was a tricky one as it posed a problem of choice as well as a problem of precise identification. In other words, there were apparent and real Zulqarnain, and to compound the problem, for centuries the identification of who Zulqarnain was had been a subject of heated controversies and dogmatic assertions.

Furthermore, in framing his question, he must have been aware that the echo of Alexander the Great was still reverberating throughout his former vast ancient empire and had not died down. In fact, in the lands of Babylon, Egypt and India, for instance, the name *Sha Sikander* had become a bogey used to scare off children. The celebrated young conqueror was still firmly in control of the psyche of the peoples of his former empire and they were equally put under a mental siege for centuries after the ruthless King had gone as they remained full of his brutal reminiscences. Alexander, therefore, became an easy and tantalising choice as the Zulqarnain but only to the unwary. In addition, he was equally well known as the founder of Alexandria, of Egypt which became a famous commercial centre and a dozen of other Alexandrias, which all were cities named after him.

Alexander's ruthlessness had become a story told in the form of a folktale that was passed from generation to generation as an eternal glory won by the Macedonian Warlord. So the Syrian clergyman, surely would not have had him in mind, otherwise, it would have been an obvious answer known to a lot of people. It could be fathomed how tricky the question was then and even now. Hence, the identification of Zulqarnain with Alexander the Great was an attractive one, but it was an identification with the apparent but not the real personage. The real historic personage must satisfy the following Qur'anic conditions: he must have been a religious man; who was just and humane, righteous and ruled in accordance

with God's laws. He must control his two kingdoms absolutely, like a ram in absolute control of its two horns. Thus, he must be the 'Two Horned One," a great master of two "Qarns" or two epochs.

Unfortunately, the historical Alexander, the impetuous Macedonian King was indeed far from satisfying these conditions. So, apparently he looked like the man of choice but in reality he was not. To untie this Gordian knot the 'real man' must be given his 'right seat'. This book, therefore, presents Darius the Great as the right man for that coveted seat. The Qur'anic Zulqarnain and the historical Darius the Great were quite identical. Thus, the Syrian Jew who put this question, must have been amazed at the wonders of the Qur'anic exposition of this personage in question. He surely must have paid homage to the Prophet as truly a Messenger of God, if he was sincere to his knowledge. The Holy Qur'an did not give the name but the title and the characters of the historic personage, in three of his expeditions and this succinct account sufficed. This Amazing Revelation, expounded three expeditions of this most widely travelled man in ancient history.

The Qur'anic story was a succinct presentation of the monumental achievements of Darius the Great, one of the greatest and most pious monarchs of the ancient world. The account of Zulqarnain's expeditions fitted with some of the historical documents of this Great Persian King. It was incontrovertible that without a divine intervention, the unlettered Prophet would not have known of these 'journeys' that were most likely to be those of Darius the Great. As such, the identification of Alexander the Great as the Zulqarnain mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, was no longer tenable. Because such identification could now be invalidated by our current knowledge on the historical Alexander. Hence, the Identification as such was irreconcilable as it was fatuous. A notable modern critic of this choice was Brother Ali Akbar.

Yet, the generality of the World of Islam accepted Alexander's

identification with a passive resignation making all other doubts and suggestions proffered earlier by some *Ulama* and writers to pale into oblivion. Because in spite of its negation of the vivid Qur'anic descriptions, Alexander's choice was fraught with danger as it rather begged the question. And there were many critics of this apparent discrepancy among whom was Ali Akbar. In his book, *Israel and the Prophecies of the Holy Qur'an,* he observed pointedly that:

> The reference in the Holy Qur'an to the history of Dhu al Qarnayn speaks of him as being Darius the First. However, earlier Muslim historians speak of Dhu al Qarnayn as Alexander the Great, and give his name as Shah Sikander. But, according to the Holy Qur'an, Dhu al Qarnayn received a revelation from Allah. But Alexander, although he was a great conqueror, was certainly not a great religious person, so it would be wrong to believe that such a man would receive a revelation from Allah. In fact, the name Shah Sikander is of Persian origin, and not Greek, as it was Alexander.[11]

The historical Alexander was noted for his ruthlessness and quest for power and glory. In all the books written about him by both ancient and modern historians, his main characteristic features had remained the same, the recurrent decimal, being over-ambition in his world view, ruthlessness in all his conquests and more seriously his polytheistic belief coupled with his fatalistic quest for self-divinity. So it was wrong to identify Alexander with the Zulqarnain of the Holy Qur'an. The author, in his reference to the Holy Qur'an 18:83, 85, again made the following observations:

> The above verses show quite clearly that Alexander the Great was not Dhual Qarnayn. Had this been so, there would have been *no reason for the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon* him) to be questioned in regard to him. The reason for this being that the history of Alexander the Great and his conquests were already known to the world at that time and surely there is no point in asking questions on a matter of which one is already aware, especially to test the authenticity of Prophethood.[12]

It was important to reiterate this important point of Akbar's

deposition that Alexander was well known and had remained for centuries like the Frankenstein Monster in his empire and as a result, his name was even used as a bogey to scare off children. Furthermore, as a Greek-European, he had got more than a fair share of publicity by Graeco-Roman historians. The ruthless King had been enjoying this undue and exaggerated publicity for a long time and even up till now.

On the contrary, Darius I had largely remained unknown in the ancient World and this fact was both surprising as it was also interesting. Cyrus, the founder of the Persian World Empire was not an obscure personality but was well known so also were his achievements. His son Cambyses who had succeeded him as King was equally well known. Unfortunately, little was known about Darius I. He succeeded Cambyses and became the greatest of all the Persian Monarchs. He was eclipsed from the annals of ancient history. And the Syrian Jew must have availed himself of this important quirk of history and posed his question. It was in response to this question that the Amazing Revelation replied with an answer in a mastery of style: "They ask Thee concerning Zulqarnain. Say, 'I will rehearse to you something of his story." (Q.18:83).

In this endeavour, Allama Maududi concurred that a great King fitting the characteristics of the Holy Qur'an, certainly must be the personage in question. He said:

> Zul-Qarnain must have been a great ruler and a great conqueror whose conquests might have spread from the East to the West and on the third side to the North or to the South. Before the revelation of the Qur'an there had been several persons, who were such great conquerors. So we must confine our research for other characteristics of Zul Qarnain to one of these persons.[13]

Taking the counsel of this eminent personality, this book had successfully delineated Darius I, as the most suitable candidate among the several persons who had been great conquerors.

Furthermore, he had tallied with the scriptural characteristics, expounded wonderfully in the story. And there were sufficient historic facts to back up his choice.

The story was told in an amazing style. If Zulqarnain was Darius the Great, it could be understood with remarkable accuracy. Because Darius the Great was great in his power and great were his opportunities, which he used for the dissemination of justice and righteousness. He was one of the greatest Monarchs in the ancient world, who could be said to have Faith and did not forget God because of affluence or the corruption of absolute power. This was then a clear demonstration of the wonders and miracles of the Holy Qur'an that by 'rehearsing something of his story'; a description of only three of his expeditions, the Amazing Revelation had told all you needed to know about this, hitherto, unknown and unsung great historic personage. The monumental achievements of Darius I, otherwise, known as 'the Great', was told only in the Holy Qur'an and centuries after him until lately when it became known to the world. His hidden historic records came to light in 1947, when Sir Rawlingson discovered the *Behistun Inscriptions* on a huge rock at Besutun. Some of these findings had corroborated the sacred statements of the Holy Qur'an. This was the crux of the matter: by framing this question, *Who was Zulqarnain?* it was meant to discover the unknown as a test of Prophetic claim.

The central aim was that if the Prophet could accurately answer this impossible question, then he was truly an Apostle of God. Because the historic records of this personage or Zulqarnain was unknown in the archives of history. The unlettered Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.); secluded in the Arabian Desert, could only know about his story through Divine Intervention, so he passed the Syrian Jewish crucial test with distinction. I have come across many wonders of the Holy Qur'an, read the opinions of many writers - both Muslim and non-Muslim - about this Amazing Qur'an. But my quest for the historical Alexander the Great had led me to research

into ancient history. It succeeded in opening to me another vista of the Holy Qur'an, this was: its Sublime concinnity, a presentation of facts, arranged so concisely, yet, very rich in details, put skilfully and harmoniously fitting together. The accounts of Darius the Great by all the classical authors I have quoted with respect to this historic figure, were summarised in a grandeur of style in the three expeditions of Zulqarnain as contained in the Sublime Qur'an. I had tried to share both my reverence for and admiration of how only these expeditions could tell you all you needed to know about Darius the Great. Each expedition could be expanded to a full textbook rich in great details.

But more importantly, how could an unlettered Prophet, living in an ignorant society at that time and separated from an event that took place over 1100 years before his time, written and kept hidden in inscriptions on stones and at a distance of several hundreds of miles be known to him with this remarkable accuracy and with minute details. The fact speaks for itself no man of understanding, could doubt that this was a practical demonstration of a Divine Intervention. The Holy Qur'an was known for its inimitable beauty and grace of its composition. It had won the admiration of all, even the Western intellectuals for its marvellous concinnity. The Holy Scripture adapts to individual's degree of intellect and level of education to captivate his attention with an amazing subtlety. The Zulqarnain story had underscored all these important facts about the Holy Qur'an.

Thus, we could find the illiterate quite content to listen to the Qur'an being read and recited, this influence was shown even by the non-Muslims alike. The intellectual obtains a great deal of satisfaction from reading it or listening to its meaningful elucidation. The highly educated and scientists find its miraculous features challenging and stimulating to their intellect and thought. This Amazing Revelation was the only one of its kind in the history

of civilisation. Everybody, therefore, was *ad nauseam* to find an unworthy identification of this kind - Zulqarnain as Alexander the Great – within its sacred content. I had considered it an excrescence that must be excised. This was in tandem with Ustadh Ali's exhortation to whoever is in search of spiritual truth and its applications when he said: "In the application of spiritual truths to our times and our own lives, we must use every kind of knowledge, science and experience which we possess but we must not obtrude irrelevant matter in our discussions..."[14]

So it was not a mastery of ancient history that is required or important in our understanding the Holy Qur'an better, but a mastery of all fields relevant to human endeavour. For instance, Mathematics informed us that one had to master at least 826 quadrillion combinations of alphabetical letters in order to produce the Mathematical distribution of the alphabets in the Qur'an.[15] A sound knowledge of Mathematics, therefore, would no doubt show us that this feat was far beyond human capacity.

Therefore, from whichever angle you view it, this Holy Qur'an, was of Divine Authorship. In addition, to its unlimited knowledge in divergent fields, known to man and those beyond his ken, its textual content had remained intact and unchanging. And only this Amazing Revelation could claim of this unique attribute. Moreover, as a fountain of all knowledge, researchers have always been kept in awe of the Holy Qur'an as a compendium of knowledge and appreciated the quintessence, wonders and miracles of this Last Testament. A Final Revelation from God that was protected from all forms of corruption (Holy Qur'an 15:8-9, 56:77).

Therefore, a shift of identification from Alexander to Darius had become both desirable and necessary to answer, once and for all, the celebrated question on Zulqarnain's identity. This would finally untie the Gordian knot. In doing so, therefore, the two persons must be juxtaposed, so that each person's religious belief,

the manner of his military conquest, the art of his governance and his achievements all must be weighed on the scale of Qur'an. This process of distillation of historic facts in *pari passu* with Qur'anic references became absolutely necessary in order to unveil the disqualification of Alexander in favour of Darius. This again was in line with Ustadh Ali's earnest advice when he wrote:

> As to the particular occasions on which particular verses were revealed, the information is interesting and valuable from a historical point of view, and our older writers have collected ample material for it. But to lay too much stress on it today puts the picture out of perspective. The Qur'an was not revealed for a particular occasion only, but for all time. The particular occasion is now past. Our chief interest now is to see how it can guide us in our present lives. Its, meaning is so manifold, and when tested, it is so true, that we should be wise to concentrate on matters that immediately help. So in mature plants seek out of the soil just that food which give them nourishment. There is plenty of other food left in the soil, which other plants take, which can digest it. In matters of remote history or folklore, we must take the results of the latest researches...[16]

The discovery of *Behistun Inscriptions* in 1947 had revolutionised our understanding of Darius the Great *vis-a-vis* his monumental achievements. In like manner, the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls had similarly, revolutionised our knowledge of Jesus Christ. The inscriptions carved on stones had shed more light and brought into focus our man of choice, the real Zulqarnain mentioned in the Holy Scripture. Since religion played a significant role in this matter and was the deciding factor, it then became necessary to understand the religion of Darius the Great. His mannerism; ethos and style of leadership, which must be viewed in the light of his religious belief and the dictates, as enshrined in the cardinal teachings of Zoroastrianism. But before doing this, it was pertinent to first scrutinise the credentials of Alexander the Great the celebrated *Askandar* in the light of history. Demosthenes, the great Greek Orator paid his glowing tribute to King Philip of

Macedon, the historical father of Alexander in the following words: "What a man had we to fight! For the sake of power and dominion he had an eye thrust out, a shoulder, broken, an arm and leg mortified. Whichever member fortune demanded, that he cast away, so that the rest might be in glory and honour."[17]

While the father could suffer any form of self-mutilation, the son could kill anyone in his quest for glory and honour, which he achieved with sword and human destruction. So who was this greatest conqueror in history? But before doing so it became necessary to give the framework or the context under which the Zulqarnain story could be viewed. In essence, the Qur'anic Zulqarnain story was a Kaleidoscopic view of European Civilisation. It must, therefore, be treated in-perspective. The central theme of the story was the Aryan race, otherwise, referred to as the great white race.

The Great White Race

The Zulqarnain story was in essence an exposition of European Civilisation and their sacred history. Zulqarnain had conspicuously showed the sacred profile of the Aryan race generally and the Indo-European specifically. In fact a careful analysis of the Qur'anic Zulqarnain story proved what the French call *explication de texte* of the Indo-European. Although there were many prophets raised among this race referred to as the Great White Race; Zulqarnain featured more prominently in the Holy Qur'an, where his story laid bare both the sacred history as epitomised in this historic personage on obverse and their notoriety as typified by *Yajuj and Majuj*, with the inherent characteristics of doing mischief on earth on the inverse of the same coin. Thus, the Holy Qur'an had in minutest details expounded important historic events that pertained to a branch of this great race the Indo-Europeans – to which the Europeans belonged. Moreover, an understanding of this race was a necessary prelude to a full comprehension of Zulqarnain and who *Yajuj and*

Majuj really were.

The hypothesis that the whole gist behind Zulqarnain and *Yajuj and Majuj* revolved around the Indo-Europeans was expounded in a wonderful style – was discernible. Breasted, wrote that among the northern nomads was this important branch, "The ancestors of leading peoples of Europe today," he said, "as own forefathers came from Europe, the Indo-European nomads were also our own ancestors."[18] Undoubtedly, Scythians were the most prominent nomads, hence were among the ancestors of European nations. Having said this it became imperative to briefly discuss the Indo-European peoples and their dispersion for the sake of clarity. The Arabian Desert was once a reservoir of unsettled population and, therefore, provided a nidus of dispersion from the margin of its Southern steppes of the Semitic race.

However, in the northern grasslands which stretched from the lower Danube eastward along the northern side of the Black Sea through Southern Russia and far into Asia north and east of the Caspian, similarly, the Indo-European nomadic dispersion took place. And for thousands of years, these northern nomads had poured forth over Europe and Western Asia.[19] This Euroasian nomadic dispersal was already discussed especially with respect to the Scythian. These nomads, migrated and moved out in diverging routes but mostly moving either East or West. The Hittites were the first or earliest group to disperse into Anatolia about 2500 BC or perhaps earlier. However, the Western migration of the barbarians was the dispersal relevant to the theme of our discussion. The nomads who as a whole extended from the frontiers of India to the east, westward across all Europe to the Atlantic were collectively referred to as Indo-Europeans. Prior to their dispersal, it was believed that they were one people, speaking the same language that was later spoken by the civilised peoples of modern Europe, including English of the present day. Breasted stated that before

they dispersed, the parent people were still in the Stone Age and the Indo-European parent people had civilisation about 3000 BC, and were the most gifted and the most highly imaginative people of the ancient world.[20] But as they dispersed, their tribes wandered farther and farther apart as they lost contact with each other. Consequently local peculiarities in speech and customs became more and more marked and conspicuous. Finally, they produced great difference and varied civilisations.

The Greeks became newcomers to the Mediterranean; as they migrated from the Central Asia and settled in Peleponnese, a land formation stretching down into the Mediterranean, in the Islands of the Aegean, along the coast of the eastern Mediterranean into Sicily and Italy. Where they adopted the gods of the people they displaced and borrowed technology from the Egyptians, which they combined with the freethinking of the island dwellers. As settlers, they lived by trading, agriculture and piracy.

A similar line of migration of Semitic peoples from the South, extending from Babylon on the east, through Phoenicia and the Hebrew kingdoms, westward to Carthage and similar settlements of Phoenicians in the Western Mediterranean, Breasted reported that they confronted the great northern line of migration, the Indo European peoples. This, therefore, led to the inevitable collision of the Semitic and the Indo-European peoples. "The history of the ancient" Breasted said, "was largely made up of the struggle between southern Semitic line and the northern Indo European line. The pith of the Qur'anic Zulqarnain story was essentially an exposition of this struggle. Indeed, nothing of significance escaped the sacred pages of the Holy Qur'an.

As they dispersed farther West the most advanced tribes of the Indo-Europeans had already crossed the Danube and were far down in the Balkan Peninsula and Italy by 2000 BC. These Western tribes according to this outstanding author, were of mixed ancestry of the

Greeks and Romans.[21] The Holy Qur'anic story began during the final movement of these barbarians to the West in the fifth century BC when Zulqarnain, presumptuously Darius the Great, appeared to police the migration of the wild tribe of Scythians as they moved to the West their final settlement. The Great King, as was already discussed was an Aryan, Indo-European of Persian extraction. Sykes said, "Persians call their country Iran and themselves Irani, a word which is the Airiya of the Avesta and signifies the "land of the Aryans" or "illustrious." Hence a complete ancestral description of Darius I, could be succinctly put thus: "Son of Vishtaspa from the clan of Achaemenid and of Pasargadai tribe, a nationality of Parsa, and of Aryan race.

Sir Percy Sykes, also held both Cyrus the Great and Darius the Great in high esteem. He extolled the splendid qualities of the former and described him as the first great Aryan whose character was known in history, while the latter he described as one of the greatest Aryans of history. Darius the Great was not only a Great King but a religious leader as well, who successfully maintained peace and order in his area of suzerainty. Hence he was in collision with the Scythians whose tempestuous charge had a century earlier swept through Media like a cyclone. They then overran province after province as far as the Mediterranean Sea. It was the Scythian invasion of Media that Prophet Jeremiah vividly described in Jer. 6:23. But this time it was never again to happen because of the timely intervention of the 'Great policeman' of the ancient world, who not only quelled their incursions into provinces but invaded Scythia the cradle of the Gog and Magog. Thus, the expeditions of Zulqarnain were the depiction of Darius the Great while he was 'policing' the European territories. Thus, with this preview the reader could properly discern the wonders of the Holy Qur'an in its account of Zulqarnain. So who was Alexander?

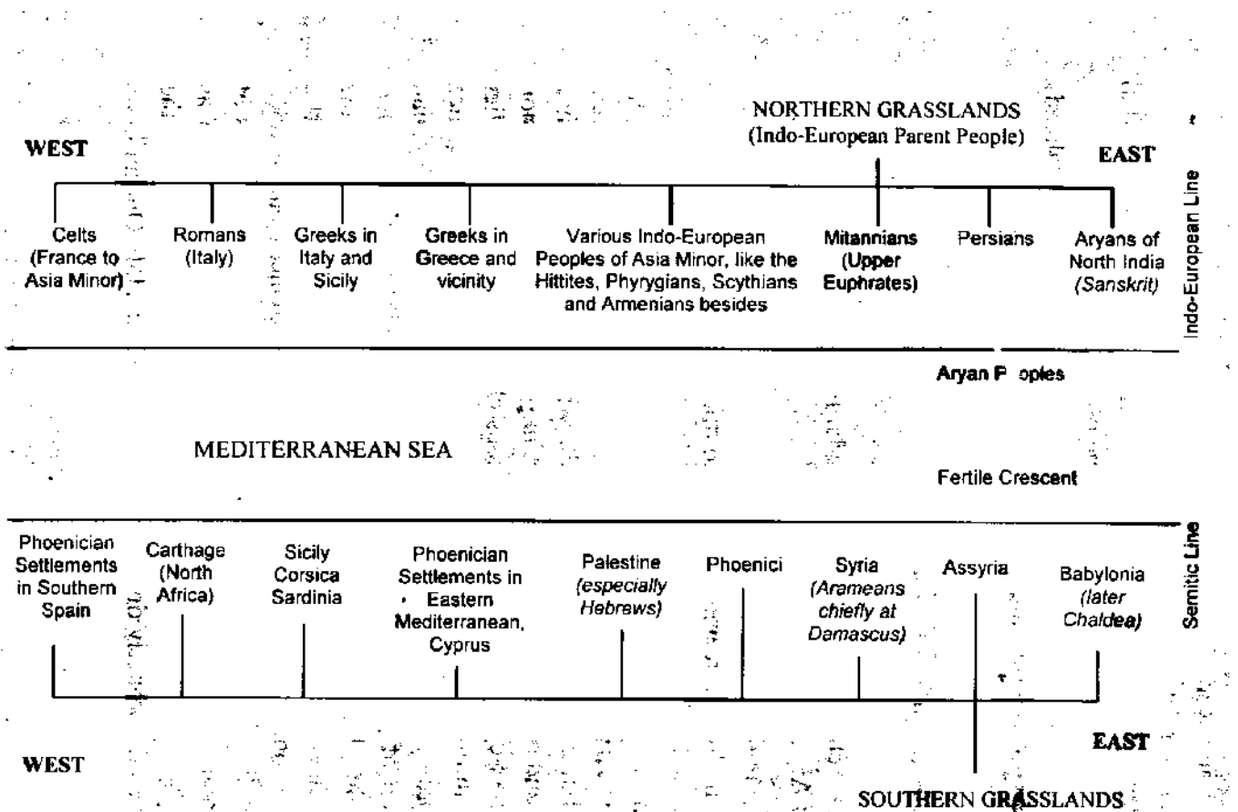


Diagram suggesting Two Lines of Semitic and Indo-European Dispersion
Source: Breasted, *Ancient Times A History of the Early World.*

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Chapter Two

ALEXANDER THE GREAT

> Amon declared Alexander to be his beloved son, on whom he bestowed "the immortality of Ra, and the royalty of Horus, victory over all his enemies, and the dominion of the world."
>
> - Fuller

Alexander was the son of Philip, King of Macedonia, who gained power over Macedonia in 360 BC. He was a very ambitious King who was determined to be the master of Greece. The cunning and ruthless leader extended his rule steadily over the Greek cities through bribery, treachery and force of arm. He, thus, extended his kingdom both eastward and northward until it reached the Danube and the Hellespont.[1] His conquests and expansion were dreaded by all and viewed with mixed feelings especially at Athens, where two policies arose in response to this ambitious expansionism by the Macedonian king and warlord. Philip offered his friendship to all the Greek cities to accept him as the unifier and saviour of the Greek world, especially at the crucial period in their history when it was exhausted and divided by bloody wars. A purposeful leadership by a man of his status would no doubt restore glory to the Greek world. Isocretes, an elderly man and one of the leading Athenian citizens was a proponent of this policy for Philip to lead the Greek world. The Orator began his career by writing law-court speeches and was famous for panegyricus and the panathenaicus which were hymns for the glories of Hellenism and Athens. Isocrates' support of Philip's mission had made a major contribution to pan-hellenism - a united Greece for the conquest and destruction of Persian World Empire. The opponents of this principle, however, viewed the Macedonian King as a man who used his words only to gain his ends. They denounced him as a barbarous tyrant, who was only endeavouring to enslave the Greek cities. Demosthenes, was the leader of this anti-Macedonian hegemony in Greece.

Demosthenes, an Athenian lawyer, politician and a powerful Orator became very vocal in the crusade against the Macedonian policy. He was by the whirlwind of his marvellous eloquence, able to persuade and carry the Athenian Assembly with him. In fact, the *Philippics*, his bitterest attacks and denunciations of the Macedonian King, were described as one of the greatest specimens of Greek eloquence. However, little did they know that Philip's ambition was far beyond the Greek nation, it was the fire of global conquest that was simmering to boil. He was a strategist who weighed all his moves on the scale of his ambition. A united Greek under him was but a fulcrum to be used to achieve his personal aim. However, Philip gained the leadership of the Greeks in 338 BC, when he defeated their forces in a decisive battle at *Chaeronea*. He made these Greek cities his subjects and signed a truce with Athens. These conquered states were to supply the Macedonian King with men, arms and ships for his war against Persia. Hence this statesman and conqueror firmly established his position as head of the Greek League of Nations.

Alexander was described at twenty to be below average height with a long flowing hair, unusually energetic, confident and ambitious, he was also moody with a terrible temper. He suffered from epilepsy and his hot temper often provoked seizure attacks. Unfortunately, when King Philip was felled by the assassin's dagger of Pausanias in 336 BC, his mantle of leadership, therefore, fell to his son Alexander, at the age of 22 years. This young over-ambitious King was, therefore, left to accomplish the dream of his father, a global conquest under Macedonian rule. No sooner had he taken this mantle of leadership than he became frenzied to outdo his father in the quest for glory.

The home environment of Alexander had prepared him to undertake the great and Herculean task of accomplishing the dream of his father. His mother Olympias had told him he was a god and

there were signs of greatness at his birth. So he grew up with the feeling that he was more than a man. At the age of 13 years, Philip had summoned to the Macedonian Court, the great Philosopher Aristotle, a former pupil of Plato, to be the teacher of the young Prince and the heir to the throne. Under the teachings of this great teacher, the lad quickly learned to understand the value of philosophy and science, and became fascinated by Greek literature especially the Homeric songs and the poems of Euripidice (480-406 BC), the last of the great tragedian poets, though he was regarded as an intellectual recluse by his contemporaries, yet, he was the favourite poet of Alexander.

Greek culture, the deeds and the values of her ancient heroes had both touched and rekindled his youthful imagination and lent a heroic tinge to Alexander's whole character and world view.[2] He grew up with his friends Cleitus, Philotas, Pausanias and Harpalus most of whom later became his loyal generals. These Macedonian youths like others were heavily inoculated with the hormone of racism. They were taught by the Aristotelian philosophy that the Greeks were the chosen people, the elect; they had the best culture and the best civilisation. All other races were barbarians, it was their moral duty to conquer them, enslave them and, if necessary destroy them. Thus, they were trained in both arts of warfare and weaponry so as to become masters of the world.

Alexander's motivation in life was fired by his ambition to rule and to excel over all the ancient heroes. He felt he was given a divine mission to take Greek culture and civilisation all over the world. Now it had the unity and strength to fulfil this mission. He was, therefore, *ab initio* not religiously inclined, as he was motivated by Greek nationalism. He was galvanised by acquisition of wealth and power, which this global conquest stands to provide. These were more than enough motivations, for one imbued with insatiable desire to dominate, outdo and excel over others in

acquisition and display of power. Thus, it could be seen that his meritorious conquests throughout his life were not religiously motivated. And under the tutelage of Aristotle, Alexander's character was moulded and developed by his mother, while his quest for eternal glory was sharpened by this great teacher.

He grew up with increasing fire in his belly and gasoline in his veins. His mind was sharpened, his whole personality imbued with the splendour of Greek geniuses, heroes and with the pride he took in Hellenic culture. So religion in the orthodox sense was neither in the eyes nor in the mind of Alexander throughout his short but eventful life. In fact, he was a zealot in *Hellenism,* a culture he resolved to make universal. He became so besotted with the dream to lead a united world under him. Ikhnaton of Egypt had first discerned this world view a thousand years earlier. This young King, therefore, took it upon himself to accomplish this seemingly untenable objectives.[3] But it was a feat already achieved by two Persian Monarchs.

Thus, the combined impact of upbringing, education and the environment built a ruthless, over-ambitious King who believed the end justified the means and pushed it to an extreme absurdity. This explained why he often left charred ruins and destruction in his wake throughout his conquests of the world. As a nationalist he fervently believed in Hellenism and was determined at all cost, to make it global. Even in the Greek religious realm, Alexander, had never seen himself as a worshipper but as an idol of worship. His father Philip had the figure of Heracles (Hercules) as his ancestor on his coins. He, therefore, believed that through his father, he was paternally a descendant of the god Hercules and maternally, a descendant of Achilles.[4] Alexander, therefore, had not only believed in the Grecian gods, he had their divine kinship. He was hence no ordinary man and the gods were helping him in his meteoric rise in power, and with the might of these gods he believed he rose to power.

His Rise in Power

Alexander rose to glory through military conquests of Europe and then Asia. He built his career upon the foundation laid down by his father Philip king of Macedonia who planned to make himself master of the disunited Greek world. He proved his ability both as a skilled statesman as well as an able and brave soldier. When he was a hostage in Thebes, he learned the value of the *Oblique Battle Front* technique in warfare. He learned this perfect killing art in ancient battles from Epaminondas, the conqueror of the Spartans. But Philip surpassed his teacher.[5] Alexander, having more ambition than his father had surpassed all in the effective use of *Oblique Battle Front* technique. When Philip was killed by the assassin's dagger in 336 BC, Alexander mounted the throne successfully. Although on Philip's death many of the Greek cities revolted against the Greek League of Nations, but Alexander crushed their uprisings with a firm hand. These uprisings had given him the opportunity to test his skills, ruthlessness and his weapon on his own people so that the nation of Greek and the rest of the world should realise, henceforth, what they were up against. Martin Robert had described Alexander's onslaughts on the Thebes, thus:

> Taken by storm, the city was completely razed to the ground except its temples and the house of the great Poet, Pindar. Six thousand Thebans were butchered on the spot. The rest were sold into slavery. Not surprising, the Greeks did as they were told then on.[6]

The Greek cities cowed with the ruthless decimation of Thebans, they offered little or feeble resistance to the inroads of the conqueror. So having made a crude example on Thebes, he invaded Asia Minor. Alexander, with the loyal support of his able generals invaded Asia Minor in 334 B.C. with a well equipped and trained army, and led by one of the greatest generals in history. Near the Hellespont, the Son of Zeus Ammon, visited the city of Troy to pay

his homage to the tomb of Achilles, the Greek hero of the Iliad. Alexander camped at the plain where the Greek heroes of the Homeric songs had once fought a battle. Here he worshipped in the temple of Athena and prayed for the success of this course – the conquest and destruction of the Persian World Empire. A success, which he believed, could not be achieved without being at peace with the gods. Thus, this homage paid to Achilles had symbolised his faith in and reverence of the Grecian gods, which all combined to give him confidence of success in this crusade. Achilles was his maternal relation he ought to be appeased before undertaking this monumental task ahead of him.

It was at the town of Gordium, Alexander untied the legendary mythical knot with the force of his sword. He initially attempted the task with his bare hands but failing to do it, he employed the use of his weapon. This demonstrated his determination to achieve his ambition, even with the force of arms. The onlookers; the Phrygians and Macedonians, shouted with delight, as Alexander cut the knot, saying, "Lo! The Oracle was fulfilled and Alexander would become the Monarch of Asia." This was because of an old saying that whoever untied the knot, he would become the master of Asia. So like a cowboy in the ranch, he raided Europe and Asia in a phenomenal rise in power. He fought many battles; his decisive engagements included: the battles of the Granicus, the Issus and the Arbela. In all his wars, it was victory after victory and his conquest at Granicus signalled the doom of the old Persian Empire.

His Battle of the Granicus (334 BC)

Alexander, the young ambitious King of Macedonia, crossed Hellespont in the spring of 334 BC to invade Asia Minor at the age of 22 years, and commanding an army of 40,000 men (35,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry). Every man was well trained and well equipped, and led by one of the greatest generals in history.[7] This

captain general of all Greece, being the head of the Greek League of Nations, was set to fight his critical battle at the river Granicus. He was with a well-trained and heavily armed infantry to fight the Persians. It was a crucial and decisive battle and the Greeks were eager to prove their mettle. It was in this first encounter with the Persians, his friend Clitus, saved the life of the impetuous King.

This victory at Granicus must have no doubt broken the jinx of the Persians. The Greeks, therefore, sallied forth and moved like an electric train leaving enormous destruction in their wake. The Persians were made to understand that their colossal world empire would ineluctably collapse, under these ferocious attacks of the invading army. It was in the battle of Issus that the handwriting on the wall was clear for all to see. Absolute luxury had already eaten the entire fabric of the Persian Empire which had become old and corrupt and therefore Alexander had little resistance at Issus.

His Battle of Issus (333 BC)

Alexander, the young conqueror marched through Asia Minor, taking the Greek cities one by one until he freed all Western Asia Minor from the Persian yoke. At the gulf of Issus, he met the main Persian army under the personal command of the Great King, Darius III Codomannus, and the last of the Persian Achaemenian line. After crossing Cappadocia, the Conqueror came down into the plains of Cicilia running like a hungry lion chasing a deer. Alexander found the Persian army at Issus. He was courageously determined to bulldoze his way to the Syrian Gates. This war Marshall tactically enclosed his enemies between the mountains and the sea, it was too late when the Persian Calvary realised that the battlefield was too narrow for them to charge effectively. Therefore, hampered by the terrain, they fell easily to the ruthless invading soldiers. They were routed and mercilessly dealt with and the Persian King took to his heels.

Alexander had employed the tactics of *Oblique Battle Front,* which his father had learned from Epaminondas. And it proved very effective, devastating and lethal to the Persian troops. Parmenio, seized the camp and the royal family at Damascus with a vast amount of booty.[8] This victory had demonstrated beyond doubt that the days of Persian world empire were numbered and Darius III Codomannus, retreated ignominiously until he had crossed the river Euphrates. He sent an embassy with a peace proposal to the Macedonian warlord, offering an immense ransom for the royal captives and a pledge to surrender all the lands west of the Euphrates. He also proposed that Alexander should marry his daughter and become his ally. The message was discussed in a Council during, which Parmenio said that if he were Alexander he would accept the terms. "And I," said the king, "would accept them if I were Parmenio."[9]

The ambitious Alexander was resolute in his determination to carry out his global conquest to the end, and he would agree to no compromise. Therefore, he sent the ambassadors of Darius with the message of his resolution; saying that he would neither receive money nor provinces in lieu of the whole empire of Darius. He affirmed that all these possessions were now his and as a vanquished King, Darius was not in a position to propose a peace deal or a compromise. Alexander was so blunt in his message when he informed the conquered Monarch that he would marry his daughter if he so desired, whether he (Darius) willed or not. He ended the message with a strong warning that: "If Darius wished for any favour, he must come himself and ask it."[10] This message was very likely intended to send shivers down the spine of the fleeing King and to demoralise him further.

Alexander at the battle of Issus had defeated an army considerably larger than his own; led by the Great King. While he was fleeing his mother, wife and children were made captives. They were all apprehensive of their fate. Alexander, therefore, sent one of

his men to comfort and reassure them for he bore no enmity against them. Contrary to expectation, his respect of the royal captives astonished his contemporaries because as some historians stated, Alexander's ideal hero Achilles would not have resisted the charm of the captive Queen Statira, the most beautiful of women. But the charms of love had no temptation for Alexander and his behaviour towards the captives was prompted not by humane or generous feelings, but by the instinct and policy of a royal invader to display respect towards royalty.[11] As such it had no religious motivation. Naturally, Darius Codomannus was very restive and disturbed with his family in the hands of his veritable enemy as captives. And with his empire on the verge of disintegration, he was humbled and obliged to write to Alexander, to complain of an unprovoked aggression against him. He requested also that the royal captives be sent back and that he was willing to conclude a treaty of friendship and alliance with the Macedonian warlord. Alexander gave him a stern reply:

> Your ancestors and without provocation inflicted wrongs upon us. I was appointed leader of the Greeks, and crossed over into Asia for the purpose of avenging those wrongs, for you were the first aggressors. In the next place, you assisted the people of Perinthus, who were offenders against my father, and Ochus sent a force into Thrace, which was part of our empire. Further, the conspirators who slew my father were suborned by you, as you yourselves boasted in your letters. You with the help of Bagoas murdered Arse (Son of Ochus) and seized the throne unjustly and contrary to the Laws of the Persians, and then you wrote unfavourable letters about me to the Greeks, to incite them to war against me, and sent to the Lacaedomonians and others of the Greeks for the same purpose, sums of money (wherefore none of the other cities partook, but only the Lacaedomonians); and your emissaries corrupted my friends and tried to dissolve the peace which I had brought about in Greece.
>
> Wherefore, I marched forth against you who were the aggressor in the quarrel. I have overcome in battle, first your generals and Satraps, and now yourself and your hosts, and

possess your land, through the grace of the gods. Those who fought on your side and were not slain, but took refuge with me, are under my protection, and are glad to be with me, and will fight with me henceforward. I am lord of all Asia, and therefore you should come to me. If you are afraid of being badly treated, send some of your friends to receive sufficient guarantees. You have only to come to me and ask for and receive your mother and wife and children; and whatever else you desire.

And for the future, whenever you send, send to me as to the Great King of Asia, and do not write as an equal, but tell me whatever your need be, as to one who is lord of all that is yours. Otherwise, I shall deal with you as an offender. But if you dispute the kingdom, then wait and fight for it again and do not flee for I shall march against you whatever you may be.[12]

Alexander could not reach any compromise with Codomannus, because he intended to tear his empire to pieces, for the benefit of his country Greece. It was a war of colonisation he waged on the collapsing World Empire. Codomannus' letter or proposal for peace, therefore, galvanised the Macedonian warlord into ravaging the Persian Empire. Its conquest and destruction had become inevitable: There was reason behind every action Alexander took, his destruction of the Phoenician cities, Sidon and Tyre was intended to obliterate their commercial activities as international centres of trade and commerce, only for Greece to fill in the vacuum. Thus, blinded by the glaring personal glory and the expected economic benefits to his country, Alexander could never compromise with anybody and was pitiless in the campaigns.

After the conquest of Tyre in August 332 BC, Alexander then performed the sacrifice to Heracles in the temple. He celebrated the solemnity with a torch procession and games. He then advanced southward, meeting no resistance until he came to Gaza, the city of the Philistines. He put the city under siege and ordered the siege engine to be mounted on elevation and to level with the wall, and it was done quickly. When the engines were placed in position, Alexander offered a sacrifice, and a bird of prey flying over the altar

dropped a stone on the King's garlanded head. Then Aristander, the soothsayer, interpreted the meaning of the sign: "O King, you will take the city, but you must take good heed of your own safety on this day."[13] In the melee that ensured, Alexander rushed to the aid of Macedonians when the besieged sallied forth and he was wounded on the shoulder by a dart. He captured the fortified city eventually with slaughter greater than in Tyre, and the women and children were sold to slavery.[14]

Alexander entered Egypt in November 332 BC, where he was welcomed. At Memphis, the capital city of the Pharaohs, he made sacrifice to Apis and other native gods. He made it clear that Greek Civilisation was now to pour into the regions of the Nile. He therefore, held athletic games and a poetical contest at Memphis where most famous artists from Greece came to take participate.[15] He wasted no time in his spread of Hellenism or Greek culture. At the outset, he planted the seeds of Greek Civilisation in the Egyptian capital. He then laid the foundation of Alexandria in 331 BC on a place east of Rhacotic, between lake Mareotis and the sea, as the site of a new city, over the Island of Pharos, because it was famous in the Homeric song. The King was said to have even traced out the ground plan of the city, Alexandria - the market place and the circuit of the walls, the sanctuary of Isis and the temples of the Hellenic gods.[16] Alexander seemed to be guided in all his actions either by the interests of Greek culture or by the Grecian gods. He never showed primacy or any relevance of the colonised peoples.

Even the choice of Alexandria in Egypt was only intended to serve the interests of Greece primarily: "Alexander's selfish objective in founding this city could not be doubted." It was intended to take the place of Tyre as the commercial centre of Western Asia and the Eastern Mediterranean. The good reason of diverting the commercial lines of activity from Phoenicia to the Egyptian coast, was in line with the natural policy of Alexander to transfer the centre of trade of the world, wherever it may be, into the

hands of the Greeks. It was with a view to boost the commercial interests of his own race that Alexander founded the port of Alexandria of Egypt.[17] Egypt was only used to serve the selfish interests of the imperial power. And there was a good reason for diverting the lines of traffic from Phoenicia to the Egyptian coast. It was naturally the policy of Alexander to transfer the centre of world trade, as much as possible, into the hands of Greeks. As Greek. Alexander pursued an International Policy that was based on "Live and Let die." This king could not have been the Qur'anic Zulqarnain.[18]

Alexander's stratagem worked because any new emporium arising on the ruins of Tyre and Sidon would have become predominantly Phoenician with nothing for Greeks; owing to their ingenuity in trade and commerce, they would become a world leading nation. Whereas if the commercial centre was shifted to the Egyptian coast, Greek traders would encounter no such rivalry. Little wonder then Alexander had given the city of Tyre a lethal blow. Because the Phoenicians must be destroyed to give the Greek traders a leverage and competitive edge over all other nations in commerce, they were perceived as enemies only on account of their prosperity in business. And by the time the cities were reconstructed, the commercial centre had already shifted to Egypt and into the hands of the Greek traders – their arch rivals. This policy had laid bare the truth about the International Policy pursued by Alexander the Great.

Martin Roberts, the author quoted before described the ruthless manner with which the city of Tyre was razed to the ground and with the most gruesome pogrom in history. He wrote:

> The fury of the Macedonians building up during the seven months' siege was now let loose. Tyre, like Thebes, was razed to the ground. Several thousand men, women and children were slaughtered, thirty thousand made slaves and two thousand men of military age crucified.[19]

The Phoenicians were never known to cause any trouble with the government in power as they were content with their prosperous business and had succeeded as a leading nation in commerce and trade. Their potential greatness had moved the Greeks to envy and as a result, Alexander let loose on them, a carnage that was beyond description. They became victims of ruthless pogrom of unparalleled scale not because they were keen supporters of the Persian Empire but because they had to give way to Greek traders in the international market. This warlord could not have lost thousands of Macedonian lives and enormous fortune, only to establish Alexandria purely for the economic, religious and political interests of the Egyptians. He colonised the world only to serve the selfish interests of Greece. It was in like manner that Britain had colonised the world to become "Great Britain." This Alexandrian policy which he introduced in ancient international politics had only changed in form but not in content, in the present context of world politics. In fact, it was an old wine in new bottle.

Alexander the Apostle of Greek civilisation, refusing all peace proposals marched against Darius, the last of the Achaemenian Kings. He crossed the Tigris at Bezebde. It was on the same night that the moon went into eclipse, on the night of 20th September 331 BC. His soldiers were terrified and anxious of what this might portend. The War Marshall then reassured them that: "It was an omen of good fortune the Persian moon would be eclipsed by the Macedonian Sun." Alexander, however, sought the confirmation of his interpretation from Aristander, his personal Astrologer, who agreed with him. Alexander, then learnt that Darius had encamped in a plain near Gaugamala on the river Bumodus, and he wasted no time in chasing the fleeing Great King to pick the World Crown, as Codamannus galloped in the battle field.

His Battle of Arbela (331 BC)

In the spring of 331 BC Alexander left Memphis and in the battle of Gaugamala; Babylon, Susa and Persepolis were delivered into the

hungry hands of the Conqueror. Advancing along the Mesopotamia, he crossed river Tigris near the ruins of Nineveh. Here at Arbela, this invincible legend engaged Persia's vast army. Although he was greatly outnumbered, the *Oblique Battle Front* technique employed by his professional army once again proved too lethal; the Asiatic army was crushed and their King was again forced into ignominious flight. The victorious Macedonian warlord then established himself in the palace of the Persian King at Babylon. At Persepolis, Alexander set fire to the palaces with his own hand, as the Persians had once done to Miletus and to the temples on the Athenian Acropolis. He hurled the torch which destroyed the most magnificent building in the East which the world had ever produced at that time. This action was said to be a revenge against the burning of Athens but some historians regarded it as due to the excesses of a drunken revel. Yet, others claimed that it was a deliberate act to signal the end of the Persian empire. He was said to have afterward expressed his regret over the barbaric action but Arrian knew better. Arrian, the great historian of Alexander, gave a detailed account of how his master burnt Persepolis, the most magnificent city in the world – a barbaric action which had astounded the civilised world. He wrote:

> He (Alexander) burnt the Palace against the advice of Parmenio who suggested that he should spare it, mainly because it was hardly wise to destroy what was his own property and because the Asians would in his opinion, be less ready to support him if he seemed only to be passing through their country as a conqueror rather than ruling it securely as a King. Alexander's answer was that he wished to punish the Persians for their invasion of Greece, for the destruction of Athens, the burning of the temples and for all other crimes against the Greek. My own view is that this was bad policy; Moreover it could hardly be considered as punishment of Persians long since dead and gone.[20]

Parmenio, a general with unalloyed fealty to the King, perhaps, was not privy to the bad international politics undertaken by his

master to supplant every civilisation with that of Greeks. There was no way Persepolis could be spared by Alexander, in his onslaught in Persia because it could not be transferred to his home country. And as far as he was concerned the best in the world must not be beyond the confines of Greece. This explained why he passed through the Persian empire not as a King but as a merciless conqueror. Alexander paid Parmenio, a good adviser and an architect to his successes for his good services with gruesome reward when he killed him in cold blood. This was Askandar on his way to glory.

While the vanquished King ran to raise a new army in Media, he was assassinated by two of his *Satraps,* Bessus and Barsaentes who killed Codomannus in July 330 BC. The victorious Conqueror rode up with a few of his officers in time to look for the body of the last Persian Emperor, the Lord of Asia, whose vast empire had now fallen into the hands of Alexander. He then became the Lord of East and West, master of the two Kingdoms. Alexander, therefore, earned the epithet "Zulqarnain." It was not a name of a person but a title and was defined by Ustadh Abdullahi Yusuf Ali. He explained it in detail thus: What is the meaning of the name of title Zulqarnain - "Lord of the two Qarns?" Qarn may mean: (1) a horn in the literal sense, as in the case of a ram or bull; (2) a horn in a metaphorical sense, as in English, the horns of a crescent, or by a further metaphor (not used in English), the horns of a kingdom or territory, two portions at opposite ends. (3) Another metaphor, a summit, a lock hair, typifying strength; a crest such as Eastern Kings wear on their diadems; (4) referring to time; an Epoch, an Age, a Generation.

These four meanings of the epithet as given by the renowned Muslim genius were comprehensive enough. He ruled out the first definition as inapplicable to a man or a great King. Although, it used to be the teaching in the past based upon the level of education of the *Ulama as* it was a time when the title Zulqarnain was used in

the literal sense, a man of God with two horns like a ram on his head. This literal translation is perhaps still gaining currency. However, the other three meanings of the title may be applicable to a man or a great King. Ustadh Abdullahi Yusuf Ali explained the meaning as implying:

> Lord of East and West, Lord of wide territory or of two Kingdoms. Lord of two crests on his diadem, typifying two kingdoms, or a rank superior to that of an ordinary King. Lord of more than one Epoch: One whose power and influence extend far beyond his life-time.[21]

According to Ustadh Abdullahi Yusuf Ali, Alexander had qualified for all the three latter designations. He was right that the Macedonian warlord was the Captain General of all Greece, and having conquered the Persian Empire became the master of Asia as well. Within thirteen years of his military conquest he had become the Lord of East and West or the Lord of wide territory or of two kingdoms. There was no gainsaying the fact, too, that there were others who had preceded him, and had earned this much-coveted title as well. His predecessors included: Cyrus (550-530 BC) and Darius the Great (522-485 BC). These great Persian monarchs had during their reign claimed the mastery of the East and West. All the three later designations would be applicable to each of them too. Incidentally, these masters of the East and West were the chief rulers of Mesopotamia, the melting pot of the world at that time, it was also described as the "Garden of Eden' of the ancient world. From 538-331 BC, the chief rulers were Cyrus the Great, Darius the Great and Xerxes. Alexander the Great ruled it from 331 BC to 323 BC.[22] All of them were masters of the world, and each was a Zulqarnain.

Although Alexander qualified as Zulqarnain, he only used this position to spread Hellenism. This was contrary to the Zulqarnain mentioned in the Amazing Revelation who was said to rule according to the laws of God. The spread of Greek culture could not be said to have anything to do with the laws of God but the laws of

the heathens. He could also be aptly described as the apostle of the Grecian gods who was sent to spread Hellenism as an ideology.

His Spread of Hellenic Culture

The childhood dream of Alexander was realised when he became Zulqarnain. A coveted position, he used it only to spread his own culture and civilisation, which he thought to be the best in the world. Historians generally had agreed that the conquests of Alexander were motivated by nationalistic and not religious zeal. He believed implicitly in the superiority of the Greek culture and civilisation. So he was determined to Hellenise the world. In this process, he attempted to merge Asiatic with European civilisation through marriage consanguinity by transplanting colonies of Greeks and Macedonians in Asia to serve as colonial masters. Thus, in his army Macedonians, Greeks and Asians stood side by side. He felt he was making concessions to the Persian World by this policy of colonisation. In a sumptuous ceremony in his palace at Babylon, he married Roxane, a beautiful Bactrian princess and in a gorgeous wedding festival, he obliged his officers and friends to marry the daughters of Asiatic nobles. Thousands of Macedonians in the army followed the example of their great King and took Persian wives. Alexander then appeared more of a Persian by adopting their raiment and by appointing them to high offices as *Satraps.*[23]

Alexander, the Apostle of Greek civilisation had schemed to spread this culture and to fuse Asia and Europe into one homogenous unity. He proposed and partially carried out the transportation of Greeks and Macedonians into Asia, and Asiatics into Europe as permanent settlers. This first approach was partially executed by his foundation of numerous cities in the Near East, which were named after him. The second approach was the initiation of intermarriages between Persians and Macedonians. This was inaugurated in a grandiose celebration at Susa where the king himself married Statira, the daughter of Darius, and his friend

Hephaestion took her sister in this marriage spree full of *Joie de vivre*. It was proved beyond doubt that the motive behind Alexander's conquests, were to spread Hellenism and to give Greeks and their allies the Hellenised barbarians a political and economic leverage over others in international affairs because there was no iota of religious motivation. In every aspect, Alexander's leadership qualities were antithetical to the Qur'anic Zulqarnain. His global dominion was for Greek colonisation and imperialism, tactically executed through Alexander the Great. The population of Greece was too insignificant as compared to the world it intended to colonise. So Alexander's intention was to increase the population of the colonialists. This could only be possible through the multiplication of Hellenised barbarians through marriage consanguinity.

In this subterfuge, therefore, the nuptials were celebrated on the same day and according to Persian fashion. A large number of Macedonian officers wedded the daughters of Persian grandees. Alexander was said to have feted 9,000 guests. Of the general mass of the Macedonians 10,000 were said to have followed the example of their officers and had taken Asiatic wives. All were liberally rewarded by Alexander.[24] It could be expected that through this method alone, the population of Hellenised barbarians would increase by over 10,000 annually. If this was added to the number in the colonies transplanted to Asia from Greece, the population would be enormous. These Hellenised barbarians were the favourites of the government who were trained not along the line of Persia this time but according to Greek culture and civilisation. They would receive the best education and the best training so that they occupy various strategic positions to serve the interests of Greece, the colonial master. The conquest and subjugation of all nations under Darius the Great was devoid of this type of nefarious system of colonisation, when it emerged about two centuries later.

Alexander had taken the policy seriously; and he proved it by showing personal example. He was already married to the beautiful

Bactrian Princess Roxana. His adoption of the polygamous custom of Persia, was in line with his grand design of increasing the population of Asiatic with Greek blood. He married another royal lady named Parysatis daughter of Ochus.[25] These marriages were purely calculated to meet up with the political exigencies of the international scheme. Henceforth, no one would accept his identification as Zulqarnain because Alexander's policies were a negation of the Qur'anic Zulqarnain completely. Alexander, pursued a policy of founding cities often named after him which he organised on Greek lines and run by Greek settlers. This policy, was described as making "Islands of Hellenism in a barbarian sea." It was to actualise this policy he commanded a mass marriage of his Macedonian soldiers with the Persian women, an event which took place at Susa shortly before his death, in a glitzy ceremony.

Some of his generals including Seleucus had also married Asiatic noble women. Therefore, Seleucus's son and heir, for instance, being half Greek and half Persian was uniquely suited to rule an Oriental Empire on Greek lines. Hence, Alexander won his appellation of 'the Great' from this policy of spreading Hellenism. This cross-fertilisation of European and Asiatic civilisations through marriage consanguinity had completed half of Alexander's wish and desire for global conquest. The other half, was to him a crucial desideratum, which unfortunately cost him his entire career. This was the claim of divinity and would be discussed shortly. He was paid with the unmerited title of 'the Great', an action that was faulted by many historians.

H. A. Clement, a historian and author of *The Story of the Ancient World,* stated that Alexander's military career, in which, within thirteen years he became a master of the two worlds was brilliant but that he was incapable of ruling them. His vast empire had proved too large to be held together and be brought under his control. He added: "Historians have called him 'the Great', his 'greatness' really lies in his work for civilisation more than in his

military conquests, which in themselves were often cruel and short-lived."[26]

This, obviously, might sound a contradiction, a cruel conqueror working for civilisation. Notwithstanding, he was called 'the Great'. His greatness could not be compared with that of Darius who was 'Great' in the real sense of the word. Alexander's cruelty knew no bounds, in fact, he could be compared with the German Adolf Hitler of the modern world. Both were megalomaniac military rulers, both were full blooded racists, both had hankered after world domination by their race but Hitler as a modern soldier had better organising skills than Alexander whose empire disintegrated with his death. Finally, both could kill countless in the interest of their own race because they were avowed racists and pitiless leaders. Alexander's conquest of the Far East also typified his brutal nature, a subject of discussion in the next chapter.

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Chapter Three

CONQUEST OF THE FAR EAST

> They shall lay hold on bow and spear; they are cruel, and have no mercy; their voices roareth like the sea, and they ride upon horses.
>
> - Jeremiah

There was the claim by some that Alexander the Great undertook some projects, notable among which was the construction of the Iron Barrier mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. It was supposed to have been constructed by Alexander, near Derbend in Central Asia in Hissar District about 150 miles south east of Sogdiana or Bukhara. But this was the area raided by Alexander as he pursued Bessus, the murderer of Darius III. His conquest of the Far East, the carnage he inflicted, especially the general massacre of innocent civilians were enough to disqualify him from the title of the Qur'anic Zulqarnain. In his heroic romances, he won battle after battle; year after year. The warlord struck through the Hindu Kush into Turkestan, crossed the Oxus river to reach Samarcand and captured the Scythian Chief Oxartes, whose daughter Roxana he married. Therefore, it became worthwhile to revisit his conquest of Bactria and Sogdiana.

His Conquest of Sogdiana and Bactria

Bessus, the Satrap who killed Darius III and put an end to the line of the Achaemenians was a kinsman of the Great King. It was felt by many that the only way to restore the image and dignity of the ruling house was that he should usurp the throne. A plot was formed in which Darius was killed in the first part of the plan. He then assumed the throne with the title of Great King and with the name of Artaxerxes in its second part. Therefore, Alexander went hunting for this pretender, lest he formed a formidable resistance and gained a mass support to counterbalance the gains of the invader. Hence,

with a murderous rage, Alexander descended into Sogdiana in pursuit of the fugitive. This country also called Bukhara and lay between the streams of the Oxus and the Jaxartes. It was named Sogdiana from the river Sogd, which flowed through the land and passed near the cities of Samarcand and Bukhara and finally joined the Oxus. While following Bessus into this area, we should look for the location of the Iron Barrier, which Alexander was alleged to have built for certain people mentioned in the Holy Qur'an.

Alexander, feared that the fugitive Bessus Artaxerxes, the *de facto* king of Persia, could easily form an army to resist him. He resolved to get rid of him as quickly as possible. And he had to cope with the prevailing rumours of mutiny, which was rampant in his army, besides, their morale which was at its lowest ebb. So, he could not have been in the good frame of mind to be the benevolent King described. Furthermore, he was not known for personally participating in construction work of any kind, but often he relinquished his role as leader only during a conquest or in melee to increase the death toll where he fought with the valour of an ordinary soldier. On his arrival at the banks of the Oxus with his soldiers weary and tired, Alexander found that Bessus had burnt the boats. He was forced to transport his army by the primitive vehicle of inflated skins. However, instead of inflating the sheep skin with air he stuffed them with rushes with which they hurriedly crossed the river at Kilif, where its bank contracted to the width of about two-thirds of a mile and advanced on the road to Maracanda, the chief city of the country easily recognised as Samarcand.[1]

Bessus, the *de facto* King, had some Sogdian allies and Spitamenes and Dataphernes were among the leaders. Unfortunately, the Sogdians made a fatal mistake thinking that Alexander's main objective was only to capture the fugitive, so they surrendered him to the invader in a bid to save their country. The King sent Ptolemy the son of Lagus, with 6,000 men to bring the

Pretender, whom they found alone in a walled village deserted by his allies. He was brought naked and kept nearby where the army was marching. This was to show to all that nobody picked on the King and got away with it. Alexander, questioned the captive on why he captured, made prisoner and finally murdered Darius, his King and benefactor to whom he had sworn loyalty. Bessus replied that he acted in concert with other Persian nobles so as to curry favour from the King. He was scourged, his ears and nose cut and crucified and was taken to Ecbatana to die.

But to the chagrin of the Sogdianis, Alexander, forcefully annexed their country. As a result of the betrayal of the former Satrap who murdered his King, Sogdians paid with their country a turn of events they had initially wanted to avoid. Having seized and garrisoned Samarcand, his army pushed on north-eastward. They followed a rough terrain with seven strongholds, which the Sogdians had built as defences against invaders.[2] The road reached the Jaxertes where the river coming from the valley of Fergana deflected its course to flow through the steppes. This was an important gate of communication between South-western Asia and China. The invaders passed over the Tian-shan mountains and descended on the side into the land of Kashgar. It was here he put the limit of his empire and on the bank of the river he founded a new city in 328 BC which he named after himself, Alexandria Ultimate.[3]

Meanwhile, the Sogdians were embittered with Alexander's action of annexing their country and they were ready to fight against the European domination. Spitamenes was again the leader of the uprising, and was supported by many Sogdians and Oxyartes. The few soldiers Alexander left in the seven strongholds were overpowered and the garrison of Samarcand besieged. It was almost at the same time that in the Western wastes, the Massagetae and other Scythian tribes flocked to drive out the intruders. It was a

dangerous moment for Alexander.[4] The resistance of the inhabitants was very tough. He sent a few thousand troops to the besieged garrison in Samarcand, because jeering hordes of barbarians of the north kept pouring down to the banks of the Jaxertes ready to cross the stream and harass the Macedonians in the rear. Every soldier fought tooth and nail to break the local, formidable resistance. It became necessary to repel them to keep the passage of the river secured. Hence, Alexander was determined to cross the river. So he made the usual ritual offerings to the gods, which were not favourable as Aristander his seer told him that they portended a personal danger to the King. However, he was not in a position to heed the warnings as the army seized the moment to cross and the Scythians were routed. Alexander pursued them at the head of his cavalry into the steppes. Parched by the intense heat, the King was impelled to drink the foul water of the desert and as a result he fell seriously ill.[5] But as soon as he recovered he pushed the conquest harder with more ruthlessness.

Meanwhile, the elusive Spitamenes had fled to the part of Sogdiana called the Bukhara so the Macedonians went after him. In their rush to capture Spitamenes, the Macedonians' whole detachment were, however, cut off and massacred. When Alexander learnt of this disaster he hurried to Samarcand with cavalry and light troops covering the distance in three days - a march between 50 and 60 miles per day.[6] It could be seen that Alexander had never undertaken any journey around this area but conquests. The fleeing Spitamenes was pursued by Alexander and he swept on Sogdiana ruthlessly ravaging the land, as he marched south-westwards to the Oxus which he crossed at Zariaspa. Unfortunately, with sadistic relish, Alexander vented his anger on the innocent civilians living in Branchidae. It was a cold blooded murder that would remain forever an albatross to the ice-cold brutish conquest of Alexander of Macedon.

His Branchidae Massacre

It was at the town of the Branchidae near Kilif that Alexander had demonstrated his brutality and ruthlessness, which were far unbecoming of the Qur'anic Zulqarnain. About two centuries earlier, the Branchidae were the custodians of the temple and Oracle of Apollo 20 miles from Miletus, and were charged with having betrayed the treasures of the sanctuary. As such their lives were not safe from the anger of the Milesians. So Xerxes, the Persian King felt their lives were in jeopardy, and transported them into Central Asia where the Greek vengeance could not reach them.[7] They were relocated in Sogdiana not far from the place where Alexander crossed their settlement. Although, they were severed and separated for so long from Hellas, they still preserved their Greek religion and language. Naturally, they were excited with the coming of the Greek army; but little did they know that the crime of their ancestors would haunt them as the folk came forth joyously to bid Alexander welcome and offer him their loyalty.

But the only thing which this innocent people stirred in Alexander's mind was that their ancestors had committed a heinous crime against Apollo by siding with Persia against Greece. That crime, according to the pigment of his imagination, had never been forgotten by the men of Miletus. So he brought the judgement of a crime committed almost two centuries earlier. The King called the Milesians in his army to pronounce a penalty upon the innocent generations of the Branchidae. The Milesians, naturally, could not agree on what to do to this innocent people. Because it was be a travesty of justice to punish them for a crime they did not commit.

Alexander himself finally decided the fate of the people; he pronounced the final judgement. To surround and cordon them with soldiers and to massacre everybody – men, women, children and babies. To exterminate them all."[8] This Branchidae incident was

typical of the man Alexander. It was a gruesome pogrom in which countless died in cold blood. Transplanting this colony of Greeks in Asia as was done by Xerxes was a negation of the international policy of Alexander. But he transplanted many of such colonies in various strategic places in Asia for the promotion of Hellenism. It could be seen how unjust and cruel was his rule. Any action or policy which was not in accord with Greek interests was cancelled by Alexander. It was, therefore, unfathomable how he could have been the Qur'anic Zulqarnain who ruled all nations according to the laws of God. Many historians in their characteristic styles have tried to justify this massacre with strange arguments to make it seem less offensive. Obviously, majority of them were not taken aback by this action of the Warlord. But the fact remained that he had committed much more heinous crimes during his conquests. Although Alexander had committed a lot of heinous and cruel deeds, none was so appalling as this extermination of an entire town.

Furthermore, along Bactria and Sogdiana his route of conquest to India, there was no indication of where he built an Iron Barrier for the security of certain people as suggested by Ustadh Abdullahi Yusuf Ali. Instead, we were only witnesses to ruins, destruction and massacres in cascades one after the other. In fact, there were more hostilities committed in Bactria and Sogdiana until at last overawed with the King's brutalities, the Scythians slew Spitamenes, the fugitive, who colluded with the executed Bessus. With the collapse of resistance in the Western region, he then subdued the rugged Southern Eastern regions of Sogdians. These regions were called Paractacene or Hissar, the Sogdian Rock, and the pass into these areas was occupied by Oxyartes. It was captured by a band of Macedonian soldiers. It was during this conquest that a whole population was captured and among the captives was a beautiful damsel called Roxana. She was a Scythian Bactrian Princess of the King of Oxyartes. Instead of building an Iron Barrier around this Hissar district, as it was believed, Alexander found himself a wife.

Although, Alexander was always indifferent to women but he was this time around hit by the thunderbolt and was attracted by the beauty and manners of this Sogdian maiden.[9] On his return from Bactria, having no time for executing any benevolent project, he subjugated other fortresses in Hissar. One thing could be noted about the Macedonian King, which was characteristic of him it was the fact that he founded cities in various strategic locations named mostly after him. He was not in the habit of executing big or small projects for the welfare of his subjects like Darius the Great. Alexander was primarily engaged in the pursuit of Greek interests. Almost the same ruthlessness was shown in his invasion of India, as he wearily galloped to a country rich in various cultures and traditions.

His Conquest of India

Now the army of Alexander was weary of the series of battles they had engaged incessantly in, especially the Macedonians, but they were very lethal to the local population they met on their way. He crossed river Indus near Attock in 326 BC. The Prince of Taxilla was said to have received the invader with obsequious pomp and paid him homage. He advanced to engage the dauntless Porus who dared his invasion in a battle at Hydaspes. He subdued his army. Although Porus, was defeated his valour had impressed Alexander. The Victor met the brave and charismatic Prince and asked him how he wished to be treated. "Treat me like a King" said Porus. "For my own sake," Alexander said, "I will ask for your own sake what you desire." "That," replied Porus, "contained all."[10] He was the second royal captive treated with dignity by the Conqueror.

Alexander, then advanced towards the Punjab but the ravages of senseless conquests had taken severe toll on the Macedonians. As such they would not want to advance into the Ganges as their King had wished because they were weary of endless rolling into the unknown for the following reasons:

> Their numbers had dwindled, the remnant of them were battered and grown old before their time. The terrible rains which had beaten incessantly upon them since crossing the Indus had made their labours doubly laborious, were the last weight in the scale. Their gear was worn out; the hoofs of their horses, as one of the campaigners described were rubbed away by the long rough journeys: their arms were blunted and broken in hard combats; the bodies of the veterans were enveloped in India rags, for their Greeks were worn out. All yearned for their homeland in the west. They had won glory enough, why heap up toil on toil and peril on peril?[11]

Yet, they were left in abject poverty in spite of the enormous wealth of Alexander the Great because of what Euripidice had said in one of his poems. "The Army does the work and the general reaps the benefits." The glory won by their sweats was not for all to partake but only the ambitious King. The fact that Alexander left his own Macedonians in abject poverty, in degradation and want showed he was not a generous King like Darius the Great. 'Sire', said one of his oldest generals, "if there is one thing a successful man should know, it is when to stop'. Since the army resolved not to advance into the Ganges, Alexander held a meeting with the officers. Coenus was their spokesman, he expressed the general feeling of the soldiers. Despite their genuine grievances he tried to bluff them that on the morrow he intended to advance; he constrained nobody to follow him saying: "Let the Macedonians go back to Macedonia and tell how they abandoned their King in a hostile land."[12] He then went into seclusion for two days refusing to talk to anyone. On the third day he put the case before the gods and offered sacrifices. Aristander his soothsayer told him that the signs were unfavourable and assuredly, there was no freak of chance. It was then the King caved in and told the stubborn army that he had decided to return. They all burst into joy and ecstasy praising their unconquered King for allowing himself to be conquered for the first time. Alexander then erected 12 towering altars to the 12 great gods of Olympus, on the banks of the Hyphasis, as a thank-offering for

having strewn his wonderful path with victories and led him safely within the reach of the world's end.[13]

By now, no one could contradict the fact that Alexander was a practising Polytheist who believed with reverence in the Grecian gods. This was not just a superstitious belief but a religious faith and practice. Notwithstanding, he continued his campaigns subduing the tribes, which did not submit to him. It was in Sangala that the King was said to have encountered a fierce battle. This encounter with the warlike tribe of the Malli almost cost the life of the King. Having routed them, a large host of these Indians ran into their walled city. Two ladders were brought and used to scale the earthen wall, the impetuous King seized a ladder and climbed up under the cover of his shield. Peucetas, holding the sacred brickler from the temple of Ilion and Leonnatus followed together with Abreas. Alexander fell over into the enemies side before his soldiers. Abreas was hit by a javelin and fell and Alexander became the target of attacks from the enemies and he alone fought gallantly.

He was then injured in the breast but he continued to fight until he fell on his shield fainting due to copious loss of blood. Peucetas arrival was timely for he stood over him with the holy shield of Troy while Leonnatus guarded him on the other side until rescue came. These two men had saved the life of the Great King with the characteristic Macedonian bravery and valour. But in their counterattack, no man, woman or child in the city was spared by the infuriated soldiers who thought that their King was dead. Although the wound was serious, Alexander recovered quickly. On their way home, the Great King insisted to remain on the land while others travelled by sea, perhaps, for the fear of revolts or rebellions, because he could easily be assassinated in the sea. He was therefore much safer on the land.

Alexander the Great in his characteristic manner halted at Opis and formally discharged about 10,000 soldiers in his army

especially those whom he could no longer use. These were the old, the wounded and those unfit for warfare, promising to make them comfortable for life. This, however, did not sink well with the Macedonians. The smouldering discontent finally found a voice, and the mutinous voice was: "Discharge us all", and some tauntingly added; "Go and conquer with your father Ammon."[14] Undoubtedly, Alexander the Son of Zeus Ammon must have been irked and taken aback. His claim to divinity was here publicly brought to derision and contempt and this was unacceptable to the King. In his usual manner Alexander leapt down from the platform he went into the shouting throng and pointed out thirteen of the active rioters and bade his hypaspists to seize them and put them to death. His ruthlessness paid dividend as the rest were cowed and the atmosphere became one of deep silence. He then remounted the platform to declare that he discharged the whole army. This bluff too had again worked.

Boxed into a corner, therefore, there was no way the Macedonian soldiers could deal with the King because he had no need of them but they were very much in need of him, perhaps, he had thousands of Hellenised soldiers now at his disposal. As far as the King was concerned, the Macedonians had outlived their usefulness. In fact, with the Hellenic Military Schools he established in every province, at the end of five years, an army of 30,000 Hellenised barbarians was at the Great King's disposal.[15] So he alone now called the shots. These Hellenisted barbarian soldiers by virtue of his new policy of New World Order were equal with the Greeks. This was the most effective means of bringing the two races together through the institution of military service. To suffer further humiliation, the King on the third day summoned the Persian and Median nobles and appointed them to post of honour and trust, which had, hitherto, been filled only by Macedonians. And Macedonian regiments were transferred to the new barbarian

army.[16] He tactically sidelined his kinsmen with whose sweat he gained his glory.

Having no alternative, the Macedonians were forced to abandon their haughty arrogance before their vanquished folks whom they considered as barbarians and whom Aristotle called 'slaves by nature'. They swallowed their pride and obsequiously implored their King to reconsider them. They laid their arms submissively imploring admission to the King's presence. Alexander then came out and there was a tearful reconciliation. This reconciliation was sealed with a great feast during, which Alexander sat together with the Macedonians, and the Persian nobles standing with the other races of his vast empire. All drew from the same mixing bowl and poured the same libations. He prayed for peace and harmony between Persians and Macedonians.[17] Yet, this did not gild the pill as the existing acrimony acceleratedly worsened.

The table then started turning against Alexander with the death of his dearest friend Hephaestion. He died in the midst of a festivity at Ecbatana when he suddenly took ill; he languished for seven days and died. Alexander was plunged into despair at losing his bosom friend. He was said to have fasted for three days and national mourning was observed in the whole empire. Unfortunately he vented his anger on the miserable physician whom he crucified.[18] He was alleged to be wanting in medical skill. The Oracle of Ammon was consulted on the type of honour to be given to the dead man. It ordained he might be given a hero's burial. Alexander gave his friend the most magnificent burial, which was held in Babylon. In fact, the funeral pyre was splendidly decked with offerings towered to the height of 200 feet.[19] Then, in a murderous rage, Alexander decided to tempt the Providence – the conquest of Arabia. Little did he know that he was digging his grave.

Alexander and Arabia

Alexander was often represented as a madman dazzled by wild and whirling visions of dominion and glory and impelled by an insatiable lust of conquest for conquest's sake. Nothing proved this assertion more like his sudden lust for the Arabian conquest. Ever since the successful voyage of Nearchus, the brain of Alexander had been filled with not only maritime enterprises but Arabian invasion, for which he made adequate preparations. The Arabian desert was a special desert and not just an expanse of dunes of sand. It harboured within its belly a Divine seed which would germinate to a big tree. A tree of Mercy unto the whole world. So it was divinely protected against all foreign invaders. Thus, greater conquerors like Cyrus, Darius and Xerxes had passed it by. No other conqueror had dared to invade it except the madman who was dazzled by wild and whirling visions of dominion and glory.

Naturally, Arabian desert was quite unlike the Egyptian desert famous for its Oracle of Zeus Ammon, which Alexander was familiar with. It was a special desert quite unlike any other desert in history. Yet, he made preparations to invade and conquer the Arabs, to subjugate them. Since he could traverse the Gedrosian desert with all its untold hardship, he thought there was no place on earth he could not conquer, after all, he was the son of Zeus Ammon the powerful sky god. And he made sacrifices to all the gods, therefore, the Grecian gods were undoubtedly on his side too. So as invincible as he was, this expedition was just another military exercise. In his grand preparations, the fleet of Nearchus sailed up the Euphrates and met the King at Babylon and told him that this fleet was not sufficient. Orders had been sent to Phoenicia for the building of more warships and more were built in Babylonia. The Great King had at his disposal thousands of troops both Greek and Hellenised soldiers. Thus, the idea was probably to invade the Sacred Desert both through the land and through the Arabian coast. And since he wanted the Arabs to worship him, so be it! Therefore, the expedition

was to set forth in the summer and all was set in readiness at length for the conquest.

But one day in the early month of June, a royal banquet was given in honour of Nearchus, one of the architects of this invasion and his seamen, when the Great King suddenly took ill on the 16th day of Daesus.[20] His condition gradually and steadily deteriorated. Yet, he thought it was one of the those brief illnesses he had encountered before as he spent the day in bed actively discussing with Nearchus on the Arabian expedition, which he fixed to commence in four days.[21] However, his condition degenerated until he was unable to speak to them but only stared fixedly at people in a stuporous condition.

He was so bedridden that he could only greet by slightly raising his head and signalling with his eyes. The best thing to do was to take his matter to the gods, after all, he was their favourite son. Therefore, Peucetas, and others passed the night vigil in the temple of Serapis and asking the gods, whether they should convey the sick man into the temple for divine intervention, so that he might be cured as his sickness had defied all medications. Unfortunately, a voice warned them not to bring him but to let him remain where he lay.[22] At last, Alexander was abandoned by the gods for he had moved to anger a Supreme God, by intending to defile His Sacred Desert. No one would invade it and live to tell the story. The greatest Conqueror in the history of the world was only planning to conquer it when he was made to die prematurely. Alexander died – on a June evening of the 13th equivalent to 28th of Daesus before the thirty third year of his age.[23] This was Alexander's experience with Arabia for other madmen to take their cue. This was the death of Alexander the man who saw Arabia but did not conquer and he died with its envy. However, there were lessons in his fall from grace, which all had pointedly shown that he was not the Zulqarnain of our choice.

Thomas Carlyle, "Adversity is hard on a man, but one man who can stand prosperity, there are a hundred that will stand adversity."[24] The Scottish essayist and historian was right in this statement, Alexander, was the typical example of a man who was swept away by success and absolute luxury. A great Conqueror that had withstood untold human hardship in adversity but was only to be conquered by luxury. He was so beguiled by prosperity as to believe that he was superhuman, bringing about a reactivation of his childhood fantasy, which he wanted to force into reality. This crucial half of his life ambition then ignominiously cost him the rest, as he claimed formal deification and ruthlessly wanted to impose his will upon his subjects. This weird pretension caused his waterloo.

Alexander's ice cold, brutish style of administration made him a polar opposite to Darius. Because as a world king, Alexander showed a sensual profligacy of unequalled dimension that made him to completely lose the interests of other nations. He gallivanted about cloaked in Persian sash with an air of panache, surrounded with serfs and flunkies. He had completely lost himself as he was indulged in *joie de vivre*. He lived in absolute luxury to let others die of wants so that even his own kinsmen the gallant Macedonian soldiers were deprived of their basic needs. Davies', vivid description of the king at the height of his absolute power hit the nail on the head.

H. A. Davies, a renowned historian had not only questioned Alexander's appellation of the 'Great' but had reflected the man and his work on a true mirror of history. He laid bare historic facts disinterestedly as they were. He had ordinately made remarkable summary of the Macedonian warlord. I had quoted him at length not only to add his voice to mine on the subject but to make the subsequent story in this chapter, an elaboration of this succinct

account. He queried:

> "Does Alexander deserve the title 'Great?' That he was a great general there can be no doubt. In other respect too he showed himself far from the ordinary run of men. His ideal a world state dominated by Greek ideas - was excellent and he did much to promote it. He built cities on the lines of his marches, which were to be radiating points of Hellenism... But in some respects he was by no means great. He made no great roads through the Persian Empire, he did little or nothing to secure his conquests for his successors; it cannot be said that he wrought any improvements in the method of governing Eastern states, and although the marriages of himself and ninety of his generals and leading men with Persian ladies may be regarded as a step towards the racial fusion of East and West, it was far more probable a step towards oriental pomp and luxury. There can be little doubt that his successes turned Alexander's head. One indication of it is to be found in his aping of Persian dress and customs, and his injunction that all who entered his presence should bend the knee to him and kiss his feet. A still more remarkable proof is the command that this subjects should regard him as a god and pay him divine honours; he took advantages of his Egyptian expedition to visit the Oasis of Siwa in the Sahara Desert where there was a shrine of the god Amon-Ra, and when he came out from the holy place the high priest hailed him as the son of Ammon. These pretensions to divinity cost Alexander the fidelity of many Macedonian friends. There were conspiracies against him which were cruelly punished when detected. Among those executed for taking part in them were Parmenio and his son Philotus, and Callisthenes cost Alexander the friendship of Aristotle. More shameful was the death of Clitus, the man who had saved his life at Granicus, whom Alexander killed in a fit of drunken fury for reproving him on account of his Median Costume and his monstrous pretensions. The case of Alexander has been paralleled in modern times by that of Napoleon. Both Alexander and Napoleon were great generals, both were inordinately ambitious, both aimed at world dominion, both drank deep from the cup of military glory, and the result in each case was intoxication. Alexander made little or no attempt to render his empire permanent; perhaps he died too soon to think of such things. Napoleon made elaborate attempts but failed.[25]

Nemesis, in a powerful recoil of nature, caught up with Alexander as he was beguiled by and corrupted with absolute power. He felt he was greater than his shadow, as he considered himself a superhuman. He craved formal deification, which became his waterloo. His claim for divinity had titillated everyone including his compatriots and was followed by serious political consequences.

His Claim of Divinity

A common dictum states that 'absolute power corrupts absolutely'. Having conquered the world, Alexander then lost his equilibrium as he reactivated his childhood belief of kinship with the gods. As a pagan and a polytheist who believed in the Grecian gods, he now wished to be declared a god himself. Thus, Ustadh Abdullahi Yusuf Ali's support of Alexander as a man of Faith could no longer withstand historical validity. His claim that:

> "..Alexander was a disciple of the Philosopher Aristotle, noted for his pursuit of sound truth in all departments of thought. Alexander's reference to Jupiter Ammon may have been no more than a playful reference to the superstitions of his time. Socrates spoke of the Grecian gods, and so did Aristotle and Plato; but it would be wrong to call them idolaters or men without faith. In the Ethiopic traditional stories of Alexander the Great, he is represented as a great Prophet.[26]

All these claims were contrary to our current knowledge of the historical Alexander. Although the Greeks were noted for their wisdom and "pursuit of sound truth in all departments of thought," but these departments were, however, limited to the confines of physical reality. They, therefore, lacked a true knowledge which encompassed belief in the Seen and in the Unseen (Holy Qur'an 2:3). Their 'Sound Truth' was that which was within the gamut of reason and therefore, verifiable to human senses. The Greek Philosophers had unflinching faith in human thought despite its

inherent weaknesses and was characterised by limitations in scope and lack of true knowledge. So in their philosophy there was no room for other source of human knowledge or Revelation. These Philosophers were ignorant of Supra-physical Reality, which was beyond the ken of philosophy. Religious thought especially monotheistic thought was not home-grown in Greece, it was exiled in the thought and life of the Greeks. Monotheism was nipped in the bud during the Socratic era. Since then they were persistent in their antipathy towards the Divine Unity, and their ethical humanism was dissolved into racism aptly described as Hellenism. A particular thought was cultivated that was secular and atheistic or Polytheistic in nature. Thus, Greek philosophy could not be advanced to prove faith in God in monotheistic concept.

As a corollary, Alexander showed that his reference to Jupiter Ammon was far more than a playful superstition. He had denied resolutely being the son of Philip but the son of supreme god Zeus Ammon. "I am not the son of Philip but a son of Zeus Ammon", he often said. This belief later became an obsession as he claimed divinity and superhuman status. He then crowned this dangerous obsession with a decree demanding for his deification. "Proclaim Alexander a god," was the royal decree he had promulgated in order to achieve his personal ambition. He, therefore, sent to all cities that henceforth he was to be officially numbered among the gods of each city and that as such he was to receive the state offerings which each city presented.[27] To make this royal decree effective, the new Macedonian god demanded that all who approached him on official occasions must bow down or prostrate to the earth and kiss his feet. Unfortunately, neither the victorious Greeks nor their vanquished subjects could accept his self-acclaimed divinity and accord him this respect. And the King was ruthlessly determined to enforce his will. But what prompted this preposterous claim, which had started as a childhood fantasy?

Alexander's conquest of Egypt had reactivated his latent feelings of self-divinity; because in the official style of Egyptian monarchy the Pharaohs were sons of Ammon, and as the successor of the Pharaohs, he assumed the same title. It then became necessary to have an official confirmation from Ammon himself that Alexander was his son. It was for this reason that Alexander undertook a journey to the Oracular Sanctuary of Ammon in the Oasis of Siwah. He wanted a formal declaration from Zeus Ammon with which to satisfy the formalities of the Priest. Some historians were of the view that it was for this single reason he undertook the conquest of Egypt.

But since childhood, Alexander had a fervent belief in his divine origin; he was divinely conceived like Achilles, he was more than an ordinary man.[28] So Alexander went into the desert to visit the temple, which was the most famous of all Egyptian temples - the temple of Zeus Ammon. In this expanse of the desert there was no tract and the road-marks to guide the travellers all had been obliterated by the wind. Miraculous guidance vouchsafed to the favourite of the god led Alexander to the temple. Ptolemy son of Legus who later became the governor of Egypt and Libya, recorded in his memoirs that two snakes moved in front of the troops and showed the way, while Aristobulus, another companion of the King spoke of the guidance of two crows.[29] Obviously, all these were incontrovertible evidences that Alexander was not the man in question – the Qur'anic Zulqarnain. Furthermore, we were furnished with more details by James Henry Breasted. He wrote that:

> Early in his conquest of Egypt, while he was founding the city of Alexandria in the Western Delta, we learn, that, 'a longing came upon him,' to consult the famous oracle of Ammon in the Sahara Desert? Here in the vast solitude Alexander entered the Holy Place alone. No one knew what took place there but he was greeted by the High Priest of the temple as the son of Zeus Ammon. All Greece heard of this remarkable occurrence, but the Hellenes had to wait some years before they learned what it all meant.[30]

On further reflection, this appeared to be a reactivation of the cause but not the cause. Because since childhood, Alexander had identified his ancestry with the gods, as such his global conquests were aimed at making this identification a reality. The *raison d'etre* for his ruthless battles was to achieve godhead status or divinity. He only used the spread of Hellenism as a smokescreen. He had harboured this ambition for years; yet it became so difficult to achieve. Both the Macedonians and the Persians had considered his self-imposed divinity as preposterous. Many of his own comrades had paid for their frankness and valour for adamantly refusing to comply with his royal decree. "This superhuman status of the world King Alexander," said Breasted, "was gained at a tragic cost to Alexander, the Macedonian youths and to the group of friends and followers about him?"[31] An outrageous claim that was attended with many severe consequences.

Consequences of his claim to Divinity

Four years after the young King had proclaimed himself a god; yet this divine status still lacked outward and visible manifestations. His companions and friends and the rest of his followers had refused to conform to his royal request: "That all who approach him on official occasion should bow down to the earth and kiss his feet," since they considered this as outrageous. Similarly, his formal notification to all the Greek cities that the League of States of which he had been the head was dissolved. And that he was henceforth to be officially numbered among the gods of each city; and that as such he was to receive the state offerings which each city presented.[32] But Hephaestion, in order to bend the rigid stance of the Greeks, organised a King's banquet, where he intended to make the king's guests at the banquet obey Alexander's policy of prostration before him. It was arranged that all the banquetters, would arise one by one and prostrate before Alexander, and would then be blessed by the King in appreciation.

Most of the Greeks were pliant enough to comply with the Obeisance because they had no choice or alternative. Because Alexander was like a pendulum swinging between the Hellenes and the Hellinised barbarians. they feared that if they refused his bidding, they risked losing him altogether to their rivals. But Callisthenes of Olynthus, a prominent man of letters and a nephew to Aristotle, stood against it and drew to himself the king's displeasure by his refusal to condescend and the utterances of bold truth. Because when it was the turn of Callisthenes, he disdainfully defied the obeisance. He simply drank his cup of wine and with dignity went straight to be kissed by the king without doing the obeisance. Alexander, flabbergasted as he was, refused to kiss him and turned away, saying, "I go the poorer by a kiss!" To the chagrin of all, the well learned men he had remained unruffled. Undoubtedly, incidence of this kind created a coolness between the king and his historian.[33] As an erudite scholar, Callisthenes, had commanded the respect of the noble Macedonian youths and he believed in death before dishonour. Callisthenes, was then charged with being an accomplice in the Hermolaus plot to kill Alexander, because the plotter was one of the warmest admirers of this learned Greek. Callisthenes was ruthlessly hanged, probably, because Alexander suspected him as an agent of the anti-Macedonian party in Greece. This was untrue because at that time he was composing a historical account of the campaigns of the great king whose exploits he lauded, but as a result of his death, it was lost in antiquity. He remained loyal to the king but the oriental policy of Alexander, his claim of divinity were most unpopular with the Macedonians. The historical account of his campaigns died with the execution of this historian.

In his desire to enforce his will on the Greeks, he first dissolved the Greek League of States, which Philip had founded and he had re-established. He apparently thought its dissolution would perhaps soften the adamant Greeks to his servitude, but understandably it

only added salt to injury. Philotus son of Parmenio, a friend to the King and a gallant fighter was among those who had first attacked this policy with truth and frankness. He was said to have asked: "Why should the blood of so many thousands be shed to gratify the obsessions of one man who had disowned his father and has sought his kinship with the gods?" He was charged with treason and killed. His father Permenio, a close friend of Philip and a loyal general to the young King was implicated in this treasonable felony, while guarding the Persian treasure at Ecbatana he was ordered to be killed.[34]

Bury and Meiggs stated that it was at Prophthasia, the capital of the Drangiana that it came to Alexander's ear that Philotas, the son of Parmenio was conspiring against his life. He immediately summoned a meeting with the Macedonians and stated his charge against his general. It was a kind of public trial, in which Philotus admitted the knowledge of a coup plan but said nothing about it. He was grisly pierced with javelins and with the death of the son, it was perceived as dangerous to let the father live. It was immaterial whether he was involved in the treason or not, a messenger was sent to Media with an instruction to put the old general to death. Although Alexander always tried to win public sympathy by summoning meetings for trials to whip up their sentiments, the plot against him continued unabated. Alexander became more and more murderous and his cruelty became increasingly severe, when he realised that his life ambition was becoming more elusive. Even his devoted friends could neither revere nor pay him homage, despite the absolute monarchy and the divine rights of the King he had newly introduced into Europe, yet he could not achieve his much coveted aim.

As a result, he became more desperate as he took many measures aimed primarily at satisfying his megalomania for power, a vanity he was so drunk with, and this burning ambition could only

be smouldered with superhuman honour. But his old comrades refused to give him this recognition and several of them paid for their brutish Macedonian frankness with their lives. When he realised the resolute stand in their opposition, he then alienated them completely. After all he was in the vantage position both as their 'god' and their king with divine rights. Alexander suddenly changed like a chameleon, from a Macedonian to a Persian both in manner and in dress.

In this attempt to embitter his people, he always dressed in Persian, robes and attire. Finally, to put them to shame and ridicule, he introduced a policy of 'No Victor, No Vanquished' in a New World Order. The vanquished Persians were, therefore, treated as equals with their victors – the Macedonians. Indeed, they were even more favoured. The Macedonians were, therefore, alienated by deification and internationalism.[35] The tragic consequences of such a policy were inevitable and fatal. Yet, his ambition became farther from being achieved, because in this contest neither the king nor the subjects caved in.

Alexander was unflinching in his quest for divinity. He demanded that all the Greeks at home should recognise his divinity. With this support at home at least, he thought the Greeks in the foreign lands would throw in the towel. Sparta was, however, reported to be indifferent to his claim. They responded with: "We allow Alexander to call himself a god, if he likes." They sensed rightly that with their troops in foreign lands it would be unwise to attack the politics of Alexander's divinity at home. It would be tantamount to shooting him down at the backs, after all, he was projecting the interests of Greece to greater heights, so let him be whatever he had chosen to be, the overall benefits were for the Greeks. In fact, they argued that there was no sensible man at Athens who would have thought of objecting to it, even the bitterest enemy of the land would have allowed him to be "the son of Zeus or

Poseidon or whomever he chose."[36] Obviously, for economic and political expediencies, Alexander was tolerated to be what he wanted to be, so long as Greece got the Persian gold and wealth, and Greeks replaced the Persians in the international scheme of things.

Thus, it was accepted that; "there was no incongruity in their officially acknowledging his divinity."[37] Greece was a materialistic nation so Alexander gave them a whiff of money. Through the conquests of Alexander, Greece had become the ruler of the world and consequently was powerful and enormously wealthy. They were very ready to do Alexander's bidding. A reward with divinity was not too much a reciprocation. Because ever since the days, in which "Homeric king was honoured as a god by the people," there was nothing offensive or outlandish to a Greek ear in predicting godhead of a revered sovereign or master," they averred.[38]

Thus, Alexander's divinity at home was neither accepted nor rejected for obvious reasons. Because he had paid for the piper, he was to dictate the tune. The Greeks at home were forced to tolerate or to become disinterested in his claim, what they would under normal circumstances have rejected vehemently. The purveyors of "accept Alexander as god," therefore, preached their gospel unmolested. Having been whipped with money the Greeks at home were foisted with his divinity. After all, divine honours had been paid to Lysander, and the Greeks, in complying with Alexander's desire, did not commit themselves more than the pupil of academy who erected an altar to his master Plato.[39] In this "politics of divinity," Alexander had successfully secured his home base. He could even brag to the Greeks in the foreign lands that they should as well reject what their parents had meritoriously accepted at home. But it was the Macedonian soldiers who were caught between the sea and the devil. Back at home, people thought they were enjoying the best of the two worlds, being with the Great king, while they were actually starving in the midst of plenty, and were relegated to

the background because the King listened more to his Hellenised barbarians than to his compatriots. These Greeks in the foreign lands were in a better position to appraise the king's claim of divinity. They outright considered it outlandish and rejected it altogether; it was a dangerous game played between the army and its general, but the general had held the four aces.

Clitus, was Alexander's childhood friend and a brother to his childhood nurse. He at the battle of Granicus had saved his life but could not control his grief and indignation at both Alexander's life-style and his political course.[40] At a royal feast he was said to have heaped unbridled reproaches upon his friend and his King for his abominable claim of superhuman god.[41] He was appalled at his transformation, which he considered outrageous. He was so indignant at his master and foster brother, but Alexander was a man so easily given to irascibility; their confrontation, therefore, ended with a fatal result. The master was so provoked to fury yet he called his chum, brother' but Clitus replied sarcastically "can I be a brother to a god?"

Martin Roberts had also reported the altercation between the two brothers more vividly. In his characteristic braggadocio, Alexander, started boasting of his achievements as a commander, even though everybody was discontent with his policy of alienation. It became very unbearable, so Clitus, a tough old Macedonian general had to call the King to order with characteristic frankness and candour. He said: "It is by the blood of Macedonians and by these wounds of ours, he said that you have risen so high. He then added, and you reject your real father Philip of Macedonia and claim the god Ammon as your father."

The criticism of his claims to be god further angered the King who became exasperated and made some sneering remarks about Macedonian stupidity aside to one of his companions. Clitus, again punched the self-appointed god with more scurrilous attacks, he roared:

> Say what you mean openly, or stop dining with men who are free and speak their minds. Content yourself rather with slaves and barbarian creatures, who lie flat on the floor in front of you in your white robe and Persian sash.[42]

Clitus continued his acerbity, "It was from the blood and the womb of Macedonians that you have grown so great," he added. And referring to Alexander's discredited lopsided state policy, he bragged that: "We are the victors not the Persians." This had shown that the Macedonians were embittered with their alienation, which was indeed very humiliating. Clitus was therefore, speaking with their voice. He was the only one who could speak to the King so frankly. But he was too unguarded in his criticisms of the King and had finally accused him thus: "you have disclaimed your father as you passed yourself up as a son of god. Can one man take the trophies won by thousands?" he queried. In fact, this was the most daring altercation Alexander had ever encountered. These pungent criticisms directed at his person, was considered a move by his Macedonian Comrades, not only to reduce him to size, but also to cast shadow upon his glory. He was deviously reminded that a leopard could not change its skin. He remained a full-blooded Macedonian, as far as they were concerned. It was unfathomable that he suddenly became a superhuman. After all, it was by the dint of their hard labour and their sweat that he became so great. His present status was not achieved by miracle wrought by a mighty god but by the contribution of the thousands of Macedonian soldiers, both slain and alive. They, therefore, deserved to be treated with dignity and respect, not to be merely truncated as equals to the vanquished Persians. But the great King had resolved to claim for himself the trophy won by thousands, so he viewed these criticisms as too serious and damaging and ruthlessly took a step to deal with anyone trying to cast a shadow upon his coveted glory. So in a furious rage, he quickly seized a spear from a guard and thrust it

through the bosom of the man to whom he owed his life. And instantaneously, he was struck with remorse and grief, as he knelt down upon the dead body of Clitus, weeping profusely.

According to Bury and Meiggs, this incident happened in 327 BC the first months of Alexander at Samarcand, when there were feelings of discontent among the close companions of Alexander and as a result, there was a rebellious movement in Sogdiana. It was for this reason that he came over the Oxus again, before the winter was over to spend some time in Samarcand. The Macedonian conqueror was expecting mutiny within his army. His estranged friends and companies now had a mouthpiece. One night; in the fortress of Samarcand the carouse lasted far into the night, Alexander, in pomp and pageantry was surrounded by Greek men of letters who accompanied the army, sang praises of Alexander, exalting him above Dioscuri the god whose feast he was celebrating on this fateful day. He was surely enjoying himself because most of the celebrities were in drunken revelry and full of his panegyrics, it was *joie de vivre* for all. Then the contumacious Clitus, flushed with wine, suddenly sprang up to denounce the blasphemy of Alexander's claim to divinity. He was exasperated and the current of his anger swept him into a scurrilous denunciation and disparagement of "god" Alexander. Though drunk, Clitus, was not out of his senses, he drank only to get the Dutch courage to speak with the voice of the Macedonian soldiers, about their rejection of the turn of events. So he talked with frankness and to the point. He said, "It was to the Macedonian, to men like Parmenio and Philotus that you owed your victories." Clitus, even boasted that he owed him gratitude for saving his life in the battle of Granicus, as he should bear gratitude to all the Macedonians. Alexander, could not hold his temper because these scurrilous attacks were too sharp and pungent, he was moved to fury. He started to move to his feet and called in Macedonians for his hypaspists. None obeyed his drunken orders, Ptolemy and other banquetters forced Clitus out of the hall, while

others tried to restrain the King. But Clitus made his way back and shouted from the doorway some insulting verses of Euripidice, the favourite Poet of the king, signifying that: "the army does the work and the general reaps the glory."[43] This captured the truth of the matter and Alexander was pale with anger.

The king leapt up, snatched a spear from a guardsman, and rushed upon his foster-brother. Drunk though he was, the aim was sure - Clitus sank in the pool of his blood dead on the ground. The gorgeous feast, therefore, suddenly provided an unexpected scene, as the celebrities were shocked to see Alexander the Great crying before a dead body. One of the Persian nobles could not hide his bewilderment, when he saw their 'god' crying. So he asked in derision: "Is this Alexander who cried because he had killed a man? Can this be he who lies upon the ground crying for fear of the Lord and the tongues of men? When he himself is the Lord, the measure of right and wrong whatever is done by supreme power is right."

Immediately, he was overwhelmed with remorse and agony. Guilt held him like a vice for three days. The murderer lay in his tent without sleep or food, cursing himself as the assassin of his friends.[44] The army sympathised with his grief but blamed him for he had unjustly slain his loyal friend and brother. The bug of the tragedy was then passed to the anger of Dionysus, because the day was supposed to be his festival day but the festival of Dioscuri was celebrated instead.[45] But Alexander was the root cause of the problems which beset him because he that was of man claimed to be God. He celebrated most of the gods' festivals so that one day his own festival as a god would be celebrated too. He could never be the Qur'anic Zulqarnain.

It had now been proven practically that Alexander who was said to be fighting for the Macedonian glory, or for the supremacy of Greek culture, was in reality fighting for himself. He only waited for the right time and opportunity to unveil his true intention. He

used his people only to achieve his personal objective. He had now acquired the divine status to outdo Dionysus and other Greek heroes who were also deified. But unfortunately, he was forced to see his own folly, as he mourned the death of Clitus, his childhood friend and a loyal general seriously. Alexander was so bereaved that he attempted to commit suicide. He sat for three days in seclusion in his tent, speechless and refusing all food, as he became a total recluse. He was prevented by his officers from taking his own life.[46] The Great King wanted to commit *harakiri.*

Despite the terrible cost of Alexander's State Policy and his personal deification, he had wanted to pursue them to the end. He was imbued with the desire to go on and on until in the end his conquest proved too large to be held together. He crossed to the Northwest India, threaded his way over the Khyber Pass and reached river Indus. Here he won further victories, but his soldiers refused to go any further.[47] Alexander was for the first time forced to retreat. This was fully discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Alexander the Great, must have died, full of envy of this virgin Arabia. He was called 'great' because he spread Hellenistic civilisation. The Greeks called themselves Hellenes and their civilisation Hellenic. He intermixed Greek culture and Asiatic, which had earned him the title of the 'Great'. He had no doubt made some lofty achievements; three of the most famous cities founded by him or through his efforts were Alexandria, Antioch and Pergamus. These added to 'Hellenistic (which means rather like the Greek or Hellenic) civilisation, Alexander was indeed Great.[48]

Alexander reaped the whirlwind

"Nemesis is said to be a recoil of nature..." The truism of this aphorism was depicted in the historical account of Alexander – who destroyed many families on his way to power. His own family, was in like manner destroyed. It was a family lacking in moral and

religious training but full of jealousy and savagery. The ruthless hatred in his undomesticated Olumpias and Eurydice, the prototype of the equally barbarous and cruel Fredegonde and Brunhild were the cause of the final destruction of the royal family after the death of Alexander. "Olympias returned suddenly to Macedonia from Epirus," Sykes said, "and contrive to seize Philip Arrhidaeus and his intriguing wife, Eurydice. With savage cruelty she put them to torture and finally, death, Philip being shot with arrows and Eurydice being graciously permitted to hang her self."[49] Meanwhile, Roxana, Alexander's first wife had enticed her mate Statira, the daughter of Darius Codomannus, to Babylon, where she murdered her, and her own position was shortly afterwards strengthened by the birth of a son known as King Alexander.[50]

The destruction of the family continued as the rivalry and beastly behaviour amongst the members of the royal family were intensified. The vicious old Queen made hundreds of arrests of the followers of Antipater and his family, all she mercilessly killed. When Cassander, who having married a daughter of Philip and an aspirant to the throne returned, the tide turned against Olympias. She was besieged and captured in Pudna, where she was stoned to death, according to the ancient law, in revenge for many inhuman crimes she committed. Cassander, kept the young Alexander and his mother Roxana in his custody as prisoners for a few years. But in 311 BC owing to the rising agitation among the people, he murdered the son of Alexander the Great, whose fate, Sykes said was one of the most pathetic story in history.[51] Similarly, Cleopatra, the widow Queen of Epirus, and Heracles, the illegitimate son were also murdered in cold blood. Cassander continued to extirpate the members of the royal family, until he had left no fear of a hostile claimant to the throne or who could boast that he was a royal descendant. But what the usurper did in a minute degree, was what Alexander the Great did in a major degree, destruction of families for the love of power. Thus, the Macedonian King had sown the

wind and reaped the whirlwind. This was the unfortunate account of Alexander's family; "He who sows the wind will reap the whirlwind." This is an everlasting truth. So, he was not the Zulqarnain mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. He was not religious in the Islamic sense of the word. It was pertinent to know the religious belief of this Macedonian warlord. This is discussed in the next chapter, even though it was difficult to reconstruct what religion was in the Greek concept.

An understanding of Grecian gods, as objects of worship in relation to man as the worshipper was an interesting one. Even how this religion evolved was difficult to fathom. Primitive Greek men prior to the Homeric songs thought that the trees and springs, the stones and hilltops, the birds and beasts were creatures possessed of strange and uncanny powers. Then spirits were thought to be lurking in dark recesses of the earth with powers to make grain sprout and the trees flourish; spirits were also believed to control the sea and the sky. These various spirits with varying responsibilities were appeased by men to win their favours and thwart their wrath. This attitude slowly gave rise to worship and its customs. Then Greeks brought Zeus the sky god into the Aegean world whom they had already worshipped in the pre-Homeric era on the grassland. According to Breasted he had different names: In one valley they called him rain giver; in another, thunderbolt. Finally, Zeus became an old word for "sky" when he became the highest god, supplanting numerous gods and goddesses revered by the Greeks. Homeric songs brought a second chapter in Greek religion, when those pre-Homeric spirits rose to the status of gods and goddesses in the Homeric songs. But with human form and qualities. Thus, Zeus the Sky god with lightning thunderbolt in his hands as weapon ruled the rest of the gods and goddesses. Thus, with this preview we enter the world of the Grecian gods. The belief in these Grecian gods had been the religion of most Europeans, even today, some worship or appease these gods in one form or another. A belief, in One God and in Revelation were Eastern in origin, hence, were foreign to the West.

Source: Brasted, Ancient Times and a history of the early World

Greeks and Persians hunting lions with Alexander the Great.

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THE GRECIAN GODS

And those whom they invoke besides Allah create nothing and are themselves created.

- Surat an-Nahl

If cattle and horses and lions had hands, or could draw with their hands and make works like men, the horses will render the shapes of the gods as horses, the cattle as cattle; each would depict their bodies like his own.

- Xenophanes

The Greeks unlike the Persians and the Hebrews did not believe in One God but in many gods. Their stories and their gods were collected in 850 BC and written down by a blind poet called Homer.[1] His collections consisted of the Homeric poems, the Iliad and the Odyssey. The Iliad was a story about the siege of Troy by the Greeks, an event which was said to have taken place in 1200 BC. But many stories and details contained in the Iliad were not historical realities. They were the invention of Homer and other bards. Greeks, who rejected Revealed Knowledge believed in this spurious fabrications by men instead. The Odyssey dealt with many adventures of Odysseus, a famous Greek captain on his ten-year voyage home after Troy had fallen. It was not certain whether the Homeric epics, the Iliad and the Odyssey were written down by the same poet. The balance of probability seemed to be so. In both poems, the gods and the goddesses intervened in the affairs of the human characters and were portrayed as full of human failings quarrelling among themselves, jealously protecting their favourite men and women and persecuting those who have offended them.[2]

Consequently, they worshipped a multitude of gods who they believed were human in form and lived in various parts of the world. They shared many things in common with humans but

radically differed from them because of their immortality, which made them divine. Homer and other writers gave images of some of these gods who held court on Mount Olympus in Thessaly, the highest peak in Greece. In addition to their immortality, these gods possessed eternal youthfulness because they fed on ambrosias – a heavenly food, and drink nectar, which bestowed them with everlasting youthfulness. They also had the power to assume both human and animal forms to intervene in the worldly affairs of men, punishing or assisting them personally by the use of miracles. So men worshipped them and tried to be at peace with all of them. Whenever they quarrelled amongst themselves, Zeus settled their disputes. His wife and sister, Hera, was the guardian of women and marriage. Zeus' sons and daughters were: Apollo, god of the Sun, music, medicine and divinations and his twin sister Artemis, a hunting goddess identified with the moon; beautiful Aphrodite, goddess of sexual love; Hermes the god of travellers, and Ares the warrior; Athena, a virgin without mother sprang from the head of Zeus because he swallowed her mother. She symbolised intelligence and was patron of artisans.[3]

There was no gainsaying the fact that Alexander was a *mushrik*, a polytheist and a zealot idolater whose global conquests were marked with brutality as they were irreligious. Consequently, he was not a just, humane and a righteous leader. The claim that he was represented in the Ethiopic traditional stories as a great Prophet was very irrational. After all, traditional stories were often full of myths, legends and falsehood concocted to achieve a predetermined end. In like manner, in the Calendars of the Saints of the Coptic Church, both in Egypt and Ethiopia, Pontius Pilate the pagan Roman Governor and his wife appeared as 'saints.'[4] Therefore, a traditional story was not a statement of fact and could not be treated as such. The Greeks never thought in credal terms. Religion was a matter of actions and right relationships, not beliefs. As a matter of fact, it was very difficult to even translate the word 'religion', in the manner

we came to use it in Greek. You have only to say something like the "worship of the gods." There was no word for creed or a monotheistic concept of the Almighty God. The aim of religious activity was to secure the *pax deorum,* which literally means 'the peace of the gods' or 'the favour of the gods'.[5] This concept was therefore, antithetical to Islam.

The Greeks had recognised in their Pantheon, Zeus Ammon as their supreme god, the greatest of the twelve gods. These gods included: Zeus, Artemis, Ares, Aphrodite, Hermes, Athena, Hephaestus, Hestia, Hera, Poseidon, Demeter and Pluto. Alexander, had identified with Zeus as his father the supreme god of the sky. He was the most predominant in power and the greatest of all the gods. Zeus' might and power were described in Homer Iliad 8:18-27, thus:

> Come, you gods have a try, then you'll all know. Dangle a rope of gold from sky. All you gods and all goddesses take hold of it. You would not have the strength to pull to earth. Zeus, who is supreme in wisdom not for all your efforts. But when once I was of a mind to pull you up I should, Earth Sea, and all, binding the rope round the peak of Olympus and leaving everything suspended in mid air. So far I am superior to gods and men.

Zeus, the father of Alexander the Great was the supreme god because he was the god of the sky. The sky was all seeing and impartial because sun shines and the rain falls upon all men alike. The sky gods and sun gods were thus gods for ensuring righteousness and Zeus in Greece (Jupiter among the Romans) had all these functions. So in addition to his supremacy of strength he was gracious too. A festival was therefore celebrated once in four years called the Zeus Festival at Olympia. It was a festival full of celebrations and revered by all the Greeks.[6] Zeus, was superior to all the gods, because the sky was conceived as male (Zeus) lying above the earth (Hera) as female, and the rain coming from the sky was his semen which impregnated the Earth and enabled her to give birth or

produce fruits in due season. It was also the semen of god Zeus that we drank to survive too, he was no doubt superior to gods and mortal men. This was because if Zeus did not copulate with Hera, there would be no food and vegetation for men and beasts in the wilderness. Then man must be at peace with the gods and more specifically with Zeus. Aeschylus (525-456 BC) the Athenian dramatist, and the first and greatest tragedian made the goddess of sexual love Aphrodite, say this:

> The Pure Heaven is passionate to piece the Earth; Passion grips the Earth to enjoy marriage. Rain falls from the bridegroom Heaven and makes Earth pregnant; she bears for mankind pasture of flocks and Demeter gift of life. From the moisture of their marriage the tree in season come to full growth. In all this I share. (Aeschylus, The Danaids, fr.44 Athenaeus 13,600 B).[7]

Zeus's consort Hera, the mother goddess of powerful Argos, became his lawful wedded wife. A sky god was naturally worshipped on mountains, and Zeus took the highest mountain Olympus as his palace. With a sanctuary later on one of the lower peaks, though, he found many other thrones at Argos, on mountain Coressus at Ephesus and on two mountains at Antioch, for example.[8] And Alexander mother's name was Olympias, perhaps, named after the holy mountain Olympus. She could again be Zeus's wife because he gave birth to his son 'a god,' Alexander because Zeus was a god of many wives. The sacred marriage was found in different forms all over the Greek world. For example, at the Festival of the Daedala at Plataea in Boeotia, a wooden image was brought in a carriage arrayed with Zeus. In the Athenian festival of the Anthesteria there was a sacred marriage between the god Dionysus and the wife of the Priest-King. Thus, sacred marriages abound within the religious beliefs of Alexander the Great and the Greeks, who believed them.

Hera, Zeus's consort, was the earth mother. The name simply means 'Our Lady' the mistress. She was the great deity of the plain

of Argos, which was the earliest power centre of mainland Greece. She became the wife of Zeus and naturally revered as a goddess of women and marriage. Alexander did not have such a sacred wedding and that was perhaps because his ambition of becoming a god was scuttled early enough. He should have no doubt engaged in such a holy matrimony.

Zeus, made other marriages. Zeus's marriage with Metis was as a result of a quarrel between him and his lawful wife Hera. Having consummated his marriage with Metis, which means 'Resource,' Zeus took the titan Themis, which means 'order' as his second wife. There were reasons behind his marriages. These two marriages complemented one another, each helping to guarantee the supremacy of Zeus, the new king of the gods. This was because all the wives had oracular powers, each with knowledge comprehending the whole sweep of time. Each, by virtue of her relationship with Earth, enjoyed certain powers that were said to ante-date both the reign and the very birth of Zeus. So he skilfully manoeuvred to marry each of them to usurp their powers to ascend as the greatest of all the gods. Through bribery and deception he succeeded in taking them into wedlock. Themis; the omniscient, represented in the world of the gods, stability, continuity, regularity, the permanence of order, and the cycle of recurring seasons. She was the mother of the Horai. (Hesiod, Theogony 901-6). Zeus, therefore, married her to craftily gain all her powers in his bid to become the supreme god above all.

Zeus, had just overthrown Cronus and upset the old order, so he married Metis. He married her only to render him services and to provide him with the wherewithal to establish an entirely a new order.[9] But Metis was a threat to any established order by marrying, mastering and swallowing Metis and Zeus revealed that he was not a king, a mere king; he became a sovereignty itself. All her powers were now inside Zeus and he became more powerful. He was full of

guile to seduce Metis. Zeus escaped to a safe place remote from Hera his lawful wife, in order to make love to Metis, and then deceiving her despite all her knowledge, laid hands on her and swallowed her. He set her deep into his belly for fear that she might give birth to a child mightier than the thunderbolt. He swallowed her when she was carrying his baby, Athena, whom Zeus later gave birth to from his head, on the steep banks of the river Triton while Metis remained hidden within his belly ever since.[10] But how was he able to achieve this feat? Zeus deceived her mind by the use of a trick, by dint of cunning words and so he was able to put her in his belly (Theogony, 889-90). Although this could not have been easy, because a scholar claimed that Metis could transform herself into any shape she liked but Zeus swallowed her 'after' confusing her and making her small (Hesiod: Theogony 886, p.110 di Gregorio).

In marrying Themis, on the other hand, Zeus rendered permanent and sacrosanct the rules he just decreed and his redistribution of honours and privileges. He could now control the fate of men both for good and bad. His double marriages, therefore set seal upon the falling Cronus and his own accession and precluded the possibility of any subsequent change.[11] Zeus, therefore, remained forever superior to all gods and men. Alexander the Great believed so much in these Grecian gods, and had chosen the supreme god Zeus Ammon, as his father. After his death, his portraits appeared regularly on coins. A silver tetradrachm dated 290 BC was discovered. It showed Alexander as god with Zeus Ammon ram's horn growing from his head. It was minted in Pergamum for Lysimachus, King of Thrace.[12] The great king must have imitated Philip who had a figure of Hercules as his ancestor stamped on his coins. It was now an incontrovertible fact that Alexander was a *mushrik*, a polytheistic zealot. Thus, he must be obliterated from all the sacred books of Islam.

Having known the historical Alexander in toto, no doubt, one

would be appalled at his identification as the Zulqarnain mentioned in the Amazing Revelation. One would also want to know the reasons for this choice of an illegal member to the commonwealth of the Faithful. However, in our condemnation of Alexander as a polytheist, we were not saying that all the ancient Greeks were heathens. Doing so, would be a contravention of Islamic teachings and principles. For instance, Socrates, appeared to be a Warner, sent to them with a Divine Philosophy which they rejected outright. And as Cicero, the Roman famous orator and statesman aptly described him succinctly thus: "Socrates brought philosophy from the heavens."

Socrates (470-399 BC)

The Greeks could not altogether be pigeon-holed as a nation of polytheists who only believed in pleasing and appeasing their pantheon, a practice described as Pax deorum. Because doing so would be tantamount to controverting the teaching of Islam, which taught that ever since peoples innovated the dogma of polytheism or *Shirk,* Allah (swt) had been sending Prophets and Apostles, inviting them to the worship of One God or *Al tawhid.* Each Prophet taught his own people how to worship the Supreme God alone without ascribing partners unto Him. He, therefore, brought them from darkness of polytheism into the light of monotheism. In this respect the Holy Qur'an said:

> For We assuredly sent Amongst every People a Messenger, (with the command) "serve Allah, and eschew Evil." Of the people were some who Allah guided, and some on whom Error became inevitably (established) (Q.16:36).

Therefore, the Greek nation could not be an exception to this Divine Injunction. In clear terms, Socrates condemned his people's gods and told them point blank: "Worship God and shun all these false gods." Because the Most Gracious, Most Merciful One had

sent human Messengers to every nation to call their attention to do Good and to eschew Evil. So no nation could claim that Allah (swt) had abandoned them or that He did not care about them in His universal Divine scheme of Salvation. While some peoples accepted the guidance of the divine Grace, others surrendered themselves to Evil, which gripped them like the Greek nation. Although, it was difficult to find among the Greek philosophers one fitting the genuine description of a Prophet, Socrates appeared distinctly to be an exception.

Socrates wrote no books but the influence of his life and teaching had been immeasurable, and would ever remain a Prophetic mission to the Athenians and to the Greek nation in general. For instance, he was known to have said that he was not the only one from God who had been the recipient of revelation but there had been many great men before him who did the same to bring Divine message to men. He was the son of a stone cutter or small sculptor, named Sophronogus. Socrates was an ill-clothed and not so good looking person, quite a poor man, who walked the streets of Athens barefoot dressed in very plain and homely clothes. Though, poor in worldly wealth and outward appearance, he was more than compensated in richness in the possession of a great mind with excellent characters; most Prophets appeared to be like this. Greeks were known for philosophy, so God sent to them a great philosopher of their own. This word "Philosopher" really means a lover of wisdom, a person who tries to find out things about men and the universe by observing and reflecting over them. The people of Greece were known to excel in this field and were renowned and respected for the quest of knowledge of science and art.

Socrates as a Messenger of God to his people did not put his thoughts down in writing neither did he bring with him a Holy Scripture but like Jesus Christ, he spread his message mostly among the poor. He employed the use of Dialogue in the spread of his

message in which he discussed freely with people in the streets, the market places or the gymnasiums and wherever people gathered, he spread his Divine philosophy through discussions. Through individual and group discussions, he made people see the errors of their ways and thoughts by questioning them until they were unable to answer or until they had realised their own folly. He was accustomed to stand about the market place all day long engaging in conversation with anyone he met punching him with reasonable questions until he was subdued to see 'reasons'. This method was very effective and its impact far reaching as the Athenian citizens claimed that his questions often left them bewildered and in a very confused state of mind, because he reasonably dispelled everything they had perceived as settled. The centre of his attack was the Grecian gods. The central theme of his teaching was the affirmation of Divine Unity in derogation of the Grecian gods. This had angered the Athenian Aristocracy and the clergy who viewed his teachings as dangerous and a serious threat to their pantheon. He remained undaunted in his crusade against these powerful polytheists, as every fibre of his monotheist personality throbbed with the life and spirit of a devotee to One God. So he was unique in Athens and beyond. In this respect, Ahmad had this to say:

> His belief in the Unity of God was unshakeable; his defiance of the plurality of Greek mythology was uncompromising. Virtue, knowledge, truth and eradication of all contradictions from One's person, were the subjects of his life long dedication. His whole life was itself a holy war against evil, ignorance and duality in man. He believed in absolute justice and the consequent punishment or reward. Readily he gave up his life with such a peace of mind and tranquillity of soul, on the altar of his conviction in the unity of God as behoves any great Prophet of God.[13]

Socrates was the personification of the best and highest in Greek genius and the noblest of all her philosophers. He was endowed with prophetic qualities; unassuming, altruistic and

without any political ambition of any kind, because the kingdom he preached was not of this world but of the Hereafter. He believed that the citizens of the state, could only be purified and saved through education of the mind to understand and recognise virtue and right.[14] Faith in Supra-physical Reality and the Hereafter was essential for the attainment of salvation. This was theistic as opposed to deistic faith associated with the Grecian gods. To Socrates, belief in Revelation was imperative towards the attainment of true knowledge. His supreme achievement lay in this unshakeable belief and conviction that the human mind was able to recognise; perceive and determine what were virtuous and right, truth and honesty, beauty and all other great ideas, which meant so much to human life.

To Socrates these ideas had *Reality:* He taught by keen questioning and discussion that it was possible to reject error and discern Reality. He was unlike his people the Athenians he had his fellowship with this *Reality.*[15] As he showed himself a deeply religious man like the Hebrew Prophets, there was a voice within him calling him to his mission.[16] Socrates, therefore, unequivocally condemned the Grecian gods of his people, saying that the stories about them were not true and should not be believed. He went further than that when he said the old way and laws of the Athenians were not good because they were old and did not agree with what was really right.[17]

As a great Philosopher, his teachings and preaching were highly philosophical but his people understood them very well. He decried the use of *old ways and laws* of the Athenians because they were paganic and there was no way they could be thought to be right because what was wrong could never be right. He was adjudged to be right and the wisest because when the Delphian Oracle was asked who was the wisest of the living it responded with the name of Socrates.[18] He was therefore, the best man to tell the Athenians the

New Ways and the Laws of God. His keen questions cast doubt upon all the old beliefs, the beliefs in the false gods. Like Jesus Christ, Socrates was grossly and often deliberately misunderstood, misrepresented and his teachings perverted. Yet, his greatness was unequalled nor surpassed. His fame, therefore, spread far and wide. Consequently, he was accused of polluting the minds of the Athenian youth. He was tried and sentenced to death:

> So the Athenians summoned Socrates to trial for corrupting the Youth with all sorts of doubts and impious teaching. Such examples as Alcibiades, who had been his pupils, seemed convincing illustrations of the viciousness of his teachings...[19]

Socrates defended himself, like Jesus Christ, against all these false accusations. But at the end, his pious teaching was rewarded with an impious verdict, when the Court vote. the death penalty on the noblest of all the Greeks in history. He passed his last days in tranquil conversation with his friends and pupils in whose presence he drank the fatal hemlock in 399 BC. He accepted death with serenity and calmness as he refused to escape or to obtain his freedom by compromising his Divine Mission of teaching Divine philosophy. He also accepted with dignity the Athenian method of putting people to death by drinking the poisonous hemlock, he was at the time 70 years of age. This great Prophet shared a lot in common with Christ. In drawing up parallels between Christ and Socrates, Joseph Chiari stated that:

> Socrates and Christ, the one interpreted by Plato, the other by St. Paul, form the two basic roots of the tree of Western civilisation. Neither of them wrote down what he said to men. They both confined themselves to speech and to action, and there is the vital lesson, the lesson valid for religion as well as morality - that life is above all action. They were both misunderstood, and they both based the authority of their philosophy not on any form of mandarinism, but on the life and actions of plain people. Christ was a carpenter and his supporters were humble men, and Socrates tested the truth of his people not on Sophists, whom he despised, but on artisans...[20]

These two great Prophets shared a lot in common. Socrates was sent to the Greek nation and Christ to the Hebrew nation. Both had preached monotheism among polytheists. Their religio-political philosophy were at one with the universal trend of Divine teachings, as there was no Prophet of God who ever revolted against the law of the state unless it conflicted with the laws of God. It was true as Chiari had pointedly observed that both were misunderstood and it could be added that their missions were misrepresented and derailed by their disciples. What Paul did to Christianity was exactly similar to what Plato did to 'Socratism'. Both Plato and Paul misinterpreted the missions of their masters. Socrates and Christ had shown a lot of forbearance in spite of many persecutions and remained unshakeable in their faith, during the course of their mission. The former was credited with the following statement:

> "..men of Athens I honour and love you but I shall obey God rather than you and while I have life and strength I shall never cease from the practice and teaching of philosophy.[21]

Despite the love he had for his people, forgiving their iniquities, yet, the Athenians condemned his teaching of Divine philosophy, which they described as "impious and corrupting their youth" because he condemned their Grecian gods and their heathen laws. However, Socrates remained uncompromising in the execution of his message. Even when he was offered a release from the death penalty, if only he could decline from his teaching of condemning their Olympian gods and goddesses, he adamantly refused to recant. So Meletus, the Chief Prosecutor, insisted that he must face the wrath of the law because his belief in One God was tantamount to absolute atheism and as such he must die. Socrates accepted the verdict willingly and was unruffled. Socrates received his cup sheepishly, irresistibly and without complaints. Here, he was quite unlike Christ who as death approached him, he became very much agitated and increasingly sorrowful unto death. He, seeking

for protection, prayed against his death. And he prayed in Islamic way with his forehead on the ground or *Sajdah*: "And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, Let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Matt. 26:39).

The action, *fell on his face and prayed* was an Islamic mode of prayer or *Salat* and the position is called *Sajdah*. This statement, *nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt,* could only be credited to a Muslim. Because he is by definition one who submits to the Will of God. Here Jesus Christ had demonstrated both in speech and *Salat* the mode of his prayer *(Sajdah* rubbing his forehead on the ground in humility), which Jesus did, he proved to be a Muslim. But about the ninth hour Jesus was said to have cried with a loud voice saying *"Eli, Eli lama Sabachthani?"* meaning my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? It was assumed that Jesus cried out in a loud voice while he was being crucified, thereby, rejecting his name of Emmanuel (which means God is with us). These words could only come from an unbeliever in God not from Emmanuel. It was incredible that such statement should come from a Prophet of God because Prophets never complained against His promise or action of God Almighty. And to say God had left Jesus in the lurch in spite of his solemn prayer was to cast shadow upon His Glory. Because the prayer of a righteous person availeth much; and he prayed in *Sajdah,* a position in which a person was nearest to God.

Prayer being an act of showing submission and subservience to God was given great attention by all the Prophets. Salat was the only acceptable mode of supplication, which all men of God had used. Jesus Christ was just following a tradition and showing the only way to reach God through prayer was by Salat. Example of other Prophets who performed Salat before supplication included the following:- Abraham: "And Abram fell on his face..." (Gen. 17:3); Joshua: "And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and did worship and..." (Joshua 5:14); Moses and Aaron: "And they fell

upon their faces and said, O God..." (Numbers 16:20, see also Numbers 26:6), to mention only a few. So unlike Christ, Socrates did not pray against his death and he was killed, while on the other hand, Christ prayed against it and he was saved from both *crarifagium* (crushing of the legs) and crucifixion. That his legs were neither broken nor was he crucified were historic realities, which were confirmed by the Holy Qur'an. This Holy Scripture explicitly stated:

> That they said in (boast), we killed Christ Jesus the Son of Mary, the Apostle of God. But they killed him not, nor crucified him, but it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge. But only conjecture to follow, for of a Surety they killed him not. (Q.4:157).

Therefore, the distinctive difference between Christ and Socrates at the tail-end of their career was prayer. Jesus did pray to remove the cup away from him while Socrates received his cup with equanimity and died in peace. Even though his disciples fled when he was allegedly captured by the Roman soldiers, his prayer had saved him from death. And his captors were dubiously misled and the Messiah was saved from the impending ignoble death. In contrast, Socrates demonstrated his victory in death with the following imperishable words: "You may think, but for yours that you may not sin against the God, or lightly reject his boon by condemning me. For if you kill me you will not easily find another like me..."[22]

Thus, Socrates had deviously cursed the Greek nation, when he said if they kill him, they would not easily find one like him. Yet, they killed him, since then there was never one like him, who even the Oracle of Delphi had testified to be the wisest of all. There was never anyone again who emerged to preach monotheism among the Greeks like Socrates, the noblest of them, all. Plato, represented the first generation who was also charged to a substantial degree with

Socratic spirit - philosophic and scientific discussions with stamp of spirituality. He later played another Paul of Tarsus when he deviated from the mainstream of Socratism. This was inevitable since Greece would never have anybody like Socrates. So his teachings were corrupted to meet the politico-religious expediencies of the time. Ahmad again had this to say:

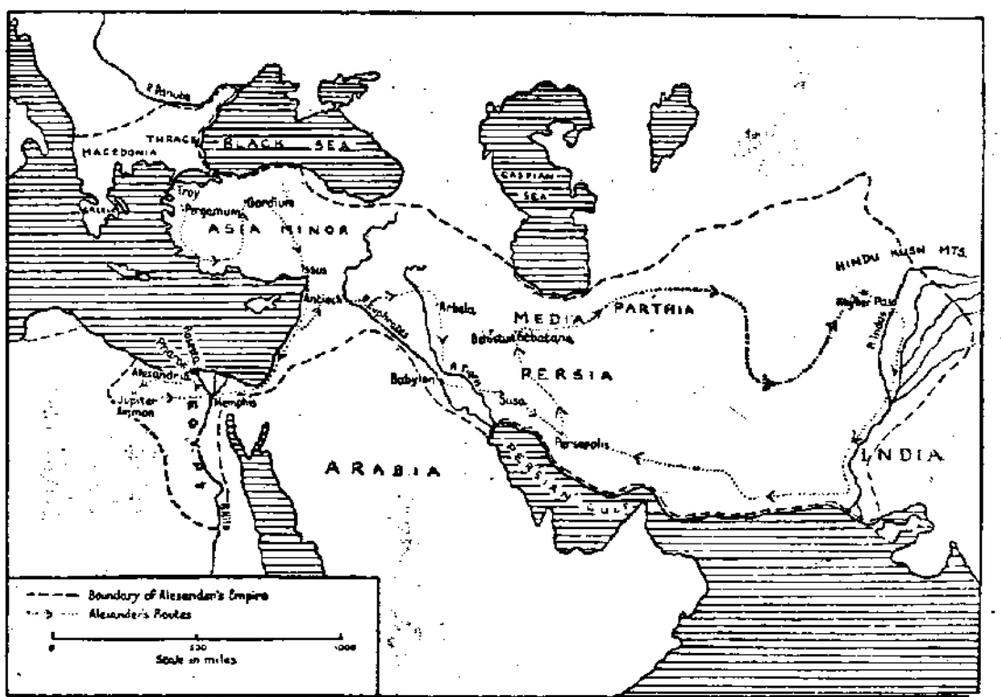
> Socrates seems to have a very intense relationship with the Supreme Being. His very personality is built on the pattern of the messengers of God. Plato represents the first generation of his pupils, who are also charged to a substantial degree with the Socratic spirit. In their philosophic and scientific discussions there is an inevitable stamp of spirituality. But in the transitional period, from Plato to Aristotle, we notice a perceptive decline in the idea of God playing a live and active role in the phenomenon of nature. In Aristotle we do not detect any evidence that he believed in any form of communication between God and Man.[23]

Thus, a Greek philosophy emerged, which was in complete negation of revelation and in contrast to the teachings of Divine Philosophy by Socrates. His message through revelation was supplanted by atheistic Greek philosophy. It was in this context, therefore, that we should again review the statement of the renowned Islamic scholar who said: "Socrates spoke of the Grecian gods, and so did Aristotle and Plato, but it would be wrong to call them idolaters or men without faith."[24]

But the crux of the matter here was to assume that all of them had shared the same faith and spoke with the same voice about the Olympian gods. This would be a wrong assumption. Because Socrates spoke of these gods only to condemn them in his affirmation of Divine Unity. The rest could not be said to share this monotheistic belief with him, as he held these gods in contempt and derogation. He considered them unworthy of worship as they were heavily dependent upon men in a symbiotic relationship of give and take, akin to an art of commercial exchange between gods and men.

He was persistently scornful of Athenian worship and as a result, he was killed. Plato on the other hand and his pupil Aristotle had deviated from the mainstream of Socratism, which taught about the supremacy of God, and the source of all goodness and unlike the Grecian gods, He was independent of all: "He was not in need of the gifts of men while He was eternally besought by all." Socrates, like a Hebrew Prophet believed that God had sent him to teach the Athenians the New laws. From his boyhood he had heard a voice within him, bidding him to do this, and not to do that. At the outset his ways of life were at variance with that of his society. He often spoke of this voice of inspiration to his disciples. But like other prophets of God he was described as demonically possessed; so it was jokingly termed as the "daemon of Socrates."

As a true man of God he shunned all forms of luxury of his days and through his self-discipline and scrupulous living he endured all forms of hardship and his life was toughened like a soldier. In heat and cold he wore the same clothing and walked barefoot in all weathers. He was said to eat and drink very little, he rather remained hungry most of the time, perhaps due to fasting. According to Mary Macgregor, Xanthipe, the wife of Socrates could not cope with the Philosopher's ways of life. Because while he was teaching wisdom in the market place, Xanthipe was at home wondering how to feed the family because Socrates was never paid by his disciples and, like Christ, his kingdom was not of this world. Furthermore, he showed complete aversion to accumulation of wealth and the materialism of his days. As a result of his excellent behaviour he was so loved and respected by his disciples and the Athenian youth and beyond. Crito, one of his disciples bribed the jailer to allow his prisoner to escape, but Socrates undaunted as ever could not oblige and refused to flee. He did not fear death but faced it calmly as he had faced life.[25] In fact, his last words to Crito were to remind him to pay a debt. "Crito, we owe a cock to Asclepius", he said, "Discharge the debt and by no means omit it." He must



Source *The story of the Ancient World*, CLEMENT, 1983

A map showing the extent of the Darian and Alexandrian Empires. The Persian Empire under Darius the Great was more than Alexander's Empire, it did not include Athens but it extended into Africa (Egypt, Libya and Ethiopia).



Source: Martin Robert, *The Ancient World* 1979

Alexander the Great on his horse Bucephalus.



Source: Legrand, *Chronicle of the World*, 1989.

A burst of the dying Alexander, three days to his conquest of Arabia.



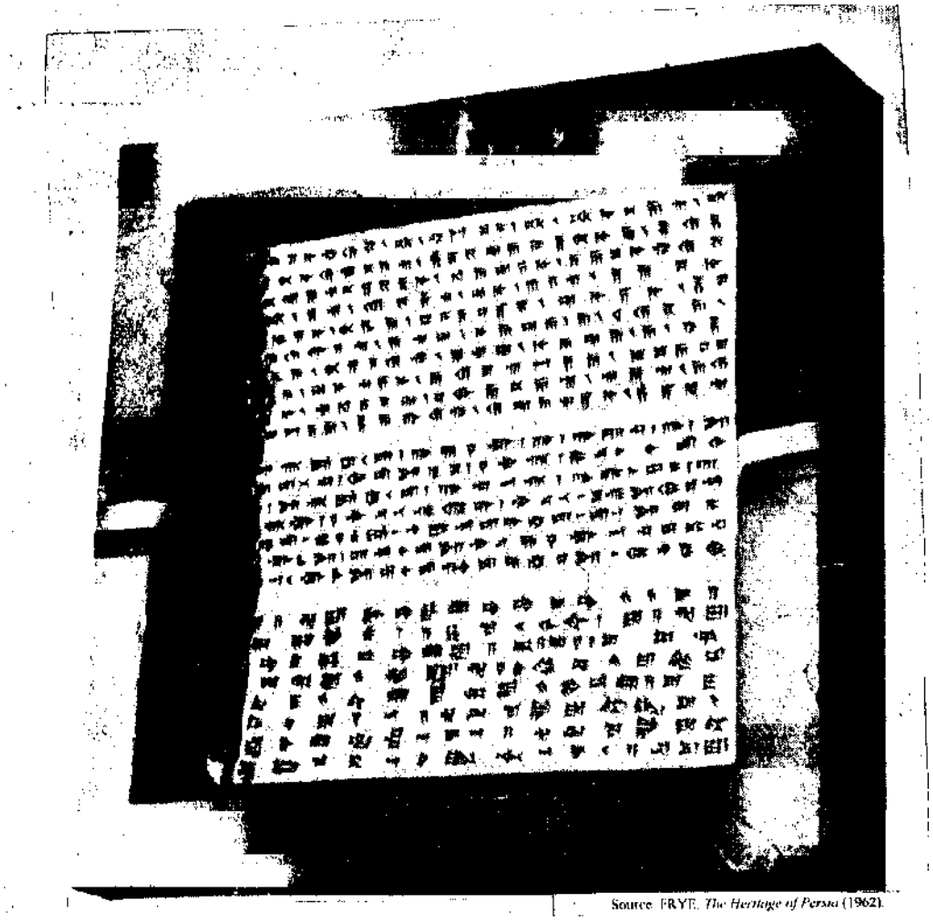
Source: Ilsoe and Jonsen, *World History in pictures* (1965).

Marble Statuette of Socrates, the Greek Divine Philosopher.



Source: The Ohio [illegible]

Statuette of Zeus the supreme sky-god, Alexander's Father.



Source: FRYE, *The Heritage of Persia* (1962).

A triangular, gold foundation table of Darius from Persepolis. The inscription is in cuneiform character and in the Persian, Babylonian and Elamite languages. He preserved his records in the widely spoken languages of his Empire.



Source: [illegible]nd, *Chronicle of the World*, (1989)

A glazed-brick griffin from Susa, the administrative capital of Persian World Empire. Darius the Great liked both interior and exterior decorations of his palaces.



The sacred marriage of Zeus and Hera. A nuptial wedding between the sky god and the mother earth.

have owed Asclepius the legendary healer his medical fee. Like all men of God they never liked to die with unpaid debt. So he prodded his disciple to ensure he paid the debt of his master. Thus, from whatever angle you view Socrates, he was indeed a man in communion with God Almighty. Alcibiades a favourite disciple of the Philosopher paid this glowing tribute to his master, the noblest of all men in Greece. He wrote:

> His absolute unlikeness to any human being that is or ever has been is perfectly astonishing. His are the words, which have a meaning in them, and also the most divine... to the whole duty of good and honourable man. This friends, is my praise of Socrates.[26]

Socrates' love and affection of his disciples stemmed only from his conscious behaviour, because his love was not a materialistic but a spiritualistic one. In his show of affection to Alcibiades, the Divine Philosopher said; "I only love you, whereas other men love what belongs to you, and your beauty, which is not you, is fading away, just as your true self is beginning to doom. And I will never desert you, if you are spoiled and deformed by the Athenian people: for the danger, which I must fear, is that you will become a lover of the people, and will be spoiled by them. Many a noble Athenian has been ruined in this way."[27] This show of love was in line with Prophetic advice; "Love someone because of God and conversely." Socrates would continue to love his disciple so long as this disciple continued to love and obey God Almighty. But when he became corrupted by the Athenian people to become a polytheist, his love of his disciple would cease henceforth. Because any love based on outward appearance or material gain was doomed to fade. A love, however, based on faith and sincerity in God would remain forever long lasting. Socrates, was undoubtedly a man of God who was sent to a highly materialistic people and polytheists to the core. His ways of life and message were abhorrent to the generality of Athenians. The trial and travails of this man of God showed the perils faced by

those assigned to preach monotheism. Although his values were recognised to be of high premium, yet he was killed because of his affirmation of Divine Unity. He kept the Grecian gods in contempt and in derogation. Even after death his original discourses on Faith and Revelation were obliterated, as his kangaroo trial would show.

The Trial of Socrates

The trial and execution of Socrates was the worst travesty of justice in the history of ancient world and hence the worst abuse of fundamental human right. He was denied freedom of religious belief and practice in the city of Athens. His accusation that he was corrupting the minds of the youth was baseless. The youth who had listened to and were appreciative of his teachings knew better because they learnt a lot from the riches and wealth of his knowledge. He insisted that the youth should show good virtues and truthfulness in all their social intercourse. More importantly, they must shun the old Athenian ways and laws and follow the New ways, which were in accordance with Divine Laws. He was inspired to tell all who cared to listen that the Grecian gods were false gods. This was what precisely had cost him his life.

The trial of one man – the noblest of all in Greece – against his nation was heard in a court of 501 Judges; the King Archon presiding. The old Divine Philosopher was found guilty by a majority of 60. It was a monstrous victory of evil over good and of falsehood over the truth. But Socrates had surprised the people by remaining in the city to answer the false charges. "I am persuaded that it was better for me to die now," he said, "and to be released, from trouble." The inspiring voice had told him, the divine voice that had guided him in his mission and his travails. The citizens of Athens after killing him, had spared no effort to bury all his original works and preaching, so that monotheism would not rise like a phoenix from the ashes. The actual reply of Socrates at his trial had not been preserved, "but we know its tone and spirit and much of its

tenor", Bury and Meiggs wrote, "For it supplied his companion Plato who was present with the material of work which stands absolutely alone in literature."

Although, in his *Apology of Socrates,* Plato had succeeded in catching the personality of the master and conveying its stimulus to his readers but with the actual charge of holding and diffusing heterodox views, he dealt briefly and unsatisfactorily. Because the forces, which had killed his master were alive and active. Plato was so afraid to tell the facts as they were. He was terrified at the perils of any crusade against the Grecian gods. So he distanced himself completely away from his master's divine philosophy to save his skin. Socrates, was a martyr to truth and faith. In the words of the Roman statesman Cicero; "Socrates was the first to call philosophy down from the heavens and to set her in the cities of men, bring her into homes and compelling her to ask questions about life and morality and things good and evil.[28] His was a Divine Philosophy to reshape man with morality and virtues and to make him subservient unto his Lord. Unfortunately, it was totally rejected by the Athenians. They rejected that which came down from the Heavens. The Athenians with spurious allegations condemned him to death, Socrates, accepted his fate without rancour and with a last request, a legacy he left for his children and all the children of Greece:

> When my sons are grown up, I would ask you, my friends, to punish them, and I would have you trouble them, as I have troubled you, if they seem to care about riches, or anything, more than about virtue, or if they pretend to be something when they are really nothing, then reprove them, as I have reproved you, for not caring about that for which they ought to care, and thinking that they are something when they are really nothing. And if you do this, both I and my sons will have received justice at your hand.
>
> The hour of departure has arrived, and I to die, and you to live which is better God only knows we go our ways.[29]

However, the trial and execution of Socrates had a wider scope

than merely diffusing heterodox, without defining clearly the manifesto of orthodoxy at that time. The execution, was undoubtedly, a protest of the spirit of monotheism against the old order or Polytheism. Thus, with the plant of monotheism nipped in the bud, polytheism had since held sway. Athenian citizens condemned Socrates, to death after a trial in which many believed he had been framed even though he denied the charges of corrupting the youth of the city and failing to worship the proper gods. In a long speech to the court he defended his life-style and faith in Divine Unity, in which he stated that he preferred to live in poverty and go barefoot rather than curry for honours and riches. He adamantly refused to compromise in his divine mission and that cost him his life.

Therefore, the noblest of the Greeks was great in life and death. The Socratic method of spreading his gospel and getting at the Truth by repeated questioning had earned him high reputation and the Athenian youth flocked to his side to study his methods. They used it to contradict their people in what they considered proper worship of the gods, as they struggled to answer their questions which invariably they failed to do. It was a philosophical method, which Socrates had used to spiritualise and moralise his society, and in this way he gathered notable youths and the intelligentsia. The Oracle of Delphi was right. Socrates was the wisest man in Greece, for he made the Greek intelligentsia to challenge the Grecian gods with facts and reason all in line with Xenophanes, his harbinger. Because Greece had refused his moral philosophy consequently, Western Civilisation in which it formed a root was morally decadent and with many consequences. Socrates, was not alone in the crusade against the old order. Many spiritual activists had come before him, notable amongst them was Xenophanes.

Xenophanes (590 – 465 BC)

Xenophanes, perhaps a forerunner of Socrates because he in 560 BC stood distinctly different from others; he was a Poet who decidedly chose to be on the side of the Truth. He travelled throughout Greece reciting his verses, which were very pungent and had upset the traditionalists by ridiculing their religious beliefs. A pride of Socrates, this effulgent Poet incessantly made scurrilous attacks on the Grecian gods. The ebullient Poet hooted at them in his crusade to establish belief in Divine Unity when he said:

> That men give their gods bodies voices and clothes, like their own. Thracians think of their gods as having red hair and blue eyes. While Ethiopians have with snub noses and black faces. Homer and Hesiod even have gods behaving badly, like committing adultery, stealing and deceiving one another.[30]

What the great Poet taught was that these false gods could neither create nor sustain anything of use either to others or to themselves. They were instead absolutely dependent on men that worshipped them on how they looked or perhaps even feed. Why then should men follow vain fancies of their own creations, instead of going to the source of knowledge, truth, and guidance, and worship, serve and obey the One True God? And when the gods committed immoral deeds as usually was the case, who could then punish the worshippers for their obscenities? With such powerful explosive poems, he put the man made gods and their worship in derision and odium. The effects of his contempt of these gods were to denude and destroy the faith in the pantheon among the people or what they described as "proper worship." But Polytheism had eaten far too deeply into the fabric of the society, so he stirred up the hornet's nest as the impact on his people was unsavoury to the clerics and Athenian aristocracy. Thus, he became a pet anathema of the traditionalists. Like Socrates of his days, Xenophanes remained undaunted from the reprisal of the traditionalists, for he told his listeners or readers that:

> If cows, lions and horses had hands and could paints, they

> would paint gods as cows lions and horses. He believes there is one god more powerful than all other gods, and men, who is different from mortals in mind and body.[31]

He exposed the foolery of men who worshipped these false gods, which were not real but were only figments of the imaginations of those who indulged in their false worship. If animals could paint, obviously, they could not have been deluded into such improper worship. The ultimate wisdom was the belief in and the worship of One True God who was unlike any form of creations. In Anatolia, Xenophanes became very vocal in his condemnation of Polytheism and in his indefatigable attempt to unsettle the *status quo*. The Greek intelligentsia saw the wisdom in his holy mission as they listened and understood the gist of his message. They were, in fact, potentially capable of carrying his message across to dismantle the old order. In the Ionian cities of Asia Minor (Anatolia), his anti-polytheism struggle gained the support of the intellectuals who backed it with facts and reasoned argument, but, unfortunately, only to relegate Révelation to the background. Consequently, a group of intellectuals emerged and poised to radically change the thinking and perception of men about the world around them and beyond. So with sharp searching questions, Thales, Anaximander and Heraclitus challenged the traditional myths and legends familiar to readers of the Poet Hesiod who catalogued some 300 gods, with Zeus as their King.[32] In this catalogue, Hesiod, had gods for the physical world: earth, sea, mountains and so on, therefore, each of these 300 gods was apportioned responsibility according to his attributes. Thus, Hermes carried messages and conveyed the soul of the dead to Hades or the underworld. Atlas, held up the sky from falling and Astraeus, took care of the stars. Hence, the upkeep of this beautiful starry sky was the responsibility of these gods, who were believed to visit their sanctuaries to receive sacrifices from their human faithful. These notions, however, were opposed by the radical scholars of Anatolia,

who saw the foolery of such beliefs and challenged them intellectually in a heroic saga.

The Greeks were thus sensitised to ask questions that no one before them ever asked or had even dared to ask or thought, about man, his nature, his relationship to society, to the universe and to his gods. Hence, Xenophanes of Colophon was one of the pioneers of *Ionian Reason* which arose as an antidote to Polytheism. He pursued undistracted the paths of reason as he rejected Orpheus as utterly as he rejected Hesiod. And his rationalism affected Heraclitus of Ephesus tremendously. Polytheism with its irrational concepts of origin of human race and the relationship between man and the gods had led to the establishment of philosophy. It was even claimed by some historians that the establishment of the study of philosophy was one of the most momentous facts in the history of Greece. It was in this scenario that Socrates came with his Divine philosophy from Heaven. But the philosophy of Xenophanes is predisposed to be different because he constructed an epistemology of which the first was God, who was not like mortals in either form or mind - which identified with the whole cosmos, and which was thus material, existing in space, and not excluding the existence of particular subordinate gods animating nature.[33]

He carried out his revolutionary ideas from city to city in the guise of a musician attended by a slave with a Cithern, an old instrument somewhat like the guitar. Xenophanes, in his ballad even deprecated the folly, the practice, which showed great honours to a visitor in a race or a contest. "Our wisdom is better than strength of human animals and horses", he said.[34] Because games could serve as ruse to distract men from the acquisition of wisdom guided with spirituality. The aesthetics of Xenophanes, therefore, was radically different from the rest of his contemporaries, who laid the foundation of present Western religious disbelief and put the supremacy of the art and sports over religion. An achievement in art; such as boxing, swimming or running were rewarded with

honours – a tendency that was *ab initio* condemned by this great moral Poet. However, most of the philosophers who challenged the existing traditional order only fought to supplant polytheism with rationalism. They succeeded, rationalism survived and formed the basis of Western Civilisation. The modern West considered itself as the continuation of a Greek intellectual tradition prominent for its reliance on reason and rationalism.

Most importantly, the Greek nation had Warners whose clarion calls to monotheism were unheeded, therefore, scoffed and derided, and the most notable among the Warners, Socrates, they killed. The dangers of Polytheism were myriad and attended with deleterious effects, notable among which was the proliferation of many "isms", rationalism, mysticism, Satanism, cultism, and other negative avirtuaristic arms of heathen ideology. These were noticeable in ancient Greece from the fifth century BC and beyond. The Greek intelligentsia had in a scathing condemnation, intrepidly rejected the pantheon with the force of reason and asserted that:

> They reject the notion of the gods meddling with the natural world. Thunder is not a loud noise made by an angry Zeus; it is to be explained in natural terms. Likewise, Iris may be goddess of the rainbow, but a rainbow is simply a multicoloured cloud of moisture.[35]

This trial-blazing by Xenophanes, an effulgent moral Poet with a Unitarian doctrine and the impact of his poetry had triggered off an avalanche of criticisms against the Grecian gods by the youth of Greece and its intelligentsia. They were all poised against the traditional worship of these gods. They had, through piercing argument and scientific means, uncovered the fallacy of polytheism. The effects of this fault-finding, therefore, aroused prejudice against the old laws. The Homeric and the Hesiod Poems, the Iliad and the Odyssey some of which dated 1200 BC were in 560 BC intrepidly opposed by the scholars of the day. Yet, the *status quo* was not unsettled, partly because the clergy had the support of the

aristocracy of Greece and wholly because of economic factors. Sculptors who made fortunes from the sales of these gods, therefore, fought tooth and nail to maintain the old order and had succeeded to a considerable extent.

Although, the literati, had fought the old order not for the affirmation of Divine Unity *per se* but for the empowerment of philosophy and science over Revelation. The Ionians, for instance, had brought their new ways of looking at things purely with the spectacle of science, hence they had a word for their world; "the Cosmos," which means the universe came from the Greek word meaning to 'order' or to 'arrange' things. Fortunately, the beautiful and orderly designs of the Cosmos were appreciated but the existence of the Supreme Designer was unfortunately denied. Could this well organised Cosmos have fortuitously come into existence? Consequently, the seed of Atheism was centuries ago planted in Greece and had grown into a full tree in the present Western Intellectual thinking. The evil plant which Socrates had wanted to nip in the bud had been bearing evil fruits ever since - negative fruitage indeed.

So the universe, including our own world, was seen and perceived as arranged in an orderly fashion without a Maker, an impossible fact. Thus, it could be studied and explained with reason and not by myths and the legends of the gods. In their scathing condemnation, they protested against Revelation. Hence they radically departed from Socratic divine philosophy. They attempted to pull down and root out polytheism in Greece only to replace it with philosophy devoid of spirituality. Therefore, art replaced religion and it dominated Greeks' way of life; poetry, music, and sculpture and painting were put at higher premium than any form of religion in ancient Greece. Since Western Civilisation, was an extension of its root, therefore, sciences in the West obliterated religion completely. These false creations of fancy were set up as

rivals to God Almighty. However, in His infinite Mercy, God had sent Warners to Greek nation warning them against the practice of both atheism and polytheism. But the reactionary forces of false worship killed some of these Warners like Socrates and turned deaf ears to the clarion calls of others to the practice of monotheism, all in a bid to maintain and to perpetuate the existing traditional order. Alexander, a scion of the aristocracy did not only fight to maintain the *status quo* but he was himself deified as "Alexander the god and son of Zeus Ammon," in his megalomaniacal quest for power and eternal glory.

Alexander the Great could have been the ideal religious revivalist unfortunately, he was not. Instead he became a famous cultural revivalist of Greek civilisation. Consequently, today we are faced with Western civilisation as an extension of Greek civilisation devoid of religious sensibility but with a stupendous might and power due to science and technological superiority. Alexander had sowed the wind he, therefore, reaped the whirlwind the brutal conquests of the Great King had boomeranged on his family, Olympias Alexander's mother was stoned to death on Casander's orders sequel to succession crisis created by the death of Antipater in 319 BC in Macedonia. Similarly, Alexander's wife Roxana the daughter of the Scythian Chief Oxertes killed herself in a family imbroglio. The Great King, therefore, was left with no heir either to his empire or to his family because nemesis the recoil of nature had caught up with the ruthless warlord. Yet, he was selected as the Qur'anic Zulqarnain. But what a choice?

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THE CHOICE OF ALEXANDER

At the wedding banquet, Attalus, the bride's uncle, insulted Alexander by casting doubts, on his legitimacy.

- Sykes

The generality of the world of Islam had surprisingly, accepted Alexander the Great as the Qur'anic Zulqarnain, even though his choice did not accord with Qur'anic specifications. The result of this was confusion and contradictions. The Qur'anic historic figure could not be reconciled with the historical Alexander. But long before this wrong and generally accepted identification was made, some of the religious teachers or *Ulama* had raised doubts about him, and had posited some other reasonable suggestions. A king of Persia was suggested by some early Muslim clerics to be the Zulqarnain mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. Perhaps, due to lack of sufficient facts and evidences to back up their claim, their proposal was relegated to the background. This proposal was, however, a reasonable one. Because there were two of the Persian Monarchs who could also stake claim to this title as was earlier on proposed. These were Cyrus the Great and Darius the Great. The vast Persian Empire was founded by the former and expanded to its glorious zenith by the latter. They were all religious men in the Islamic sense of the word. During their reigns, every subject nation had kept to the tenets of its religious beliefs, freely without intimidation. Religion had, therefore, been an important integral part of their governance.[1] Both were religious rulers who ruled according to the laws of God. But Darius had excelled over Cyrus both in greatness and in monumental achievements.

Although some of these ancient Persian monarchs were eclectic, they did not proselytise their religion and on the contrary, were even initiated into the worship of foreign deities whom they

considered as their protectors. However, these two great Persian monarchs had followed the religion of Zoroastrianism. They might have employed the ploy of religious politics of that time, in reaching out to the religious sensibilities of their subjects. And more importantly, both Cyrus and Darius I, were religious men who had professed a monotheistic faith. Unlike Alexander the Great, a polytheist and ruthless King, they were humane and just in their leadership. But in spite of their meritorious achievements these great Persian monarchs were not brought up into the full glare of history in the past. This gave the great pagan both a leverage and an edge over them to clinch the seat of Zulqarnain.

In the process of identification of Who Zulqarnain was, Syed Maududi gave the following guidelines, thus:

> This title should be applicable to such a ruler who might have constructed a strong wall across a mountain pass to protect his kingdom from the incursions of Gog and Magog. In order to investigate this thing, we will have to determine as to who were Gog and Magog. We will also have to find out when such a wall was built and by whom and to which territory it was adjacent.
>
> Besides possessing the above mentioned characteristics, he should also be a God-worshipper and a just ruler, for the Qur'an has brought into prominence these characteristics more than anything else.[2]

Therefore, Alexander, became a dross in this synthetic analysis of identifying who Zulqarnain was, using Syed Maududi's yardstick for selection and other academic approaches. It was not enough as he rightly observed to be a Zulqarnain but more significantly, to live up to the expectation of the Holy Scripture. In the subsequent pages we would follow his footprint, looking for the characteristics of the real Zulqarnain, whether or not were exhibited by the Macedonian Warlord on his path to glory. And having gone through a detail history of the contestant; he was far from being the right choice.

There were many reasons for these apparent discrepancies. The

campaigns and triumphs of Darius I, otherwise known as Darius the Great were not recorded in the conventional way of writing, on scrolls or papers, but were documented in inscriptions on stones, and most of these stones were not discovered until lately. They had remained hidden until recently when archaeological discoveries brought them to light, so a lot about this great Persian monarch had remained unknown for centuries. The discovery of the *Behistun* monument of King Darius had brought this King into the full glare of history. This king had engraved this record of achievements on a huge rock, by passing between Babylon and the Iranian plateau, and overlooking a main road to Behistun. It was on this huge rock in Behistun that the great King had published his triumphs in three of the most important languages of his World Empire: the Persian, the Babylonian and the Elamite. Little was known about this great *Behistun inscriptions*, until 1847 when Sir Henry Rawlingson, a British Army officer and scholar, climbed the cliff of this rock, at the risk of his life, and took a careful copy of the inscription. Furthermore, Sir Rawlingson showed a great ingenuity when he succeeded in deciphering the Babylonian Cuneiform inscriptions. This imposing rock at Behistun captivated the attention of all ancient travellers along this busy road between Babylon and the Iranian Plateau. It was 300 feet high and the splendid writing was carved 25 feet high and 50 feet wide as a beautiful monument.[3]

It was the ingenuity of this British Army officer, his soldierly valour and excellent scholarship that helped modern historians to recover the lost language and history of Babylonia and Assyria. And it was the result of his great work that so much became known about Darius the Great; in fact, he ushered in the second epoch of the Great King. But while this great Persian King had remained unknown in history, there were numerous historical writings and sculptures everywhere about Alexander the Great. These widely circulated literatures, highly publicised by both ancient and modern Graeco-Roman historians, were perhaps a payment in kind made to

difficult to surpass out of mutual envy. The Greeks and the Persians were arch-rivals and competitors in many respects such as culture, religion and military. Athens was saved from the subjugation of Darius the Great, purely by Divine Providence. The story was that Darius heard that the Athenians had helped to burn the city of Sardis and was immediately moved to fury and asked, "the Athenians - who are they?" It was said that he called for a bow and shooting an arrow into the air, invoked the heaven that it might be given to him to punish. Moreover, he bade one of his slaves to tell him three times at dinner as a reminder; "Sir, remember the Athenians."[5] This anecdote of Darius showed the existence of imbroglio between the Athenians and the Persians. "The Athenians who are they?" as spoken by Darius could have been very insulting not only to Athens but the whole of Greece. It did not, however, explain the cause of

the Macedonian Conqueror who killed thousands in his bid to Hellenise the world. So he was unduly projected and over-publicised as the greatest General and Conqueror of the ancient world. This could also be viewed as a literary attempt aimed at not only buttressing but continuously spreading the Hellenic Civilisation, which Alexander had started. But in reality, his achievements to any disinterested historian did not surpass those of Darius the Great who reigned about two centuries before him. It was even possible, until lately, that there might have been a deliberate attempt by the Graeco-Roman historians to de-emphasise the roles of all ancient non-Greek heroes and to hold them in check, so that Hellenic Civilisation and its purveyors were neither rivalled nor surpassed.

Consequently, one got more historic details or archaeological discoveries relevant only to Greek Civilisation than for any other civilisation. The result was that even in Persia and in the Muslim world, they remained under the mental siege of Alexander's conquests, which they propagated as the best in history. They could not see beyond the confines of Alexander's world and his achievements, because they were even forced by spurious writings to accept him as the one mentioned in their Holy Book. If Alexander the Great was mentioned in the Sacred Book of Muslims, then by implication greater was Hellenic Civilisation. There was indeed an initial subtle rivalry between the Persians and the Greeks, which graduated into overt confrontation in battles. This rivalry continues till today.

Graeco-Persian rivalry

There must have been a deliberate policy or a conspiracy by the King Darius did; he sent his army and navy into action. The Athenians, therefore, started this war of aggression, a manifestation of Graeco-Persian rivalry. The Greeks, who modern historians project as the best soldiers, having the best tactics and weaponry, were in fact, no match for the Persians in battles. The nation that first created a concept of one world under a Persian rule, and accomplished it with absolutism were no mediocre in warfare. Athens was only saved from Persian subjugation in Marathon and other battles not by the dint of her force of arms but by Providence; saved her as storms destroyed more of the Persian fleet than in the actual combat. Because Athens was in the divine scheme destined to form the nucleus of the present Western Civilisation, it was preserved with its characteristics.

Therefore, the contest for who would be the master of the world between Greece and Persia began from the dawn of recorded history. The phenomenal rise to world power by Cyrus the Great and his monumental achievements did not augur well for the Greek states. Since then the Persians were viewed as serious obstacles to the Greek impending global hegemony; Athens and other Greeks had helped the Ionian Greeks of Asia Minor in an unsuccessful

Darius the Great in effect was the first to establish a system of *one man* who was virtually in absolute control of the whole world. Apart from Athens, he had subjugated almost all the important states in the ancient world. Athens was providentially saved, perhaps, because it would form the nucleus of Western Civilisation. Thus, the global hegemony was viewed by the Greek states as the most dangerous threat not only to their states' existence but also their ambition of one day colonising the world both socially, politically and even, if possible, religiously. The religion of Persia was also a potential threat to the Grecian gods because they abhorred the survival of monotheism wherever it might be. Although Ikhnaton of Egypt was the first to be associated with the concept of one God, the Jews and Arabs were the people who attained absolute belief in One God through a system of codified laws referred to as Abrahamic faiths. They were followed by the Persians who equally professed monotheism through Zoroastrianism.

The Abrahamic faith and Zoroastrianism were sister religions as they all preached Islam, on a national scale. The Jews had posed no threat to Greece because they were a subject people living in diaspora. So the attacks were directed at the Persians both for religious and political reasons. Hence the enmity against the Persians by the West had a long history. With the Greeks colonising the world through the conquests of Alexander, a period of cold war then ensued; during this period Persian art, architecture, administration, military in ancient history were de-emphasised, altered through mudslinging or misrepresented. The Persian civilisation must be destroyed. But the brilliant culture of this people had been highlighted by disinterested historians. Brinton, *et al;* captured the monumental contributions of the Persians in the following words:

> The ruins of their ceremonial capital, Persepolis (Greek for "city of the Persians'), display a cosmopolitan splendour; their

> revealed religion and their great Prophet, Zoroaster in Persian, Zarathushtra, sixth century BC., contributed to Christianity. Worship of Ahura Mazda, the Persian God of Light, was a more advanced than any save Ikhnaton cult of Aton.[6]

The Persians had indeed displayed a cosmopolitan splendour that was influenced by a monotheistic religion, which played a significant role in their economic and social development. Zoroastrianism had also contributed to the cultural mosaic which formed and shaped the global empire of Persia. The World Persian Empire was unique in its kind and therefore, provoked the envy of other cultures, particularly Greece. From about 800 to 600 BC, the city states of Greece developed their own political institutions at home and founded many colonies. As from 600 to 400 BC, the city state civilisation as a whole reached its height. Therefore, collision with Persian civilisation was inevitable. It was not the Greek people acting as a nation that embarked on this programme of colonisation but the individual Greek city states. Soon the "daughter" cities became politically independent retaining only a sentimental tie to the original founding "mothers." The consequences were over-population, and hunger and constant internecine warfare. Even in the remotest colony, the population remembered its Greek origin and maintained its traditional feeling of superiority to those not speaking Greek, the "barbarians" who made noises like "ba-ba-ba" when they talked.[7]

However, in the late fourth century a Greek league of nations was established under King Philip of Macedonia, which provided his son with the fulcrum to launch his global conquest. He succeeded in establishing a world empire under the yoke of Greek colonisation. So thoroughly did the Greeks colonise most of the barbarian nations; in fact, its toe and heel colonisation of Italy had made the Romans later to call the area *Magna Graecia* which means Great Greece. Two hundred years later, Rome took over the imperial power from Macedonia, with the emergence of the

Romans. Rome equally inherited the West's traditional arch-rivalry with the Persians. The Roman Empire, viewed the Persian Empire with suspicion. This was the existing state of affairs when Islamic Civilisation came to subjugate these most powerful empires, the Persians and the Romans carried along with it the enmity of the West.

In all the major religions of the world, the process of diffusion was slow, difficult and erratic except Islam. It subjugated the two world powers in the twinkle of an eye.

> The religion of Islam is one of the outstanding phenomena of history. Within a century of the death of its founder, the Muslim Empire stretched from Southern France through Spain, North Africa, the levant and Central Asia to the confines of China. (Anderson 1976, p.91).

It is pertinent to note that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was not the founder of Islam as alleged by the Western critics; Islam is a religion of God revealed to His Prophet who acted not as a founder but as a Messenger of God to preach His religion and it came in the late sixth century after the Christian era to vanquish the most powerful empires in history. Persia accepted Islam while the British empire took over from where the Roman Empire had ended. The combination of the Greek, Roman and British empires produced the Western Civilisation. Its arch rivalry continued in the modern world, not between nation states but between cultures. At present, therefore, the world is witnessing the inevitable clash between Islamic Civilisation and Western Civilisation aptly described as the "clash of the titans." It was, therefore, difficult for the Graeco-Roman historians to do justice in their historical accounts of a civilisation they fully understood to be superior to their own. These historians might have deliberately hidden important facts, which conspired to make a true identification of Zulqarnain from the ancient world a difficult one. In the final analysis, Alexander could not be said to be the Qur'anic Zulqarnain. He was a wrong choice; a fallacious one indeed.

The Fallacy of Alexander's Choice

Alexander could have been foisted upon Islamic literature, perhaps, merely for want of reasons, or for lack of a better candidate to compete with him. So in the absence of a suitable one, the idea must have crystallised to let the pagan be allowed to fill in the vacuum, though, the Macedonian King was a misfit going by Qur'anic description. But surprisingly, most of the *Ulama* or Islamic scholars often had to accept the contradiction, or at times evade it completely by saying, "God knows best.' This had led to a maze of speculations both in the past and in the present of a certain pre-historic or ancient King of Persia but without factual evidence to corroborate their claim. Alexander the Great, therefore, stared them in the face as their Zulqarnain. Since what was preferable was not available, the available became acceptable, hence the idolater had remained as the chosen one ever since. For instance, in Sheikh Abubakar Gumi's Qur'anic exegesis, his explication on Q.18:83, he said:

> Zulqarnain is said to be a King and a follower of the teachings of Abraham from whom he received the Faith of Islam. His name was Alexander and Haliru his vizier and nephew, was the commander of his force. He founded the city of Alexandria. *Unfortunately, in the story, there are contradictions. God knows* best. The important thing is that God has given him authority, which he exercised according to His laws and became powerful with Allah's help.[8]

The learned international Islamic scholar was honest enough to point out that there were flaws in Alexander's choice. The reason for this was that Alexander was a misfit, he did not belong there, that was all. Although the Abraham mentioned here, could be implied to be patriarch Abraham, who lived in about 1750 BC while the *Askandar* as Alexander was popularly called died in 323 BC. They were therefore, separated by over a thousand years. Another important fact was that the historical Alexander was never known to

have followed any of the Abrahamic Faiths, which were monotheistic religions neither did he rule in accordance with God's laws, for he was an avowed polytheist and a wicked king.

Moreover, Allama Maududi's support of King Cyrus could not be substantiated with historical facts, even though, he qualified for the epithet. He then said:

> ...We admit that of all the conquerors, who had passed away before the revelation of the Qur'an, Cyrus alone is the one to whom the characteristics of "Zul-Qarnain" are most applicable, but we need more evidence to determine specifically that Cyrus is definitely, "Zul-Qarnain." Anyhow, there is no other conqueror to whom the characteristics stated in the Qur'an are as much to Cyrus.
>
> Historically it is enough to say that Cyrus was a Persian ruler, whose rise began about 549 B.C. In a few years, he conquered the kingdom of Media and Lydia and afterwards conquered Babylon in 539 B.C. After this no powerful kingdom was left to oppose him. His conquests extended to Sind and the territory known as Turkistan on one side, and the Egypt and Lybia and to Thrace and Macedonia and the Caucasia and Khawarzam in the North. In fact, the whole-civilised world was under his sway.[9]

Syed Maududi's exposition confirmed the fact that Cyrus was the first King to establish a World Empire at the dawn of recorded history. He was Zulqarnain in the real sense of the word, but the lack of absolute consolidation of the vast Empire coupled with the lack of extensive expeditions as described in the Holy Qur'an, had made him a second to Darius the Great. It was not only insufficient historical facts that were lacking in his choice, but his achievements were grossly limited in scope when compared with Darius the Great.

Similarly, Ustadh Abdullahi Yusuf Ali, who had over the years championed the identification of Alexander as Zulqarnain and commenting on the same verse Q.18:83 had this to say:

> Literally, "the two-horned one," the King with the two horns, or the Lord of the Two Epochs. Who was he? In what age, and

> where did he live? The Qur'an gives us no material on which we can base a positive answer. Nor it is necessary to find an answer as the story is treated as a parable...[10]

If it was not necessary to find an answer, why in the first place, did he identify Alexander the Great as the answer, and giving many reasons to back up his claim? This in itself underscored the necessity to find out who Zulqarnain was. Secondly, the Holy Qur'an did give us certain specifications, which were enough materials from which conclusions could be drawn on who Zulqarnain was. In a brilliant style, three of his expeditions described in the Holy Qur'an had given us a deep insight as to the nature, faith and power and the style of his administration. The Amazing Revelation had therefore, given us more materials than we needed on the subject. All that was required was very little effort on our part, to look back into ancient history and to scout for those who could be called the "Lords of the East and West." Having done this, then we should apply the Qur'anic specifications to fish out who was not qualified for these descriptions. Then we would surely arrive at the answer with absolutism. Although the story was treated as a parable, notwithstanding, it was necessary, I believe, to find this answer. For example, Hadrat Umar (r.a.) when he was a Caliph, though absolutely certain of the veracity of the story, despatched a team of people to find the wall of Zulqarnain. This single action of one of the most loyal companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) proved that the Holy Qur'an incontrovertibly gave us enough materials on which to base correct answer. The wall of Zulqarnain, which the Arabs had never heard of before was found. They came to know of it through the Holy Qur'an. However, the great genius who had single-handedly made English an Islamic language seemed to hold a contrary opinion when he said:

> I do not consider that historical or geographical considerations have much bearing on a story treated as a parable, as Zulqarnain is. *Indeed all stories or narration are referred to in the Qur'an as* parables, for their Spiritual meaning.[11]

But he contradicted himself when he presented a seemingly wrong candidate and made efforts to back him up. No matter how beautiful he presented his choice, Alexander the Great, as Zulqarnain of the Holy Qur'an could no longer stand criticisms based upon the current knowledge on this historical personage. His presentation of a candidate had proved that indeed, both historical and geographical considerations did have very important bearing on a story like this, treated by the Holy Qur'an. In addition to the spiritual values, such scholarly considerations would demonstrate the wonders and miracles of the Holy Qur'an as well. Nevertheless, it would be dangerous to come to a rash conclusion, about stories or a parable like this, in consideration of their historical or geographical origins, until proven by archaeological and scientific evidences, so that such considerations are proved beyond doubt. In this regard, it would be important not to put emphasis on personal opinion or experience, which were mere subjective analyses, but rather they should be based on exhaustive research or proven scientific discovery. We must be objective in all our considerations, otherwise, there would be problems, at a later date when new knowledge based on scientific, historical or archaeological discoveries were added to the current knowledge, thus, invalidating our previous subjective opinions on a stated subject. For instance, still on our theme of discussion, Ustadh Abdullahi Yusuf Ali said:

> Personally, I have not the least doubt that Zulqarnain is meant to be Alexander the Great, the historical, and not the legendary Alexander, of whom more presently. My first appointment after graduation was that of a lecturer in Greek history. I have studied the details of Alexander's extraordinary personality in Greek historians as well as in modern writers, and have since visited most of the localities connected with his brilliant career.[12]

It was true that this genius had traversed western lands and had studied western manners and the depths of western thought; these no doubt, had enabled him to give the Holy Qur'an a fitting garb in English Language, which is yet unequalled. And he had advanced

our understanding of the Holy Qur'an several folds, far better than even in our mother's tongue. But his deep knowledge and proficiency of Greek language and culture had beclouded his judgement on Alexander; he had inadvertently danced to the tune of the purveyors of Greek Civilisation. This he did by giving a final and personal verdict on his candidate as the best choice. By this singular act, the Muslim world was kept under a mental siege. It was forced to accept the personal judgement of her celebrated genius with finality. But Alexander's choice as Zulqarnain was fallacious because, from all indications, we had seen so far that he was not the personage referred to by the Holy Qur'an. And there was no way he would have been. Undoubtedly, the Holy Scripture had spoken of Darius the Great as one of the greatest Kings who ruled the world.

In fairness to Ustadh Ali of blessed memory the identification of who Zulqarnain was in history was not within his jurisdiction, it was purely the responsibility of historians. Furthermore, the celebrated genius was not rigid in his opinion but allowed much latitude in spiritual matters. Besides, at the time of his great work in 1934, *Askandar*, was the only suitable historic personage available. Thus, it was not an error on his part, furthermore, the Holy Qur'an is beyond the comprehension of a particular age or generation, because it is Allah's Eternal Miracle revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) for all succeeding generations. It was for this and other reasons that the outstanding Islamic scholar had this to say:

> So I believe in progressive interpretation, in the need for understanding and explaining spiritual matters from different angles. The difficulties that confront me may not be the same as those that confront you. The problems, which our age has to meet, may not be the same as the problems which puzzled earnest minds of the fourth or sixth or later centuries of the Hijra. Therefore, it is no merit to hug the solutions offered in the fourth or sixth centuries when our souls cry out in hunger

for solace in the fourteenth century of the Hijra.[13]

The identification of the personage involved in history had, hitherto, remained shrouded in conjectures and controversies. Ustadh Abdullahi Yusuf Ali, in his explication of the quoted verse (18:83), said:

> Zulqarnain was a most powerful King, but it was God, who in His universal plan, gave him power and provided him with the ways and means for his great work. His sway extended over East and West, and over people of diverse civilisations. He was just and righteous, not selfish or grasping. He protected the weak and punished the unlawful and turbulent. Three of his expeditions are described in the text, each embodying a great ethical idea involved in the possession of kingship or power.[14]

He, therefore, identified the historical Alexander with these remarkable characteristics as the personage referred to in the Qur'anic story. But the Macedonian King's behaviour as we read earlier on, was antithetical to the Holy Qur'an's vivid description of the attributes of the person - powerful man with a means to all ends; who was just, righteous and protected the weak, punished the unlawful and ruled according to God's laws. His kingship embodied a great ethical idea. There was no historian who would describe Alexander the Great with these lofty ideals, because he was the reverse in historic reality. No doubt his career was an extra-ordinary one that it impressed his contemporaries as a world event, of course, it was one of the greatest world events but not the only event of its kind in history. But the crucial desideratum was that he did not meet up with Qur'anic qualifications. As far as faith was concerned, he was a dead end, Alexander's kingship did not attach any importance to matters of spiritual significance, which was the main thing to note in stories rehearsed in the Holy Qur'an. Such stories were to serve as *ibra* or instructive value. Because in each of the episodes mentioned in this historical event, the military conquests were not mentioned instead, spiritual motives were revealed and commented on; thus,

whoever this story applied to must be a Muslim with an unflinching faith in *Tawhid* or monotheism.

To the contrary, Alexander the Great was a Polytheist with avowed belief in the Grecian gods and his conquests were no doubt aimed at Hellenising the world with being at 'peace with gods' or Pax deorum. The Greeks did not, like the Hebrews and the Persians, believe in only one God, but in many. Usually, however, the Greeks thought of them as being on the side of what was good and just, and man must endeavour to be at peace with all of them. And Alexander did all that, he made the usual sacrifices to these gods during his conquests and before undertaking any major personal decision, he had to consult Aristander his soothsayer and ritual adviser. It could be reiterated that these Grecian gods were supposed to live in the air on the heights of Mount Olympus. A mountain with a towering height of about 10,000 feet and visible over a large part of Greece. These gods were said to be beautiful and immortal, and they obtained their eternal life from the special food they ate, ambrosia to be eaten and nectar to be drunk.[15] Socrates had condemned all these gods for depending upon men for their subsistence. Zeus, as already discussed previously, was the chief of the gods, the lord of the sky and from his cloud-palace, ruled gods and men with the thunder and lightning, which he held in his hand. He had attained his supremacy above all, through many antics and manoeuvres as already explained. This supreme god had two brothers Poseidon, and Pluto. While he ruled the sky, the former ruled the sea and the latter ruled the underworld, where all the dead gathered.[16]

Athena, the daughter of Zeus born through his head was the greatest goddess of the Greeks. She was the protecting goddess of the Greek cities as well as controller of peace. She was the goddess of war and peace and the patron of Athens; which was named after her. Thus, altogether there were twelve of these Grecian gods. The names were already mentioned excluding that of Pluto who ruled

the underworld. Each was assigned with an area of command:

> Zeus, the father of gods and men. Poseidon the ruler of the sea. Apollo, the god of the sun, music and Prophecy, Athena, the goddess of wisdom and the arts of peace, Demeter, the goddess of agriculture, Hera, the queen of Zeus and goddess of marriage, Hephaestus, the lame god of fire and metal working, Hermes, the god of the winds and the messenger of the gods, Artemis, the goddess of the moon and the chase, Hestia, the goddess of the hearth, Ares, the god of war, Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty.[17]

The Greeks, Alexander inclusive, loved, revered and honoured these gods. It could not be said, however, that all Greeks of the ancient world were polytheists. This was because the Merciful One had sent a Warner or a Prophet to every nation and some people believed in them. But, unfortunately, Alexander the Great was not one of the few who followed the clarion call to monotheistic faith at that time. He was a polytheist from his beginning to his end, and like Pharaoh Merneptah, asked people to worship him in his megalomania. Yet, Ustadh Abdullahi Yusuf Ali made this pontification, "personally, I have not the least doubt that Zulqarnain was meant to be Alexander the Great, the historic Alexander, and not the legendary Alexander."[18]

However, the analogy of this misnomer was like that of a man reading the story of an animal, which vividly described a sheep, but in making a practical reference to this animal, he pointed to a dog as the animal typified in his book. Obviously, this would no doubt bring up confusion when a more discerning reader subsequently discovered the abnormality in this identification. Although, this may be an unsavoury analogy, but it depicted clearly the cause of the confusion of who Zulqarnain really was. The Holy Qur'an described a Muslim as the Zulqarnain, while a *Kafir* (an infidel) was identified as the personage referred to. Yet, in answering the celebrated question, "who was Zulqarnain?" the Muslim World answered, "Alexander the Great!", thereby upholding this misnomer rather

dogmatically. This arose because the stable gate was bolted before the stallion had entered, a hasty conclusion was made based upon insufficient data. Because, at the time of Ustadh Abdullahi Yusuf Ali, by quirk of history, very little was known about Darius the Great. So he made his identification based upon the available knowledge at his disposal. This was something that could not be dispensed with in dealing with the Amazing Qur'an. It contained a sea of unlimited knowledge that could not be comprehended by any generation. It was in view of this that Dr. Maurice Bucaille had once stated that: "To understand all such verses of the Qur'an one is today required to have an absolute encyclopaedic knowledge, by which I mean, one which embraces very many disciplines."[19]

This statement of a French Scientist, hinted how so much unlimited knowledge was contained in the Holy Qur'an. This required an encyclopaedic knowledge to understand this Noble Qur'an. A versatile field of knowledge which embraced very many disciplines. He defined the word 'science' to mean knowledge, which had been soundly established. It excluded theories, which could be abandoned later on in favour of more accurate explanations; which were more plausible. This important fact, however, applied not only to science but also to all the departments of human knowledge. Its also included historical events and parables. It was in respect of this, that Shaykh Muhammad Mit Walli Al-Shar'rawi, had cautioned us against over-zealousness or hasty conclusion. This renowned Egyptian Islamic scholar, had this to say:

> No less dangerous than this attitude is the practice by some scientists and scholars who attempt to elucidate the Qur'an in terms of these scientific discoveries or ascribe to some verses and facts the power of foretelling future events, only to be stunned later by discovering that they have been over-enthusiastic.[20]

The Egyptian scholar had only added his voice to that of the

French Scientist who equally insisted that the scientific fact must be 100% established before any allusion could be made in respect of the Holy Qur'an. He rejected outright the use of theories for obvious reasons. What applied to scientific fact, similarly applied to all branches of knowledge. But we could not avoid elucidating some verses of the Holy Qur'an with the sciences or some verses with modern historical or archaeological findings, with a view to demonstrating the miracles of the Holy Qur'an. This Amazing Revelation tempted us to doing so, because it was the only Holy Book in history, that was compatible with science. Dr. Maurice Bucaille explained thus:

> In many parts of the Book, the Qur'an leads, in simple terms; to this kind of general reflection. But it also contains infinitely more precise data, which are directly related to facts discovered by modern science: these are what exercise a magnetic attraction for today's scientists.[21]

The Holy Qur'an called repeatedly for reflection on physical phenomena to see the grandeur of His creations with a view to fearing Him as the Almighty God and to obey His commands. It equally called for the study of the history of nations, their rise and fall, and with other stories and parables, all aimed at giving mankind *ibra* or instruction value. The Holy Qur'an demonstrated its miracles daily, we could not grasp all because of lack of adequate knowledge and the means to do so. Sheikh Al'sharawi explained this miraculous nature of the Amazing Qur'an, in the following words.

> It should be pointed out that the meanings of the verses of the Qur'an all constantly regenerated from generations to generation. This continual increase of meaning is one of the Qur'an's fundamental miraculous features, developing in proportion to the degree of knowledge revealed to mankind at Allah's will and timing.[22]

The textual purity of the Holy Qur'an had remained and would remain intact till the end of time. However, the commentaries on its

verses and meanings do change with passage of time and increase in knowledge. So fresh explanations proven with complete accuracy and in accordance with the *Qur'an* and *Hadith* of the Prophet (phuh) do emerge from time to time to supplant older ones. As Sheikh Mitwalli had posited, today we draw upon broader meanings from the Qur'an, far more significant in their implication than anything, hitherto, before perceived. This was due to mankind's expanding knowledge and intellectual capacity. He gave the reason for this continual increase of meaning of this Most Amazing Revelation in these words:

> If this renewed contribution had been confined to one generation or one people it would have exhausted its message and purpose in a few years, and eventually the Qur'an's miraculousness would have diminished. It would have reached the following generations devoid of divine power and spiritual conviction.[23]

Ustadh Abdullahi Yusuf Ali who had spent his entire life on the study of the Holy Qur'an and had succeeded in giving the Holy Scripture an *au fait* translation and commentary in English, was in the best stead to give us a glimpse of the continual increase of meaning of the Qur'anic verses. He was distinguished in this field and his work was described as highly elegant in style, with the most appropriate choice of words close to the original meaning of the text. with almost encyclopaedic knowledge he accompanied his translation with rich informative notes and commentaries. Undoubtedly, he had rendered an enormous and enviable service to Islam, hence, he was indeed a Jewel of inestimable value. Consequently, the work of this Muslim genius; "Translation and Commentary of the Holy Qur'an", was selected and approved as standard by Islamic Researches, IFTA, Call and Guidance in Saudi Arabia. As one of the world's leading authority on this subject, we could benefit from the richness of his knowledge and experience with the Holy Qur'an, He said inter alia:

> How much greater is the joy and sense of wonder and miracle when the Qur'an opens our spiritual eye! The meaning, which we thought we had grasped, expands. New worlds are opened out. As we progress, still newer, and again newer worlds "swim into our ken." The miracle deepens and deepens, and almost completely absorbs us.[24]

Furthermore, and still in fairness to the outstanding Qur'anic Translator and Commentator, his identification of Alexander was not a conclusive one. This he showed when he categorically stated that:

> God's purpose is eternal, and His plan is perfect, but man's intelligence is limited at its best. In the same individual it grows and declines according to the strength of his power and the width of his experience. If we take mankind collectively the variations are even greater from age to age and from people to people. There is thus no finality in human interpretation. And in the thing interpreted - God's creation - there is constant flux and change. So that the impact of the one on the other must yield diverse results. The view of Kunchinjunga must vary infinitely according to the position of the observer, even if Kunchinjunga remained the same. But if Kunchinjunga itself varies, there is a double cause of variation in the view. So I believe in progressive interpretation, in the need for understanding and explaining spiritual matters from different angles...[25]

This deposition prove that he was a scholar *par excellence* and with a remarkable understanding of the Holy Qur'an. His belief, "in progressive interpretation, in the need for understanding and explaining spiritual matters from different angles" had stemmed from his realisation that the Holy Qur'an was not revealed for certain time, occasion or generation but for all generations till the end of time. And the keen understanding of the Holy scripture in each generation, directly proportional with their level of education and the problems that confronted indirectly. Although the argument presented in this book was not based on interpretation but on identification resulting from it, the explanation given by the erudite scholar sufficed and was excellent as it was comprehensive.

The entire Qur'an comprising 77,639 words was revealed to the Prophet of Mercy piecemeal over a period of twenty-three years. For over one thousand and four hundred yours not a single out of the 19,300, not a single full stop of the 6,366, and not a single letter of the 323,674 of the Holy Qur'an changed. But Allama Jalal-ud-Din as Suyuti in his book *Al-Atqan*, he stated that: the Qur'an has a total of six throusand, six hundred and sixty six (6,666) Ayat. An Ayah is a Qur'anic sentence like the Biblical verse. The Holy Scripture contains more than seventy-seven thousand (77,000) words. The use of the alphabets in the Holy Qur'an has exactly been mentioned as three hundred and twenty-three thousand six hundred and seventy one (322,671).[26] However, the Holy Qur'an shall forever remain unchanged. But the meaning of these holy verses keep changing as the *Al-Qur'an al-Hakim* (The full of Wisdom) adapts to every stage of human civilisation. This unique feature of the Full of Wisdom made the renowned Commentator explain when he said:

> I spoke of the general meaning of the verses. Every earnest and, reverent student of the Qur'an, as he proceeds with his study, will find, with an inward joy difficult to describe, how this general meaning also enlarges as his own capacity for understanding increases. It is like a traveller climbing a mountain: the higher he goes, the farther he sees...[27]

Hence, the Wisdom of the Holy Qur'an was far beyond the production of human beings. The Holy Qur'an, therefore, remains the Everlasting Miracle as it also remains a Religious Book *per excellence,* for the spiritual guidance of mankind. Having digressed much, it was important to return to the theme of our discussion: Who was Zulqarnain? and the consequences of the fallacious choice of Alexander the Great to our Holy Scripture and to our sacred history were numerous.

The Consequences of Alexander's Choice

In order to understand the subject matter of this book more properly

and in the correct perspective, it then became imperative to briefly discuss the Persians, the first nation to emerge as world leaders at the dawn of recorded history. The equation of Alexander with the Qur'anic Zulqarnain had been controverted due to the current knowledge of historical Alexander the Great. The contradictions in the points presented in support of this equation were in absolute negation of the Holy Scriptural descriptions. So it was consigned to be dropped because of its consequences, which stemmed from the fact that our knowledge of the Persian Campaigns against the Hellas was drawn entirely from Greek sources, and their historians determined which historic data to feed us and this often tallied with their points of view. At the outset, therefore, the Greeks had all nations handcuffed with their historic records, through Herodotus and other sources to a large extent. Invariably, this had buttressed Greek point of view. By equating undeservedly, Alexander of Macedonia with Qur'anic Zulqarnain was unwittingly upholding the religion and Greek cultural hegemony. Alexander was a venerated apostle of Hellenism. In his Panegyrics his great historian Arrian concurred:

> For my own part, I think there was at that time no race of men, not city, no even a single individual to whom Alexander's name and fame had not penetrated. For this reason it seems to me that a hero totally unlike any other human being could not have been born without the agency of the deity.[28]

Which deity? Zeus Ammon, of course, the divine father of Alexander. Could one hate the root of a tree without hating the tree? The root of belief of Alexander was this supreme god of the sky, yet, he was upheld and revered as a great religious leader in the Muslim world, which held in contempt *shirk* or polytheism in all its forms and ramifications. The religion of the Macedonian warlord, was polytheism, thus equating Alexander with the Qur'anic Zulqarnain was like paying homage to the altar of Zeus Ammon *albeit* unknowingly. Any one who read with care the story of

Alexander by Arrian, Plutarch and the host of other writers, could not fail to notice, the partial frame of mind with which they were written, especially his character. The errors, defects, ruthlessness and his unflagging racism were hidden or extenuated in order to make the warlord what he was not, the grey areas in the account of his brutal wars were buried in interpretative arguments, all in favour of the Macedonian warlord. Sir Percy Sykes had not only shared in the panegyrics of Alexander but revered him as an apostle of Hellenism. However, he was honest to point out that the Great Macedonian's career was in time overlaid with myths. He said: "so far has this process gone that the Alexander known to the East is, for the most part, an almost legendary being," according to this, "Alexander was the son of a King with Egypt."[29]

The anomalous identification had over the centuries permeated all over the nook and cranny of the Middle East and Africa. Sir Sykes, was highly motivated to engage in tracing out the routes followed by the illustrious Greek in Persia, and he claimed to have been the first European to trod the footsteps of Alexander the Great, "the most famous man ever born." Even today, the historian opined that throughout Asia as far as the confines of China, his name was one by which to conjure.[30] He was, therefore, in the best position to shed beam of light on the dark shadow of myths surrounding the Great Conqueror. From Kashmir across the stupendous ranges of the Himalayas to Gilgit and to Hunza, spurious stories about the King abound, in all these remote states in the world, which had never been visited by any European traveller until recently. Sykes cited two examples that showed the extra-ordinary fame of Alexander the Great, which he got by quirk of history and the false pens of the Greek historians and their allies. He wrote:

> In this isolated valley rules a petty Raja who claims descent from Alexander. Nor can we dismiss his claim with ridicule. Marco Polo tells us that a similar claim was made by the king of Badakshan, and it is reasonable to believe that in both cases the

claims are based on a tradition of the Greeco-Bactrian Kingdom which still lingers in these upland countries.[31]

No reasonable people could dismiss a false claim with ridicule, so long as such a falsehood helped to achieve certain politico-religious objectives. As this extra-ordinary fame of Alexander was designed to sustain a global religio-cultural hegemony, so it was allowed to remain for centuries uncorrected. In another instance the historian declared that:

> From Hunza it is a far cry to the coast of Makran, where, in 1877, a Telegraph official, while inspecting the line which runs along its barren coast, was murdered by the wild tribes men of Karwan, who had hitherto regarded an Englishman's life as sacred. They murdered this man mainly because they had heard that their co-religionists, the Turks, had defeated the Greek, the nation of Iskandar Zulqarnain or Alexander, the Lord of the Two Horns, and they considered this defeat to be a blow to the power and prestige of all European nations alike. It is thus with no ordinary interest that the career of Europe's mightiest son is to be regarded.[32]

It could easily be deduced that since the myths of Alexander had given the European nations, a sacred profile, the anomaly was rigidly upheld and all attempts to de-mystify him was equally rigidly resisted; instead, it was made further secure with falsified accounts. Iskandar Zulqarnain or Alexander, the Lord of the Two Horns, was interpreted by Sykes and other writers to be, "an epithet referring to his supposed descent from Ammon, in virtue of which he is represented in art as having a ram's horn on each temple."[33] Nothing could be farther from the truth. The easiest form of the many romances of Alexander in Greek could be traced to the second century AD Since then the incredible things about Alexander were allowed to survive provided they would serve certain purposes, one of which was to give an Englishman a sacred profile in the Muslim world. But the offending facts about him like his attempt to destroy Zoroastrian religion in Persia was hushed up by most of these

writers. The most important ludicrous account of Alexander that was allowed to exist was given by the same author. He wrote.

> But for us the most important work dealing with Alexander from the Persian point of view is the famous epic of Firdausi. In it the Poet describes Iskander as a scion of the Persian royal family, and he describes how Dara or Darius married the daughter of Filigus of Rum, or Philip of Greece. He divorced his wife, who became the mother of Alexander, and Darius Codomannus was his son by a second wife. Thus, the Macedonian was half-brother to the Great King, and his campaigns in Asia were undertaken to wrest the throne from his kinsman.[34]

With delight the author stated that this version of history, "is devotedly believed by most Persians, who were delighted above all things in the improbable."[35] This Alexander's choice was to the Europeans and their allies most important; because the Persians who were supposed to know the Macedonian warlord well enough, unfortunately, they were not only believers in the wrong version of his story, they were its active purveyors. This would then mean if the Persians could identify a part of Alexander, as their own, in order to partake in his sacred history as Zulqarnain, then who could dare to controvert this malicious identification? Of course, the truth would always prevail over falsehood. Although, Firdausi was noted among the many national poets of historical Persia, his epic was only a part of the bandwagon effects, of the fallacious equation of Alexander with the Qur'anic Zulqarnain. The marriage of Darius with the daughter of Filigus of Rum or Philip of Greece came out, not from the figment of imagination of the Poet, but imbibed from the spurious accounts of the warlord by historians. It was not a historical event, yet, it was lauded by the Europeans because this added delicious irony could get the rest of the world hoodwinked. Fuller, another writer enraptured by the Macedonian Warlord, winked at the macabre of his conquests and his onslaughts on his way to power. He glorified the King in the following words that Alexander was:

> More than a world – conqueror, he established a world idea which ever since has reverberated down the ages, and because of this, no man in history approaches him in the span of his fame. In Rome he was glorified by the early Caesars; in Jewish folklore he was acclaimed the precursor of the Messiah; and in Turkestan and Badakhshan chieftains of note still seek in him their ancestor. The romance which emanated from his life swept from Iceland to the yellow sea; it transformed him into the son of the last Pharaoh, Nectanebo; a scion of the Achaemenid house a fervent Moslem; a Christian Saint; and all-powerful magician. Fabulous though these legends are each contains a truth, that Alexander was a prodigy among men.[36]

But already, Sykes had already laid bare the motive behind the myths created around the Macedonian chief which was simply to give a whiteman a sacred profile especially in the Muslim world. This was the grain of truth in all these fictitious write-ups. And had the Darius the Great not being an upholder of monotheistic faith, there could have been no European writer who could claim that Alexander was a prodigy among men. Because the Persian World King was the whole subsequent course of history, the political, economic and cultural life of after times. Many disinterested writers agreed that he was a standard with which to judge other monarchs in history. The name Darius, therefore, had betaken the ends of one world epoch and the beginning of another because he was Zulqarnain.

Darius, as a great law-giver revived the relationship between God and man and established a harmony between man and man; undermining the principle of enmity, which separated city from city and people from people and exalting the principle of amity which united them into a single city, a common brotherhood. Hence, the concept of *Homonoia* or unity in concord was to his credit. The religious leader strove arduously to tie the people of his world empire together being one in mind as a Reconciler of the World.

Without this much needed unity of heart and mind binding all men together the peaceful progress and development of the world would have been distorted. Alexander, on the other hand was never known to be a law-giver or to be on a divine mission and any attempt to make him so was to put history on trial. And his orchestrated epic was a denigration of history. Because of the foisted erroneous belief that such Romances contained a grain of truth.

In religious realm Alexander was a dead end even though a supreme idea of divine conquest was attributed to him by Fuller, who quoted Dr. Tain who said that Alexander had never contemplated becoming a world ruler but what he really conceived was the idea of divine world ruler, out of which the concept of a universal world empire took shape. Furthermore it was a relationship between God and man. These notions, however, were in complete negation of the historical Alexander, whose global conquest was aimed primarily to make himself god among men, and secondarily, to create a world dominated by Greeks, their culture and civilisation. The new relationship between God and man as discovered was a new dispensation in which Alexander was deified and became an object of worship. Fuller, then contradicted himself when after giving the divine ancestry of Alexander he said:

> He was a man-god who tradition affirmed, had journeyed through Lydia and Egypt to India, spreading the mystical cult of the vine and conquering the nations as he went. These myths, which were spiritual realities in the age in which Olympias lived, had a profound influence upon and through her upon her son.[37]

Undoubtedly, it was these mythical realities that were antithetical to any establishment of a relationship between God and man, which the historian attributed to Alexander. Because Alexander was never known to be a monotheist but a ruthless polytheist. Hence what tradition affirmed about him were indeed not historic realities. Thus, with legendary divine ancestry of Heracles

through Philip his father and Achilles through Olympias, Alexander was therefore impregnated with the idea of self-divinity. Because his mother was the daughter of Neoptolemus of Epirus, who traced his decent from Achilles. In her native town at Dodona (Dramisos), she had worshipped at the most ancient oracle of Zeus, and she was aware that the more mysterious Oracle of Ammon was situated at the Oasis of Siwa. How Zeus became the father of Alexander was shrouded in the antiquity of history which no historian had laid bare. Fuller, had further stated that besides Heracles and Achilles, Dionysus son of Zeus and Semele, a daughter of Cadmus King of Thebes was also one of Alexander's legendary ancestors; and in Macedonia a day was set apart for his worship. A parallel motif could easily be drawn between Alexander and Dionysus. Both were children of Zeus Ammon, the former through Olympias and the latter through Semele, and tradition affirmed that Alexander followed the line of advance trodden by Dionysus and Heracles. He even traversed the hostile Grednosian desert in a feat second only to Dionysus. But while Dionysus was deified and became god, Alexander was unfortunately unsuccessful in his bid, even though he satisfied all conditions for being divine. Thus, he went berserk and killed many of his comrades in reprisal, an action that speeded up his waterloo. This was even more painful when Zeus was said to have endorsed his credentials in his famous shrine at siwa. In all probability Fuller said that:

> Amon declared Alexander to be his beloved son, on whom he bestowed "the immortality of Ra, and the royalty of Horus, Victory over all his enemies, and the dominion of the world," etc., etc., In this important point is that this declaration "was the only formula known by which the priests could declare him *de jure* King of Egypt, as he already was *de facto*.[38]

Alexander, therefore, had every reason to be mad at the treachery of fate that rendered him unequal to his step brother Dionysus. He endured untold hardship when he traversed a distance of seventeen thousand miles from Europe into Asia and at the

colossal loss of countless lives and property. Yet, he was refused the title of divinity.

Alexander, was impregnated with the idea of vengeance against Persia by King Philip of Macedon, and it was from his mother, Olympias, that he inherited the passion which fructifies it, such a vindictive savagery that was only seen in Hitler several centuries later. Olympias' domineering attitude and savagery were undoubtedly revealed in her son Alexander. Fuller did mention that while under the tutorship of Aristotle, the great Philosopher instilled into him hatred of the Persians, for they had murdered Aristotle's friend and relative, Hermeias tyrant of Atarmeus.[39] This explained why he rode through Persia not as a King but as a ruthless conqueror, let loose to settle the score of personal vendetta against Persia. In a delicious irony, Aristotle, had felt the impact of the killing machine he helped in building when the likes of his beloved nephew and a scholar of repute was ruthlessly killed by Alexander. And in a counter-irony the Warlord died without achieving his personal ambition to become a god among men.

Unfortunately, how Alexander's romances were believed and spread out by even the Persians, because the great Persians having been conquered by the Greeks had lost their equilibrium, as they joined other ignoramuses, searching for the Qur'anic Zulqarnain. Whereas, in point of fact, he was in Persia lying peaceful in his tomb at *Naqsh-i-Rustum* in Persepolis. Perhaps, they were inflicted with inferiority complex, as they looked outwards instead of inwards in their search for the real Zulqarnain. And the most likely place to get him was in Greece, and to add salt to injury the destroyer of their Zoroastrian religion was unanimously and erroneously identified and revered. By so doing the Persians had abandoned their sacred history and thrown it unto the dogs, perhaps out of frustration of a conquered nation.

But the choice of "Europe's mightiest son" did not help matters

rather it only made the Persians a laughing stock and it was a slight and a ridicule to the Muslim world in general. Sir Percy Sykes had put this point more scholarly thereby letting the cat out of the bag. He disclosed that:

> These fascinating romances must have been the joy of European and Asiatic alike, and they were incorporated into literature both sacred and profane, including the Koran.[40]

To all the critics, now and in time to come, the Holy Qur'an is protected from any form of corruption. Its textual purity had remained and would remain forever intact. Nothing was incorporated into it, as such, there was no story of Alexander incorporated into its sacred pages. The question raised as to who Zulqarnain was, had not been answered. The equation of the great historic personage mentioned in the Holy Qur'an with Alexander was an inconclusive and contentious issue among Muslim scholars, an academic exercise which this book was intended to illuminate. The filth of Alexander's story was not even near the confines of the sacred scripture, to the chagrin of the Europeans and their Asiatic collaborators. The clandestine attempt of incorporation of "Alexander's choice as Zulqarnain, was the most dangerous and had deleterious consequences. It gave way for a horrible attempt to foist rather deviously "Lord of the Two Horns" into Muslim literature. Hence, Muslims were surreptitiously made to pay homage to supreme god Zeus Ammon, which was tantamount to a spiritual conquest in disguise. Another important point against the misinterpretation of the metaphor of the Two Horned One, was that the horn of Zeus Ammon was used in literal sense, hence, there was no room for a mistaken identity. The world would never remain in check over the inflated monumental achievements of *Askandar*. The true ancestors of Zulqarnain were the Persians and not the Greeks; a nation with a long ancient history.

The Persians

The Persians were divided into tribes namely: the Pasargadae, Moraphii, Maspii, Panthialaei, Derusiaei and Germanii. These according to Clement Huart were all agriculturists, whereas the Dai, Mardi, Dropici and Sagartii were mainly nomads. Hence, they were ten tribes in all. The most notable among them were the Pasargadae and the Hakhamanish, a clan from this tribe. The Persians in all belonged to the Aryan race, the Greeks created out of the clan Hakamanish, an eponymous King Achaemenes. The Aryan family in consequence of unknown historic events had come down from mountains of the Parsua and settled in the midst of a population of wholly different origin, the Cassaeans or Ashanites, who may be related by their speech to the Georgians of Transcaucasia.[41]

Meanwhile, a certain Median chief and a ruler of Akessaia, a capital town of the Kassites, which the Medes renamed Hagmatana (Ecbatana), this Median Chief named Khshathrita, was a fierce opponent and rival of the Assyrians. The Kassites were later assimilated with Medes to form a formidable force. Therefore, in testing his strength before his eventual invasion of the Assyrians, the Median King invaded the area held by the Persians, conquered their ruler Teispes (pronounced Chishpish) the son of Hakamanish, and made him his vassal. Subsequently, Khshthrita the founder of the Median Empire failed in his invasion against the war-like Assyrians. According to John A. Boyle who stated that based upon the Assyrian records the Median Kingdom was engaged in battle in 670 BC with the Scythians, a fierce, warlike, highly mobile and deadly Aryan tribe who lived in the rapine. Perhaps, weakened by its Assyrian war, the Median Kingdom was assailed by this dangerous tribe and they wreaked terrible havoc on the Medes. This was the first crime the Scythians had perpetrated that subsequently attracted revenge against this notorious tribe. A lot would be discussed about the Scythians in this book, because of their mischief on earth.

The Median King Khshathrita was succeeded by his son named Cyaxares or Uvakhshatara. But no sooner the new King had mounted the throne than he was again subdued and subjugated by the deadly Scythians. The Median Kingdom had remained for almost three decades under the heavy yoke of Scythian domination, during which his people suffered terribly. However, in his attempt to shake off the yoke of the Scythian domination, Cyaxares, having made their leaders drunk at a banquet, he unhesitatingly slew them all in his desperate bid to gain his freedom. In fact, this massacre of the Scythian chiefs had added salt to injury. The Scythians ever since had sought to avenge the slaughter of their chiefs by any means necessary. Thus, they became increasingly ferocious not only to the Medes but also to the Persians their neighbours alike. Hence a battle line was drawn between them. This might explain the reason of both the imbroglio and the internecine feud between the Medes and the Persians on one hand and the deadly Scythians on the other. But Scythians of whatever geographical location were inherently dangerous, ruthless, murderous and because of their ferocious cannibalism were described as barbarians. Consequently they were to play important role in the Zulqarnain's story. Although the Medes under the yoke of Scythian domination had become notable adept in warfare and experts in archery, which they learned from their captors, but they suffered devastation and the period was irksome and counter progressive. It conspired to bring the Median Empire on the decline and as a result it became weakened internally.

So Teispes, the King of Persia then availed himself of this opportunity, the temporary eclipse of the Medes to free himself from their bondage. As he succeeded in winning his freedom, the Persian King then moved southwards from the land of Parsumash or Pars subjugating Elam and annexing Parsa and Ashan into his Empire. This King then divided his realm between two of his sons namely; Ariaramnes and Cyrus I. The former then proclaimed

himself the great King of Kings, King of land of Parsa. According to Professor Boyle, a golden tablet was found at Hagmadana bearing Ariaramnes' portrayed and proclaiming: "This land of the Persians, which I possess, provided with fine horses, and good men, it is the great god *Ahura Mazda* who has given it to me. I am the King of this land."[42]

This King was vindicated because with a triple combination of faith in *Ahura Mazda,* good men and fine horses, the Persians had ruled the whole world for two centuries. King Ariaramnes was succeeded by Arsames, who no sooner had he mounted the throne of Persia than he was deposed by the Median King Cyaxares. Because he regained his strength to launch a fresh attack on the Assyrians. The Median King had succeeded in making alliance with the Babylonians who were also enemies of the Assyrians. With a combination of the Median and Babylonian strengths, Cyaxares conquered, ransacked and destroyed the Assyrians and their Capital Nineveh. He was then able to muster his strength and dominion over his neighbours, particularly the Persians.

Although Cyaxares, the Median King was triumphant over the Persians, he allowed the Achaemenid royal house to govern their territories but under his suzerainty. Meanwhile, Astyages the son of King Cyaxares, dreamed that there flowed from his daughter named Mandane a torrent, which not only filled his capital but covered all Asia. He believed it portended power so he feared to give her in marriage to a noble Mede, through whom the prophesy of this dream might be fulfiled, so instead, he gave her to a Persian of good family but of quiet temper, whom he regarded as inferior to a Mede of even modest condition. This was Cambyses I (pronounced Kambujiya) and the marriage was blessed with a baby boy named Cyrus II.[43]

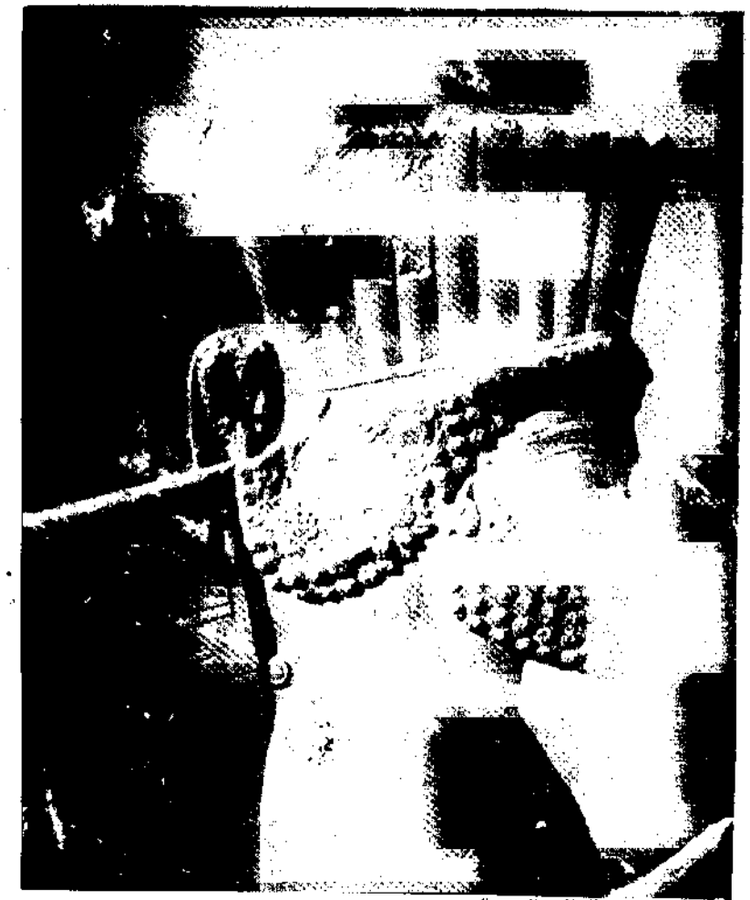
Astages feared the advent of someone who would overthrow his empire. In his second dream he saw a vine rising from his

daughter's body and covering the whole of Asia. In terror he sent for his daughter, Mundane, and when the child was born he handed it to Harpagus, a man he trusted with the orders to kill it.[44] All these dreams had foreseen the coming of a King through his daughter who would be the master of Europe and Asia. This baby Cyrus II, however, was not killed by Harpagus instead he gave the child to one of the King's shepherds, named Mithradates with the instruction to dispose it in the wilderness to die. But Spaco, the shepherd's wife had just given birth to a still born child, she persuaded her husband to exchange the still birth with Mandane's baby, and to show the dead baby to Harpagus. He granted to her request and the plan was successfully carried out. As destiny could never be changed, Cyrus II survived to be the first man in recorded history to establish a World Empire. In yet another stroke of fate several years later, he too had a dream, which foretold his potential successor to his throne. Frye, gave a detailed account of this dream, which he based on the Herodotus account of Cyrus. During his expedition against the Massagetai of East of the Caspian sea the king had a dream, about which Professor Frye wrote:

> After war had started Cyrus sent his son and successor Cambyses back to Persia accompanied by Croesus, ex-King of Lydia. Then Cyrus dreamt that he saw the young Darius, eldest son of Vishtaspa and grandson of Arsames, also an Achaemenid, with wings on his shoulders which overshadowed Asia and Europe. Since Darius was not yet twenty and was staying in Persia rather than with the army of Cyrus, the great King summoned Vishtaspa and ordered him back to Persia to guard his son until the war was over, which Vishtaspa did.[45]

Fortunately, Cyrus the Great, learning from his own history, did not tempt Providence by trying to kill the young Darius whom he saw in vision as the future Zulqarnain, the master of Asia and Europe, instead he ordered for the protection of the future Great King. Unfortunately, in this battle Cyrus defeated the Massagetai, captured the ruler, a son of Queen Tomyris, but the son committed suicide. Cyrus fell in the battle in Circa 530 BC, after ruling for

twenty-nine years. The conquests and achievements which made Cyrus "Great" is the topic of the next chapter. At this juncture, a genealogy of the Achaemenids is hereby reproduced for the sake of clarity.



Source: Frye, The Heritage of Persia, 1962.

A Persian bodyguard, the "Immortal" of Darius, the King of Kings.

GENEALOGY OF THE ACHAEMENIDS

Achaemenes (Hakhamanish)
Teispes (Chishpish)

Cyrus I (Kurush)

Cymbyses I (Kambujiya)

Cyrus II (559-530)

Cambyses II (530-522)

Xerxes II
424-423

Artaxerxes II Mnemon
404-359

Artraxerxes III Ochus
359-338

Arses (Arsha)
338-336

Smerdis (Bardiya)
or Gaumata
522

Ariarammes (Ariyaramna)

Arsames (Arshama)

Hystapses (Vishtaspa)

Darius (Darayavahush
522-486

Xerxes I (Khshayarsha
486-465

Artaxerxes I Longimanus
465-424

Darius II (Nothus)
423-404

Artostes

Arsames

Darius III (Codomannus)
336-330

Source: Frye, *Heritage of Persia*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London (1962) p.293

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Chapter Six

CYRUS THE GREAT (558-528 BC)

That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem,. Thou shall be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.

- Isaiah

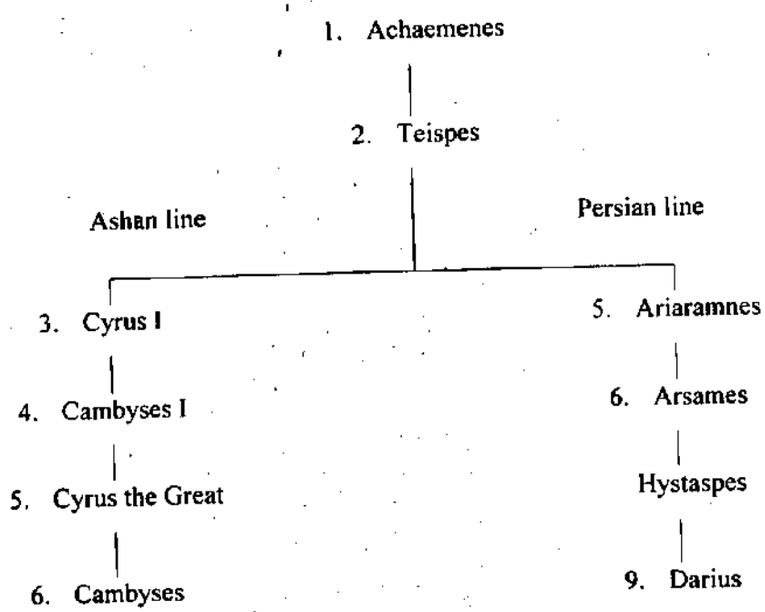
O man, I am Cyrus, the Son of Cambyses, who founded the Empire of Persia and was King of Asia. Grudge me not therefore this monument.

- Arrian

The Persians had already formed an independent local kingdom in the last decade of the eighth century BC under Hakhamenesh, the eponymous ancestor of the Achaemenians. They were, however, reduced to vassalage by the northern Medes until the middle of the sixth century when Cyrus defeated Median King and unified the Medes, and Persians into one Kingdom.[1] He was destined to be the architect of *Pax Achaemenica* in history. Cyrus the Great was destined to create the first World Empire. He conquered Lydia, and the whole of western Asia Minor. The Ionian cities were also subjugated to his dominion. He then moved down the Tigris subduing the vassal states of Babylonia, and finally took Babylon. He turned his attention to the east, annexing the eastern provinces to his empire, only to fall in battle against north-eastern Iranian Scythians. His body was embalmed and taken to his home province of Fars where his tomb now stands.

He was noted in history as a benevolent Conqueror and the Liberator of the Hebrews from bondage. Zoroastrian religious beliefs, which were basically ethical and universalistic, produced a tolerant attitude toward other religions was exemplified in Cyrus' treatment of the conquered peoples to an extent that the Bible described him as the Lord's shepherd and Messiah.[2] Thus, we could easily see how Cyrus might lay a claim with his impeccable

credentials to the title of Zulqarnain; it became imperative to expound his story. Kurash II, otherwise known as Cyrus succeeded in 558 BC to establish himself as a King. His sudden astounding conquest created an immense empire, which had not been seen before. This Persian empire stretched from the Hellespont to the borders of India.[3] It was the first World Empire to be conceived and accomplished. Cyrus, the founder of this colossal empire was a great military and organising genius to subjugate so many peoples with various religions, customs, civilisations and to bequeath to his successors a world state, which was overthrown by Alexander the Great about two centuries later. Cyrus the Great had the same ancestry with Darius the Great. He was the seventh World King while Darius was the ninth as this simplified genealogy shows in the Achaemenid royal house.



Source: Percy Sykes, *A History of Persia, vol. I,* (1969) p.143

According to Percy Sykes, this reference to a double line of Achaemenian monarch was made by Darius in the great inscription and had initially puzzled its decipherers. This renown soldier and a scholar said an examination of the Great King's statement was justified: "There are eight of my races who have been kings before;" Darius said, "I am the ninth." Cyrus, was the eight Achaemenid King but the first world King. He was credited with the concept of *One World,* the fusion of various peoples and cultures in one *Oecumene*. Hence he was the first to assume the global dominion in recorded history, a title of this leadership aptly described in the Holy Qur'an as Zulqarnain. Thus, the Achaemenid monarch thought himself as a King of Kings over many peoples with their rulers and chiefs.

Furthermore, Cyrus was to be remembered as the liberator of the Jews from captivity. His history was tied to this historic act, which was a landmark in the history of mankind. The land of Judah remained a Jewish nation for more than three hundred years. However, in 586 BC. Babylon's King Nebuchadnezzar invaded Jerusalem and all Judah and took the people captive. This Babylonian captivity brought the Jews again to foreign land as slaves. When the Babylonians put the city of Jerusalem under siege, the Egyptians who came to help them were effectively disposed, leaving the city defenceless. The foreign invaders surrounded it and cut it off from any outside help. The inhabitants were in a serious plight as food became very scarce in the city. In fact, a point was reached when all the bread of the city was gone (Jeremiah 37:21, see also 2 Kings 25:3). The fall of Jerusalem was, therefore, inevitable. Prophet Jeremiah had foreseen the destruction of Jerusalem with its Temple. He warned the citizens of the city about the inevitable Babylonian invasion (Jer. 38:2-3). His warnings however, passed through the deaf ears of the people until when they were besieged by the ruthless invaders.

The invaders succeeded in destroying the wall of the city, the

attackers rushed inside it and the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar captured this city in 586 BC. The Biblical account in 2 Chronicles 36:18-19 recorded this end of Judah's history and the beginning of the Babylonian captivity.

> And all the articles of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the lord, and the treasures of the King and his officers, he (Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon) brought them all to Babylon. Then they burned the house of God, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem and burned all its building with fire, and destroyed all its valuable articles.

In short, in modern terms it could be said that Jerusalem was razed to the ground; its people taken into slavery. Chronicles 36:20 added:

> And those who had escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon, and they were servants to him and to his sons until the rule of the Kingdom of Persia.

King Zedekiah and some of his soldiers, having lost the city, fled at night in the direction of the Arabah (2 Kings 25:4). It was a region around the Jordan valley. The vanquished king was, however, captured and taken to Babylon. Where his sons were killed and the King's eyes gouged out at Riblar where Nebuchadnezzar had established his headquarters. King Nebuchadnezzar at Riblar (2 Kings 25:18-21) ordered a number of important citizens to be slain. The vessels and metal ornaments in the Temple of Solomon were broken and carted away (2 Kings 25:13-17). In fact, when the rule of the King of Persia came as it was foretold in the scripture the Hebrews were given amnesty by the great King Cyrus.

It was incognisance of Cyrus' impeccable record that Allama Maududi had chosen him as the Qur'anic Zulqarnain. Because most of the characteristics of the personage mentioned in the Holy Scripture were applicable to him. He was at the time of the erudite scholar, the only known conqueror known among the ancient rulers.

to whom the features of Zulqarnain might be applicable. The erudite Scholar also stated that even the enemies of King Cyrus had been full of praise for him for his justice, and Ezra, a book of the Bible, asserts that he was a God-worshipper, and a God-fearing King who set free the Israelites. Because of his God-worship, and ordered that the Temple of Solomon should be rebuilt for the worship of Allah, who has no partner.' The piety, uprightness and magnanimity of Cyrus were known to all. All these proved the direct influence of his Zoroastrian religion, which was Islamic in principle.

Cyrus' magnanimity

While under the yoke of foreign subjugation, the Hebrews suffered many untold hardship and all forms of cruelties were inflicted on the Jews in bondage. Then Cyrus the Great gave them amnesty when he conquered Babylon. The Jews were given freedom and a new lease of life; those in exiles were allowed to return to Jerusalem and rebuild their holy city. This happened about two decades after the death of Nebuchadnezzar in 562 BC, when the might and power of Babylonia gradually became weakened. The Jews had spent about twenty four years in Babylonian captivity. The Persian empire rose under the able leadership of Cyrus to become a very powerful nation. It would no doubt collide with the weakened Babylonia. One day during a banquet given by King Nabonidus' son of Belshazzar a mysterious hand wrote on a wall the word; *mene mene takel upharsin*. And Prophet Daniel explained the strange writing that God had "weighed the King in balance and found him wanting to his kingdom had been handed over to Cyrus." The inevitable event happened when the great conqueror came to Babylonia.

In 539 BC a battle was fought between the Persians under Cyrus and the Babylonians under King Nabonidus, the fourth King after Nebuchadnezzar, and the last King of Babylonia. The battle was fought at a place called Opis on the river *Tigris,* and the

Babylonian army was utterly destroyed. King Nabonidus driven out of Sippar fled and Gobryas the commander of the invading army, therefore, entered Babylon without skirmish. The temples were protected and looting was forbidden. Cyrus the Great Conqueror then appeared in person on 27th October 539 BC and as he was called 'deliverer' by the Jews. The vanquished King Nabonidus of Babylon surrendered to the Great King and was taken to Carmania (Kirman) where he lived till his death. Cyrus was consecrated as King of Babylon on 20th March 538 BC, when he took the hands of the god Bel-Marduk.[5] And this made him an object of veneration by the Babylonians. Cyrus the Great was a religious person and had respect for the gods of other peoples. He, therefore, restored to the various cities the images of their gods, which Nabonidus had removed to Babylon. This attitude was unlike that of Babylonia and Assyria, who took delight in their fetishist idea of decorating the conquered people and profaning the images of their gods. They used to carry the gods of the conquered people as trophies or war, making them form a kind of triumphal procession under their own national gods.

But the great Zoroastrian was tolerant of other religions. Therefore, Cyrus won both political as well as religious victory, by his respect of these images, and when he restored them to the peoples who valued and revered them. He gave the statues of gods, which he found in Babylon back to their lawful owners, who naturally received them with joy and happiness. The gratitude felt by these peoples conquered by Babylon, on the news that their national gods were coming home was very enormous.[6] He was indeed magnanimous in victory, and this idea of his genius consolidated the power of the conqueror. He granted a special favour to Jews, whom he gave amnesty and freedom. Cyrus would ever be remembered for this gesture, the liberation of Jews from the Babylonian captivity. The publicity given to this by the Jews, had taken Cyrus's name to lofty height making it a household name. He

was indeed considered to be the "second Moses" for the Hebrews.

Cyrus was inspired by God to act in this manner, and he returned to the Jews in exile the gold and silver vessels from the Temple of Jerusalem, which he found among the royal treasures. He set the Jews free in accordance with this divine injunction. "Now, in the first year of Cyrus, that was, in the year 538 BC, the Lord stirred up the Spirit of Cyrus" (Ezra 1:1). With his mind turned in favour of the Hebrews in bondage, so he enacted an edict which he issued within the first year of his reign as King of Babylon to effect the injunction. It was this edict, which had liberated the Jews and allowed them to return to Palestine to rebuild the Temple that had remained a famous landmark in the history of mankind. But it was important to note that all his actions were mere reflections of his religious belief, and the dictate of Zoroastrianism. He was a follower of this pristine Faith in Divine Unity. The teachings of this ancient religion could equally be mirrored through the activities of Darius the Great for similar reasons. Both held a lofty position in Persia as great upholders of this Persee religion. Cyrus, as a result, he was inspired by Jehovah God to issue this decree when he declared that:

> The LORD, the God of heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah (Ezra 1:2).

The desire that the Jews should return to their country to rebuild the Temple and the city, were in accordance with Cyrus religious policy was overriding, however, it was only achieved about a decade later with the help and assistance of Darius the Great. He too was inspired by God to act in this direction; he had a similar religious policy. As a religious man he was never grasping nor wink at injustice but rendered selfish service to his people. Cyrus was a just King, for example, Herodotus, gave the account of how Cyrus treated a selfish powerful clique who presented him with

their selfish proposal he wrote:

> Artembares instructed the Persians in a design, which they took from him and led him before Cyrus; this was its purport: "seeing that Zeus grants lordship to the Persian people, and to you, Cyrus, among them by bringing Astyages low, let us now remove out of the little and rugged land that we possess and take into ourselves one that is better. There be many further such on our borders and many further distant; if we take our one of these we shall have more reasons for renown. It is but reasonable that a ruling people should act thus; for when shall we have a fairer occasion than now, when we are lords of so many men and of all Asia?" Cyrus heard them and found naught to marvel at their design; "Do so", said he, "but if you do, make ready to be no longer rulers, but subjects. Soft lands breed soft men, wondrous fruits of earth and valiant warriors grow not from the same boil." Threat the Persians saw that Cyrus reasoned better than they, and they departed from before him, choosing rather to be rulers on a barren mountain-side than slaves in tilled valleys.[7]

Undoubtedly, Cyrus was one of the towering figures in ancient history. He subjugated three great empires; he destroyed the Median, the Lydian and the Babylonian empires. In short, the figure of Cyrus had survived throughout history as a man of exceptional qualities. In battles he was bold and dauntless and in victory magnanimous. He had unshakeable belief in the Unity of God, this like Darius, must have sprung from the teachings of Prophet Zoroaster. He died in a battle in 528 BC and was buried in a tomb at Pasargadae. When Alexander the Great went through this city, he visited the tomb. Had the Persians of later years had abided with the precept of Cyrus, "Soft land breed soft men", their empire could not have been battered by Alexander to become "slaves in tilled valleys." It was pointedly observed by Henri Barr in the foreword in *Ancient Persia and Iranian Civilisation* that:

> The vast empire created by Cyrus, Cambyses, and Darius that other "administrator of genius" astonished and frightened the free Hellenes; and yet, as a first attempt at an Aryan empire, it

served as a model to Alexander. What the Great King had wished to do from East to West, Alexander attempted from West to East. Through the pages of Xenophon, he followed Cyrus. "It is known that he professed the highest esteem for this Persian idealised by an admirer of Agesilaos" and had a genuine liking for the Iranian nobility. The Persians came to him, astonished and charmed. He wanted to blend the two elements. The Greek city expanded to the dream of workd-monarchy. It has been said that "the history of Alexander is part of Persian history, its normal continuation being the Hellinistic Age.[8]

In the formation of this colossal empire, and composite civilisation, there was a striking similarity between Cyrus and Darius in their approach to issues as it concerned the administration of their own people and those of other nations. One may reiterate to say that Cyrus was equally qualified to be the Qur'anic Zulqarnain. He was a just, righteous leader who ruled in accordance with the laws of God. So nothing stopped him from clinching this title too. But Cyrus did not fit the Qur'anic descriptions as much as Darius did. He was a well known figure among the Jews and the Christians, therefore, he presented no problem as to who he was. Asking any question about him rendered the answer too obvious, and making it thereby immaterial. Although he ruled the empire about eight years before Darius, and he was more popular but the extent of his empire was not of Alexanderian dimension. A brief comparison of the two kings would show the distinction.

Cyrus and Darius compared

It was pertinent to reiterate once more that the question of who Zulqarnain was, was meant to be a difficult one. It was not intended to be answered either from the Jewish or Christian Scripture and even in the historical record, it was not at all easy. Both Cyrus and Alexander would provide easy and obvious answers on account of their popularity as a result of the availability of their historic records. However, such was not the case with Darius the Great

because most of his records were carved on stones and were buried in the womb of the earth or on top of high rocky cliffs all of, which were inaccessible to the general public for centuries. In addition, the monumental achievements of Darius no doubt had surpassed those of Cyrus, such that in writing these lofty achievements, one would have to state that, in addition to the achievements of Cyrus, Darius had excelled him with the following meritorious achievements to mankind's history. Darius chivalry, sagacity and political savvy were no match for that of Cyrus, though, both were "Great."

This was because Darius had to re-conquer the vast empire founded by Cyrus and expanded by his son Cambyses by military conquests for almost seven years. It was not just bequeathed to him simply as a King. He re-conquered it in a military fashion similar to that of Cyrus, then he consolidated the vast empire into his absolute control before embarking on its gigantic expansion. He demonstrated a unique ability as a military and administrative genius, the type of which the world had never seen before. The monumental achievements of Darius the Great and his global meritocracy had remained unsurpassed in the history of the ancient world. H. A. Clement had compared and contrasted the two great Persian Monarchs in the following words:

> The greatest of the Persian Kings was Darius who succeeded Cyrus after a short space of eight years. He is often called Darius the Great, because he used his power mainly for the benefit of his people. Cyrus had shown his sense of Justice in freeing the Hebrews. Darius kept peace and order throughout his empire. He built roads and canals to encourage trade. He collected a fleet of Phoenician warships to make his power felt on sea. He divided his empire into Provinces and placed a governor over each one to enforce his rule. His subjects prospered under his government although they had no power.[9]

Clement, a renowned historian made some remarkable statements about Darius, similar to the Qur'anic description of Zulqarnain. That he used his power mainly for the benefit of his

people. He achieved this only by making journeys to every nook and cranny to ensure that justice reigned throughout his empire. Expeditions such as these could not be possible without road links and ships. Another very important statement made about Darius was that: "His subjects prospered under his government." This could only mean that the King ruled his people according to the laws of God. No doubt such a government could be described to be a wise government.

Darius the Great advanced the economic status of his peoples. Although the use of coinage system had been invented in Asia minor, but he perfected it. He introduced his gold coins 'Daric' named after him to be used in replacement of trade by barter. These coins bear on one side only the King as an archer bending with his bow one knee on the ground. No doubt about it, Persians were the best archers of the ancient world. In addition to the gold coins silver Medic shekels were used, each worth one twentieth of the gold piece. Perhaps, Medic was derived from Media. The Persian coins bore the image of the King on the obverse; on the reverse a hollow square. As the author pointedly observed the use of darics of Darius had enormously stimulated the economic growth of the empire. Administration of justice was indispensable to an empire of this extent. Darius as a religious person had proved himself to be a paragon of justice. He believed in *Ahura Mazda* the Creator of the Heaven and earth, as he proclaimed in the *Behistum Inscription* that the King reigned by the grace of *Ahura Mazda,* and he gave him his power that enabled him to conquer the rebels, so he ruled with righteousness. In the first expedition of Zulqarnain as recounted by the Holy Qur'an; he taught that the work of righteousness was always accompanied with good reward as pointed out thus: "But whoever believes And works righteousness He shall have a good Reward, and easy will be His task as we order it By our command" (Holy Qur'an 18:88).

This principle of justice was one of the fundamental teachings of Zoroastrianism. Darius the Great had applied this principle in the

governance of his peoples. He claimed in the Behistun Inscription that he was not a tyrant nor was he wicked but ruled with righteousness. It could be discernible that Zulqarnain had a similar and almost identical style of administration with Darius the Great. The wisdom and sense of justice shared by both Cyrus and Darius were largely due to the influence of their religious teacher and Prophet. Zoroaster, the Prophet of Zoroastrianism, which in its pristine form was a monotheistic faith. The monotheism of Cyrus could be proved from the tribute paid to him in the Old Testament:

> "Thus, saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose "right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name: am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou has not known me. I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no god beside me: I girded thee, though thou has not known me - Isaiah 45:1-5,

There was no doubt, Jehovah God would not have praised a polytheist with these lofty words from the lips of Prophet Isaiah. It is significant that he even honoured Lord called Cyrus by name. He subdued other Kings for him to make him the King of Kings. Therefore, Zoroastrianism in its original form was closer to Judaism and Islam, in affirming the Divine Unity. Darius the Great was greater than Cyrus the Great in both military and civil achievements. Cyrus liberated the Hebrew captives from the Babylonian captivity and allowed them to return to Palestine to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple. This singular act had made him popular among the writers of the Old Testament who hailed him as the 'deliverer' the 'anointed' and the 'shepherd'. As popular as he was in the religious circles, especially the Jews and Christians, no one would ask who he was,

because the answer would have been too obvious. This important point could never be overemphasised.

With religious zeal and patriotism, the Jews returned from Babylon. The cavalcade moving towards the holy city of Jerusalem was composed of the following: 42,360 Jews carrying with them 7,337 servants men and women, 200 singing men and singing girls. The Caravan was carried on 736 horses, 245 mules, 435 camels and 6,720 asses (see Ezra 2:64-69). On reaching Jerusalem, they began to plan the reconstruction of the Temple and for this purpose they collected 61,000 drams of gold and 5,000 pounds of silver. This was in addition to the treasure they had brought with them from Babylon, which was thirty horses laden with gold and one thousand carrying silver, also there were 5,400 gold and silver vessels to be placed in the Temple (Ezra 1:9-11). In spite of their eagerness to accomplish this gigantic project, the progress of work, however, came to a halt. It was with the support and assistance of Darius the Great that this holy project had progressed to completion in 515 BC.

It was now patently clear that Cyrus could not be compared with Darius on this coveted epithet of Zulqarnain and more importantly, the Qur'anic descriptions. His expeditions were almost the replica of the journeys of Qur'anic Zulqarnain. Hence, there should not be any mistaken identity as to who Zulqarnain was; Darius the Great had distinguished himself as the only one who could be rightly identified as the Qur'anic Zulqarnain. He remained in obscurity for centuries because he carved his records on stones and huge rock, because he was a King who was conscious of history, even on his tomb there were inscriptions recording some of his monumental achievements. The history of his achievements were recorded in three major languages of his colossal empire, the Babylonian, the Elamite and the Persian, as no serious citizen could be ignorant of all. His carved records on stones were to enable him to attain the mastery of "Two Epochs." Darius was indeed *Primus interpares* among the great Kings of the ancient World.

There was no doubt he was a man of two epochs. in British Museum, there was a relic of the seal of Darius. It was a cylinder of the Assyrian type. a green chalcedong, on which was engraved the figure of the King hunting lion. with the inscription in three languages: "I, Darius. the King."[10] The Behistun Inscription was a preserved historical monument (records) not meant to be tampered with or read by passers-by. Accordingly, Darius made translated copies of it, which were sent to all the different parts of his provinces to achieve this predetermined aim or purpose. The Aramaic version was, for instance, found among the archives of the Jewish colony at Elephantine in Egypt. From this document, it was inferred that the Behistun inscription could not be later than 510 BC. One of these copies engraved on stone in Babylonian Cuneiform was discovered in Babylon. Therefore, this trilingual document was believed to be carved out in 516 BC, recording the military victories of the Great King and the achievements of his global meritocracy.

But why was the King so much interested in this type of historical record keeping? The choice of this unique historical documentation style must be with a purpose. And the reason perhaps was beyond his personal ambition of keeping his legacy for posterity but it could be religiously motivated. He was so conscious of the importance of keeping his records permanently secured, which perhaps was an instruction by God, for the sake of future references to his epochs; a man with 'two epochs' was Darius the Great.

Darius' Preservation of Records

It was remarkable how the records in the Behistun cliff and the tomb inscription at *Naqshi-Rustum* were preserved and handed over to posterity. Frye gave one reason why the Behistun inscription remained in a relatively good state of preservation: that Darius had the steps that led up to it smoothed away so that no one could climb

up to the relief.[11] Sykes, similarly, had given another reason for the preservation of the relief, as due to a curse he invoked on thieves and saboteurs. Darius, anathematised any saboteur who tampered with his records in the following words:

> Saith Darius the King: If thou shall behold this tablet or these sculptures, and shalt destroy them and not preserve them so long as thy line endureth, then may *Ahura Mazda* slay thee, and may thy race come to nought, and whatsoever thou doest may *Ahura Mazda* destory![12]

"It was impossible to over-estimate these trilingual inscriptions," said Sykes, "not only for their extra-ordinary historical value but perhaps even for the light they shed on the Babylonian and Assyrian cuneiform inscription."[13] The Great King was aware that historical records written on parchment and scrolls papers were not safe from destruction either from within or from a foreign invader. Had all these historical records been kept in a place or a library in Persepolis, for example, they could have either been stolen or burnt down. Undoubtedly, these valuable documents could have been lost in inferno when Alexander burnt down Persepolis. The wise King, therefore, did not keep all his eggs in one basket, he made copies of these records on gold tablets and sent to all strategic places in his empire. A fragment of the text of his ascension to power in Aramaic inscription was found in Egypt. Hence, from all these measures taken with respect to the safety of the records of his military campaigns and his monumental achievements, one could easily discern that there was a purpose behind it all. The reason was to be the master of 'Two Epochs', or a celebrated figure both in the ancient and the modern worlds which could not be tenable without genuine historic records. This was explained somewhere in the book.

Darius the Great had absolutely controlled the world. Cyrus had carried his victories westward to the shores of the Aegean sea and the Greek cities of Western Asia Minor fell under the Persian sway.

This brought the oriental colossus directly alongside with south eastern Europe. Darius finally extended it to include the European territory as far as the Danube, crossing to the Balkans and southern Russia. The Darian or Persian empire was about the same as Alexander's empire except that it did not include the mainland Greece. But it extended further to include the Ethiopians south of Egypt who became subject to the Great King.[14] In the modern world he was the celebrated Zulqarnain, he was the master of two *Qarns*.

This world Achaemenian Empire had contributed two centuries of international prosperity; maintenance of good roads, protection of sea and land routes and the creation of an efficient mail system combined to increase traffic, and the widespread use of coinage system had facilitated trade. Agriculture prospered and economic life improved and continued peacefully. All these contributed to stability; this stability was reflected in the imperial art and architecture and gave a cultural unity to the empire with materials and craftsmen coming from all parts of the world. The basic feature of Achaemenian architecture was pillared hall which imparted a sense of lightness and spirituality. The columns in Persepolis still tapered upward for some sixty feet, making the capital the most magnificent in the ancient world. All these were in line with the mastery of two 'Qarns'. These records and archaeological find helped a great deal to increase our understanding of the Archaemenids and their contribution to the world.

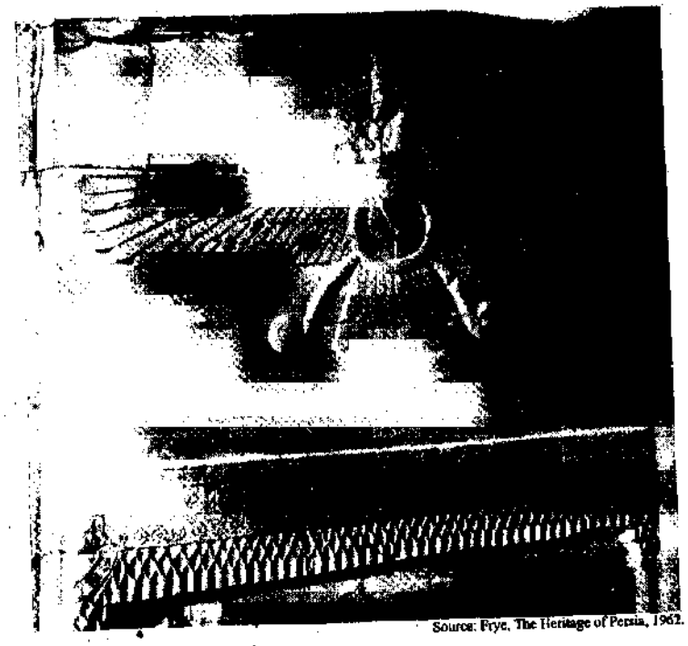
The religious capital of the empire was Persepolis where special ceremonies such as the New Year celebrations were held in the royal residences. It was a compound of sumptuous and solemn buildings. The imposing entrance to the vast terrace was called the "Gate of All Nations", and was decorated with bas-reliefs of peaceful processions of guard and bearers of offerings from all nations of the Darian Word Empire; he established a unique global meritocracy in history. The imperial palaces in the administrative

capital at Susa were adorned with enamelled brick panels, displaying a procession of the imperial archers. Therefore, Persepolis and Susa were like the New York and Washington DC to America of the modern world. In terms of art and crafts, the Achaemenian art was sumptuous with an excellent craftsmanship especially in metal-smithery. This art of metal work was very much advanced during the reign of Darius. He would have used this craftsmanship in the construction of the Iron Barrier for his people in the Caucasus, where molten lead combined with bricks were used in the fortification of the wall (Q.18:96).

In the minor arts, there were impressive metal cups and vases, drinking bowls and drinking horns, ornaments and customs jewellery, weapons in brass, bronze, iron and gold, carved stone bowls, glassware, ivory and inlaid enamel work. In sculptures, they were experts in making them with soft stones and *lapis lazuli* (blue precious stones). Sculptures were also made with gold, silver and bronze. It could then be easily discernible why the Great King had spent so much time and energy in the preservation of his historic achievements. He determined to show to the world that he was the master of the "two Qarns" or Zulqarnain. From legendary history, it was during the reign of King Hushang that the discovery of fire was made. He was also attributed to be the first man in Parsis to use iron for making implements and was also credited with the first construction of irrigation system.[15] The kingdom, therefore, had a long history of metalsmithery and masonry, which dated a millennium BC. The art was only perfected during the reign of Darius the Great. The Greeks only recently learned practical skills of masonry and surveying including metal work from the Egyptians.[16] Perhaps this was some years after Alexander's conquests, making them centuries behind the Persians in this field.

From whatever angle the administration of Darius was viewed, it was the best in the world. This could not have been possible

without Divine intervention. The Holy Qur'an told us why: "God had given him 'the means to all ends.' This was proven from ancient history, because he was a reality and not a myth. Thomas Carlyle said: "History is the essence of innumerable biographies." Undoubtedly, from the biography of this greatest Persian monarch, one could find striking similarities with the Qur'anic description of Zulqarnain. This was even more glaring in his religious belief in Zoroastrianism, which was one of the First Revelations of Al-Islam. As a master of the two *Qarns*, therefore, Darius the Great was incontrovertibly the Qur'anic Zulqarnain. And as a man of faith, he should be viewed in the context of Zoroastrianism, the subject of the next chapter.



Source: Frye, The Heritage of Persia, 1962.

The Symbol of Ahura Mazda, a preserved inscription from the palace of Darius the Great. The use of such symbols or images were, however, prohibited in the Final Revelation.

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Chapter Seven

ZOROASTRIANISM

Mankind was one single nation. And Allah sent Messengers with glad tidings and warnings.

- Surat al-Baqarah

And this is in the Books of the earliest (Revelations), The Books of Abraham and Moses.

- Sura al-Ala

From the Holy Qur'an, the Book that explained everything, there were many "Books of earliest Revelations." Though not mentioned by name but from all indications the Gathas containing the pristine hymns of Zoroaster (a.s) belonged to this catalogue of "Earliest Revelations." Which came at the dawn of recorded history; an era of fusion of all peoples into one World Empire. Zoroastrianism was not the first revealed religion in history but a representative of group of Revelations Catalogued: as Earliest Revelations, in which 'The Books of Abraham (a.s)' and Moses (a.s) were prototype (Q. 87:18-19). However, most of them were lost in the night of history. And all of them had expired, for they have served their usefulness, and hence were now not in their original forms. The Holy Qur'an, therefore, had overtaken their functions because: "The fuller light of the sun obscures the lesser light of the stars."

However, in this discourse, Zoroastrianism was referred to as the First Revelation only in the sense that it represented the group of first the "Earliest Revelations." It was not used in the chronological sense. Furthermore, the case study of this ancient religion confirmed the veracity of the Glorious Qur'an, that all the previous revelations had contained the same message – al-Islam. Although "it had suffered over the years from interpolations; massive tempering, yet, it could still be reconstructed from the remaining portions of the

scripture left, and a fairly good impression of its original content be made. The reader should approach the passages of this chapter with these important points in mind.

In order to appreciate this great historical personage, Darius the Great, as a man of faith, it is important to view him against the background of his religion, since he was a religious man and had professed Zoroastrianism as a religion. *Ahura Mazda* was the name of God in Zoroastrianism, which literally meant the *Wise Lord.* It was an ancient Persian religion, also called *Parsi* religion. It was one of the oldest religions in the world, perhaps, as old if not older than Hinduism. When the practice of *tawhid* or monotheism was at its lowest ebb and oppression, injustice, polytheism held sway, and Allah (swt) as an act of Mercy raised a Prophet in Persia in order to restore the worship of One God or *Ahura Mazda.*

The name of this Prophet was called *Zoroaster* or *Zarathushtra* and the religion that was revealed to him was named Zoroastrianism. It was a monotheist religion in origin. He was born at about seventh century BC, perhaps many years earlier, in the town of Azarbaijan, north-west of Media close to the border of Armenia. However, in another account, this date must be a century older than that because recent research into the eastern and western historical traditions and astronomical calculations placed Zoroaster's birth date at 1768 BC. He preferred solitary life and often wandered away into the wilderness to meditate and he spent 15 years in a cave on a mountainside. It was during this period of seclusion and at the age of 30 years that this Prophet first received his revelation. It was then he got his enlightenment thus:

> Just as a full day, consists of day and night, of light and darkness, so the world consists of good and evil. Just as the day and night can never change their natural course, so good, can never become evil, or can evil become good. Just as the day must always be light and the night dark, so good must always be good, and evil must always be evil.[1]

Thus, it became clear to Prophet Zoroaster that *Ahura Mazda* ruled this world of Light and Darkness and of Good and the Evil force named *Angra Mainyu* or *Ahriman*.[2] This *Angra Mainyu* or *Iblis* was also called Satan. However, the Prophet was not to keep this divine revelation to himself; he was to preach it to his people: "that their gods of fear and superstition are only agents of *Angra Mainyu*, and time would come when *Ahura Mazda* the supreme God of Light and Truth would vanquish *Angra Mainyu*." At dawn, the following day, Prophet Zoroaster was standing peacefully by the sacred river *Daiti* when he suddenly saw *Ahura Mazda* in a wonderful vision. He was led by an archangel into the presence of *Ahura Mazda* where he was taught the cardinal principles of the true religion. Zoroastrian calendar started from this great event which was 5th May, 650 BC or the first of the Religion (I.A.R.)[3] Henri Berr also averred that:

> "It is hard to get back to the primitive beliefs of the Iranians for the Avesta is a late compilation and to a fairly great extent, "a Talmud, a book of casuistry and strictly observation of the law. But they seemed too have advanced beyond the nature-worship of which traces are preserved in the Gathas, the oldest portion of the Avestra. Many centuries before the Christian era, Zarathustra received from his god Ahura Mazda; and whether a person of this name did or did not exists about 1100, this period saw the birth of a purified worship, shorn of the blood-sacrifices which still soiled the altars of every Aryan people."[4]

Prophet Zoroaster tried to rid the world of the religious corruption of his day by the base practice of the false Prophets, who did not only distort the sacred scripture but allowed their evil doctrines to divert the people from the Straight Path. These were the followers of the *Lie Demon* or *Angra Mainyu* or *Satan*. And his religious ethical concepts had dominated religious thought in Persia. It was a concept of monotheism with *Ahura Mazda* or the Wise Lord as the Supreme God and the Creator of the universe.

According to Prophet Zoroaster, God's Will and His plans

would be realised only through the endeavour of men who have, by their own free choice, dedicated themselves to Truth and Good thought. Therefore, his message centred around the idea of "Kingdom of *Ahura Mazda.*"[6] The establishment of which shall be achieved not through sacrificial rites; as had been the practised before, but through the exercise of Good thoughts, Good words and Good deeds, which would ensure man's salvation in this world and in the Hereafter. He who followed the practices of Truth entered heaven, which in Zoroaster's concept was the condition of best abode, and he who did not, entered hell, which was the worst existence.[6]

The only outward religious rite that perhaps Prophet Zoroaster practised was the circumambulation of fire on the altar as the symbol of *Ahura Mazda's* Light and Purity, and a solemn communion meal, an adumbration of things to come in heaven, the blessed dwelling of the Good mind and of Righteousness.[7] He was a strict monotheist and he neither preached nor condoned the worshipping of fire. It was a later development that crept into the religion. The Kingdom of *Ahura Mazda* would be realised through Revelation with the help of Saviours who would strengthen the good religion of *Ahura Mazda.* Prophet Zoroaster prayed that may he and those who had accepted his message be those that revived its existence.[8] His prayer was granted when Cyrus the Great and Darius the Great emerged after him as saviours of this great religion.

The original teachings of this great Prophet came to us only through his Seventeen Hymns, or *Gathas,* which were the most sacred part of the *Avesta.* The rest of the extant Avestan text were either later compositions or mainly ancient pre-Zoroastrian pagan hymns and laws reintroduced with a Zoroastrian colouring.[9] Nevertheless, the pristine teachings of this religion were very much close to Islam, and the attributes of *Ahura Mazda* were: He was the Supreme God; the First and the Last of all Eternity, the Mighty and

Holy, the Creator of all, Giver of all good, and the Giver of Life. Those who looked up to *Ahura Mazda* with awe; he was a friend, brother, nay father. This God was Holy, Eternal, Just, and Omniscient (all Knowing). He was a Primeval Being, Creator of all and the Origin of all goodness. Because of these attributes, Zoroaster chose *Ahura Mazda* alone as his Master.[10]

Ahura Mazda "directs and perfects the world which he has made," and the righteous are the "saviours," who aid him in the accomplishment of his work. The victory of the God of goodness, of the beneficent principle was ineluctable and so was the triumph of light over darkness. Angra Mainyu, the accursed was only given a grace of time before he would be vanquished at the appointed time.

Moreover, this Prophet taught that man had freedom of choice, and that mankind was divided into two opposing parties: the *Ashavants* or followers of Truth; these were the just and God fearing people. And the *Dregvants* or the followers of Evil and Falsehood; these were the evil rulers, evil doers, evil speakers, evil conscience and evil thinkers. So every man, having freedom of will must ultimately make his own choice either for good or for evil. He then gathered various symbolic representations of struggle, which lay scattered in the ancient myths of gods, spirits, demons and monsters and welded them into a single universal conflict: good versus evil.[11] According to the teachings of Prophet Zoroaster, human choices were in three areas: thought, word and deed. These, therefore, constituted the *Human triad.* Hence, man's choice was not restricted to his actions or to his words but encompassed all these areas of human capacity. And life was a matter of choice between good thoughts, good words, good deeds and evil thought, evil words and evil deeds.[12] Therefore, there would be a Day of Judgement where individuals would be judged. Each soul would be judged after death at the Separator Bridge, a bridge that spanned the abyss of hell and leads to paradise at the other end.

On this *Day of Reckoning*, as each soul crosses the bridge, the records of that soul's life on earth were opened and read. They were *weighed on a scale*. If good thoughts, words and deeds outweigh evil thoughts, evil words and evil deeds, then the soul crossed without difficulty to paradise. But if the reverse was the case, then the soul was unable to go beyond the centre of the bridge, it then automatically fell to its doom, as it dropped into Hell. Paradise was described as the best place of existence, the abodé of the good, where there was eternal bliss for the righteous. Hell was the opposite; it was the worst place of existence where there was eternal suffering for the evil. Man, therefore, must strive towards the attainment of paradise by doing good deeds in all the *Human triad*. So that his good deeds outweighed his evil deeds when measured with a Just balance on the Day of Judgement.

The Zoroastrian sacred scripture was the *Avesta*. It consisted of the *Yasna* or collection of prayer and liturgy formulas, the *Yasht* and the *Viderta*. But only a small part of the *Avesta* now survived according to S.A., Nigosian. And quoting some verses from the Yasna, we read:

> Hear that which is the highest good! With an enlightened mind, Look upon the two sides between which each man must choose for himself! Awake... Before the great and final consummation is upon you.
>
> So understand, O mortal men, The decrees which Mazdah has ordained regarding happiness and suffering. Then eternal joy shall reign everywhere (Yasna 30:2,11).

In fact, these were some of the teachings which had pervaded the thoughts, the words and the deeds of Darius the Great throughout the period of his reign, he remained a true follower of Prophet Zoroaster. The Prophet had to contend with so many evil forces of his time, like any other Prophet of God who preached and championed the course of monotheism. He preached the Divine Unity of God at the time when polytheism was at its peak in ancient

Persia and when the people were deeply involved in occultism, magic, divination, fire worship, astrology, alchemy. .And they performed many base ceremonies believed to influence either benevolent or malevolent spirits. The Priests who engaged in this art were called *Magi.*

The Magi was a tribe belonging to the *Medes,* they were the priesthood, just like the Levites of the worship of Jahveh were originally members of the tribe of Levi. This great Prophet appeared on the scene to fight these evil practices, and as a Messenger of God he was sent to restore the practice of monotheism among the people. The impact of his teachings was indeed far-reaching and so forceful. It was not an easy fight because a long time before him, the people of Persia had reverence for and worshipped *Atar,* the god of fire. Although, Prophet Zoroaster had told them to worship *Ahura Mazda* alone and not *Atar* in that fire is light and Light is the symbol of *Ahura Mazda.*[13] He, therefore, fought the fire worshippers of his days to abandon the pagan practice. In the last years of his career, this great Prophet was preoccupied with holy wars. His last war was against the Hyaones where he lost his life, Ajataspa (Arjasp) was the commander of the people who fought the Prophet and he was killed by Tur-i-Bratarvakhsh. This great Prophet, son of Pourushaspa and Dughda died in a holy war at the age of seventy-seven years of age.[14]

Unfortunately, Zoroastrianism, which was *ab initio* a Monotheistic Faith later became radically, interpolated and modified after this great Prophet. Many changes and innovations crept into this religion. The old heathen gods reappeared with full force and new ones were introduced. In fact, even Zoroaster himself came to be considered a god. Christianity had suffered a similar fate with Zoroastrianism. So within it many movements and groups that had emerged among which were Mazdaeism, Zurvanism and Mithraism. Wallbank had given the account of how the religion of

Zoroastrianism was defiled by the Magi Priests immediately after the death of the great Prophet. He wrote:

> The Magi revived many old gods as lesser deities, added much ritual, and replaced monotheism with dualism by transforming what Zoroaster had called the principle or spirit of evil into the powerful god Ahriman, rival of *Ahura Mazda*.[15]

This was one of the ways of how the teaching and the religion of Prophet Zoroaster, Zoroastrianism, was perverted. This concept of Dualism introduced by the Priests was antithetical to his pure teaching. For he taught that the universe was created by the God of Light and the forces of Good would ultimately prevail over Evil. In other words, the forces of Evil or *Ahriman* were only given a respite. But the Magi priests corrupted his monotheistic religion by making *Ahriman* or *Angra Mainyu* co-eternal with the One and only Supreme Creator.

Some historians claimed that the Mazdean Religion, from its origin upheld a belief in the dualism, which characterised the ancient Persian religion. And that Zoroastrianism was one of the few religions, which accepted no converts. To the first claim, Zoroastrainism in its pristine form did not subscribe to the concept of dualism, which obviously appeared to be a later development into the ancient religion. And to the second view, Zoroastrianism was a national religion sent to the Persians in like manner Judaism was sent to the Jews, consequently, all national religions prosetilisation and conversion to non-national were not permissible, the ancient Persian religion inclusive.

Shahrastani (AD 1086 - 1153) the first historian to take interest into this subject and wrote his account in Arabic believed that dualism existed before Zoroaster and that Mazdaism had gone past the stage corresponding to the adoration of the elements, the cult of fire and water, of which *Anahit* was the protectress, a function she was supposed to combine with protection of Agriculture. Andre

Godard, wrote that a cult of saints, and *inter alia* of a protector helping shepherd to fight against wild beasts, rapidly became mingled with this primitive animism. 'The imagery of the so called Luristan bronzes;' Godard said, "reveals an entire sumero-Iranian pantheon which prefigures Mazdaism. Therefore, pre-Zoroastrian heathenism had a propound influence on the ancient monotheist religion especially after the death of Prophet Zoroaster." Godard opined:

> It seems almost certain that primitive Mazdaism was very different from Zoroastrianism, but even more so from the Mazdaism of the Sassanid period in the form revealed to us by writings collected at the end of that dynasty. There is no certain basis, no specific document enabling us to codify the scattered bits of information which we possess. Sassanid Mazdaism, on the other hand, is relatively familiar to us.[16]

Many corroborating evidences could be advanced to give in support of corruption of Zoroastrianism by many primitive cults. The claim by Andre Godard in his book, *The Art of Iran* that Cyrus and Darius were truly eclectic in their worship of Ahura Mazda was misconstrued, especially when the author said:

> It seems clear that majority of them, especially Cyrus and Darius, were eclectic enough and skilful politicians enough not to accept Ahura Mazda as the sole divinity. While granting him in the first place, they also admitted the power of other gods worshipped by the different peoples of the empire...[17]

Godard adduced reasons for his claim only from archaeological finding, which he said, "has offered us an absolute proof." He said:

> An expedition of the Iranian Department of Antiquities discovered at Pasargadae of a bas-relief sculptured in the embrasure of a door of the entrance palace to Cyrus's capital, representing a man dressed in a costume imitating a fish, a kind of chasuble worn by the priests of Ea, which confirms the cult of the Babylonian god Marduk.[18]

Although the author tried to incriminate Darius with paganism

without adducing any convincing reason, hence his accusation was both fatuous and inane. The reasons he gave to support that Cyrus was a cultist worshipper of Marduk were not strong enough to prove his case. Undoubtedly, Cyrus the great was consecrated as a king of Babylonian and held the hands of god - Bel Marduk. This political Symbolism could not be interpreted to mean either reverence or worship of the Babylonian god. Because it was a political ploy and a demonstration of political virtuosity on the part of Cyrus, the first World King in recorded history. By paying lip service to their religion and respect for their gods, and by doing so, he had succeeded in assuaging the tension that enveloped Babylonia, and the lurking fear of whether the Persians were like the Assyrians who destroyed all religious sites and took away as prisoners of war deified imageries.

But this singular action performed by King Cyrus sent a message of good will across his peoples that reverberated all over the vast Empire, thereby sending this important message to all nations that: "all the peoples under Cyrus suzereighty were free to pursue their religious practices without fear of harassment and intimidation from the World King." This eclectic nature of the Persian Monarchs had endeared them to the peoples of their World Empire. Hence, it must be viewed in the political context of the time. Furthermore, the reign of Cyrus was an introduction of a global governance under one man; leadership with human face, magnanimity and sincerity of purpose. Thus, the excavation of a bas - relief of religious importance of any kind in a World capital Pasargadae was within our expectation. This in itself could not be used to cast shadow upon the glory of an impeccable king who was sanctified by Prophet Isaiah in the Bible (Isaiah 45:1-5). Moreover, the Lord called Cyrus by name which was a sign of great honour, and said to him: "I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight:" Obviously, Jehovah would not have given all these favours to a heathen but to His chosen one. Similarly, Darius was also sanctified in the Holy Qur'an where he

was referred to as Zulqarnain (Q. 18:83-98). These World Kings, therefore, appeared as Prophets in the service of Ahura Mazda. From the accounts of the Bible and Qur'an both Cyrus and Darius could be considered to be Prophets; they all received revelation from God.

Darius the Great, who was a true follower of Prophet Zoroaster, then appeared on the scene. He did not only as a King revive this religion but also had remained its steadfast faithful. And during the 36 years of his reign of this colossal empire, he had consistently remained a just and righteous leader, who was conscious of the Day of Judgement because he belonged to the *Asharants*. He had fitted the Qur'anic descriptions for he was truly a *Muslim* and not a *Mushrik*. He was a Zoroastrian of pristine origin, a true and sincere follower of monotheism. His rule and conquests were therefore, influenced by his Faith. He was always in fear and reverence of his Wise Lord or *Ahura Mazda*, and he remained ever conscious of the Hereafter where every soul would give an account of its sins on the inevitable Day of Judgement.

As a Muslim, Darius the Great was aware of the advent of the greatest Prophet from Arabia, the Seal of the Prophets, who was foretold in all the sacred Books of monotheistic religions in their pristine forms. This included the sacred Book of Zoroastrianism. So he must have read about this prophecy of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.). The *Parsi* scripture, which was the Holy Book of Darius the Great contained this important prophecy. Zoroastrianism or *Parsee* religion (a national religion of the Persians) was one of the oldest religions in the world, perhaps as old if not older than Hinduism. The scripture contained two collections, the Dasatir and the *Zand Avesta*, which were analogous to the Old and New Testaments, Dasatir number 14 (the Sansanil), contained the Prophecy of the advent of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.). It stated thus:

> When the Persians should sink so low in morality, a man will be

> born in Arabia whose followers will upset their throne, religion and everything. The mighty stiff-necked ones in Persia will be overpowered. The house which was built (referring to the building of Ka'bah originally built by the Prophet Abraham) and in which many idols have been placed will be purged of idols, and people will say their prayers facing towards it. His followers will capture the towns of the Parsis and Taus and Balkh and other big places round about. People will embroil with one another. The wise men of Persia and others will join his followers.[19]

This prophecy had indeed come to pass when Muslims conquered Persia, and majority of the Persians embraced Islam *en masse*. This prophecy was contained in a holy Book that was highly restricted and kept forever in the custody of Persees. It was a national religion of the Persians joined only by birth, not by proselytisation. It had come to pass in the full glare of history. The man, an Arab coming from Arabia. The Persians would join his Faith. Fire temples would be destroyed. All were indicating the advent of this Prophet of Mercy. The tremendous power of the Zoroastrian religion itself received a near-fatal blow in AD 651, when the Muslims captured Persia. Therefore, true Zoroastrians all embraced Islam.

Zoroastrianism or Mazdaism went through changes of fortune. But the Achaemenids, from Darius onwards, and the Sassanids long after supported and protected it, and Ahura Mazda (Ormuzd) held an ever higher place in the Iranian faith. If he was not the only god, he was the greatest of the gods, as the king of Persia was King of Kings, and effaced the others. He was the sky; he was light; he was symbolised by fire; but he had not, and could not have an image.[20] Ormuzd, was indeed, the only supreme God because the pure form of Zoroastrianism was monotheism in action. It was an active, pure Islam, which had no room for association or voluptuousness. As Henri Berr also remarked that it was a doctrine of progress, in righteousness and truth, a technology which gave history its

meaning and purpose. Because whatever a man's condition may be – priests, rulers, warrior, farmer, or craftsman – this condition must be held by a pure man, whose thoughts, words and deeds are pure. These constituted the *hamatem, hukhtem* and *huarestem.* (Yasna: 19, 45, 47).

The powerful Persian empire, very rich in history was finally brought to an end by the Muslim armies under their great Commander Khalid Ibn Al-Walid (r.a.), known as the "Sword of Allah," a military genius *par excellence* who Alexander the Great could envy. Moving swiftly like an electric train, he swept through Mesopotamia, which was part of the vast empire in 633 AD. He engaged the Persian armies under General Rustam, son of Farrukh Hormazd, who put up a heavy defence with numerical superiority and numerous elephants but Khalid shattered into smithereens at Qadisiyya not far from Hirah, a day's journey south of Karbala in 637 AD. The Army of Mercy then took the capital of Ctesiphon with its sumptuous royal Palace. Though, gallant fighters in battles, they were the most magnanimous combatants in history. They were instructed by the Noblest Prophet (saw) not to destroy property including animals, fodder and vegetation, and must exercise restraint concerning the religions and the places of worship including the clergy of the conquered nation. And they were to treat with kid gloves, the elderly people, women, children and babies, and under no circumstances should they shed unduly the blood of their enemies; because they were the harbingers of mercy unto the nations of the world.

Consequently, the handful, well trained, disciplined and victorious army set up military encampments on the edge of the desert at Kufa and Basra from where they controlled the Conquered territory. They observed the Prophet's instructions strictly with a unique discipline unheard of in the history of military conquests. In fact, the humane gesture shown had further endeared the vanquished people to Islam. However, the Sassanid King, Yazdagird III, after

galloping in the battlefield regained his composure and counter-attacked the faithful. But again his armies were no match for the fighters who were better than the Macedonians. He suffered a crushing defeat at Nihavand. The Persian King again took to his heels and was assassinated some years later. He was murdered in his sleep by a miller with whom he had sought shelter, in the autumn of 651 AD. The Muslim conquest was the first of its kind in the annals of history where the target aimed was destroyed with minimal bloodshed and collateral damage. And the army conducted themselves in the most orderly manner with brotherhood fraternity extended to the vanquished folk. No soldier was allowed to go into the people to pillage or to show any undesirable conduct or misdemeanour. Finally, after their conquest, the Persians *en masse* boarded "Noah's Ark" in fulfilment of the prophecy mentioned in their Sacred Scripture. Thus, the Persians enjoyed the best of both worlds; they were world leaders in the ancient world and now as Muslims (not Persians), were the world leaders of the modern world. The faithful army, though, always a handful in number had shown heroism and chivalry in battles that were unequalled in history. In 642 AD. Alexandria of Egypt, the great metropolis of Byzantine and Centre of Greek culture finally fell into the hands of the Muslims. This Legrand said, "marks a climax to the Moslem conquests achieved since Muhammad's death in 632 AD."[21]

In the conquest of Persia by the Muslims, with the fire of vengeance once more blazing up in Persia, a Proclamation of *Jihad* was made all over the land and Sa'ad ibn Abi Waqqas (r.a.) was appointed Generalissimo in AH 14/AD 635. In his account of this battle, Amir Hassan Siddiqi in *Decisive Battles of Islam* wrote that the Caliph at that time Hadrat Umar (r.a.) was anxious to the command in person but the Council of Advisers did not approve. Sa'ad Ibn Abi Waqqas, therefore, proceeded with a detailed plan of battle with a detailed plan of battle at the head of large army to the frontier.

The total strength of the Muslim army stood at 30,000. The

Caliph, a practical man whose actions were guided by the Holy Qur'an and the tradition of His Prophet, sent instructions that the army should encamp at Qadisiyah, with the mountain in the rear. And that before, opening hostilities, envoys should be sent over to the Court of Persia with the message of Islam. His instructions were followed. The Muslim emissaries were laughed at, ridiculed and scorned by the Persians. "You are a contemptible people," retorted Yazdagird. "Undoubtedly, we were so," replied the Muslim spokesman; "We were a people of no consequences. But God raised a Prophet in our midst who purged us of all low and base things and put us on the path of virtue. Should you also accept this message, we are all brothers; otherwise, it is not possible for us at this stage to give up hostilities without your agreeing to pay tribute."[22]

Yazdagird, on hearing this was moved to outrageous anger and in such exasperation, he sent the Muslim envoys out of his Court. But these envoys remained unprovoked, they wee most dauntless fighters in history. Little did the Persians realised they were facing better, and more heroic, and fearless fighters than the Macedonians who tore their World Empire to pieces several centuries earlier. The king like an act of fate made one of the envoys to take a basketful of earth, a spiteful denigration of this contemptible people, and indicating that they would work as slaves for the Persians. The Muslim deputies unmoved to irascibility took the message as sign of good augury, saying: "With their own hands the Persians had made over their land to them. What unshakeable faith!"

Meanwhile, Sa'ad Ibn abi-Waqqas, the Generalissimo was incapacitated with sciatica. He, therefore, entrusted the command to Khalid B. Arfat (r.a.) who equally distinguished himself as a great general. The Persians with their numerical superiority, weapons including elephants were ripped to shreds. Umar the Great, the Caliph and ruler of the World, happy with this great victory convened a large conference of the Medinese where he told the gathering the joyful tidings of this decisive victory of Islam. He then

delivered one of the greatest speech in the history, a stirring speech which ended thus:

> O Muslims, I am not a King that it should be my desire to make you my slaves – I am myself, a slave of God though the responsibilities of the Caliphate have been made to be heavy upon my head. I should deem myself fortunate if I served you in a manner that secured you sound and tranquil sleep in your homes, but I would a miserable wretch if it were my desire to make you wait constantly upon me and mount guard at my portals. It is my object to instruct you not by words by deeds.[23]

Umar the Great would ever remained one of the greatest personality in history and indeed a paragon of justice. "I served you in a manner that secured you sound and tranquil sleep in your homes." This remained forever the cornerstone of administration and everlasting legacy for the World, from one of the most honoured servants of the Most High.

The stiff-necked ones were overpowered as it was foretold in the scripture, were scattered and today there are very few Zoroastrians left in Persia. Those who escaped the Islamic conquest settled in India, at present they live in Bombay and its vicinity and are called *Persees* (Persians). No one could become a Zoroastrian or *Persee* who was not one by birth.[24] Since the religion was solely revealed to the Persians.

In all these national religions – Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism and Christianity and other revealed religions – the advent of the Prophet of Islam (Pbuh) was foretold in each. Allah (swt) had spoken the Truth when He said that every nation had its Prophets. Therefore, all their original scriptures were divinely inspired but because they were not divinely protected, they were later corrupted with innovations and falsehoods. "To every people (were sent) A Messenger: when their Messenger comes (before them), the matter will be judged between them with justice, and will not be wronged." (Holy Qur'an 10:47).

Every nation had its Message and Messenger: Allah revealed

Himself to it in some way or another. According to a *Hadith*, the Holy Prophet said there were 124,000 Prophets sent before him and a Muslim must respect all of them equally with no distinction between them. "Of some Messengers We have already told thee the story, of others We have not" (Q.4:164). Out of the 124,000 Prophets sent to this world before the seal of the Prophets, only the stories of 25 were told in the Holy Qur'an. At the appropriate time, and when the world was ripe and sophisticated enough then a global religion of Islam was revealed, perfected and protected against corruption. The Seal of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be on him, testified to the truth of all other Prophets belonging to all different nations of the world. A part of their national Messages was made a part of Faith in Islam and each of their messages was a portion of the Holy Qur'an.

Each of the scripture of all these national Prophets was found in its original form to contain the prophecy of the advent of this greatest Prophet. His advent as was foretold, therefore, rendered all other forms of national religions, null and void. This brought the end of their times and missions. Since their messages were co-terminal, with the teachings of the last Prophet, they ought to be dissolved into the fold of Islam. This was the essence of making this world a global village in order to make a universal religion practicable. For instance, the Persians after the 651 AD Islamic conquest had abandoned their national religion (Zoroastrianism) to join Islam. The discovery of Dead Sea Scroll in 1947 had led to the better understanding of Jesus Christ and his ministry. Similarly, the discovery of the Behistun inscriptions in the same year had equally helped our understanding of Darius the Great better including his monumental achievements. Therefore, Science and Technology helped us a lot in understanding the past historic events, with appreciable precision and accuracy.

So, the stories of ancient historic personages must not be closed

with finality because interesting archaeological and or scientific discovery could emerge at any time, to radically change our views. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was the only great historic personage who was born in the full glare of history. Everything about him was known and documented with infinitesimal detail and with perfect exactitude. The rest, however, were not that lucky. We are now in a good stead to understand Darius the Great, the greatest Persian King who bestrode the Eastern and Western kingdoms like a colossus. And in doing so we would appreciate his style of governance *vis-a-vis* his religious belief and dictate, and at the same time to juxtapose him with the Macedonian warlord and then to judge for ourselves who was more qualified to be the Zulqarnain mentioned in the Amazing Revelation. So who was this Darius the Great? But before understanding this great historic personage who could be conveniently identified as Zulqarnain, it would be better to understand his religious belief, Zoroastrianism in relation to Islam because the original religion was a sister to Islam, it belonged to the League of Monotheistic Faiths. The relationship of Zoroastrianism and Islam would give us a better perspective in appreciating Darius the Great in relation to the Qur'anic story.

Islam and Zoroastrianism

Islam, the First and Final religion, could be verified by a simple study of one of the most ancient revealed religions, Zoroastrianism and comparing it to Islam in a number of ways. Besides, everyone was born upright by nature. Pure nature leads to Allah, the One and only true God. Thus, the natural propensity of every individual was to Islam. There was even a divine injunction in this respect." 'The Religion before Allah is Islam (submission to His will): "Qur'an 3:19)."

Islam was not only a Religion but *al-Deen.* Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi's explication of this important distinguishing feature was

relevant. In Arabic, the word *deen* was used to convey various meanings: (a) Power, Suzerainty and Control (b) Obedience and Submission (c) Compensation and atonement and (d) Way of life, rule of conduct and ideology. The term used in the Holy Qur'an was in the fourth sense. Which meant Islam was a way of life or attitude of mind and thought and mode of behaviour and action pursued or followed by an individual or society.[26] This was what Prophet Zoroaster conveyed as *Human triad* (attitude of mind, thought, speech and action). And Islam, in Arabic means to surrender, to yield, to accept bondage to consign, oneself, *Al-Islam* as used in the Qur'an means to bow down before God, to submit and obey Him; to renounce one's own independence and surrender before Him completely.[27] So a Religion before Allah is *Islam-al-Deen.*

Allah (swt), the Most Gracious and Most Merciful One, therefore, sent His Prophets to guide men towards His chosen religion. Man, therefore, must conform to the norms and values of His Divine Guidance. In other words, he should be governed by what God and His Apostle had said, not by his own whims and caprices. From the dawn of civilisation man was told the moment he came to this world that *al-Islam* was the only true way and right conduct for him. This was evident from the Holy Qur'an: "Mankind was one single nation. And God sent Messengers With glad tidings and warnings" (Q.2:213).

Therefore, in every different parts of the world and at different periods of human civilisation, whoever was ordained for the guidance of his nation, the burden of his message was invariably the same, its gist similar with slight changes based upon the stage of development. This same message of Islam, which was transmitted to various periods through a chain of Prophets was perfected and completed and made universal. The seal of these Prophets was Muhammad (s.a.w.). The world essentially was one universe, created by One God with One religion, *al-Islam,* throughout history. The prophets sent before the last Prophets including those

mentioned in the Holy Qur'an and those who were not mentioned, each was given only a Portion of the Holy Qur'an to teach Islam to his people. In other words, Islam was the First and Final religion, this was attested to by this verse: "Who have been given a portion of the Book?" (Q.3:23). Among the recipients of this Portion were Prophet Moses (a.s), David (a.s). Jesus (a.s) and Zoroaster (a.s) who, however, was not mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. In his elucidation of this verse, Ustadh Abdullahi Yusuf Ali, in reference to 'A Portion of the Book' averred that:

> I conceive that God's revelation as a whole throughout the ages is "The Book." The Law of Moses and the Gospel of Jesus were portions of the book. The Qur'an completes the revelation and is *par excellence* the Book of God.[27]

All the preceding Prophets with revelation of Scripture, including Zoroaster, had only received a Portion of the Holy Qur'an. This was an affirmation that they all preached *al-Islam*. Jesus Christ had attested to this assertion for he said: "We see in part, we prophesy in part but when that which is perfect is come that which is in part will be done away." But most of these Portions of the Holy Scripture were no longer in their pristine forms. All the same from what their Prophets taught and from the relevant portions of their scriptures, that remained, the type and nature of their messages, the religion could be deduced correctly and be reconstructed. A study of Zoroastrian Scripture especially the *Gathas*, which was the authentic part of the Avesta, would prove beyond doubt that Prophet Zoroaster had preached Islam to the ancient Persia and he was an avowed monotheist. The Abrahamic Faiths included Judaism, Christianity and Islam. A true Abrahamic faith was essentially monotheistic and Islamic in content as taught by Patriarch Abraham (a.s) who was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but a Muslim. Their Prophets were all Muslims. These Jewish scriptures; the Torah of Moses, the *Zabur* or Psalms of David and the *Injil* or Gospel of Jesus, though, now not in their original forms were all Portions of

the Holy Qur'an. They all were racially originated from Prophet Abraham (as), hence were referred to as Abrahamic faiths because he was the Patriarch of the Jews and the Arabs.

But Abrahamic faiths were not the only monotheistic faiths in history. Although, not mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, Prophet Zarathushtra or Zoroaster was non-Abrahamic but Persee: he taught the same form of Islam to his people, a monotheistic religion named after him called Zoroastrianism. In correlation, his holy scripture, the Avesta was a Divinely revealed Book. A careful study of this holy Book showed it was also a Portion of the Holy Qur'an. Therefore, Zoroastrianism was similar to Islam in teachings and code of behaviours, and pure teaching of the Avesta were Qur'anic in nature. The conduct and behaviours of true followers of this ancient religion were equally Islamic. This was ably demonstrated by both Cyrus the Great and Darius the Great. In the previous pages, Prophet Zoroasters birth and how he received his revelation were briefly discussed. A brief mention of his message in relation with Islam would be highlighted to complete the story.

Prophet Zoroaster

Prophet Zoroaster was born in the town of Azerbaijan, north-west of Media, close to the border of Armenia. His father Pourusharpa came from the family of the Spitamas whose genealogy was traced back through forty-five generations to Gayomart, the first man.[28] This man was perhaps the Adam of the Abrahamic religions. Drughdhava, the Prophet's mother, came from the well-to-do clan of the Hvogras. Like most Prophets of God, Zoroaster was from a noble ancestry.

Virgin births were common in the Near East during Zoroaster's time. He was even claimed to have been of immaculate conception. His mother at the age of 15 years was conceived by a heavenly shaft of light and gave birth to this Prophet.[29] He did many miracles from

his childhood like most of the Hebrew Prophets. He was polygynic, had three wives with children, and during the course of his mission he waged many holy wars, and was martyred in the process. Prophet Zoroaster was of Vedic Aryan ancestry, a group of wanderers who in about the second millennium BC went to India; Hinduism developed from this group. Another group of these Aryan invaders entered Armenia, Azarbaijan and Iranian Plateau, Zoroastrianism developed from them in this ancient Persia.[30] How he received his revelation from *Ahura Mazda* was explained earlier on in the book. And his holy scripture was called Avesta of which the Gathas was the most Sacred as it contained seventeen original hymns of the Prophet.

In the formative years of this religion, the Prophet had encountered a number of problems, especially from the pre-Zoroastrian pagans and the Vedic influences of Hinduism and Buddhism. Without doubt, it was difficult to establish a monotheistic religion under the torrential currents of polytheism. So he fought many holy wars to affirm the Divine Unity, and to preserve the purity of his scripture. The Portion of the Book, he received consisted of ancient writings that were believed to have been composed over a period of one thousand years. The only reliable text was the *Gathas;* the *Avestan* text was corrupted. A reconstruction of his actual teachings, therefore, became very difficult. Thus, his scripture was corrupted mainly with pre-Zoroastrian pagan hymns. Consequently, many of the gods worshipped in Persia were similar to the gods of India. For example, prominent among these deities were nature gods such as sky; Vivahvant (in the Vedic Vevasvant); Wind; Vayu (in the Vedic Vayu); Sun; Mithra (in the Vedic Mitra); Water, Haurvalat (in the Vedic Sarvatat); Fire; Atar (in the Vedic Agni) and so on.[31]

The Prophet was able to relegate most of these gods to the background, in his bid to made the worship of *Ahura Mazda* pure

and untainted. It was an arduous task but he succeeded in making monotheism survive only during his life time. The worship of the Sun god Mithra and Fire or Atar were deep-rooted among the people of ancient Persia. This god of Fire was revered and worshipped. It was not possible to abolish all the paganic elements and rituals: which had pervaded the fabric of the entire society, but with jihad, tact and diplomacy he succeeded in a considerable degree. Zoroaster then shifted the emphasis in his fight against fire worshipping. He said, *"Ahura Mazda* was like Atar in that Fire was light and Light was the symbol of *Ahura Mazda."*[32] So they must abandon the worship of Atar to worship Ahura Mazda alone. Fire, remained a part of the Zoroastrian scheme as the symbol of *Ahura Mazda's* Light and righteousness. Zoroastrians have ever since paid a perpetual tribute to this symbolic element. His introduction of *Ahura Mazda's* Light was too advanced for his people's comprehension. So he left it at its rudimentary level that the light of Fire was the Symbol of the Light of God. The full import of *Ahura Mazda's* Light was only comprehensible in the Final Religion as the Parable of light in the Holy Qur'an.

The Symbol of Light or Al-Nur

Prophet Zoroaster had used the light of Fire as a Symbol of *Ahura Mazda,* only to divert the attention of his people away from worshipping Atar the god of Fire. Because the Light of *Ahura Mazda* was far much transcendental than the extinguishable light of fire. Light was used as the direct presence of the Divine in the terrestrial order, which was described so majestically as the Divine presence in the Light verse of the Holy Qur'an. It was a fact that there was Light of God, which he symbolised to achieve two purposes. To show *Ahura Mazda* has Light and to distract his people's mind from the worship of Atar to that of the Supreme God of Wisdom. If all the fire altars, which littered the land could be

reconverted to the places of worship of the Wise Lord, per chance monotheism could supplant the polytheism of the land. This showed this great Prophet had applied tact and wisdom in his teachings of Zoroastrianism.

He applied a similar method, when he de-emphasised the worship of Sun god or Mithra, when he said at best, Mithra could only be an intermediary between the people and *Ahura Mazda*, so people must shun his worship to make their services pure to this Wise Lord, the Creator of all things. It was a Herculean task, establishing a monotheistic religion in the midst of paganism and age long idolatry. With the emphasis of Light shifted to *Ahura Mazda* and Mithra reduced to an intermediary, the people could easily fathom the supremacy of this One God. When this was achieved the practice of monotheism could survive among the people. His techniques worked and monotheism survived in Persia while it did not in India. This success gave credit to this great Prophet of Islam.

In the Final Religion; Light as the symbol of *Ahura Mazda* was described as His attribute or name, *Al-Nur*, in the Holy Qur'an, a parable of light was given, which contained layer upon layer of transcendent Truth. The magnificent verse of the Light in the Final Revelation reads:

> **Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The Parable of His light is as if there were a Niche and within it a lamp: The lamp enclosed in Glass: The glass as it were A brilliant Star: Lit from a blessed Tree. An olive, neither of the East nor of the West, whose oil is well-nigh luminous, Though fire scarce touched it: Light upon light! Allah doth guide whom He will. To His Light: Allah doth set forth Parables for men and Allah Doth know all things. (Lit is such a Light) In houses which Allah Hath permitted to be raised To honour; for the celebration, in them, of His name: In them is He glorified in the mornings and in the evenings, (again and again) (Qur'an 24:35-36).**

The only outward rite that Prophet Zoroaster practised was the circumambulation of fire on the altar as the symbol of *Ahura Mazda* Himself, because the physical was only a reflection of the true Light of God. His circumabulation of fire was not in adoration or worship of Atar, which he dissuaded his people from, but it was a symbolic rite, like the circumambulation of Ka'bah by pilgrims during Hajj. He introduced in the First of the Religion the concept of *Ahura Mazda* light, which was perfected in the Final Religion. The Parable of Allah's Light could only be comprehensible now, due to the sophistication of our civilisation. Even then volumes of books have been written in an attempt to explain it. The commentary of Ustadh Abdullahi Yusuf Ali was given here in full:

The physical light is but a reflection of the true Light in the world of Reality, and that true Light is Allah. We can only think of Allah in terms of our phenomenal experience, and in the phenomenal world, Light is the purest thing we know, but physical light has drawbacks incidental to its physical nature: e.g. (1) It is dependent upon some source external to itself. (2) It is a passing phenomenon; (3) It is dependent on space and time; its speed is 186,000 miles per second, and there are stars whose light takes thousands of years before it reaches the earth. The Perfect Light of Allah is free from such defects.

The first three points in the Parable centre round symbols of the Niche, the lamp, and the Glass. (1) The Niche (Mishkat) is the little shadow recess in the wall of an Eastern house, fairly high from the ground, in which a light (before the days of electricity) was usually placed. Its height enabled it to diffuse the light in the room and minimise the shadows. The ground of the wall was white-washed, it also acted as a reflector; the opening in front made the way for the light. So with the spiritual light, it is placed high, above worldly things; it has a niche or habitation of its own; in Revelation and other signs of Allah; its access to men is by a special Way, open to



Source. H.J. Schonfield, *The Suez Canal* 1969

The Stone of Darius recording the cutting of the Nile – Red Sea Canal, i
one of his endeavours to open the world to all.

Fig. 1.6(a) The mast of a ship is seen before the hull on a curved horizon

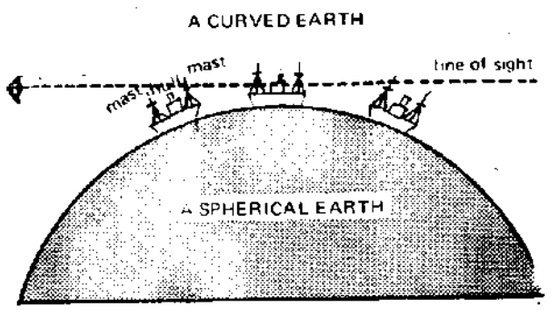
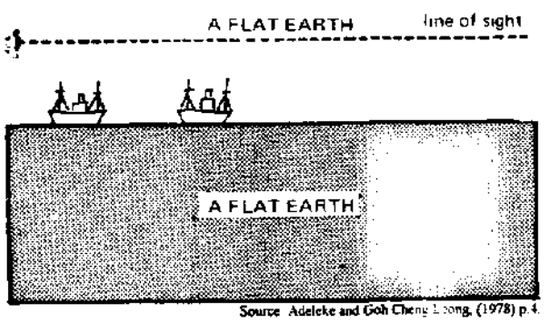


Fig. 1.6(b) A flat earth, the entire ship is seen at once on a flat surface



Source Adeleke and Goh Cheng Loong, (1978) p.4.

The Holy Qur'an makes allusions to the spherical shape of the Earth, and advances a prove to it by reference to the aberration of the sun rising and sun setting in the sea as observed from the horizon. In modern geography, figs. 1.6 (a) and 1.6 (b), 1.7 (a) 1.7 (b) attempt to prove the same thing.

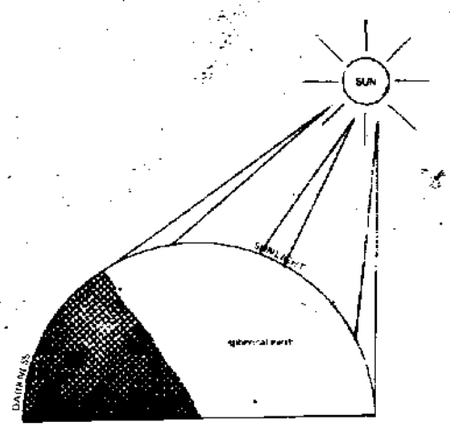


Fig. 1.7(a) Sunrises and sunsets at different times for different places

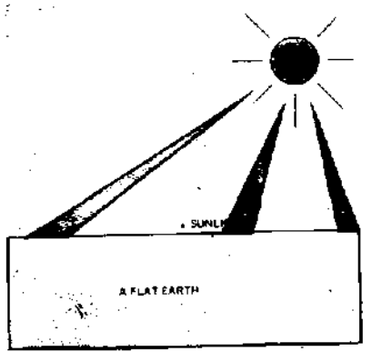


Fig. 1.7(b) The whole world will have sunrise or sunset at the same time



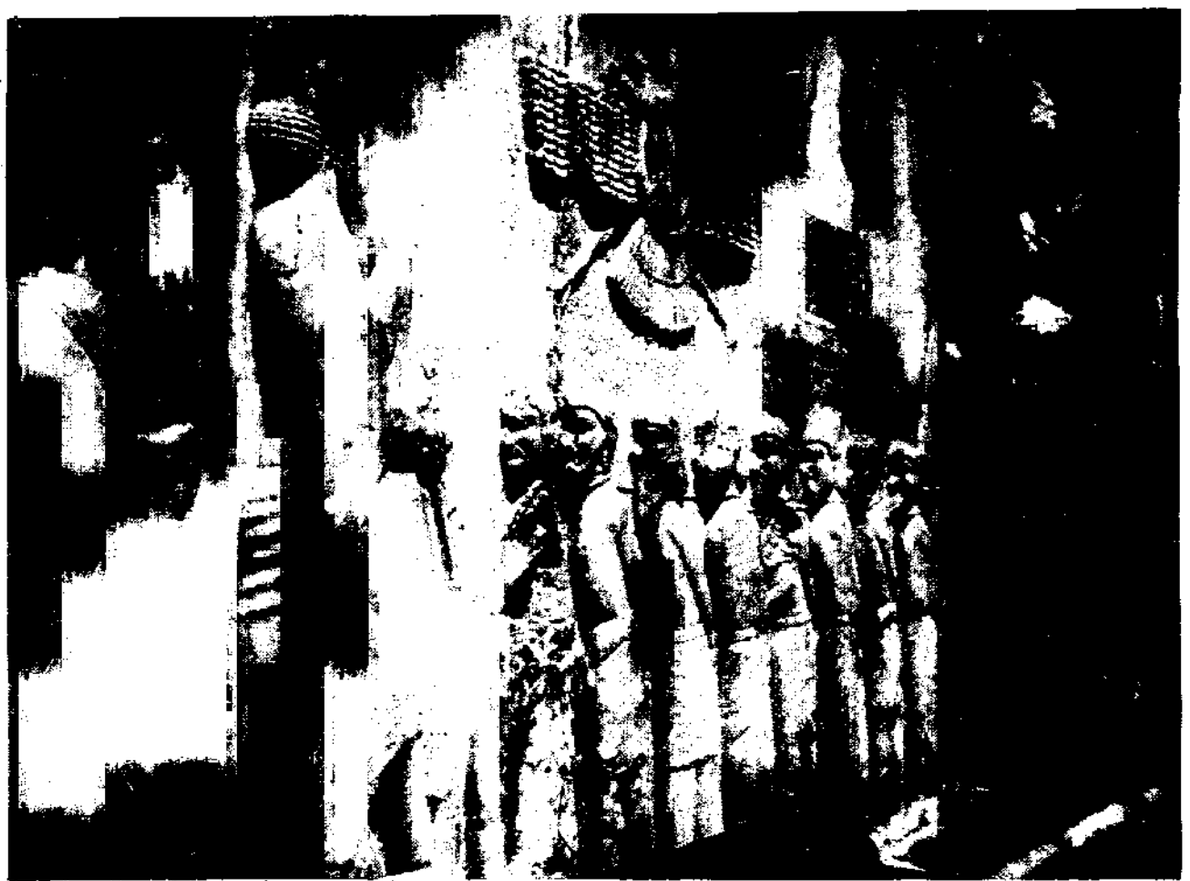
Source: *The Heritage of Persia.*

Persepolis at dawn. Alexander's destruction of this world capital in 330 B.C. and time have left it in ruins.



Source: FRYE

A Noble Mede standing with a gesture of respect, in audience before the Darius, the King of Kings.



Source: Hisee and Jonsen, *World History in Pictures (1965)*.

Rebels arraigned before Darius, the King of Kings. Behind him is Xerxes his son and successor



Source: *Ancient Persia and Iranian Civilisation*. HUART 1972.

Daric of Darius, the gold coin introduced by Darius the Great C.516 BC.



Source: The Open University, *Greek and Roman Religion* 1977.

Alexander the Great with the horn of Zeus deified as Hercules, from a tetradrach struck in Asia.



Source. Boyle (ed). *World History* (1958

Tomb of Cyrus the Great (d. 530 BC) at Pasargadae. Persian, Achaemenid period. A great king, the first to establish a World Empire in recorded history.



Source: Duiker, *Ancient Persian and Iranian Civilization* 1972

The rock tomb of Darius the Great at Naqsh-I-Rustom. Here Zulqarnain lies in peace.

all, yet closed to those who refuse its rays. (2) The Lamp is the core of the Spiritual Truth, which is the real illumination; the Niche is nothing without it, the Niche is actually made for it. (3) The Glass is the transparent medium through which the light passes. On the other hand, it protects the light from moths and other forms of life and from dusts of wind and on the other, it transmits the Light through a medium which is made up of and akin to the glosser substances of the earth (such as sand, soda, potash, etc.), so arranged as to admit the subtle to the gloss by its transparency. So the Spiritual Truth has to be filtered through human language or human intelligence to make it intelligible to mankind.

The glass by itself does not shine. But when the light comes into it, it shines like a brilliant star. So men of God, who preach Allah's Truth, are themselves illuminated by Allah's Light and become the illuminating media which that light spreads and permeates human life. The olive tree is not a very impressive tree in its outward appearance. Its leaves have a dull greenish-brown colour, and in size it is inconspicuous. But its oil is used in sacred ceremonies and forms a wholesome ingredient of food. The fruit has a specially fine flavour. It is neither of the East nor West. It is universal, for such is Allah's Light. As applied to the olive, there is also a more literal meaning, which can be allegorised in a different way. An olive tree with an eastern aspect gets only the rays of the morning sun; one with a western aspect, only the rays of the western sun. In the northern hemisphere, the south aspect will give the sun's rays a great part of the day, while a north aspect will shut them out altogether, and *vice versa* in the southern hemisphere. But a tree in the open plain or on a hill will get perpetual sunshine by day; it will be more mature, and the fruit and oil will be of superior quality. So Allah's Light is not localised or immature: it is perfect and universal.

Pure olive oil is beautiful in colour, consistency, and illuminating power. The world has tried all kinds of illuminants, and

for economic reasons or conveniences one replaces another. But for coolness, comfort to the eyes and steadiness, are superior to electricity, mineral oils, and animal oils. And among vegetable oils, olive oil takes a high place and deserves its sacred associations. Its purity is almost like light itself. You may suppose it to be almost light before it is lit. So with spiritual Truth: it illuminates the mind and understanding imperceptibly, almost before the human mind and heart have been consciously touched by it. Glorious, illimitable Light, which cannot be described or measured. And there are grades and grades of it, passing transcendental into regions of Spiritual height, which man's imagination can scarcely conceive of. The topmost pinnacle is the true prototypal Light, the real Light, of which all others were reflections of Allah.[33]

The scholarly elucidation of this glorious parable of light (Q. 24: 35), on which volumes had been written by Malik Ben Nabi, was quite revealing. In addition to its layers of transcendental truth about spiritual mysteries, his exegesis had succeeded in unveiling its scientific implication. He said that modern commentators found in this metaphor more than anagogic allusion, this being one of the most remarkable coincidence of the Qur'anic conception with scientific fact." Nabi, interpreted the verse succinctly thus: "even without the contact of fire the light gushes forth from a niche in which there is a flame in a glass." The allegorical use of niche, Flame and Glass were implied to mean; projector (or reflector), Incandescent luminous object (or filament) and bulb respectively. These equivalencies would not seem to be forced or arbitrary but as the author rightly observed they were suggested by the very terms of the verse and by the special nature of the metaphor, given the idea of a flame, which was kindled 'though fire touch it not.'[34] The allusion became completely apparent, when the scholar said *inter alia*:

> Even without the contact of fire, the light gushes out of a projector, in which there is a filament in a bulb, which is kindled by the essence of a blessed tree, which neither western nor eastern.

"This was indeed," he said, "one of the most astonishing coincidence of revealed ideas by means of modern ones." The seal of the Prophet was, therefore, aware of our, modern electricity and fluorescent light. This form of light surely was one of the most remarkable achievements of modern science, and it had not escaped the sacred pages of a Book which explained everything.

The best description of this unique phenomenon of the Holy Qur'an, given already by Allama Abdullahi Yusuf Ali is pertinent at this juncture, to be reiterated thus: How much greater is the joy and sense of wonder and miracle when the Qur'an opens our spiritual eyes! The meaning which we thought we had grasped expands. New worlds are opened out. As we progress, still newer, and again newer worlds "Swim into our ken" The scientific dimension of the Holy Scripture was equally phenomenal, its queries of inexhaustible knowledge were astounding. Prophet Zoroaster's Light of Ahura Mazda was laden with a lot of meaning as we have just mentioned a few. And as we progressed in scientific knowledge, newer worlds would 'swim into our ken," continuously.

In addition to the Light of Ahura Mazda, the Prophet also preached about the Day of Judgement in his eschatology, Zoroaster talked about individual judgement. That each soul was to be judged after death at the "Separator Bridge" which spans across hell to paradise. This he received from revelation of a Portion of the Book in which there was a parallel motif with the final teaching of Islam.

The Separator Bridge or Sirat

Prophet Zoroaster also taught that in as much as light could not be darkness, *Ahura Mazda* was incapable of creating evil. He was a God of goodness only. And in like manner, as darkness could never be light, so *Angra Mainyu* or *Iblis* was incapable of doing goodness as he was the initiator of all evil. Thus, in his teaching it was not the

ethical dualism of Good versus Evil that was important but man as an arbiter between them. Zoroaster's insistence on man's freedom of choice was a marked characteristic of the Gathas.[36]

It was by the exercise of his free will that man could be judged either for good or evil and be rewarded accordingly, with either paradise or hell respectively. He then introduced a concept of a Separator Bridge. Each soul was to be judged after death on the Day of Judgement at the separator Bridge, which spanned the abyss of hell to paradise at the other end. According to Zoroaster's teaching, each individual would be judged while the soul crosses the Bridge. The records of that soul's life on earth were opened and read. The soul crossed to paradise only when its earthly good thought, good words and good deeds, all combined to outweigh the evil thoughts, words and deeds. But if the reverse was the case, the soul would be unable to cross as it would automatically fall to its doom.

This concept of Angelogy was also similar to the Islamic teaching in the Final Religion. Angles are supra-physical invisible beings, who function as the servitors and messengers of God; they also directly affect the lives of men. For example, two angels are assigned the *Rakib* and *Atid*, to every man to keep the records of his good and bad deeds respectively. It is also the two angels *Munkar* and *Nakir* who in the tomb immediately after death, subject men to the fearsome questioning about their faith; it is an angel who holds the Balance on Judgement Day, and it is an angel *Azra'il* who executes the divine decree of death of every living thing at the appointed time. Angles do not act capriciously at will because they have no freedom of choice like men; they can only do good, act as protectors and overseers of men. All their actions are under the command of the All-knowing the Wise.

Similarly, in Zoroastrian teachings, individuals in their earthly sojourn had angels that recorded their deeds either of good or of bad named Rakib and Atid respectively and he will be questioned in the

grave by *Munkaran* and *Nakir*. On the Day of Judgement, each deed would be weighed on a just balance and the individual would be rewarded either with paradise or hell. Similarly, an allusion to Separator Bridge could be made from the Holy Qur'an: "Not one of you but will pass over it: this is, with thy Lord, a Decree which must be accomplished." (Q. 19:17). In his commentary, Ustadh Abdullahi Yusuf gave three interpretations of this verse, two of which are relevant to the point of discussion, he said: "(1) The general is that every person must pass through or by or over the Fire. Those who have had *Tagwa* will be saved by Allah's Mercy, while unrepentant sinners will suffer the torments in ignominy. (2) Some refer this verse to the Bridge over Hell, the Bridge Sirat, over which all must pass to their final destiny." These were two of the three explanations, though this Bridge was not mentioned in the Qur'an, an allusion to its existence could rightly be made from these interpretations.

The insistence of Prophet Zoroaster on man to exercise his free will; to do good and to choose *Ahura Mazda* as his master was analogous to this concept of *Tagwa* in the Final Revelation. According to Ustadh Abdullahi Yusuf's explication, *Taqwa* signified: (1) the fear of Allah, which according to the writers of Proverbs 1:7 in the Old Testament is the beginning of wisdom (2) restraint, or guarding one's tongue, hand, and heart from evil. (3) hence righteousness, piety, good conduct. All these Prophet Zoroaster summarised in the *Human triad*. Zoroaster being one of the Prophets of the First Religion, his preaching of *Taqwa* was centred on the exercise of good thoughts, good words and good deeds. This constituted a *Taqwa*, preached to his people in ancient Persia. Similarly, as for the Hebrews, holders of 'A portion of the Book', their Prophets more or less had preached the same thing. To them the name of the Lord was Jehovah: "The Fear of the Lord is the beginning knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Prov. 1:7). The instruction in all Revelations to man in

every age was to be of good thoughts, good deeds and good words.

He taught his people in ancient Persia that *Ahura Mazda* was the Creator of all things. His God of Creation was described exactly in the same terms and endowed with the same attributes as in Islam in the Final Revelation. *Ahura Mazda* was the Creator of all things. He was unique and independent in His grandeur of creations.

The Creation

The question of the origin of man and the universe, were attributed categorically to *Ahura Mazda,* the Supreme God. He was the Creator of all things; Prophet Zoroaster in his hymns asked thus:

> This I ask you, O Lord, answer me truly: Who set the Earth in its place below, and the Sky among the clouds that it should not fall. Who made the waters and the plants? Who yoked the two steeds to wind and clouds? Who, O wise One, created the Good mind? *(Yasna 44:4).*

> He (Ahura Mazda) who, through His holy mind thought: "Let the Blessed expanses be filled with Light. He Himself (Ahura Mazda), in His wisdom... created... physical bodies, conscience and wills... (Yasna 31:7-11).

According to Zoroaster, it was *Ahura Mazda* who created light, all physical bodies, and all other things through His holy mind and thought. This was a concept of creation through 'Divine Will' as taught in the Final Religion. Similarly, this great Prophet stated to his polytheistic society of ancient Persia, a concept of the creative energy of the Most High in the following words:

> ...O Ahura Mazda, from the beginning Thou didst create for us, through Thy mind, physical bodies, consciences and wills;... Thou didst infuse the soul of life into mortal bones;...Thou didst grant us capacities to act and words to guide, so that man may choose freely... (Yasna 31:11).

In a pagan society with belief in and reverence for many gods and goddesses, a clarion call to monotheistic faith was an arduous

task. Notwithstanding, prophet Zoroaster had proved his mettle and consequently, a belief in Divine Unity had survived in ancient Persia to a reasonable extent. His teachings about creation was similar to the teachings of his Master and the greatest of all the Prophets, Muhammad (s.a.w.). In the Final Revelation, was Allah (s.w.t.) created all things from his 'Divine Will' and through His holy mind and thought' according to Zoroastrian teaching. There was only a change in the semantics and perfection of this phraseology, it was more precise to say: "His command when He intends anything He only say to it 'Be!' and it is." The Holy Qur'an says: "Verily, when He intends a thing, His command is 'Be', and it is!" (Q.36:82). The teaching of the creative energy of Allah (s.w.t.) was co-terminus with Zoroastrian concept.

The concept of creation, both in the First of the Religion where Prophet Zoroaster was a member and in the Final Religion as revealed to the Seal of the Prophets, the same. They carried the same meaning. That God's creation was not dependent on time, or instrument or means, or any conditions whatsoever. *Ahura Mazda* was Omniscient, consequently, existence awaits His Will, Plan or Intention. This was the meaning of existence comes through "His Holy mind and thought." Because the moment Allah (swt) Wills a thing, it becomes His word or command, and the thing forthwith comes into existence. Put in another phraseology, the Final Revelation stated thus: "The Originator of the heavens and the earth: When He decreeth a matter, He saith to it: "Be", And it is" (Q.2:117).

Allah's 'Word' was in itself the Deed; His Promise was in itself the Truth, there was no interposition of time or condition between His Will and its consequence for He was the ultimate Reality. Undoubtedly, Zoroaster had fellowship with this Reality to have known that He was independent of the proximate or material causes, for He Himself created them and established their laws as He pleased. For He said: "For to anything which We Have willed, We

but say "Be", and it is" (Q.16:40).

Similarly, Prophet Zoroaster taught that *Ahura Mazda* had willed the creation of light when He said: "Let the Blessed expanses be filled with light, and there was light." And he used light as the symbol of his Wise Lord. He created *Angra Mainyu*, the evil who was associated with darkness, and gave him a respite but there would be a time when he would be destroyed by the Supreme God of Truth and Righteousness. This also had a similarity in the Final Revelation with *Iblis*, the accursed. The Prophet rejected Satan outright as Evil and associated him with darkness and that he would be overcome at a point in time and be annihilated by Ahura Mazda.

The Angra Mainyu or Iblis

The concept of Allah's goodness and the evilness of *Iblis* was taught by Prophet Zoroaster to his people in ancient Persia. He referred to *Iblis*, as *Angra Mainyu* or *Ahriman*. He taught that he was created by *Ahura Mazda* and he would be destroyed at some period of time. In other words, the force of evil, which Ahriman represented was only given a divine grace of time. He was nowhere co-eternal with the Supreme God or *Ahura Mazda*. The conflict between evil and suffering, and good was to challenge man to use his free will to make the right choice and practice *Taqwa*. This was for the overall benefit of man, because in the final analysis, goodness would overcome evil. And *Angra Mainyu* with his evil followers would be damned in hell fire after the Day of Judgement.

The cause and genesis of the fall of *Angra Mainyu* or *Iblis* from grace was given in detail in the Final Revelation. His transgression began with the creation of man: "Behold, thy Lord said: To the angels: I am about to create man from clay: when I have fashioned him And breathed into him of My Spirit, fall ye down in prostration unto him" (Q.38:71-72).

This was the creation of Adam, typified as man. And perhaps the Goyamart of the Zoroastrians. Man in himself was nothing but

frail clay. But he was fashioned by Allah's creative power into something with Allah's Spirit breathed into him. Therefore, his dignity was raised above that of the highest creatures. But *Angra Mainyu* or *Iblis* refused to fall down in prostration to Adam as commanded by the Wise Lord, while all the angels had complied: "So the angels prostrated themselves. All of them together, No said Iblis; he was haughty, and became one of those who reject Faith." (Q.38:73-74).

The refusal of *Iblis*, Satan or *Angra Mainyu*, to comply with the Divine injunction was tantamount to a rebellion to Allah (swt), the Wise Lord. It arose out of sheer haughtiness; envy that came out of his exaggerated self-opinion but he was in no way sufficiently high in rank to dispute with the Most High. It would be pertinent to state that even in the First of the Religions, there was no Prophet who received a Portion of the Book (Qur'an) and preached that Satan or *Angra Mainyu* was co-equal to the Supreme God. Although, *Iblis* was only a mere Allah's creation, yet, the Most Merciful One asked the rebel the reason for his transgression as a Just King. The Most Gracious One asked: (Allah) said: "O Iblis! what prevents thee from prostrating thyself to One whom I have Created with My hands? Art thou one of the high (and mighty) ones?" (Q.38:75)

Surely, Iblis was in no way mighty in rank to oppose the Divine Command of the Most Powerful but he gave the reason for his transgression when he replied: "(Iblis) said: I am better than he: "Thou createdst me from fire, and him thou createdst from clay" (Q.38:76). Here, Angra Mainyu thought with arrogance of superiority of his substance (fire) over that of Adam (clay). The Ahriman as a created being, however, did not have an inkling of being co-eternal with his Creator. Undoubtedly, Dualism was never preached or taught by the ancient Prophet. For his hauteur, Iblis, was expelled from Paradise: "Then get thee out of here; for thou art rejected, accursed. And My curse shall be on thee till the Day of Judgement" (Q.38:77-78).

Then the Accursed one implored for a respite till the Day of Reckoning: "(Iblis) Said: O my lord, give me then respite till the Day the (dead) are raised." (Q.15:36) His request was granted and he remained the accursed, thereafter. He was deprived of God's grace and became in the spiritual world what an outlaw was in a political kingdom. In God's grant of limited free-will to man was implied the use of faculty of choosing between good and evil, and the faculty was exercised through the temptations and allurements put forward by Satan or Angra Mainyu. This in essence was what Prophet Zoroaster taught and he emphasised that Ahriman was the "open enemy" of man.

The request of *Iblis* was granted, when Allah (s.w.t.) said: "Respite then as granted thee - till the Day of the Time appointed!" (Q.38:80-81). Ever since he had been enjoying the postponement of his penalty; just as in accordance with Prophet Zoroaster's teaching, the evil would never do good as much as darkness will never be light. So *Iblis* used this period of respite to enthrone evil: (Iblis) said: "O my Lord! Because Thou hast put me in the wrong, I will make (wrong fair-seeming) To them on earth, and I will put them All in the Wrong." (Q.15:39).

Since *Iblis* was powerless on the Most High, he turned his evil attention to man, he vowed to put all men in the wrong. This he could achieve through the use of antics; allurements, deception and subterfuge thereby making wrong things seem right to mankind. So that all men could be condemned to perdition. Thus, he waged his war against Adam and his progenies. This was the Scenario the Persian Prophet tried to depict when he reduced it to a conflict between Good and Evil. But not as an eternal conflict in which the Evil would be perpetual in opposition but finally Good would be victorious, as it would inevitably overcome Evil at a point in time. It was a struggle, which put the free will of man to test. The choice between Good and Evil was there for him to make. Allah (s.w.t.)

granted limited free will to man; he was given the faculty of choosing between good and evil, and the faculty was exercised to deal with the temptations and allurements put forward by *Angra Mainyu* or *Iblis*, the open enemy of man. This contest was to last for the period of man's probation on this earth. The quality of his earthly life determined the quality of his life in the Hereafter. It was either paradise for the doers of good or hell for the evil doers. Thus, man was the architect of his fate; he would make or mar it, the choice was his.

To safeguard man against the evil machinations of *Angra Mainyu* his bitterest enemy, the Compassionate One sent various prophets whom He gave 'A Portion of the Qur'an' so as to guide their peoples. These Prophets were the primary teachers of Islam. Prophet Zoroaster was an advocate of Islam and one its primary teachers. He taught the Persians of his time that without interfering in any way with this quality of choice given to man, *Ahura Mazda* desired that His creatures come to him of their own free will. So he preached to his people to practise *Taqwa* or the exercise of good Human triad. This meant they should always be with good thoughts, good words and good deeds. And all must avoid the evil designs of *Angra Mainyu* or *Ahriman*. The Persian Prophet, was categorical in his teachings that the final outcome was that Good would eventually overcome Evil. The conflict between them was only allowed to exist, to see the best in conduct. The ancient question of would *Ahura Mazda* and *Angra Mainyu* eternally oppose each other? This question had been answered and the cause of the conflict and its final outcome fully explained by the Holy Qur'an. It was only a respite given to *Iblis*, the accursed.

Despite the treacherous and nebulous plans of Satan against man, he could not have it all his way because in an act of mercy, Allah (swt) decreed: "(Allah) said: This is for me a straight path. For over My servants no authority shalt thou have except such as put themselves in the wrong and follow thee." (Q.15:41-42).

To put all men into this 'Straight Path' was the mission of Islam al-Deen sent to guide men unto it, since from the time of Adam till the end of time. Therefore, God sent His Prophets and Messengers to the peoples of all nations to guide their people to follow Allah's straight path, this is the *Siratal Mustaqim.* Even among the Zoroastrians, the true followers of the Portion of the Book revealed to their Prophet, had yearned for this path:

> Oh Ahura Mazda... Reveal unto me for my enlightenment that which you have ordained as the better path for me to follow, so that I may join myself unto it...(Yasna 31:5).

This Straight Path, as taught by all the primary teachers of Islam was to be sincere in the worship of Allah (swt) or *Ahura Mazda,* to obtain purification from all strain of evil and exemption from all the influences of evil. It changed the whole nature of man and protected him against the evil allurements of *Angra Mainyu.* Hence evil acknowledged him to be beyond its power and will not even tempt him. Apart from such purified souls everyone who worshipped Allah, invited Allah's grace to protect him. Therefore, right from childhood, children were trained to follow this path of salvation among the Zoroastians, the true followers of Zarathustra.

In the *Naojote* ceremony, among the Zoroastrians, which corresponded to *Bar-Mizvah* in Judaism and confirmation in Christianity, a child was initiated into the Zoroastrian faith at the age of nine years among the Persians.[37] This ceremony signified a new life of the boy or girl brought into the religious fold. He or she, henceforth, was held responsible for offering of prayers and observing the religious customs.[38] At this tender age, the child was trained to follow the 'Straight Path'. The term Naojote was made up of two words: *nao* means "new", and *Jote* or rather *Zote* meaning "to offer prayers." Hence the word Naojote would mean, "a new initiate to offer Zoroastrian prayers." It was in the ceremony that for the first time the initiate was made to wear *Sudrah,* a sacred shirt

and a *Kusti*, a sacred thread. This was prior to the investiture, because the initiates a boy or a girl, was given a ceremonial bath in sacred or holy water by the officiating priests. The initiate dressed in *Sudrah* and *Kusti* as the sign and symbol of his religion. The Priest and the child then recite prayers after which the initiate made Declaration of Faith.

> Praise be the Most righteous, the wisest, the most holy and the best Mazdaean Law which is the gift of Mazda. The good, true, and perfect religion, which God has sent to this world, is that which Prophet Zoroaster has brought. That religion is the religion of Zoroaster, the religion of Ahura Mazda communicated to holy Zoroaster.[39]

Interestingly, at the outset Allah (swt) had defined His 'Straight Path' to salvation. And had sent His Messengers with a clear Message. Consequently, all nations had their Warners, and the teaching was essentially the same in content, although it may vary in form according to the stage of development of the people. Children in all the nations with 'A Portion of the Book' were taught to follow this *Siratal Mustaqim*. In the First of the Religion, ceremonies were performed in their initiation into the religious fold of their parents. This was seen as *Bar Mitzvah* among the Jews, *confirmation* among the Christians and the *Naojote* among the Zoroastrians. The important aspect of this was not so much on its ceremonial colouring but on its emphasis that the child between the ages of seven and nine years must be conversant with religious practice.

In the Final Religion, however, emphasis was shifted from ceremonies to strict cultivation of Islamic norms and values in children at much tender ages. The result was that even from the ages of seven to nine, some gifted children had already committed the whole of the Qur'an to memory. The strict Islamic discipline among the children was maintained continuously in the First and down to the Final Religion of Islam. As the Most Compassionate One, Allah

(s.w.t.), had defined at the outset His path of Salvation, which was taught to people of all the nations, this in itself was a demonstration of Justice and Righteousness. In contrast to the teaching of salvation in the present form of Christianity, the path of salvation was by crucifixion of Christ, which took place only twenty centuries ago, a period of time too insignificant compared to previous civilisation. If Justice had any meaning, Christ would have been crucified immediately when the original sin was committed so as to atone for it, so that henceforth, he who believed in him "shall be saved."

But to atone for a sin several centuries after its commitment, and after several civilisations and human development had elapsed was to ascribe injustice unto the Merciful One, which was fatuous and inane. The salvation of all the peoples who had lived before the crucifixion saga was seriously put at risk. It could not have been an afterthought on the part of the Omnipotent and Omniscient God, to have made salvation by the cross the only way about 2000 years ago. The right answer to this without rigmarolling was that salvation was by the Faith and Deed, the strict observation of the Law as taught by Jesus, a Prophet of Islam. Because faith without work is dead. It was by having faith in Allah (s.w.t.) and doing the righteous deeds that man could attain to salvation. This is the 'Straight Path' defined since the time of Adam till end of time. All primary teachers of Islam taught their people to follow this path and not to deviate from it. This was evident from this Zoroastrian prayer in Yasna 31:5. Man having been favoured and elevated by his Creator was gifted with *sensus communis*, to guide him in his freedom of choice. If he put himself in the way of wrong and deliberately chose evil, he must accept its consequences and conversely. The blame was not even on Satan, the power of evil, it was on the sinner himself who puts himself into his power.[40] There was no buck-passing the to anybody. The Merciful One said:

> For over My servants;
> No authority shalt thou

Have, except such as
Put themselves in the wrong
and follow thee (Qur'an 15:42).

As an act of justice, the Most Compassionate One had equipped man to use his free will, to do either Good or Evil. Because *Iblis* or *Angra Mainyu* would have no authority on he who rejected him and decided to be on the side of righteousness. Even those who chose to be on the wrong path and followed *Angra Mainyu,* Allah (swt) was aware of all. Both *Iblis* and his followers were only given a respite. Allah said:

Think not that God
Doth not heed the deeds
Of those who do wrong
He but giveth them respite
Against a Day
When the eyes will
Fixedly stare - In horror. (Q.14:42)

This respite was not an indefinite one. It was for a period definitely limited; while our probation in this world lasts. It was part of the test as to how we used our limited free will. It was a period during which the best in conduct was proved and tested. Thus, there was no basis for 'Dualism', which was later introduced, between Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu. It was not taught or preached by Prophet Zoroaster who always affirmed the supremacy of his God above all things. He preached that the power of Good contrasted with Evil; the spiritual power of God as contrasted with the power that we see in our earthly affairs. Iblis, or Angra Mainyu acknowledged that even his power, such as it was, had no reality except as it was permitted to operate by God in God's wise and universal plan, and that it could not harm the true and sincere worshippers of God.

The Holy Qur'an confirmed what previous religious scriptures

had taught of the 'Portion of the Book' revealed to their respective prophets in their original forms. Prophet Zoroaster was not a Dualist, it was a concept, which had developed after him. Because after the Final judgement, evil declared itself in its true colours and it would frankly say:

> I deceived you. The Promise of Allah was true, but you believed me rather than Allah. I had no power to force you. I had but to call you, and you came running after me. You must blame yourselves. Did you think I was equal with Allah? I know too well that I was not and never could be. If you did wrong, you must suffer the penalty.[41]

The story of Prophet Zoroaster and his teachings of the religion of monotheism proved the wonders of the Holy Qur'an. A study of the 'Portion of the Book' revealed to him was essentially Islamic. Similarly, the personal conduct of the true followers of this religion, both in public and in private, both as conquerors and vanquished and as the first rulers of the world were Muslim characteristically. These Islamic attitude and conscious behaviour were seen in both Cyrus the Great and more glaringly, in Darius the Great, the most probable Qur'anic Zulqarnain.

The date of birth of this great Prophet was uncertain. He was however, believed to have been born in 1768 BC about twenty years after Patriarch Abraham had migrated from Ur of Chaldea to settle in Canaan in 1750 BC, where he established Islam and a nation. The Abrahamic faiths, and the nations of Israelites and Ishmaelites (Arabs) who all had emerged from his progenies. There were many great movements at that time. While Prophet Zoroaster was establishing Islam in Persia, a man named Siddharta Gautama taught in north-east India. His teaching, according to many scholars, was equally a monotheistic faith. He was given the title of Buddha, the 'Enlightened One'. His followers became a religious movement, separated from the mainstream of Hinduism to establish a separate religion called Buddhism. Unfortunately, this religion was derailed

entirely from its initial course with the passage of time. Hinduism, the predominant religion of India at that time, was founded by the Vedic Aryan wanderers. Similarly, it was from this Aryan race that Zoroastrianism developed in Persia. The Question of which of the two was older is still debatable. It was possible that all these Indo-Persian religions evolved from a 'Portion of the Book' revealed to each. But it was only Zoroastrianism, in spite of all odds, that had retained its monotheism and was relatively free from corruption as a result of the impact of its revivalist Cyrus and Darius the Great.

Patriarch Abraham may have lived at the time when the Aryans were settling in the north of India and in Persia. These religious movements took place about a hundred years after that of Siddhartha, Gautama Buddha who established his Buddhism.[42] Perhaps Prophet Zoroaster was a contemporary of the patriarch. Thus, concurrently great religious movements were taking place; in Palestine, in Persia and in India. He was described by the Holy Qur'an thus: "Abraham was indeed a model, Devoutly obedient to God, (And) time in faith, and he joined not gods with God" (Q.16:120).

The Gospel of Divine Unity had been the cornerstone of spiritual Truth for all time. Quite unlike the rest of the religious movements, the one in Palestine was the most successful of all. In affirming Divine Unity, Abraham, in this respect, was the model and fountainhead for the world of West Asia and its spiritual descendants all over the world. Abraham (a.s) was among a people (the chaldeans) who worshipped stars and had forsaken the Gospel of Unity. He was among them but not of them. He suffered persecution and left his home and his people and settled in the land of Canaan. Consequently, he would be eternally remembered as the foremost architect of monotheism aptly described as Abrahamic faiths.

As Abrahamic faiths; Judaism, Christianity and Islam had exhorted men to virtuous deeds and pious life. They resolutely

affirmed Divine Unity, and condemned falsehood, dishonesty, hypocrisy, injustice, cruelty, pride, ungratefulness, treachery, intemperance, concupiscence, sloth, jealousy, selfishness, apathy, vile speech, and violence or aggression. Zoroastrianism was a sister to these faiths and shared the same ethical and moral precepts they preached. They prevented man from harm or destruction of life and or property. They all upheld the golden rule: "Do unto others as you want others do unto you." Thus, Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Zoroastrianism in their pristine form had preached more or less the same doctrine. They preached peace, love, politeness and sincerity among their adherents. And lastly, they all exhorted man to do well to all and to abstain from doing evil; to show mercy, forgiveness, truthfulness, courage, patience, sympathy, kindness and goodness to parents. Zoroastrianism although was not a member of the Abrahamic faiths, it was a bona fide member of the commonwealth of monotheistic faiths.

The roots of Abrahamic tradition as earlier mentioned went back to some 4,000 years in history, when the forefather of the Ishmaelite (Arabs) and the Jews emigrated from the metropolis of Ur of the Chaldea in Summeria to the land of Canaan. Patriarch Abraham, therefore, was neither a Jew nor a Christian but a professor of a religion of complete submission to the Will of God or Islam. He was an ardent monotheist. In all these religious movements, Zoroastrianism appeared to be very vibrant and many scholars believed it had influenced most of the world's religions. This claim was or might be a prelude to the ascription of plagiarism, from this Persian religion by other major religions. It is pertinent to discuss briefly the effects of Zoroastrianism on the Abrahamic faiths.

The Impact of Zoroastrianism

The effect of Zoroastrianism on other religions especially, on Judaism, Christianity and Islam as claimed by many writers; could not have been theologically but secular. The true followers of this

Persian religion, though they did not proselyte their religion but it influenced the various peoples they vanquished through their tolerance, justice and righteousness all consequent upon the dictate of their religion. The history of Cyrus and Darius and some other Achaemenian Kings were enough examples to be cited. The rich religious panorama of Persian history revealed a remarkable sense of tolerance combined with an intense religious life. The followers of the great Persian Prophet, were fortunate to combine, power with Faith with which they were able to rule the world and to win the hearts of various nations whom they vanquished. They were extremely wealthy and powerful monarchs who were not mean but liberal.

The rare combination of religious faith, which was Islamic in nature, wealth and global power was the first of its kind in the ancient world. Cyrus the Great was the first to establish a World Empire and was unblemished in conquests and rule. He was the first to make Persia a haven for religious minorities. The respect for the religion of other men, enunciated so majestically by Cyrus had endeared him to the peoples of many nations. It was because of Cyrus's faith which was Islamic in essence, that Jehovah chose him to liberate the Hebrews from the Babylonian Captivity. In other words, he was their "Second Moses." This would not have been so if Cyrus was not a man of God. He won the accolades of the Jews for discharging his "Divine" duty of liberating them from bondage and he set them free. His choice for this sacred duty was not unconnected with his faith. Both the Jews and the Persians were holders of monotheistic belief. This could be aptly described in the words of a celebrated Persian Poet:

> To speak the same tongue is kinship and affinity; a man (when he is) with those in whom he cannot confide is like a prisoner in chains.
>
> Oh, many are the Indians and Turks who speak the same tongue; oh, Many the Pair of Turks that are as strangers (to each

other). Therefore, the tongue of mutual understanding is different indeed to be one in heart is better than to be one in tongue.[43]

God Almighty committed the destiny of the Hebrews in bondage unto Cyrus because they were one at heart. He could have chosen Alexander the Great or any other heathen King for the job but "to be one in heart is better than to be one in tongue." Undoubtedly, both the Jews and their Zoroastrian liberators were one in heart because they all affirmed the Divine Unity. Cyrus at the dawn of recorded history emphasised peace and justice on the global scale. He succeeded in linking the Jewish people with the Persians directly and Judaism with Zoroastrianism indirectly. The achievements of Cyrus were consolidated and further expanded by Darius the Great. These Achaemenian Kings had succeeded in making some very good and imperishable marks upon the minds of the various peoples they subjugated. They were all world Kings who had advanced the course of Zoroastrianism not by proselytisation but by practical demonstration of sublime qualities and religious ethos, which amazed most of the nations. Consequently, they became emulated by them.

It was through their secular world power that other nations became impressed by this ancient Persian monotheistic faith. It could be said that it was the first to establish world empire and rule it according to the laws of God. This was typified in both Cyrus and more emphatically in Darius' administration. These world Kings did not proselytise Zoroastrianism; it remained within the confines of Persia because it was primarily a Persian religion. Their Prophet and their Kings were only primary teachers of Islam. It should be noted, therefore, that the bone marrow of Persians was essentially religious, which spread in a long span of history. The religious history of the people, therefore, fell into pre-Zoroastrian, Zoroastrian and Islamic phases. The ancient pagan cults of Persia were non-Aryan but had its impact on the people of Pars and its

neighbours. And through their Zoroastrian faith the people of Persia were very much endeared to all the nations they came in contact with. With the coming of Islam the land already watered by Zoroaster's teachings, therefore, it germinated faster and the Islamic tree has been bearing fruits ever since.

Undoubtedly, the Zoroastrians had influenced the ancient world but not due to the spread of their faith by proselysation but by the way they conducted themselves, thereby, demonstrating the Human triad of their religion; purity of thought, words and deeds. These Islamic virtues shown by the world leaders of the ancient times had impressed the world. But it was not only Prophet Zoroaster who received 'A Portion of the Book, there were many prophets in various nations of his time, before and after him. The followers of these various prophets did not have the unique combination of the Zoroastrians especially their Kings, who made Zoroastrianism for over two centuries the royal religion. They combined religion, wealth and imperial power because Persia at that period of time was synonymous with riches and gold. This important point bears repeating again and again because I could not subscribe to the notion of S.A. Nigosian who in his outline of Zoroastrianism mentioned that it had an incalculable influence on other religions, especially Judaism, Christianity and Islam. He then averred that: "The ideas of the 'devil', 'Satan', the "adversary" and the vivid imagery of heaven and hell all stem from Zoroaster..."[44]

Nothing could be farther from the truth, if this was to mean that Abrahamic religions got these ideas from prophet Zoroaster. In all the Jewish prophets, including Jesus Christ, these ideas were revealed (to them) in their Holy Scriptures, some of which, perhaps, had preceded the Gathic Avesta of Zoroaster. Because we were told in the Holy Qur'an that all revealed scriptures contained only a Portion of the Book (Qur'an). These ideas, therefore, did not originate from the Persian Prophet alone so that the rest took this

portion from him. They only simply shared a common Divine source. Therefore, the incalculable influence Zoroastrianism had on the world was consequent upon the world imperial power, which was exerted by the Zoroastrians especially their Achaemenian Kings. But Nigosian also added that:

> Moreover, down through the ages, the indirect but powerful contribution of Zoroastrian ideas has been seen in a number of literary classics: Dante's Divine Comedy, Adamnan's Vision of Heaven and Hell, and Milton's Paradise Lost...[45]

It was also a known fact that through the same ages, Zoroastrianism, was corrupted as most of the pagan cults fought by Zoroaster had crept into it. So the question of which of the Zoroaster's ideas had reshaped the patterns of the modern world religions remained to be answered. Ismail Ragi al-Faruqi, a scholar of international repute, had also viewed in perspective the effects of Zoroastrianism on other religions. He wrote.

> Zoroastrianism rubbed shoulders on its own soil first with Judaism and then with Christianity. It taught the latter through the former. It is safe to say that the whole of Jewish eschatology, angelogy, Day of Judgement and Paradise and Hell, resurrection of the flesh, and Messianism, both exilic and post-exilic, came from Persia. In turn, these ideas having become Jewish, exercised enormous influences on Christianity.[46]

However, if all these ideas came from Persia to Judea, then the whole monotheistic concept came from Persia; principally from Zoroastrianism. This was not possible because the Orthodox Hebrews both exilic and postexilic were characteristically Jewish, rigid in their formalism and ritualism. They fervently believed in their laws and their prophets and were ever impervious to any influences external to their Holy Scriptures. So they could not have accepted any eschatological ideas that were antithetical to their creed. It could be posited more correctly that the idea must have

equally been revealed to the Jewish Prophets rather concurrently. This was more in line with Qur'anic teaching.

The Jews, in spite of their sufferings at the hands of their captors, were known to remain undefiled in their religious beliefs and practices. Were these Zoroastrian eschatological ideas not common or compatible with their prophetic teachings and their laws. they could not been accepted in the first place. Because anything outside their laws and their Prophets was considered paganic and was outright rejected by all. The rational explanation was simple; the Islamic eschatological concept was the same and was taught by all the Primary teachers of Islam. Thus, the same concept was repeated verbatim by the Zoroastrians, the Jews, the Christians and finally the Muslims. Each of them received their teachings through their respective Prophets from one single Divine Source, which was the All Powerful God.

Therefore, these religions in their pure states had potentiated each other before they eventually and final dissolved into Islam. the Final Revelation forming a single global *ummah* (community) demonstrating Allah's Divine Plan of One God (Allah), One Nation (Muslim) and One Religion (Islam al-deen) and living in harmony in One World. This is the ultimate end and a divine decree that will come to pass. This explained the reason why the Zoroastrian world Kings did not proselytise their religion or attempt to make it acceptable to all the conquered nations. Because they were not mandated by *Ahura Mazda* to do so. This was the responsibility of the office of Islam. under the Seal of the Prophets. Allah (s.w.t.) was not oblivious of the global contribution of the Zoroastrians, their Prophets and their Kings. Neither was it not recorded in the book of Books in His Final Revelation. The Holy Qur'an had mentioned the contribution of one of the Achaemenian Kings as representative of them all. He was described as a world leader who was just, righteous and ruled according to the laws of God. There was never be any ancient King who would fit these qualities other than Darius

the Great, a true Zoroastrian who was described in the Holy Qur'an as Zulqarnain. This was a strong indication that Zoroastrianism was an ancient brand of Islam.

Similarly, the Bible did mention both Darius and his son Xerxes as great Kings. Therefore the Persians in their long, rich history had at the dawn of recorded history established a good contact with Judaism. It had also another contact down through the ages with Christianity. Its influence on Christianity was indirect and negative. Like all the national religions, Zoroastrianism was corrupted especially by the heathen cultist practices of the pre-Zoroastrian era. Mithraism, the cult of Sun worshipping was revived and became a dominant religion in the Near East and far beyond. Christianity, in its formative years supplanted Mithraism in a bid to amass numerical power. S.A. Nigosian had espoused on the influence of Mithraism, which was not true Zoroastrianism. This pagan cult before the Christian era had penetrated the Roman Empire from the Near East. During the second century AD, Mithraism had become the strongest religious rival of Christianity. It therefore unhesitatingly swallowed this ancient cult into its fold. Hence, outwardly, it had many startling similarities to Mithraism. Nigosian wrote that:

> Followers of Mithra regarded the Seventh day of each week (Sunday, and not Saturday) as a sacred day to the Sun god Mithra. The birth of Mithra was celebrated toward the end of December, more or less simultaneously with the winter Solstice, which falls on the shortest day in the northern hemisphere. Worshippers of Mithra had a ritual similar to the Eucharist (communion) ceremony in the Christian community, in which they took consecrated bread and wine, and a bell tolled at the climax of their service.[47]

Henceforth, it could be seen that the influence on the Pauline Christianity was not Zoroastrian but Mithraic. This ancient cult of Mithra was even widespread before Zoroaster. But the Prophet was able to relegate this solar hero to the background, to the level of an

intermediate angel in Zoroastrianism. However, after the death of the Prophet and with the passage of time, there was a surge of a new wave of Mithraism. The Sun god was raised to his pre-Zoroastrian status and coloured with Babylonian astrology, the Olympian Pantheon and even local elements from Anatolia where it first arose.[48] This religion of 'Sun god' or Mithra attracted to it many Roman soldiers in the Eastern Mediterranean world. The 'mystery religion', as it was called, therefore, had numerous followers. It attracted them because of its emphasis on courage, valour and chivalry, the characters which Roman soldiers would wish to be associated with; so they joined Mithraism *en masse*. Apostle Paul on his prowl to gather numerical superiority, saw its glaring popularity and he incorporated it into his new brand of Christianity referred to as Pauline Christianity.

Pure Zoroastrians, on the other hand, had strong appetite for monotheism. So when the Holy Prophet of Islam emerged from Arabia as was foretold in the Holy Zoroastrian scripture, they embraced Islam *en masse*. Because a pristine form of Zoroastrianism was Islamic in nature, it therefore, spread into Persia like a bush fire. Sayyid Hossein Nasr had rightly stated that the spread of Islam in Persia was a gradual process and not due to any coercing but rather to a profound spiritual need. This gradual process could be defined to mean since the dawn of history, the Persians had been Islamic in principle cultivated by their great Prophet but with passage of time, gradually and steadily Persia was left with spiritual vacuum and a profound spiritual need, which Islam finally had come to fill. He rightly debunked the theory of spread of Islam by the force of arm. In his essay in *Persia Bridge of Turquoise*, Sayyid Nasr said:

> The Persians did not become Muslim because of the fear of the sword, contrary to the view of many orientalists; for how could fifty thousand or at most a hundred thousand soldiers force a people spreading from Mesopotamia to Transoxiana to change

their religion and, moreover, to produce great scholars, theologians and saints belonging to the new religion.[49]

The people of Persia must have been eagerly awaiting the advent of the greatest Prophet from Arabian desert. A very long expectation which resulted into a quest and a yearning. This yearning was however fulfilled with the emergence of Prophet Muhammad (saw). The spiritual destiny of the Persian people was symbolised by the quest of Salman al-Farisi (ra) who set out from Persia in search of the true prophet, finally found him in Arabia and became his intimate companion and a member of his *ahle bayt* (household).[50] Through its long and extensive religious history, Persia was able to make a three-link of contact with the great religions of the world. These religions - Judaism, Christianity and Islam were divinely revealed and have a lot of religious practices in common. Although their eschatological ideas were revealed independent of each other but they strengthened one another. At the beginning of their religious history they were in direct contact with Judaism and at one end, in direct and intimate contact with Islam at the tail end into which the Persian religious history dissolved completely. Zoroastrianism is almost a non-existent religion in today's modern world because the soul of both Judaism and Zoroastrianism were united in Islam. This explained their similarities. These rivers with their tributaries took different courses and meandered through different lands of varying topographic terrains, and they inevitably joined the sea. Islam is the sea.

All the divinely revealed religions, the Prophets who preached them to their various peoples were primary teachers of Islam because their teachings were limited only to their nations alone. If there was any religion in the ancient world whose followers became world leaders it was Zoroastrianism, yet, they were forbidden from spreading their religion beyond the borders of Persia, because the Prophet was only a primary teacher of Islam. Even in this

contemporary world, a lot of money was spent just to make Christianity an international religion but it was originally meant not to be taken beyond the Jewish borders, because Christianity was an offshoot of Judaism, tailored to meet the needs and the aspirations of the Jewish people. Jesus Christ was himself a primary teacher of Islam to the Jewish nation.

It was the office of Islam that was mandated to proselytise to all the nations of the world. Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) was sent as a mercy unto the world in general. He was therefore, a Professor *per excellence* in the teaching of Islam unto the world. He was the greatest and seal of all the Prophets of God. Each of the Prophets of God who had received His revelation to his people, received only 'A Portion of the Book'. But to the seal of the Prophets, the 'Whole of the Book' was revealed in the form of Qur'an. The understanding of these facts had become necessary, because of the false allegations that some religions had direct influence on Islam but they might exert indirect influence by engineering sectarian divisions within its fold. The Holy Qur'an contained all the previous Divine messages, and 'a part' could never be compared with the 'whole.' Consequently, it is a complete Book which explains everything.

We now come to an often repeated charge, with respect to the authorship of the Qur'an that there were Jewish and Christian influences on it. These were spurious allegations, which had been debunked by many ancient and contemporary writers including non-Muslim authors. For instance, the Prophet was alleged to have been instructed on Christianity and Judaism either during his travels or while staying in Mecca or Medina, Professor Muhammad Khalifa refused this allegation by stating that the Prophet did travel twice to Syria at the age of thirteen and twenty five. This was long before his mission. This spurious allegation put forward by Bodley and others, to describe him as "a man who spent most of his time on the road", therefore, collapsed under the weight of this reasonable argument.[40] He was born in the full glare of history and nobody was identified as

his teacher either in Mecca or in Medina because he was taught by the All knowing, the Wise, through Divine revelation.

Since no Jewish or Christian teachers could be identified with the Prophet, Menezes and Gadner then postulated a completely different teacher for the Prophet. They put forward a preposterous Salmanic connection:

> They maintained that Salman, a Persian, had helped in writing the Sacred Book. This Salman, who had been a Zoroastrian before accepting Christianity in Syria, later moved on to Medina where he met the Prophet and embraced Islam...[52]

This allegation like the rest of them collapsed under the weight of facts advanced by Khalifa. He wrote:

> It is well known to Muslims that the greater part of the Qur'an i. e. about two-thirds of it, was revealed in Mecca before the Prophet migrated to Medina, where Salman met him.
>
> Furthermore, the Book's literary style was so sublime that even born Arab linguists who have tried over the years to imitate it have not been successful - to say nothing of a Persian.[53]

Although initially, it had started from Zoroastrian influences on Judaism and Christianity, then the foray of spurious allegations gradually but stealthily shifted or gravitated to the Holy Qur'an because the world was astounded with its unlimited knowledge. To accept the Divine Authorship of this Qur'an Most Honourable, had not been an easy task, and those who attempted to cast shadow upon the Final Revelation, out of sheer jealousy have all failed woefully. Professor Muhammad Khalifa, a distinguished Islamic Scholar and a Professor of Electrical Engineering, had advanced the following statement of facts, in his book *'The Sublime Qur'an and Orientalism* which I consider to be a "Patriot anti-missiles" against the scurrilous attacks of people moved by anger and jealousy. According to this erudite scholar, had Muhammad in fact learnt from a Christian Monk, a Bishop, a Jewish Rabbi, or even from Christian slaves, the

following might have happened:

1. Muhammad would never have denied it because he was famous all his life for both preaching and telling the truth.

To this I might add that Islam has made the virtues of *Sidq-o-Safa*. Truthfulness and Purity as its distinctive characteristics. The noble Personality of the Holy Prophet was the perfect exponent of this great virtue. He was unshakeable on this stand. So deep was the impression of the truthfulness upon the heart of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) that when someone asked Abu Jahl, who was his bitterest enemy. "Tell me truly what dost thou think of Muhammad. Is he a liar?" Abu Jahl said: "By god! Muhammad is a truthful man. He never told a lie." On another occasion he said: "O Muhammad We do not hold that you are a liar; but we only hold that your teachings are false." Yet, no one had proved the falsehood of his teaching and fourteen centuries had elapsed. The modern 'critics' claim was not so much on the falsehood of teachings which they considered as true but its divine origin was not authentic. He had an unidentified religious teacher.

The Prophet of Islam (pbuh) was identified even by his bitterest enemies as a paragon of honesty. In fact, his people called him *al-Amin* which means, the truthful One. Undoubtedly, if he had a private teacher elsewhere he would have said it, and even mentioned what he had learned from him. He was such a transparently honest man who no one has ever heard tell a lie, even once or jokingly. Yet, the vainglorious writers kept writing unfounded allegations against the Holy man, and his revealed Book. In his defence of the Prophet, Khalifa continued.

2. He could never have preached a faith so radically different from Christianity and Judaism, particularly with respect to their basic creeds.

3. Under the circumstances, and considering the climate of antagonism existing between him and those who did not believe

in his message, particularly the Jews and Polytheists, his teachers name could scarcely have remained unknown throughout all the years of the Prophet's mission.

4. Whoever taught him would surely have written a book or at least a chapter similar to the Qur'anic revelations.

5. The Jews, referred to in the Qur'an as " The people of the Book" had been persistently cross-examining him, defying him and hiding their books from others. How then could they have taught him at the same time? If they had taught him anything, would they not have been the first to declare it in order to disprove his Prophethood? It is difficult to believe that they would not also have been careful to suppress the uncomplimentary references to them contained in the Qur'an.

6. Had Muhammad not been sincere in his Prophethood and honest in delivering his revelations, his friends and followers would never have been so devoted to him, nor would they have clung to his teachings, despite devastating hardship and persecution. It is a remarkable tribute to the character of Muhammad and to those of his friends and followers that not one of them ever betrayed him.

7. The Qur'an confirms certain biblical records of previous Prophets. Since the historical events in the Bible were originally revealed by God to Moses and other Prophets, why could not this confirmation be a sign that the source is one, and divine?

8. If divine authorship had never been claimed for the Bible by a Christian, why should Muhammad have risked additional persecution from his enemies by claiming the Qur'an to have been revealed by God if this were not so?[54]

The Holy Prophet, motivated by a sense of religious duty, had remained undaunted in the discharge of his mission, in spite of the devastating persecution meted to him and his followers. Criticisms and untold hardship he faced, yet, his unflinching loyalty to his Lord had convinced all his adversaries that criticisms and the use of force would not make a dent upon the Prophet. The Meccans, therefore, approached him with a deal to compromise, through his uncle. In response to his uncle's plea to compromise with the Meccans, his answer was decisive as it was sincere. He said:

> I swear by the name of God. O uncle! that if they place the Sun in my right-hand and the Moon in my left hand in return for giving up this matter (Islam) I will never desist until either I make it a triumph or I would perish defending it.[55]

Evidently, God was ever on the side of His greatest Prophet, so Islam was triumphant and prevailed over all enemies and hypocrites. The triumph of Islam was evident from its rapid spread, the lightning-like rapidity of its diffusion, conquering nations and empires which was unparalleled in the annals of world history. This was a veritable miracle as compared with the slow progress of Christianity or any other religion. More importantly, Islam won the allegiance of many races. It cut across age-long traditions, imposed, in some cases a new culture upon people, changed religious beliefs, so remarkable has been its influence that millions in conquered countries were today as proud of the name of Islam as if they had been born under the shadow of the sacred Ka'aba at Mecca.[56] Islam now is the fastest growing religion in the world today. It is the second largest, but due to the allegiance of many differing races to it, international politics would be forced to be redefined. Professor Huntington of Harvard University, in a widely read article in "Foreign Affairs" of Summer 1993 put forward this argument:

> That the nation state is no longer the Primary unit of International relation. Alas, competition and conflict from men's relations with each other, will have to be worked out at another level, that is, among large units known as, cultures or civilisation...[57]

Islam transcends national borders because it emerged as a Super-Civilisation, which threatens Western Civilisation. It was in view of this that the Harvard Professor had foreseen a *clash of civilisation:* Islam and the West. Because Islam is an ideology and a religion of the future. In spite of the numerous polemist attacks, Islam surges forward. It would undoubtedly supplant this Western Civilisation, which is already corrupt, decadent and begging for

destruction. It was reasonable to argue that had all the polemical allegations both in the past and in the present been veritable ones, they would have wreaked havoc on the Final Religion. Unfortunately, they were all false and outlandish eked out from the figment of the imagination of people provoked to anger and jealousy. A typical example of this malicious allegation was given by the erudite Rev. Borworth Smith. He had this to say:

> Now, too, arose the invention, the maliciousness of which was only equalled by its stupidity, but believed by all who wished to believe it - of the dove trained to gather peas placed in the ear of Muhammad, that people might believe that he was inspired by the Holy Ghost - Inspired, it would seem, by the very being, whose separate existence it was the first article of his creed to deny!..."[58]

This was typical of the type of mischievous allegations the greatest Prophet received; they only change the style of presentation. But the most important thing about it was that they were all false and outrageous. In concluding the discussion, Gary Miller, a Canadian Mathematician answered the polemist accusation which the Meccans had started that 'The Devils bring Muhammad that Qur'an!" He then made this deposition; in the Qur'an, Allah (s.w.t.) instructs us: "So when you recite the Qur'an, Seek refuge in Allah from Shaytan the rejected" (Q.16:98). The author then asked: "Now is this how Satan writes a book?" He tells one, "Before you read my book, ask God to save you from me?"[48] Obviously, "this is ludicrous and impossible," he concluded. The Holy Qur'an is far beyond the reach of the Devil, let alone to compose it; a Divine Authorship beyond doubt!

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DARIUS THE GREAT (521-485 BC)

Verily We established his power on earth, and We gave him the ways and the means to all ends.

- Surat al Kahf

On this account (his world power) Ahura Mazda brought me help because I was not wicked, nor was I a liar, nor was I a tyrant, neither I nor any of my line. I have ruled (the world) according to righteousness.

- Behistun Inscription

When the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was asked who Zulqarnain was, He received the right answer through Divine revelation but not by name but by title and characteristics of the person. The most appropriate historic personage who fitted these descriptions couldn't have been any other person but Darius the Great, the celebrated and greatest Persian monarch in ancient history. His reign of 36 years were both eventful and fruitful as the ancient world witnessed a just administration during which all nations prospered. How he came to power was a remarkable event in history. His name had betoken the end of one epoch and the beginning of another; he would even be remembered for his introduction of *Aperire terram gentibus* – to open the world to all people.

Accession of Darius

The accession of Darius to the throne of Persian World Empire was an interesting event in ancient history. King Cambuses had secretly killed on suspicions of infidelity, his brother Smerdis, to whom he had entrusted the regency of some of the eastern Satrapies. While the King was in Egypt, a certain Magian named Gaumata made attempt to overthrow the Achaemenian dynasty in a *coup d'etat.* By pretending to be the dead Smerdis whom he closely resembled. Unfortunately, when the King was recalled from Egypt because of the rebellion at home, he died on his way to Parsa in 521 BC. The

false Smerdis, the coup plotter, therefore, fought harder to get control of the government. The next heir to the throne was Hystaspes, who at that time was a Satrap of Parthia and was the father of Darius and made no attempt to secure his right, so Gaumata firmly established himself as a *de facto* King.

But Darius had different thoughts from his father; in a decisive counter-attack, he organised with six nobles, and successfully aborted the *coup d'etat*, when he killed the Usurper and became the *dejure* King himself. He, therefore, restored the legitimate right of his family and the Achaemenian dynasty by marrying Atossa, the daughter of Cyrus the Great and widow of Cambyses, thereby consolidating and uniting the ruling families. The Queen bore him a great son and successor, Xerxes. The king tactically and courageously established his power in Parsis and beyond. He quelled all the uprisings and rebellions to fully grasp the reign of control of his Empire.

Darius the Great, prevailed over his enemies, and attributed his success to quell all the rebellions in his world empire to the favour of *Ahura Mazda,* which he described in pictogram on the rock of Behistun. It showed Darius, attended by two of his great officers, one of whom was believed to be his father-in-law, Gobryas. He was depicted triumphing over his enemies. According to Percy Sykes this pictorial record showed the Great King stands with his left foot firmly planted on Gaumata the magian, represented as lying on his back with his arms raised in an attitude of entreaty. In front stand nine rebel leaders, roped together with their hands bound, all of whom are named by epigraphs. Above hovers the god *Ahura Mazda,* and to him the right hand of Darius it raised in adoration:

Taken from left to right, as shown in the illustration, the names of the rebels were: 1. Atrina, the first Susian pretender. 2. Nidintu-Bel, the first Babylonian pretender. 3. Phraortes, the Median pretender. 4. Marliya, the second Susian pretender. 5. Citrantakhma, the Sagaitian pretender. 6. Vahyazdata, the second pseudo -

Smerdis. 7. Arakha, the second Babylonian pretender. 8. Frada, the Magian pretender. 9. Skunka, Scythian leader, whose figure was added at a later period.[1]

Undoubtedly, it was both venturesome and perilous task for one man to control the whole world and to put all peoples under his suzerainty, as was successfully achieved by King Darius. Having achieved this feat so remarkably, as a religious leader and God worshipper, he showed his adoration to *Ahura Mazda* in the pictogram, as he raised up his right index finger symbolising his belief in Divine Unity. By pointing his index finger up, he was showing his adoration of "Allahu Ahad," the Wise One. It was with the support of this One God that he triumphed over all his travails and vanquished his enemies. From the evidence of this pictogram alone, we have at last found the man we had been looking for, who fitted the Qur'anic descriptions – a World King with absolute faith in One God.

The pictogram also showed the Smerdis Gaumata, the bitterest enemy of the new King, lying naked on the ground with his hands raised up in position of a complete surrender and submission. As a sign of both humiliation and derogation, the Great King put his left foot matching the belly of the Usurper, a thief who had come to steal a world crown. It was indeed one of the happiest moment in the life of Darius, so the event was inscribed on the great inscription. For this and other favours, the King was grateful to *Ahurà Mazda*. Richard N. Frye, a Professor of Iranian in Harvard University, described the Magian Gaumata saga as one of the greatest stories and scandals of ancient history. The primary source of this historical event was the Behistun Inscription, in which Darius gave a detail account of how with Allah's help came to power, and quoting from this important source, the Professor wrote:

> This is what was done by me after I became King. (One) Cambyses by name, the son of Cyrus, of our family, was King here. There was a brother that Cambyses called Bardiya, of the

same mother and the same father as Cambyses. Afterwards Cambyses went to Egypt. When Cambyses had gone to Egypt, then the people became false and lie became multiplied in the land both in Persis and in Media and in other lands.

Saith Darius the King: Afterwards there was a man, a Magian, Gaumata by name; he rebelled (fell out) from Pishiyahuvada. Fourteen days of the Month Viyakhna had passed when he rose up from the mountain Arakadri. He lied to the people thus: "I am Bardiya, the son of Cyrus, brother of Cambyses." Then all people became allied (to him). From Cambyses both Persis and Media and the other lands went over to him. He seized the Kingdom. Afterwards Cambyses died naturally. Saith Darius the King: This kingdom which Gaumata the Magian took from Cambyses, from early (times) this kingdom had belonged to our family. Afterwards Gaumata the Magian robbed Cambyses; he took for himself both Persis and Media and other lands. He made them his own possession. He became King.

Saith Darius the King: There was not a man, neither a Persian nor a Mede nor anyone of our family, who could have taken that he might slay many who had previously known Bardiya. For this reason would he slay many that had previously known Bardiya. For this reason would he slay the people "lest they know me that I am not Bardiya the son of Cyrus." There was no one who dared say anything about Gaumata the Magian until I came. Then I prayed to *Ahura Mazda. Ahura Mazda* bore me aid. Ten days were past of the month Bagayadi, then I with a few men slew that Gaumata the Magian and those chief men who were his supporters. A fortress by name Sikayahuvati, a district by name Nisaya, in Media, there I slew him, I took the kingdom from him. By the grace of *Ahura Mazda* I became King. *Ahura Mazda* bestowed the kingdom upon me.

Saith Darius the King: The kingdom, which had been taken away from our family that I put in (its) place. I re-established it on its foundation. As before, so I made the temples which Gaumata the Magian had destroyed. I handed back to the people the chatter, herds, servants, and houses, which Gaumata the Magian had taken from them. I re-established the people on its foundation, (in) both Persis and Media and the other lands.[2]

Taken stock of the situation in toto, all the actions taken by Darius were justified; Gaumata, who attempted to seize power in Parsis was an impostor. King Cambyses had killed Smerdis Bardiya seven years ago, there was no way the impersonation of the megalomaniac could be accepted. His fear, lest he be exposed as a false son of Cyrus the Great, led to the elimination all those who knew the true Smerdis to whom he bore remarkable resemblance. Furthermore, while terrorising people, the Villain then went on looting spree, destroying and confiscating public property. No doubt he could have been a disaster to the Persian World Empire. It was in this context that the actions of Darius could be viewed and judged. Therefore, motivated by deep sense of duty and patriotism, Darius, then a Spear Bearer to King Cambyses had to seize power in the counter-revolution in his country. Three months after Gaumata had seized power in the Palace intrigues, following the death of King Cambyses to whom Darius was distantly related, Gaumata, the Magian proclaimed himself *de facto* King in July 522 BC and was toppled by Darius in September of the same year. He was prevented from taking the reign of Persia, an event that could spell doom and have caused severe consequences not only to the Persian Empire but also to the world in general. The hand clock of civilisation would have been turned backward, a catastrophe to mankind.

But Darius and the six nobles who collaborated with him had saved the world. The names of these great men were also given in the Behistun inscription: Vindafarna (the intaphernes) of Herodotus. son of Vayaspara; Hutana (Otanes) son of Thukhra; Gaubaruva (Gobryas) son of Marduniya; Vidarna (Hydarnes) son of Bagabigna; Bagabukhsha (Megabyzus) son of Daduhya, and Ardumanish son of Vahuka.[3] They rapidly strode through the fortress of Sikthauvatish or Sikayahuvati in Media, then got access into the private apartment of Gaumata and killed him. Thus, a legitimate government was finally restored.

Therefore, Darius ascended to the throne with Allah's support, establishing his power in Parsis and beyond. It was not easy even today to counter *coup d'etat*, especially in a monarchical regime of this nature, but Allah gave him courage to confront Gaumata when everybody was cowed in awe and terrified with fear of the Magian. In this saga Darius recalled when the Megalomaniac was terrifying all people in the following words: "There was no one who dared say anything about Gaumata, the Magian, until I came. Then I prayed to *Ahura Mazda. Ahura Mazda* bore me aid." All revolutions were carefully planned especially this one associated deeply with palace intrigues but Darius, countered it in only three months with the support of Allah (swt). His account of his accession to power was in accordance with the sacred story of the Holy Qur'an, especially when he confessed that: "By the grace of *Ahura Mazda* I became King. *Ahura Mazda* bestowed the Kingdom upon me." This statement written on the great Behistun inscription co-related or was in accordance with the Holy Qur'an's account of the same event in 18:84, when Allah (swt) said. "Verily, We have established his power on Earth."

The Prophet of Mercy secluded in the Arabian Desert couldn't have known these facts, which were written in languages foreign to his own. But knowing them with such remarkable exactitude was a clear evidence of revelation to the unlettered Prophet. Therefore, he was incontrovertibly an Apostle of *Ahura Mazda*, the Wise One. Because God's revelation as a whole ran through the ages, it was "The Book," the Qur'an, in which all other previous revelations were, "portions from it, including the Avesta of Prophet Zoroaster. The Holy Qur'an contains these revelations in whole and is *par excellence* the Book of God. Therefore, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w), the seal and the greatest of all the Prophets knew with absolutism all the previous revealed scriptures because "to every people was sent an Apostle" (Qur'an 10:47). The Zulqarnain story underscored this important fact. A careful study of

the original hymns of Zoroaster in the Gathas were shown to be some revealed portions of the Holy Qur'an.

This was the story of the false Smerdis, an opportunist of the highest order, who being a look-alike to the slain Smerdis, the brother of King Cambyses wanted to usurp the throne. This was really scandalous as he physically and psychologically terrorised everybody in order to retain and consolidate his power. Thanks to the timely intervention of Darius, who was destined to be the greatest world King in history had aborted the *'coup d'etat.* Darius the Great was a great story teller; an account of his ascension to power he told with a such lucid style. No sooner had the false Smerdis slain than, according to Herodotus, Persians drew their daggers and killed all the Magians they could find. Darius, was successful against Gaumata and later against the other rebels. He restored the Achaemenid ruling house, which then ruled the world for two centuries, until the conquest of Alexander that terminated the Achaemenian dynasty.

Again, his coronation in 521 BC as the Persian monarch was followed immediately with explosive revolts and violence throughout the vast empire. It was a very daunting and difficult period for the newly crowned King to grasp the reins of this world empire, because revolts were occurring and spreading like bush-fire all over the kingdoms. A weak-minded person; would have lost hope and be overtaken by these extensive violent revolts, but as a religious man with faith in God, he had remained undaunted, as he fought indefatigably and finally prevailed over his enemies. He was a man chosen and supported by God to rule the empire, he had to fight battles to re-conquer the world and to bring these extensive revolts under control. He, therefore, fought 19 battles in seven years to regain absolute control of the empire. In addition, Darius and his generals overcame nine pretenders or coup plotters who had proclaimed themselves Kings.[4] In modern terms, this meant he had

survived nine *coup d'etat* at the end. In addition, he won all his battles and brought unity to the empire founded by Cyrus, expanded by his son Cambyses and was finally re-established by the Great King, Darius Hystapes. Assuming he was the Zulqarnain of the Holy Qur'an all that had been said so far from the history of Darius the Great, were summarised in a wonderful style in a single verse of the Amazing Qur'an 18:84, thus: "Verily, we have established his power on Earth." To 'establish his Power' connotes the use of some kind of might or force in order to impose a will. In fact, history had shown that Darius did not mount his throne so easily. He was enforced on the throne an indication of establishment of his power. The King was not given power on a platter of gold. No, his power was established for him by God Almighty. It was a clear demonstration of one with God is a majority as he claimed in the inscription.

Darius, as a religious person, realised that the establishment and the consolidation of his power in Persia and beyond was far beyond his own human capacity. He did not arrogate the successes of seven years of fighting to his own innate ability but to a Supreme Being to whom he was subservient. He had prevailed over all his enemies and had accomplished great things because of the help of *Ahura Mazda,* to whom he had a deep sense of obligation. So he wrote this in the *Behistun Inscription,* where he gave the reasons for his phenomenal successes. He said:

> On this account Ahura Mazda brought me help because I was not wicked, nor was I a tyrant neither I nor any of my line. I have ruled according to righteousness.[5]

This was a true confession of a Muslim who whenever he achieved any success he attributed it to God Almighty. This statement had made him fit more closely to the Qur'anic descriptions of *Zulqarnain.* In this confession, Darius had told us why he was Allah's choice to rule and the reasons for establishing

his power over the peoples; "he was just, humane and righteous." There is always a purpose for whatever Allah (swt) does. His choice of this King was because he would rule with justice and righteousness. Darius had proved himself a truly religious leader. In fact, the King was not tooting his own horn as both ancient and modern historians adjudged him a just ruler. In describing his administration James Henry Breasted said: "The rule of Darius was just, humane and intelligent."[6] In fact, it was an excellent meritocracy in the ancient history.

Darius the Great proved his own mettle as Allah's choice, his administration was the best in ancient history. Then to the second half of the sacred verse: "his power on earth." This showed that having established his power over Persia, he would rule the world. In short, he was given power to rule the whole world. Here the Holy Qur'an defined the meaning of Zulqarnain: "One who Allah has established his power all over the world." But how would Zulqarnain rule the world? Again, the marvellous Qur'an has given the answer in the last segment of the sacred verse, where Allah (swt) said: "We gave him the way and means to all ends" (18:84). Thus, God Almighty having established the power of Darius the Great, He made him 'great', by giving him opportunities and the capacity to utilise them, so that he accomplished all his set objectives. It was because of this singular Allah's favour, he was able to transform his kingdoms to greatness and to advance the course of modern civilisation. He was given power and greatness, while he used his opportunities or "way and means," to do justice and righteousness in the administration of his world empire. To recapitulate this verse 18:84; It would become clear that it could refer to none but Darius the Great. It reads: "Verily We established his power on earth, and We gave him the ways and the means to all ends."

Indeed, great was his power and great were his opportunities (ways and means), that he used for justice and righteousness. But he

recognised that God gave the power and opportunities to him as a trust. He had faith, and did not forget God. How did we know this? Darius the great had ascribed all his achievements to Allah's favour. He documented this in the *Behistun Inscriptions,* where he said: "By the grace of Ahura Mazda, these lands have conformed to my decree, even as it was commanded unto them by, so was it done."[7]

Darius the Great had faith and did not forget his God, here, he was no doubt amazed at Allah's special favour unto him. How, "these lands," meaning all the nations of the East and West kingdoms were subjected to his command was a marvel. He only asked and it would be done, not only in the Eastern kingdom but the Western kingdom as well. This was indeed Allah's Grace, otherwise how could one man control the whole world? Allah (swt) had indeed spoken the Truth. He had given Darius the Great "ways and means to all ends." This stupendous power had made him to reflect upon His grace: "Look at all these lands" (this obviously meant the entire world). He only had to say to any nation, "Do this!" and it would be done. This was the height and the extent of his power, which no man had wielded in ancient history. This was not because of his intelligence as some historians have suggested but because of Allah's Grace, Who had given him this unique favour of "means to all ends." He had confirmed it in his records in the *Behistun Inscriptions.* It is important to see how Darius the Great had used this unique ability, in the history of the ancient world to rule the world. He was the right man in question who conquered nation by nation until he subjugated the world. He achieved this because of his God-given rare ability. He was a jack of all trades; master of all and a model. His military skill and organisation was a heritage he left for the subsequent civilisation. In military warfare, Darius left a legacy for the world. Fuller had expounded on the military organisation of this genius, when he wrote:

> Darius placed the army on a divisional basis. Each division was 10,000 men strong and consisted of ten battalions of ten

companies each and each company to ten sections. His royal bodyguard, known as the "Immortals," also 10,000 string, was his cavalry. Nearly all superior officers and garrison commanders were either Persians or Medes.[8]

It was based on this organisation, according to Fuller, that the recent British Indian Army was fashioned. Many of the modern military organisations had copied from the Zulqarnain. To prove his claim, he quoted some authorities to gain their support; "Taken as a whole, Breasted speaks of Darius imperial organisation as "one of the most remarkable achievement in the history of the ancient orient, if not of the World," and furthermore, Robinson stated that "it proved to be the model for all latter empires" and in particular the Roman."[9]

Darius, was indeed a model for the subsequent civilisations because he was a man of dual epochs or master of the two "Qarns." It was with such a well organised army that he conquered the world.

Darius Conquered the World

The world empire of Darius, the Lord of the East and West, stretched from river Indus to the Aegean sea and from the Indian Ocean to the Caspian deserts. It was further expanded by the Great King to include European territory as far as the Danube.[10] It reached its limit; when it included the Caspian, the Caucasus and the Black Sea bounded it on the north, the Mediterranean in the West. And about 512 BC, he descended into Punjab or Hapta-Hindu where he further conquered extensive territory.[11] Therefore, Darius had become a ruler of the world, one and a half centuries earlier than Alexander the Great.

He proclaimed in the Behistun inscriptions that he reigned by the grace of this God who gave him power and support; it was by His support that he was able to conquer his rebels and ruled the world empire. So he ruled with righteousness and fear of God. It

was under Darius the Great that the world empire attained its widest expansion. It extended to Ethiopia and Libya.

His colossal world empire was peopled with multitudinous customs; cultures, religious beliefs, civilisations and contained an expanse of land, hills, and mountains, deserts and seas. It, therefore, demanded an effort of organisation on a greater scale than any ruler had ever attempted before, which was even too great an undertaking to be completed by Cyrus or any other King but only the man who Allah (swt) Had given the 'means to all ends.' So Darius became the only man in ancient history who brought the whole world under his dominion and sovereignty, and ruled it effectively for 36 years. This giant empire reached it zenith of glory under the able leadership and administrative ingenuity of Darius the Great. He had demonstrated skills and organisation, which had remained one of the most remarkable in the history of the world. Breasted again, had this to say:

> Let us therefore notice an important fact here revealed: this system was not attempting government on a larger scale than the world had ever seen before, but it was a government controlled by one man.[12]

Darius showed administrative ingenuity which no King had equalled in the history of the ancient Orient if not of the world, it was in fact, one of the wonders of ancient history. He proved to be an excellent political maestro, who wielded such plenitude of power, and held his vast empire with divergent civilisations under an absolute control. Indeed he was the "Two Horned One." The most daunting task which he assailed was the administration of the world.

Darius' Administrative Skills

The Persian empire was the first attempt at governing many different racial groups on the principles of equal responsibilities and rights of all people. So long as his subjects paid their taxes and kept

the peace, King Darius did not interfere with local religion, customs or trade. He stimulated the economic growth of most of his nations. As a matter of fact, Darius was called the "Shopkeeper" because he stimulated trade by introducing a uniform system of gold and silver coinage on Lydian model.[13]

The ingenuity of the World King was great, as there could be no economic prosperity without good government. In the art of governance Darius had excelled as the greatest King who had wielded an enormous control of the peoples of the world, which comprised the most diverse nationalities and languages. Although the King was an absolute autocrat ruling from afar, the subjects peoples retained their organisation, their religion, even their chiefs. The Phoenicians were still governed by their Kings, the Egyptians had their chiefs or nomes and the Jews went on with the establishment of their theocratic state in peace. So long as these vassals provinces recognised the King's authority and paid their taxes, people lived undisturbed, but all subjects without exception, even ministers and generals, were considered as *bandaka* or slave of the King. Darius was not a despot but a just King. The humanness of the Persian rulers had stemmed from the ethical religion of Zoroastrianism. This religion made little progress until the time of Darius the Great who became the utmost upholder of the Parsee religion. Therefore most nations remained content with the imperial administration. Toynbee wrote that the Persian Empire was profitable for the Aramaens as well as for the Jews and for the Phoenicians. Thus, the principal Syrian peoples were content to be subjects.[14]

Administration of justice was indispensable to an empire of this extensive dimension. The King was the supreme judge especially in penal matters but in civil cases he delegated his powers to judges whom he appointed. However, crimes against the state or against the person of the King were treated as high treason and were

punishable by decapitation and amputation of the arm. Rebels were therefore executed without mercy, otherwise, this government of One man ruling the world would have been impracticable. Even today, treasonable felony is punishable with death in most parts of the world. The rebels who supported Gaumata met with ignoble death. So also were other rebels. Darius wrote in the Behistun Inscription the penalties meted out to the rebels charged with high treason:

> They were led to the royal court, their noses and ears were cut off, and they were shown to the people, then they were taken to the capital of the Province where they had revolted and were put to death.[15]

The imposition of capital punishment for treason and rebellion was necessary in order to preserve and maintain the One-man leadership of the entire world. Apart from the usurpers and outlaws, none was harmed by the administration of Darius the Great, a religious man who had proved himself to be an epitome of justice. With absolute faith in Ahura Mazda, the Creator of the Heaven and Earth, he proclaimed repeatedly in the Behistun Inscription that the King Darius reigned by the grace of Ahura Mazda, who gave him support to conquer new lands and made him to prevail over his enemies. So he ruled his world empire with righteousness, a fact attested to by most historians. He was a Pacifist of exceptional standard. Darius had always remained grateful to his Wise Lord who enabled him to quell all the revolts on coming to the throne, because he found almost all the provinces of the empire in revolt, including his native Pars. The story of these revolts and the submission of the rebels was not only engraved in his heart of hearts but it was carved also by his order on the Behistun Inscription near Kermanshah.

The gift of his mountain matching abilities were also attributed to *Ahura Mazda.* His strength, ability and skill were given to him by the Almighty God. He proclaimed it in *Naqsh-I-Ruslum* inscription

where the King of Kings said:

> This indeed is my activity: In as much as my body has the strength, as battle fighter I am a good battle fighter. Trained am I both with hands and with feet. As a horseman I am a good horseman. As a Bowman I am a good Bowman both afoot and on horseback. And the skilfulness' which *Ahura Mazda* has bestowed upon me and I have had the strength to use them - by the favour of *Ahura Mazda* what has been done by me, I have done with these skilfulness' which *Ahura Mazda* has bestowed upon me.[16]

What Darius the Great simply said was: "Do not be carried away by my great accomplishments because nothing from me except with the help of Allah Most High." This was not surprising for a man with the "means to all ends," a rare gift of ability to accomplish his objectives, and he revealed this gift in his unique administrative style. In developing his organisation, Breasted reported that Darius made himself the actual king in Egypt and Babylonia, two of the most important and sensitive states. He then divided the rest of the empire into twenty eight provinces or *Satrapies*, and each province or satrapy he put under the control of a governor or *Satrap* who was directly appointed by the Great King.

The Great King also showed a keen sagacity in the distribution of portfolios in his empire and was extremely cautious in his selection of Satraps. Professor Arnold J. Toynbee noted that the Darius made himself king of Babylonia because it was the granary and the workshop of the Persian Empire; and it was also the central node of the Empire's internal network of overland communication.[17] And Egypt was also given special treatment. Thus, by this keen discernment of vulnerable points of his World Empire, Darius, revealed his administrative ingenuity that impressed the world. He knitted all the nations together and held firmly the rein of control. As Qur'anic Zulqarnain, he was *Primus inter pares* among the monarchs of the ancient world.

To forestall any revolts similar to the types he had encountered at his installation as the King of Persia, he put all the Satraps under close security surveillance. He put his intelligent officials, called the King's Ears or the King's Eyes, to listen and to watch closely each satrap and his activities in his respective satrapy. They were to provide the king with daily intelligence reports, through efficient courier system and were therefore, charged with the responsibility of reporting any evidence of rebellion, subversion, insurgency or espionage in all his satrapies.

The *satraps* were therefore, brought under an effective central government and control. Beside the satrap, the king appointed military commanders and secretaries of state, who received orders from the court and kept an eye on each other. In this way, he armed himself against the perpetual danger, of seeing the governor of a distant province disobeying the orders of the central authority or pursuing his own independent schemes.[18] Darius demonstrated exceptional skills in his governance and in maintaining an effective authority over his satrapies. He had taken care not to concentrate all powers in the hands of one man and so tempting him to dream of complete independence and not autonomy.

In demonstrating a unique ability to govern the ancient world, Darius remained *nullum secundum* in leadership skills, which he used to gain the absolute control of his world empire. The Great King was aware of this fact. In fact, twenty eight figures of men arranged in two bands were drawn on his tomb, at *Naqsh-i-Rustum* popularly called the "carving of Rustum," which represented the various provinces of the Persian world empire, under the absolute control of Darius the Great. A text on the tomb read thus: "Look at the image of those who bear my throne, and you will know how great is the number of the countries which Darius the King has possessed."[19]

Herodotus, the first Greek historian known as the "Father of History," gave twenty *satrapies,* the Persepolis Inscriptions gave twenty four and the *Naqsh-i-Rustum* gave twenty eight *satrapies.*

> By the favour of Ahura Mazda these are the countries, which I seized outside of Pars: I ruled over them; they bore tribute to me; what was said to them by me, that they did; my law – that held them firm: Media, Khwaja, Parthia, Aria, Bactria, Sogdiana, Chorasmia, Drangiana, Arachosia, Sattagydia, Sardis, Ionia, Scythians who are across the sea, Skudra, Petassus wearing Ionians, Gandara, Sind, Haoma growing Scythians, Scythians with pointed caps, Babylonia, Assyria, Arabia, Egypt, Aramenia, Cappodocia, Libyans, Ethiopians, Men of Maka and Carians[20]

At the end of Darius' reign, he had controlled thirty one provinces. This showed that the Great King kept expanding his empire. This whole edifice of *satrapies* comprising the world empire rested on *one man* who wielded absolute control over them. They gave loyalty to him and the reigning house whose representative was revered like a god, surrounded with imposing pomp of ceremony in a splendid display of power. With this unalloyed loyalty to the King, the subject peoples retained their own organisation, religion and even their rulers. It was an indirect rule with the King as an absolute autocrat ruling from afar. But in the final analysis, these subjects prospered because they were ruled with the fear of God or Ahura Mazda.

Each province *Satrapy or Khshathrapa*, the *Satrap* or Governor had with him a Secretary or Chancellor whose duty was to watch the acts of his *satrap* and to report directly to the court. He was the agent of the state and his primary duty was to report any subversive activity in his province. The command of the troops was in the hand of a general or *Karanos*. These high government officials: the *satraps,* chancellors and *Karanos* were independent of each other and they reported directly to the court, the centre of authority. The central government, therefore, sent orders to each *satrapy,* which were borne by couriers. To facilitate the journeys between the *satrapies* and the central authority, the great king had constructed road links and water ways throughout his world empire.

Professor Toynbee also pointed out that because of the sheer size of the World Empire, communications became a pressing problem for the imperial Government and overland communication was speeded up by the building of trunk roads. But Darius saw that he must also try to link his empire's extremities by water. With most efficient mail system in the world, one man dominion over all nations became well established, in which each nation prospered.

Thus, the administration of justice was indispensable to an empire of this extent. Darius the Great, being a religious leader, had proved himself to be an epitome of justice. He had faith in *Ahura Mazda*, the Creator of the Heaven and Earth. It was *Ahura Mazda* who gave him their possession. He maintained a just law with respect to the administration of his vast empire; as a statesman and law-giver and administrator of justice and order, which made the 'Laws of the Medes and Persians' the holders of Zoroastianism a byword for incorruptibility. Darius proclaimed in the *Naqsh-i-Rustum* inscription as to how he ruled and the principles of his administration thus:

> Saith Darius the King: By the favour of Ahura Mazda I am of such a sort that I am a friend to right, I am not a friend to wrong. It is not my desire that the weak man should have wrong done to him by the mighty; nor is it my desire that the mighty man should have wrong done to him by the weak. What is right, that is my desire. I am not a friend to the man who is a Lie-follower. I am not hot-tempered. What things develop in my anger, I hold firmly under control by my thinking power. I am firmly ruling over my own. The man who co-operates, him according to his co-operative action, him thus do I reward. Who does harm, him according to the damage thus I punish. It is not my desire that a man should do harm; nor indeed is it my desire, if he should do harm, he should not be punished. What a man says against a man, that does not convince me, until he satisfies the Ordinance of Good Regulations. What a man does or performs according to his powers, I am satisfied and my pleasure is abundant, and I am well satisifed.[21]

The principle of justice and fair-play were among the

fundamental teachings of Zoroastrianism. Darius the Great was the most notable upholder of the worship of *Ahura Mazda,* He had epitomised it in his world meritocracy. Let us mirror this great king on the sacred pages of the Holy Qur'an. It would be pertinent to remember Darius was separated from the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) by one thousand one hundred years and by a distance of several hundred miles. Yet, it was revealed to him through the Holy Qur'an, this great event that took place many centuries earlier with perfect exactitude. Darius was reputed to be a widely travelled man both in the land and by the sea, to reach out to his subjects in all the provinces around the world. The Holy Qur'an described three expeditions of Zulqarnain, which were most likely to be those of Darius the Great. In the first expedition it was stated that he found people who complained to him, the man with authority, thus: We said: "O Zulqarnain! (Thou has authority) either to punish them or to treat them with kindness," (Q. 18:86).

Darius, was the most powerful monarch of ancient history, who had great power and a great opportunity. "Thou has authority," was undoubtedly applicable to the greatest World King. In his explanation of the above quoted verse, Ustadh Abdullahi Yusuf Ali said about this King:

> He had great power and a great opportunity. He got authority over a turbulent and unruly people. Was he going to be severe with them and chastise them, or was he going to seek peace at any price, i.e. to wink at violence and injustice so long as it did not affect his power? He chose the better course, as described in the next verse. To protect the weak and the innocent, he punished the guilty and the headstrong, but he remembered always that the true punishment would come in the Hereafter - *the true and final justice before the throne of God.*[22]

This exposition applied to none other than Darius the Great. Because they accorded perfectly with the records of *Naqsh-i-Rustum* mentioned above, where the great King described his principle of administration. A principle based on the dictates of Zoroastrianism,

hence it was Islamic principle. To prove his faith in Allah (swt), he always made this emphasis that he was not only the champion of the downtrodden but a king who was guided by truth and sincerity:

> Saith Darius the King: By the favour of Ahura Mazda. I am of such a sort that I am a friend to right, I am not a friend to wrong. It is not my desire that the weak man should have wrong done to him by the mighty; nor is it my desire that the mighty should have wrong done to him by the weak. What is right is my desire. I am not a friend to the man who is a Lie-follower.[23]

The application of this principle of justice by Darius was a corroboration of the sacred statement of the Holy Qur'an, where an apparently weak people complained to him against the wrong done to them by an apparently wicked and stronger people. Here the king's sense of justice was put to test. But he proved his mettle when he replied this people:

> He said: "Whoever doth wrong, Him shall we punish; then shall he be sent back. To his Lord; and He will punish him with a punishment unheard of (before). But whoever believes and works righteousness, he shall have a goodly Reward and easy will be his task as we order it by our command." (Q:18:87-88)

These verses sharply mirrored the personality of Darius who never compromised his principle. He ruled with righteousness that whoever did wrong must be punished in accordance with his crime. As a just King he was disinterested in the dissemination of justice. He would not wink at injustice, violence or oppression in order to remain in power. He believed power was given by *Ahura Mazda* whom He favoured, as such, he was not a respecter of persons but of God Almighty, hence, he could neither be charged with nepotism nor favouritism. As a religious leader he preached the cardinal principles of Zoroastrianism (Q.18:87-88). Even if a criminal was punished with capital punishment; "sent back to his Lord," there would be a final judgement on the Day of Reckoning. He would be punished in Hell with punishment unheard of. But whoever believes

in *Ahura Mazda* and work righteousness shall have a goodly reward. This reward was with paradise an abode of eternal bliss. This was "By our command," the Supreme command of *Ahura Mazda* and His Apostle Darius the King. Because he was a monarch, a religious leader and perhaps an Apostle of God or *Ahura Mazda.* Multiple responsibilities were thrust upon the great King which could never be attributed to Alexander the Great.

Darius, in addition to his duty as a king; like a prophet was expounding to his people the cardinal teachings of Prophet Zoroaster (a.s), which he was reviving. He showed to this people that he was an *ashavant* or the "Follower of Truth" and not a *dregvant* or "Lie follower." So he defended the weak against the mighty and the Truth against Falsehood. He rejected *Angra Mainyu* or *Ahriman* and had absolute faith in *Ahura Mazda.* Although as a King, he punished the wrongdoers, this could not be compared to the spiritual consequences of sin, in the final justice of God. Darius believed in the *Day of Judgement* where all human actions on earth would be weighed on a just balance - his thought, word and deed. These constituted the *Human triad* already discussed. Therefore, the life of man was a matter of choice between good thoughts, good words and good deeds and evil thoughts, evil words and evil deeds. One must endeavour to do good and avoid evil, so that on the Last Day he would be rewarded with *paradise* and not *hell*. Thus, people must always be conscious of the spiritual consequences of sin due to evil thoughts, evil words and evil deeds and avoid them.

Darius performed the dual functions of a king and a religious leader, *albeit* a prophet, thereby, giving the best form of administration ever to be recorded in the history of the ancient world. He preached his religion by both words and personal examples. Ustadh Abdullahi had captured his description accurately when he said:

> Zulqarnain was a most powerful King, but it was God, Who, in

> His universal plan, gave him power and provided him with the ways and means for his great work. His sway extended over East and West, and over people of diverse civilisations. He was just and righteous, not selfish or grasping. He protected the weak and punished the unlawful and the turbulent. Three of his expeditions are described in the text, each embodying a great ethical idea involved in the possession of kingship or power.[24]

There was no way this uprightness could be applicable to Alexander the Great the apostle of Greek civilisation, with absolute faith in Hellenism. The Zulqarnain described had a similar and almost identical style of administration with Darius the Great. In fact, the two were one. This was a demonstration of the miracles of the Holy Qur'an. With absolute accuracy the Amazing Qur'an expounded his story, which was in perfect accord with his documents recorded, as inscribed in the Behistun inscriptions, *Naqsh-i-Rustum* and other materials, a thousand and one hundred years after these historical events had taken place. This was no doubt a testimony of a Divine revelation. For this and other reasons, it was pertinent to ponder over this sacred question: "Do they not ponder over the Qur'an, or are there locks on their hearts?" (Q.47:24)

Unless there were locks on your heart, making it impervious to reason, you could not miss the crux of the matter: The Holy Qur'an was Divinely revealed, it is of Divine Authorship. Because as you come to the Qur'an, you come to a new world, a world of untold treasures of knowledge in all fields, both known and unknown to man. A demonstration of an everlasting living miracle.

Having said this, let us come back to the administrative uniqueness of Darius, and how he governed his *satrapies* with justice and ruled them in accordance with the laws of God. They were autonomous and all prospered under his leadership. This system of confederation had provided an effective means of collecting revenues, tributes and the supply of troops to the central

government very efficiently. It equally facilitated his coinage system, which had stimulated the growth of commerce and industry. The use of *darics* in all the commercial activities in the vast Persian World Empire, stimulated economic growth, as it replaced the olden method of trade by barter. The first *darics* in circulation was introduced at about 516 BC.[25] The reign of Darius the Great was, therefore, the most prosperous meritocracy in the ancient world. It was not an easy task for one man to control the world, but this was made easy for the king for Allah (swt) established his power on earth, – the world. The means of communication had helped tremendously, and enabled the King to undertake journeys into every nook and cranny of his empire for the dissemination of justice. He would not have achieved 'Greatness' without "the means to all ends."

Darius: A King with The Means to All Ends

Kindness and generosity were some of the qualities that endeared Darius the Great to all the various peoples of his world empire. These were Muslim characteristics, which the king had depicted in his social interactions and enabled him to prevail over his enemies. He became a hero to all his peoples as he, emerged a unique benevolent personality in the history of the ancient world. It was because of his nobility and excellent behaviour that Allah (swt) gave him a unique capacity of achieving all that he hoped for. Darius, had outdone Kayuman, the first king of the semi-legendary history of his nation the Pars, under whose beneficent rule both men and beasts thrived. He had equally outshone King Jamshid, the "Resplendent Jam," who was the first king to organise his society into classes: Priests, warriors, husbandmen and artisans. He stratified the society into a small priestly and noble class who occupied the top of the social pyramid and a toiling mass of peasants at the bottom.

It was during the reign of Jamshid that gold, silver and precious

stones were dug out and used for ornaments. Similarly, wine and sugar from cane were made for the first time.[26] His invention of wine was explained by Sykes to have been due to an accident. He had preserved some grapes which fermented and were believed to be dangerous to life. One of the wives of Jamshid was suffering from a painful malady and drank of the fermented beverages in the belief that she would die, but on the contrary, she fell into a delightful sleep and was cured. Thus, alcohol was accidentally discovered. Yet he was surpassed by this world King who was favoured by Ahura Mazda with the means to all ends. The declaration of the annual priestly prayer to the Kings on the first day of *Nau Ruz* included, among other things, that the ruling king should drink immortality from the cup of Jamshid! Darius, was indeed immortalised not only in Pars but in the history of the world due to his shining monumental achievements. In fact, he was aptly described in the Holy Qur'an as Zulqarnain, master of the two worlds and a man of "Two Epochs or Qarns."

Tradition affirmed that King Jamshid was the first to construct roads and build ships and establish the Festival of New Year's Day or Nau Ruz on the Vernal of Equinox.[27] Darius had taken all to international stage. He had advanced the course of human civilisation through the construction of roads, bridges and waterways world-wide. The annual festival during his reign had become a spectacular international event. This annual festival was celebrated until the days of Yazdegird the last of the pre-Islamic kings of Pars. The reign of "Resplendent Jam" was remembered for its prosperity, in fact, his style of leadership was described as remarkable; the legendary king was even described as the Solomon of his people. Darius, following his footsteps had surpassed him because he was a man of God with spiritual insight and with a special favour by God to achieve all that he hoped for. His reign was rated as the best in the history of the ancient world. Although he had reached the highest pinnacle in successfully ruling the world, he never forgot God as the source of his achievements. He always

attributed his enormous power to "the favour of Ahura Mazda."

Although Darius was given a unique favour by the Almighty God, by giving him the means to achieve all ends, his dominion was only limited to the world of men. As such, he could not be compared with the greatest King Solomon (a.s.) whose powers had included not only over men but the world of Jinns, animals, and birds as well. The plenitude of power like that of King Solomon (a. s.), son of King David (a.s.), could never be conferred on any mortal till the end of time. His knowledge and his reign were, therefore, unparalleled in the annals of human history. Darius the Great who could correctly be called the Qur'anic Zulqarnain had "means to all ends," which was limited in scope as compared with the knowledge and power specially bestowed upon King Solomon (a.s.). They were all men of God and both were thankful to Him for His favours upon them. Allah (swt) said in the Holy Qur'an: "We gave (in the past) knowledge to David and Solomon, and they both said: Praise be to God, who has favoured us above many of His servants who believe" (Q.27:15).

Both King David (a.s.) and his son King Solomon (a.s.) were just Kings and Apostles of God. They were all powerful kings and both ascribed the source of their power, wisdom to the only source of all good – the Almighty God. Similarly, King Darius had never forgotten this favour from his Lord. In fact, most of the records on various stone inscriptions began normally with, "By the favour of Ahura Mazda." This showed that all Prophets were conscious of Allah's grace and favour upon them, who though, were mortal beings He had elevated them to the highest spiritual level above other men who believed. These great men had double responsibilities; Prophethood and Kingship and were therefore, doubly honoured.

It was during the reign of King David (a.s) that Israel became a powerful nation when the great King succeeded in the unification of

the twelve tribes including the northern part of the Kingdom in 925 BC. He was succeeded by his son King Solomon (a.s) whose great achievements made Israel even more powerful; in fact, his reign was described as the golden age for Israel. He established himself as a powerful monarch whose influence was felt far beyond his own nation and under this Great King, Israel enjoyed unprecedented unity and stability because he governed with a strictly hierarchical bureaucracy arranged in nine departments based on the Egyptian model.[28] A professional army of an elite chariot corps of 4,000 horses and 1,400 vehicles backed the Great King. Consequently; the nation witnessed a blossoming of economic and commercial activities; trading became extensive and close-knit international relations especially with other powerful nations and with the Phoenicians especially was well established. Owing to its extensive road links, Israel witnessed the influx of other nationals who came to meet the world King. The most notable among the great historic personage who came on a visit to Israel was the celebrated Queen of Sheba from Ethiopia who travelled 1,500 miles from Africa to meet King Solomon (a.s) to experience for herself his great wisdom and enormous wealth.[29] This was in line with Allah's wisdom about which Imam Ghazzali opined that:

> And know that Almighty God selected the sons of Adam two groups, which above others He exalted, Prophet and Kings. To His slaves He sent the Prophets to reveal the path towards Him, and to preserve them from one another, He delegated Kings; and in His Wisdom bound the peoples' welfare to these rulers whom He appointed to such high rank, as you may know from the Tradition "The Sultan is God's shadow upon the earth," which means that Kings are chiefs among men and delegates over God's creatures.[30]

King Solomon (a.s.) had wielded enormous power and wisdom in his dual capacity. He was a king with power and authority outside his kingdom and he had influence among many neighbouring peoples, besides his prophetic office. The king had knowledge of

birds, beasts and plants. He was just and wise, and understood men, and above all as a prophet, he had a spiritual insight, which brought him near to God. King Solomon (a.s.) was also a king of many worlds including that of the world of Jinns. Allah (swt) said: "And before Solomon were marshalled His hosts, of Jinns and men and birds, and they were all kept in order and ranks" (Q.27:17).

Consequently, the immense power of King Solomon (a.s.) was in a unique class of his own, and as such, he should not be compared with any king in both ancient and modern civilisations. In like manner, no prophet could be compared with the seal and the greatest of all the prophets – Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.). Because as a prophet, he was equally sent to the world of Jinns as well as mankind and he was an absolute mercy unto the world. King Solomon (a.s.) was a king *par excellence* with varied subjects, varying in grades and species. They varied also according to their different intelligence, taste and civilisation, which he kept in due order and cooperation by his discipline, justice and good government. As a result, he was a king incomparable to any other kings in history.

The special favour of God upon Darius the Great to achieve all that he hoped for could only be viewed within the gamut of human compass. His power was limited in time and space. There were many kings who came after him equally with monumental achievements during their era. The result of his special gift was that he dwarfed both his predecessors and his contemporaries by his immense achievements. He had for instance, outclassed Cyrus the Great, the first King to establish a world empire at the dawn of recorded history. Nevertheless,, the inability of Darius the Great to subjugate the Athenians especially at the Marathon should not be considered either as a blot on his achievements for Athens was saved by divine Providence, because it was destined to be the foundation root of yet another civilisation later to be called the

Western Civilisation. It could easily be inferred that Darius' unique ability to accomplish what he aimed at had enabled him to hold the mastery of two epochs.

An epoch is a period of time in which striking things happened. Such memorable events of King Darius were inscribed on stones. And most of these important events had remarkable impact on the modern world, because they were outstanding milestone of human civilisation and were celebrated events in the ancient world. The modern epoch was even more celebrated because billions of people read about him as Zulqarnain. And the legendary king appeared to foresee this unfolding historical events, because he adequately prepared for them by preserving his records. He endeared himself to the peoples of his World Empire.

Darius – King of Two Epochs

Darius, was a generous king and a man with a good sense of history; his generosity knew no bounds. His attitudes were largely influenced by Zoroastianism, the religion of which he was a very ardent follower. His kind assistance to the Jews after their liberation from Babylonian captivity was appreciated by all. He even paid the cost of rebuilding Solomon's Temple and Jewish religious rites from his royal treasury. Similarly, he brought to Susa the High Priest of Sais named Uzahorresenet and entrusted him with the reparation of the havoc wreaked by his predecessor to the Egyptians. On his European conquests, he used the services of a Samian architect to cross the Danube. This architect named Mandrocles was employed by the Great King to throw a bridge across the Bosphorus, north of the Byzantium. When the Persian host had passed over, the great king paid Mandrocles handsomely. He then ordered two pillars to be set up on the European side, where the names of the various peoples composing his army were inscribed in Greek and in Cuneiform characters.

These Pillars of Darius on European territory were seen by the great Greek historian Herodotus, and in the temple of Hera at Samos; there was also to be seen another monument of the crossing into Europe by Darius the Great. He was a king with a good sense of history; he was so generous to share his glory with the people involved in his epoch-making ventures. "What a man does or performs according to his powers, I am satisfied, and my pleasure is abundant, and I am well satisfied," he wrote on the Naqsh-i Rustum inscription. In fact, Mandrocles knowing that the great Darius was a man with a deep sense of history, therefore, spent a part of the handsome reward given him by the Great King in setting up a painting in his honour. In a beautiful piece of work, he portrayed King Darius seated in his characteristic majestic posture. He then inscribed on it four poetic verses:

> Having bridged the fishy Bosphorus,
> Mandrocles dedicated to Hera,
> A memorial of his raft-bridge.
> A crown he set upon his own head,
> And glory upon men of Samos,
> For the work he wrought pleased King Darius.[31]

Mandrocles, was in return greatly pleased with the handsome gift by the generous King. The king of kings was neither mean nor ruthless to the peoples who served him in his epoch making conquests. All were pleased with him in both official and private matters which the king engaged them in. He was, therefore, unequalled as a king of the "Two Epochs," otherwise known as Zulqarnain. Similarly, on a rock of Bisutun in north-west Iran, the Great King had an inscription carved, recording his military victories in 516 BC. The inscription was trilingual in old Persian, Elamite and Babylonian, all three in Cuneiform script. This proved that the world King was devoid of ethnocentrism by choosing the three major languages. The purpose of leaving behind a permanent

historic record was to hand over his achievements in his first epoch into the archives of history, and this he had achieved with a considerable success. The Holy Qur'an had mentioned him, thereby, as Zulqarnain opening up his second epoch in which he was revered and respected by billions of Muslims world-wide.

In contrast, Alexander, was devoid of any orthodox religious sensibility; he was mean and ruthless in his social and official intercourse. He held his glory like a miser because all his glorious achievements were centred on the Macedonian king alone. Even when he assumed the leadership of the world, he could not get out of the shell of tribalism, therefore, remained a Greek ruler who ruled only for the interests of Greece. He weighed all his official functions on the scale of the national interest of his country in derogation to other nations; as he put the primacy of his own personal interest above all other interests. Because he was not a just king. Alexander, therefore, differed radically from Darius in his epoch-making conquests. As a pagan, his sense of justice and righteousness was guided only by Hellenism and by his personal ambition. In his 13 years of military conquests, he had founded and re-founded about seventy cities where many Greeks settled down and introduced Greek art, Greek manner, Greek knowledge and Greek language.[32] Undoubtedly, he was a tribal world king, who put his tribesmen on global hegemony. After all, as a student of Aristotle, he believed that all other nations were "slaves by nature." So he enslaved the world with impunity.

Alexander, hoarded his glory so parsimoniously, sharing it with nobody else in an essence captured by Euripidice his favourite poet: "The army does the work, the general reaps the benefits." He had proved this to be the case when he named most of the cities he founded after himself. For example, these cities were named or renamed after Alexander the Macedonian King: Alexandria of Arachosia, Alexandria of Egypt, Alexandria of Caucasus,

Alexandria Arcians, Alexandria Eschate and Sogdian Alexandria. When his horse Bucephalus died of weariness and old age on the Hydaspes, he named the city after it, "Bucephala." Most of these cities were in the Far East. After destroying a town his usual command was, "rename it after me." Yet, he did nothing to improve the lot of the people. Darius, was quite unlike Alexander. The case of Histiaeus should be remembered, who had won the confidence of the Great King but later became his traitor because of his magnanimity he recalled him to his capital to be his adviser or courtier.

> O Histiaeus', said the King, "there is nothing more precious than a wise and kind friend, and I knew this thou art to me. So now thou must leave Miletus and the new city which thou hast built, and come with me to my court at Susa.

Histiaeus had won the confidence of King Darius when he refused to oblige to the request of the Scythians to destroy the bridge across the Danube and resisted the prodding of Miltiades to do so, so that the Great King would be left in the lurch. As a tyrant he told the other tyrants;

> O ye tyrants, be sure of this, that if we leave the Persians to perish, the men of our cities will rise up against us because it is the King who strengthens us in our power; and if he dies, neither shall I be able to rule in Miletus, nor you in those cities of which ye are tyrants.

He prevailed over them to wait patiently for the return of the Great King. Darius the Great was appreciative of his action and had rewarded him generously, and gave him Thrace. He brought him to his courts as adviser, it was for this reason that he made this remark:

> "O Histiaeus," said the King, "I have pondered it well, and I find none is better minded to me and to my kingdom than thou art. This I know, for I have learnt it, not by words but in deed. And now I purpose to do great things. Come therefore, to me in any wise, that I may entrust them to thee."[33]

But Histiaeus was only as trustworthy as the fox because he was dangerously over ambitious. Megabazus, the general of the Great King, had these inklings, so he cautioned the King against his gift, of Thrace to this Greek for he might turn traitor. Thus, he was brought to Susa as courtier to the Great King. As events unfolded later, Megabazus was vindicated. Histiaeus, conspired with his brother-in-law Aristagoras, who was then the tyrant of Miletus, to instigate revolt against the Persians, in these tiny Greek cities. If these cities were set on fire, Histiaeus thought, the king would send him to his country to douse it. He, thought if the Greeks revolted against Persia, Darius could perhaps send him back to Miletus to restore order to the city. So he used Aristagoras to incite rebellion, who also for personal reasons wanted the Greeks in Asia Minor to revolt against the King under his leadership. Histiaeus, therefore, sent a slave to his brother-in-law with a message who met Aristagoras and said that his master had sent him. He demanded Aristagoras to shave off his hair and read the message that was branded on his scalp. It was a strange way to send a secret message. And on his scalp, were tattooed signs, which meant that the tyrant was to revolt against the Persian domination.[34] Thus, it was Histiaeus who had sewn the sandals which Aristagoras had put on, to cause crisis in Asia Minor.

When the Great King got wind of the conspiracy, and heard that the Athenians had instigated the burning of Sardes, he did not act rashly. He only sent for Histiaeus and asked him:

> O Histiaeus, I hear that the man whom has given thy city has been doing strange things. He has brought over men from Europe to help the Ionians whom I shall punish... How can all this seem good to thee? And without thy counsels how could such a thing be done? See that thou bring not thyself into blame afresh.[35]

It was difficult to convince the King that Histiaeus had turned traitor for two reasons. Personally, he was impressed with his

unalloyed loyalty at the bridge of boats at recrossing the Danube. So he was again ready to believe his loyalty. Secondly, there was no evidence to implicate the Greek, he was only being accused. Darius the Great as lawgiver believed absolutely in the rule of law, and was abhorrent to lies or lie followers, for he wrote on the inscription that: "What a man says against a man, that does not convince me, until he satisfies the ordinance of Good Regulations." Without this, it could be difficult to convince the King that Histiaeus had become a traitor. So when Histiaeus said: "Yea, I swear by the god whom the King worshippeth;" and cried, that: "I will not put off the tunic in which I shall go down to Ionia, before I bring under thy power the mighty Island of Sardinia." The Great King believed him and he was bidden to go to Sardis to help Artaphernes to put down the revolt. Unfortunately, nemesis caught up with the traitor when his treacherous plan was exposed. He therefore ran away into the countryside and became a pirate.

At long last Histiaeus was caught and taken prisoner by the Persians. He was ordered by Artaphernes to be crucified and his head be sent to King Darius, as a penalty to breach of trust and treason. After all crime against the state was a treason punishable with death. But the Great King was displeased with his general for not sending the Greek to him alive. Undoubtedly he would have tampered justice with mercy. On the magnanimity of the great king, Herodotus concurred: "If Histiaeus had been sent away alive to King Darius," he wrote, "he would not, I think, have suffered any harm, but his trespass would have been forgiven him."

As a mark of a magnanimous King, Darius was determined to show what honour was, yet, possible to even his faithless servant. He ordered the head of Histiaeus, to be washed and adorn it well, and to bury it as the head of one who had done much good to himself and to the Persians.[36] The Great King was indeed an epitome of magnanimity. This humane gesture was a reflection of a true religious leader and a benchmark of honourable men.

Percontra, Alexander, the hubristic King, mercilessly killed his foster-brother who risked his life to save the King's in a fierce battle. For a simple reason that he reproached the haughty leader to mend his ways. This again pointedly show that he could not be equated with the Qur'anic Zulqarnain. It should be reiterated that Alexander and Darius differed radically in their styles in global empire-building. Darius, being a religious man who ruled according to the laws of God was more humane and decorous in his social dealings with not only Persians his kinsmen, but all the peoples under him. Alexander, it could be remembered, became inconsolable at the death of Hephaestion, his bosom friend; in fact, in a gruesome action, he crucified the innocent physician whom he blamed for the death of his patient. Darius the Great, could never act in this manner because of his faith in God, Ahura Mazda, the giver and taker of life.

In addition, it was the policy of Darius to honour sages and all the talented men of his empire; his kind treatment of Democedes of Croton was lauded by all. This man's skill had earned him high salaries, as public physician at Aegina and Athens, higher still in the service of Polycrates of Samos and highest of them all in the service of Darius the Great. It happened that Democedes was one of the prisoners of war at Susa, and was taken from his dungeon to treat Darius, who had sprained his foot in a wild hunt.[37] The physician's success gained him the King's favour; Democedes was given all he would ask for, except of course, permission to return to Greece.

It so happened also that when Queen Atossa was suffering from a breast tumour, she consulted the physician, who made her swear that if he cured her, she would honour any request he made to which she agreed. He then treated her tumour. Acting on his request, she made the king to send Democedes as one of the spies in a project of conquering the Greek states. The powerful Queen Atossa, daughter of Cyrus the Great and mother of Xerxes persuaded the king, Darius gave the physician a rich present for his kinsfolk. Democedes

promised to return but he never did because "east or west, home is the best."

This is further evidence that Darius the Great was trusting, diplomatic and benevolent in his dealings with the peoples. He was unblemished in his leadership career; he was kind to his subjects and magnanimous in victory. Consequently, he had emerged as the greatest King and master of "Two Epochs." He was a celebrated King during his era, the ancient world and revered in the modern world, for he was the Qur'anic Zulqarnain. An eternal glory which Ahura Mazda had bestowed on him. Another dimension to his greatness, however, was the foundation of democratic governance, which he nurtured in all his nations; his own form of democracy was different from that of Greeks because, as a great lawgiver, he believed in democratic rule with a stamp of spirituality.

Darius and Democracy

By his opting for democracy and social justice, Darius the Great had advanced the course of European Civilisation and the world in general considerably. He was also one of the architects of Greek Democracy. Darius, a political and administrative genius, had welded the rich historical evolution of his nation with his own practical experience to introduce a new and positive dimension into the governance of a nation and the world. His ingenuity and sagacity were both tasked to their fullest limits, during his tenure in the office of one man ruling the whole world. It was a one-man rule devoid of tyranny and injustice.

He observed that revolts had taught Persia that the system of dictatorial rule did not answer or address the yearnings of the peoples it governed. Darius thought it was necessary to make an experiment of the opposite policy, which was democratic governance. It could be remembered that his accession to power was followed by extensive revolts throughout the Persian world empire.

The crises in the first year of his reign stretched his force and tested his ability in the task of quelling these rebellions. He must have realised, too, that a dictatorial regime was fraught with suspicions and assassinations. It could also be recalled that King Cambyses, his predecessor, had to put to death his brother Smerdis whom he entrusted with the regency of the Eastern provinces on suspicion of infidelity. This gave rise to the Gaumata's saga as was previously discussed.

Rebellions and betrayals were rampant in dictatorial regimes. The examples cited were only the tip of the iceberg in the history of Persia, which Roloff Beny had aptly described as "a country and culture as old as time and as new as tomorrow." Although the Persians were noted for just and humane rules, incidents like these were bound to happen. Darius the Great was a towering personality who had combined his past and present to reshape the future of administration of people, at national and international levels. So he bequeathed to the world democracy based on the laws of Ahura Mazda. It was because of this delicious irony that Bury and Meiggs marvelled that: "The world may well have been surprised to see the greatest despotism of all favouring the institution of democracy, it was a concession to the spirit of Greeks, which reflects credit on the wisdom of Darius."[38]

The claim by A. Jarde in his book, the *Formations of Greek People* that in the Persian Wars, Greece defended not civilisation against barbarism, but individual freedom and reason against humane but despotic kingship was unrealistic. He viewed the matter out of context and his opinion was contradictory on its own. Because it was only a humane leadership that engendered reason and freedom in societies, and to assert that the Persian rule especially under the great Darius was inimical to freedom of thought and expression was to put history and trial or a sheer attempt to cast shadow upon the glory of the World Empire, whose rulers Darius in particular had contributed immensely to the growth of science, art

and even democracy to the World. The foremost beneficiaries of the rule of Darius were the Greeks. Could Greece now turn to bite the fingers that fed her? In history of the world, Darius was a phenomenon and a factor of real importance, both because he had encouraged the growth of knowledge that added something of value to the classical Greece.

To give credit to whom it is due, then Darius the Great the Qur'anic Zulqarnain – could be considered the father of Greece's, hence modern democracy. The success of democracy in Athens was the product of trial and error in governance for centuries in Persia. Darius, as a man of God with the discerning mind of a genius had, already advocated a change of policy centuries before the dawn of government of the people by the people in Europe. Unmistakably, it was a democratic governance with rules according to the laws of God that he had in mind. His fear of dictatorship might have stemmed from a premonition of the fate of his world empire after him. Because as a just king of all lands, his successors might not be able to discharge justice to all peoples. Obviously, he could not have held the mastery of two epochs without being the ***de jure*** King of all nations.

Darius as the King of All Nations

In order to keep in touch with his *satrapies,* it became very imperative to establish and maintain an effective and safe communication through good road networks in all his provinces; with each other and with the central administration or capital. The King established efficient road links with Babylon and Egypt. Road links were essential for many reasons; they facilitated security and intelligence services, and were essential for economic activities among the various peoples in his kingdom. The King had many royal residences and palaces across his vast empire and was always on the road in order to reach out to his peoples and to have personal contact with them. For instance, in the ancient Elamite City of *Susa*

in the *Zagros* mountains, he had a palatial residence. The Great King also had palaces in Sardis and Babylon.

Shush, was the Elamite capital of King *Untash Gal* who built the *Ziggurat of Chogha Zanbil.* This ancient city was razed to the ground when it was destroyed by the Assyrians in 640 BC. Darius the Great rebuilt the city of "Shush" or Susa in 520 BC to serve as the Achaemenian capital. He made its reconstruction a world event in a grandiose display of power. He described its construction in one of his inscriptions, which showed how workmen were recruited from the world over and materials imported from every corner of his *satrapies.* He wrote:

> This is the palace which I built at Susa. From afar its ornamentation was brought. Downward the earth was dug until I reached the rock in the earth. When the excavations was made, then rubble was packed down, the Babylonian people they did (these tasks). The cedar timber, this - a mountain by name Lebanon from there it was brought; the Assyrian people, they brought it to Babylon, from Babylon the Carians and Ionians brought it to Susa. The *yaka* timber was brought from Gandara and from Carmania. The gold was brought from Sardis and from Bactria, which were wrought here. The precious stone *Lapis lazuli* and cornelian which were wrought here, these were brought from Sogdiana. The precious stone turquoise this was brought from Egypt. The ornamentation with which the wall was adorned, that was brought from Ionia. The Ivory which was wrought here was brought from Ethiopia and from Sind and from Arachosia. The stone columns were wrought here - a village by name Abiradus in Elam - from there they were brought. The stone-cutters who wrought the stone, these were Ionians and Sardians. The goldsmiths who wrought the gold, these were Medes and Egyptians. The men who wrought the baked bricks these were Babylonians. The men who adorned the wall, these were Medes and Egyptians.[39]

It was only Zulqarnain who could make about twenty seven nations most of whom were the former rulers of the world his own labourers. Darius was a great builder; it was he who designed the

famous platform - palace of Persepolis. This capital city stood on a limestone terrace overlooking the *Marvdasht* plain, at the foot of the *Kuh e Rahmat* or the mountain of mercy. The great King started work on the capital in about 520 BC and was carried on by his son and successor Xerxes and Antaxerxes until 465 BC when the building of the city was completed.

Jacques Legrand had espoused the greatness of Persia; displayed in the monumental architecture of its twin capitals, Susa and Persepolis. The enormous variety of artistic influences reflected the extent of the Persian world empire during the reign of Darius the Great. Although Cyrus had employed teams of Lydian and Greek masons in his Palace at Pasargadae; Darius continued the Greek tradition with great columnar halls flanked by colonnaded porticoes[40] Legrand also highlighted that the hub of managerial activities was at Susa, the political and administrative centre of the World Empire, which Darius rebuilt after it had been destroyed in 640 BC by Ashurbanipal, the Assyrian King. The erudite author also described the reconstruction of the capital in the following words:

> A low hill was levelled with gravel to a height of about 65 feet above the streambed to form a terrace of ten acres. Darius' Palace was built on the north side, its rectangular rooms arranged round several courtyards. The Apadana, or audience hall, at Susa is surrounded by a triple row of columns of black and white stones. Each column is 65 feet high, with a pair of bulls at the top supporting the roof beams, stone was in short supply, and the mud walls of the Palace are decorated with enamelled bricks depicting bulls, griffin and the "immortals", Darius' personal bodyguard. 26 or 27 different peoples provided labour and materials.[41]

Susa was important as the world capital city as well as its centre of commerce; it was the Washington D.C. of the day. Darius himself on the great inscription vividly described its grand reconstruction. Despite Susa's importance as a world capital and the

hub of international commercial activities, the greatest architectural magnificence was reserved for Persepolis. The terrace of this city of the Persians, as the Greeks named it, was three times the size of Susa's, which was reached by twin returning staircases of 111 steps and surmounted by the immense Gate of Xerxes, with colossal cherubim and Assyrian type monster.[42]

The Chronicler also pointed rightly that the greatness of Persia was displayed in the monumental architecture of its twin capitals, Susa and Persepolis. The enormous variety of artistic influences reflected the extent of the Persian World Empire. They were excellent magnificent cities the world had not seen their type in ancient history. Although Cyrus had employed teams of Lydian and Greek masons on his Palace at Pasargadae; Darius started in 516 BC the building of Persepolis at *Stakhr-I-Parsa* to take the place of Cyrus' old capital. Darius' Palace in this city was distinguished with elegant and luxurious architecture, which was typical of Egyptian Cavetto mouldings, and the carved frontages of cruciform tomb in a huge cliff at *Nash-i-Rustum* also looked Egyptian. As a world capital, the city deserved to be adorned with various international architectures, a befitting grandeur decorations to the most powerful city on earth.

The celebration *Nau Ruz*, became an international annual event that coincided with the spring equinox, a spectacular event lasting for eleven days. The citizens of this world capital witnessed a grand event with parades of unparalleled magnificence, with delegations from all over the known world arriving to pay homage to the mighty and powerful King Darius.[43] The empire builder no doubt had left his marks on the sand of history. The building of the city continued through three reigns; from Darius to Xerxes and Artaxerxes. While Susa remained the administrative capital of the world, Persepolis was the ceremonial capital; which epitomised the grandeur of the greatest empire the world had ever seen, stretching from the Caspian

Sea to the Nile, and from India to the Aegean.[44] The control of this world empire was tough, yet, he governed it absolutely with justice and fair play that ennobled him in all the nations including Greece. This was in contrast to the ephemeral and pernicious rule of Alexander the Great. To control the world one must have to be as puissant as Darius who was indefatigable in coping with the numerous activities that demanded his attention. Legrand had described the daily routine activities taking place in this most powerful Palace in the world: "Ceremonial life in the Palace revolves round the two great audience halls. The Apadana is where the King receives his dignitaries and the annual tributes of his subject peoples, and where he gives an annual banquet for the people of Persia and Media."

It was reached by flights of one hundred and eleven steps with friezes depicting tribute bearers: Medes, Susians, Arabs, Armenians, Babylonians, Egyptians, Scythians, Indians, Libyans, Ethiopians, Drangians, Bactrians, Sogdians, Parthians Chorasmians, Arachosians, Sattagydians, Gandarians, Sahagydians, men of Maka, Tonians, Assyrians, Cappodocians, Carians, Ionians and Sardians. The other great hall was known as the Hall of 100 columns and was used for receiving the peoples of the Empire who came to see the King in hundreds. The Hall of 100 columns known as the Gate of all Nations was famous for *Nau Ruz* where King Darius received all the world delegates that came to pay him homage.

It was Xerxes (486-465 BC) who built a double ramped staircase called the *Gate of All Nations*, and guarded by colossal winged bulls with human heads. Delegations from the world over who came to the Achaemenian court paused at this Gate before entering the *Apadana* or Hall of Audience of Darius the Great. Persepolis was the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenian World Empire, while the administrative business of government was carried on in the winter at Shush or Susa. Sometimes during the

summer some administrative businesses were carried out at Hamagdana or Ecbatana. But Persepolis was important for annual ritual celebrations or festivals. In the spring of each year at the *Nau Ruz* celebrations, Darius the Great and his court gathered at this capital to receive the tributes of subject nations, and to re-establish his Universal Order for the coming year. It was also the time when the great King emphasised the supreme secular powers of the Achaemenian state or the ruling house of Darius the Great. Therefore, Persepolis had served a dual purpose as an important political and religious centre, until it was burnt down by Alexander the Great in 330 BC.[45] He must have destroyed it out of envy because Persepolis was one of the most magnificent and beautiful palaces in the world.

King Xerxes, the son and successor of Darius the Great and a grandson of Cyrus the Great must have foreseen the advent of this terrible event, the coming of a barbarian. In the inscription at Persepolis his prayer was found. As a faithful King, he prayed for the protection of his own and his father's legacies. As follows:

> Saith Xerxes the King: By the favour of Ahura Mazda, this colonnade of All lands I built. Much other good (construction) was built within this (city) Persepolis, which I built and which my father built. Whatever good construction is seen, all that by the favour of Ahura Mazda. We built.
>
> Saith Xerxes the King: Me may Ahura Mazda Protect, and my Kingdom, and what was built by me, and what was built by my father, that also may Ahura Mazda protect.[46]

Unfortunately, a century and half later, Alexander the Great came destroying everything on his way in a bid to supplant every culture with his own. So he left this magnificent city in charred ruins. Darius, as the world King, received tributes from all the *satrapies* over which he ruled. He received tributes on the 21st of March of each year at Persepolis during the annual festival. This was a royal custom called Nau Ruz. It was a celebration attended by

all Nations during his reign. According to Omar Khayyam, a renowned mathematician and poet on the first day of the New Year, *Nau Ruz*, the King received the High Priest of the Zoroastrians as his first visitor of the year. He brought with him as gifts to the great King the following items: a golden goblet full of wine, a ring, some gold coins, a fistful of green sprigs of wheat, a sword, a bow and arrow, a pen and pen-case, a mule, a hawk, and a handsome slave.[47] The High Priest, would then in the Persian language glorify God and praise the monarch. He then addressed the great King before the mammoth gathering, thus:

> "O Majesty, on this feast of the Equinox, the first day of the first month of the year, seeing that thou hast freely chosen God and the Faith of the Ancient Ones, may Surush, the Angel Messenger, grant thee wisdom and insight and sagacity in thy affairs. Live long in praise, be happy and fortunate upon thy golden throne, drink immortality from the cup of Jamshid; and keep in solemn trust the customs of our ancestors, their noble aspirations, fair gestes and the exercise of justice and righteousness. May thy soul flourish; May thy youth be as the new grown grain, may thy horse be puissant, victorious, thy sword bright and deadly against foes, thy hawk swift against its prey, thy every act straight as the arrows shaft. Go forth from thy rich throne, conquer new lands. Honour the craftsman and the sage in equal degree; disdain the acquisition of wealth. May thy house prosper and thy life be long!"[48]

Darius had followed diligently all the advice given by the High Priest, perhaps, they were the King's new year resolution. This annual festival was celebrated with pomp and pageantry with all the nations of the world in attendance, all dressed in their national costumes and each nation with its annual tribute to present to the World King. This was the custom that became an international event from the era of Cyrus the Great till the days of Xerxes and ended with Yazdegird, the last of the pre-Islamic Kings of Persia. It was after the High Priest's annual prayer that the *satrapies* proceeded to pay their tributes to the monarch. For instance, Asia

Minor was divided into four districts. The first, comprising the Ionians, Carians and Lycians paid 400 talents of silver. The second, comprising the Mysians, Lydians and other peoples, paid 500 talents. The Phrygians, the Paphlagonians, and Hellespont form the third group, paid 360 talents. The fourth group Cilicia paid 500 talents and 360 white horses. Phoenicia, Palestine and Cyprus paid 350 talents.[49]

Darius the Great became enormously wealthy with tributes of cash and kind pouring in from all over the world. Persepolis, therefore, used to be agog with international kaleidoscope of various peoples and was the richest city in the world. Egypt, in addition to the seven hundred talents, which she had to pay with Cyrenaica Barca, also had to supply the army of occupation with 120,000 measures of corn, worth 610 talents and fisheries of Lake Moeris in the Fayyum paid 240 talents to the queen's private purse. It was estimated that a talent was worth about two hundred and forty pounds. The total amount thus coming into the Treasury may be reckoned at four million pounds. This was without counting the payment in kind, or gift offered to the King coming from Parsis, and the inhabitants who paid no taxes but were only obliged to make gifts to the King.[50] Tributes were also paid in kind: Babylonia supplied the King with 500 eunuchs, Media supplied 100,000 sheep, 4,000 mules and 3,000 Nisaen horses; Armenia, 30,000 colts. India, in addition to the hunting dogs, which she sent to the King's Palace, paid gold dust worth of about 40,680 talents of silver.[51]

And these satrapies according to Sykes were assessed partly in money and partly in kind; He said, "It is interesting to note that this system still obtains in Persia." This was not surprising because everything introduced or was made by Darius the Great passed through two epochs. The revenue allocation introduced by the Great King was not arbitrary but commensurate with the economic status of every satrapy. The lowest revenue was paid by the land known in

modern times as Baluchistan, which Sykes described, "then, as now, poor and sterile." And was assessed at 170 talents of silver. Babylonia, on the other hand, was assessed at 1000 talents while Egypt was at 700 talents of gold. According to this writer, the Great King received a total annual revenue in cash of 3,708,280 pounds.[52]

Every three years, Ethiopians made a payment of gold, elephant tusks, ebony and five children. The people of Cholcis, furnished the King with 100 boys and 100 girls every five years. The Arabs supplied him with 100cwt of frankincense every year.[53] Darius the Great was indeed favoured by *Ahura Mazda* who made him so rich, powerful and very religious. He was adjudged a just King because he was not grasping nor avaricious. He never forgot his obligations towards his Wise Lord. At the annual festival, he was always reminded by the High Priest who told him to: "disdain the acquisition of wealth." So he used his wealth for the welfare of his peoples.

The essence of the Priestly Prayer cum-sermon was not to allow the King to fall an easy prey to the guile of power and luxury but to be always alive to his responsibilities to his God and to his peoples. Thus, *Nau Ruz* was an important day in the life of the King, the citizens of Persepolis and the rest of the peoples in all the *satrapies*. Darius the Great appeared to have hearkened to the priestly sermon, while he translated the advice into actions. For example, he honoured talented people of his empire. Because he was urged to: "honour the craftsman and the sage in equal degree." He must have realised that when the craftsmen and the sages were honoured, the growth of knowledge and the work of art and science were indirectly advanced. Darius, therefore, encouraged the growth of the science of medicine when he reactivated the medical school at Sais. It was also under his reign that the astronomical studies of the great Chaldean astronomer Naburimannu were carried out with his full support in Babylon. Similarly, the researches of this astronomer

were carried out by Kidinnu under the Persian rule.

Darius also gave assistance to Naburimannu to do his researches in the Cosmos and who, in fact, he did a great work in the field of Astronomy, which helped to advance our knowledge of the subject. He accurately compiled the table of the motions of the sun, and moon; recorded and calculated their daily, monthly and yearly revolutions; exactly dating the eclipses of the sun and the moon and other important celestial events. It was Naburimannu who first calculated the length of the year as 365 days, 6 hours, 15 minutes and 41 seconds. This measurement which was made before the telescope was invented was only 26 minutes 55 seconds longer. A splendid time table of the vast celestial clock by Naburimannu was the earliest great astronomical work.[54] The astronomical calculations of Naburimannu and Kidinnu were passed to the Greeks, whom they called Neburianos and Kidenas. They were the pioneers of modern Astronomy.

There was another dimension to this great International Year Celebration. It was also the time when the great King re-emphasised the policy of his supreme secular powers and re-established a new Universal Order. Darius the Great wielded an enormous power which the world had hitherto never seen. *One man* in absolute control of the world. The Achaemenian power had reached its zenith during the reign of this great king. This Ruling House had riveted the attention of the world for years. This made Polybius, the Greek historian to write:

> I ask you, do you think that either the Persians and the Persian ruler or the Macedonian and their King... could ever have believed that at the time when live the name of the Persians could have perished utterly - those who were the masters of the whole world?[55]

Darius the Great the Qur'anic Zulqarnain was indeed the greatest master of the whole world. His monumental achievements

were unsurpassed in the history of the ancient world. His capital city, Persepolis, was no doubt very important to the King as a world capital, once a centre and a hub of international activities. It held the remains of the greatest monarch of his time. In Persepolis were to be found the rock cut tombs of Artaxerxes II and Artaxerxes III. At some distance across the plain from Persepolis lies a sheer rock cliff called *Naqsh-i-Rustum*. Within it were the rock cut tombs of Darius I, Darius II, Xerxes and Artaxerxes I. This rock cliff was important not only as a cemetery of the Achaemenian kings but for its historical records of Darius the Great, otherwise known as the 'Carving of Rustum.'

He used to stay in his palaces at Babylon. And he built a magnificent and splendid palace at Pasargadae and magnificent residence at Persepolis. He was not giving to sitting in the lap of luxury in these palaces, but travelled extensively and widely by road to reach the masses. He did not simply rely on intelligence reports which could often be misleading and malicious, so as a religious leader he travelled to see for himself and have a feel of the impact of his leadership on all his provinces. Therefore, he built trunk roads one of which was the famous Royal Road.

The Royal Road

Darius the Great in a magnificent display of power and ingenuity, built a Royal Road from Sardis to Susa, a distance of about 1,500 miles in length. It started from Sardis, crossed Phrygia to reach the Halys near Pteria, the old capital of the Hittites, it then ran southwards over the mountains to the Euphrates at Samosata. It crossed the Tigris at Nineveh near Mosul, the road then went over Susiana to the capital.[56] It takes three months for pedestrians to traverse this well secured road, with security system which was a prototype of our modern system; the king was far ahead of his time. To maintain the security of the caravans and pedestrians plying this

road especially at its mountainous terrain, there were at intervals, security posts mounted by troops and good hostelries, which provided decent accommodation.[57] They gave comfort to both the pedestrians and caravans plying the road. The dangerous mountain passes were guarded by forts and at these stations, horses were kept in readiness for any security emergency; orders and messages were safely carried out by couriers. This gave an excellent postal system.

Along the Royal Road between Sardis and Susa, there was a post station at every fourteen miles, where the King's couriers could obtain fresh horses to enable them to cover the 1500 miles route in a week. This most efficient courier system in the ancient world was lauded by Herodotus: "Nothing mortal travels so fast as these Persian Messengers," he said, "These men will not be hindered...; either by snow or rain, or heat, or by the darkness of night."[58] This efficient organisation of the road safety would no doubt impress the reader, as to how ingenious this king was in his administration. The king was a widely travelled man on road, he therefore knew the value and importance of maintaining a road safety system. The importance of this special road was felt throughout the empire and even the modern world. It affected the modern world in a number of ways.

The Impact of the Royal Road

This good and safe road, which was carefully maintained, brought Central Asia nearer to the Aegean and helped in a great measure to arouse Western curiosity. The construction of this Royal Road by Darius the Great had widened the Greek's idea of geography, which was shown by the importance it assumed on the first Greek maps. It was conceived as a straight line running east and west. It played on one of the maps used by Herodotus practically the part which the line of Equator plays in modern Atlas. With the Royal Road as the equator, the longitudes were determined by the Nile, and the Danube, the two greatest rivers of the world were in the same

meridian. The Danube being supposed to flow from North to South. This line of meridian passed through Sinope.[59]

The attempt to apply mathematical principles to a small portion of the earth, was the intellectual activity of the Ionian investigators, Anaximander and Hecabaeus who were both citizens of Miletus. The former constructed the first map in history and the latter wrote a geography which served as a text to Anaximander's map.[60] Undoubtedly, the Royal Road had an incalculable influence on development of geography and the first world map. Bury and Meiggs c ncurred thus: "This development of geography in Ionia was centrally forwarded by the Royal Road, and so far the Persian conquest of eastern Greece was an advantage to European civilisation."[61]

Anaximander succeeded in the drawing the first world map based on the influence of the Royal Road in the concept of geography, which helped the genius to draw the map in 550 BC. It was not due the system of geometry, which Anaximander learned as a pupil of Thales. Without the impact of this Road, the world would not have had its first map that stunned the people of Miletus because the controversial map of the world was engraved on a tablet of stone by Anaximander which became the talk of the town. The map showed the world as round, like a pillar, with the inhabited part on one side. But the unusual feature of his world map was it was represented as being viewed from above as though by a bird or a god.[62] Anaximander also suggested that the earthly cylinder lay at a celestial sphere in a position of perfect equilibrium. The genius owed his success to the reign of Darius the Great, which was a blessing to human civilisation. The rule of Darius was not only a blessing to the Europeans but to the world.

It was one of the wonders of the Holy Qur'an, which had mentioned one of such journeys of the king by road, which contained so many incidental details which were absolutely true.

Having accomplished his mastery on land, the Great King then turned to the sea. During his reign he made Persia a sea power, this helped him to circumnavigate his provinces as a world king.

Darius' Mastery of the Sea

It was unanimously agreed that nothing showed the wise statesmanship of Darius the Great more clearly than his remarkable effort to make Persia a great sea power.[63] To achieve this unparalleled feat in history, he was obliged to engage the services of foreign navigators. At Peucela he built a fleet, which sailed down the Indus under the Greek Admiral Scylax of Caryanda; in less than 30 months he had sailed round the coasts of Gedrosia (Makran) and Arabia. Scylax wrote an account of this voyage that had been lost but was seen by Aristotle.[64] This great philosopher must have told his pupil Alexander. And more importantly, one of the sea voyage undertaken by the great Persian King could have been the one referred to by the Holy Qur'an (18:85). Scylax was the first western sailor known to have sailed along this coast of Asia in about 500 BC. Journeys on the sea or by waterways had provided his empire with an efficient means of communication. It was for this reason the King cut the Nile in Egypt.

The Greek explorer was a pioneer in geography and the first Western observer to give an account of India. It was known from the account of Herodotus that Scylax was sent by Darius the Great to explore the course of the Indus River and that he returned by sea after two and half years to the Isthmus of Heroonpolis or the Isthmus of Suez.

When Scylax duly accomplished his mission, Darius, annexed the Indus basin. This according to Professor Toynbee was either after or in anticipation of it, he finished cutting the canal that Pharaoh Necholl had started to cut from the easternmost arm of the Nile Delta to the head of the Gulf of Suez. The renowned historian

also wrote that Xerxes had tried to repeat Necho II's feat of circumnavigating Africa. But Xerxes' squadron, which set out from the Mediterranean, turned back. Both Darius' and Xerxes were oceanic minded but regrettably, that trait was not inherited by their successors.[65] Typical of his characteristics, Darius left an important legacy to the world when he cut the canal of the Pharaoh.

Darius and Canal of the Pharaohs

Geographically, Egypt was the national gateway between East and West. Darius the master of these two kingdoms was aware of this important fact. He realised too that once intercontinental trade routes were opened up, it was inevitable that it was through Egypt that the wealth and produce of the nations should pass. His administration, therefore, intended to give this country a navigable Nile to ease the troublesome journeys on land and through deserts. This had brought succour to the pedestrians and caravans and boosted economic growth. Economically, Egypt had prosperous cities where goods from many nations could be sold and exchanged: the goods of the Far East, of Persia, Babylon and Arabia, of Somaliland and the Sudan, of Greece and Rome, of Southern France, Seaboard of northern Africa, Spain and the Isles of the sea. The possessor of Egypt, therefore, held the mart of the World.[66] It was for this and other interests that Darius the Great made himself the King of both Egypt and Babylonia. It was for similar reason too, which made successive empires cast envious eyes upon this land of the Pharaohs. A country favoured with political and economic strategic importance, was a cynosure of all eyes in the ancient world, and therefore, sought by conquest to secure her strategic and commercial positions. King Cambyses conquered Egypt and it was annexed to the Persian Empire.

Egypt had prospered under Darius the Great for he had left the country with important legacies, like the dredging of the Suez

Canal. This he did for the overall development of Egypt that was in contrast to the founding of the city of Alexandria by Alexander the Great, to serve the commercial interests of Greece primarily. The project executed by Darius the Great was, however, devoid of this colonial interest. In cutting and dredging the Suez Canal the Great King had untied the Gordian Knot, because all previous attempts had failed. One of the oldest engineering feats considered by civilised man was the linking of the Mediterranean with the Red Sea by a waterway. Its advantages were recognised in the twentieth century BC.[67] From the dawn of Egyptian Civilisation, a profitable trade had been on with many nations. For example, there were extensive commercial transactions with the land of the Punt, which was perhaps Somaliland which was rich in gold, ivory and spices brought from the East African coast. Similarly, a wealth of merchandise also passed to and fro between Egypt and the lands bordering on the Persian Gulf.

The contribution of Darius had always been for the upliftment of the world for he had never been parochial in his leadership of the West and East. No historian could deny the fact that he had lived up to expectation as a World King. A renowned historian, Professor Arnold Toynbee, testified to the great vision of the World leader, when he wrote:

> The Persian Emperor Darius I surveyed a throughway for navigation from the Kabul River tributary of the Indus across the Arabian sea to the head of the Gully of Suez, and he linked up this water-route with the Nile and the Mediterranean by reconditioning the ship-canal, linking Suez with the Nile Delta via the lakes and the Wadi Tumilat, that had been dug by the Pharaoh Necho II(609-593 BC.). Darius also sent a squadron to explore the colonial extension of the Greek World to the West of the straits of Otranto. His son and successor, Xerxes, tried – though this unsuccessfully – to emulate another feat of Necho's: the navigation of Africa by a squadron of Phoenician ships in Necho's service.[68]

The earliest Egyptian Canal builders were primarily concerned

with providing a passage for vessels from the Red Sea to the interior cities along the Nile. A navigable canal linking the Nile with the Red Sea was not available. However, it was claimed that it was Sesostris, a Pharaoh of the twelfth Dynasty (Circa 2000 BC), who first attempted this enterprise. And for the next thousand years the Canal was available to shipping, hence, it was referred to as the Canal of the Pharaohs. Hugh J. Schonfield, wrote that it was the famous Pharaoh Necho (612 BC) who, defeated Josiah, King of Judah, at the Battle of Magiddo, and undertook to re-cut the Canal. He employed 120,000 slaves on the labour, but finally desisted from this attempt when an Oracle warned him that he was preparing the way for a barbarian invader.[69] The Oracle was thought afterwards to refer to the Persians, who less than a century later, conquered Egypt under King Cambyses. It was, however, a Persian ruler, Darius Hystapes or Darius the Great who restored and enlarged the Canal of the Pharaohs. The Canal was dredged for the interests of Egypt. Thus, the country became more prosperous under the Great King. He demonstrated his sense of history when he recorded the event in the monumental records of his achievements. He wrote:

> I am a Persian: With the Power of Persia I conquered Egypt. I ordered this Canal to be dug from the river called Pirava (the Nile) which flows in Egypt, to the Sea which comes out of Persia (the Red Sea). This Canal was afterwards dug as I had commanded..."[70]

Herodotus mentioned that the transit took four days to traverse and that two triremes could navigate it abreast. Communication, was, therefore, facilitated through navigation in the sea, in his kingdoms of the West and East when he dredged the Suez Canal. Darius the Great restored this ancient sand-filled canal of the Egyptians, connecting the Nile with the Red Sea. He realised the importance of this canal and he was the first in history to cut and dredge it successfully. This man of history had by this action, advanced the course of human civilisation several folds. He

documented this great achievement. Written on a stone table. Darius wrote: "I command to dig this canal from the stream in Egypt called the Nile, to the Sea (Red Sea) which stretches from Persia according to my will.[71]

It was also recorded from the Suez Inscription of Darius the Great about the same event in the following words:

> Saith Darius the King: "I am a Persian and I gave order to dig canal from a river by name Nile which flows in Egypt, to the sea which goes from Persia. Afterward this canal was dug thus as I had ordered, and ships went from Egypt through this canal to Persia thus as was my desire."[72]

The vision shown by the Great King in cutting and excavating this important river, no doubt, had impressed modern historians, because he was extolled for this act of foresight as a great genius. He had no doubt too, advanced the growth and course of civilisation in Egypt, if not of the world. River Nile was often described as Egypt's umbilical cord, a sand-filled Nile would no doubt hamper seriously any development in this land of the Pharaohs. He was no doubt interested in the growth of Egyptian commerce, arts and sciences; he had made moves to advance them. Having enhanced navigation in the Nile, Darius then turned his attention to other areas of human development. Darius the Great, like the modern men, showed surprising discernment in selecting the most valuable things, in building the great civilisation about him for execution in his own government. The case of this canal of the Pharaohs was an important instance of his acumen. He was three millennia ahead of his time. He realised, though, the canal belonged to Egypt as it also belonged to mankind, so he cut it so that Egypt being strategically located between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean could become a gateway between East and West, and it did.

He realised then the crucial importance of this land of the Pharaohs, for which he made himself its own king; because he who

held this country firmly in his control would bestride the world like a colossus. The Great King was able to achieve this feat, for he often said, "for long King of this great earth, the son of Vishtasp," a reference to his power as he bestrode his two kingdoms like a colossus. This canal which was of paramount importance to all the super powers both the ancient and the modern world alike, was restored and enlarged by Darius the King. The canal started north of the city of Bubastis, passed Pithom, and by the Bitter lakes reached the Gulf of Suez. Its length was equal to four days sailing and its width was enough for two triremes to pass. Although, Pharaoh Necho had started but later stopped his project of cutting the canal in the middle, it was not only because of the warning of the Oracle as it was claimed, but because mortality among the workmen was tremendously high. Darius the King having finished the work, subsequently he destroyed the last section of the Canal. Because he was told that the Red Sea might submerge Egypt, which was at a higher level than the country.[73] However, Xerxes, the King successor and son of Darius, re-excavated this last section to complete the work of his father.

Since then subsequent attempts were made by various foreign rulers to recondition or re-cut this important canal. These rulers included the Ptolemies; Philadelphus (286 BC) and Euergetes (246 BC), Emperor Trajan (98AD) under the Romans. Interestingly, Umar the Great (a.r.) in the seventh century had realised the crucial importance of this canal when he permitted Amru the Governor of Egypt to reopen the waterway in the winter of 641-642, and until the end of the eight century it rendered useful service under the name of the Canal of the Prince of the Faithful.[73] Here, one could again vividly see a motif between Darius the Great and Umar the Great (a. r.). They were always ahead in all matters involving human welfare and justice.

In the modern world the Great Powers had rivalled themselves

to coveting and possession of this natural bridge among them. Finally, it was de Lesseps who cut this narrow neck of land, making up the bridge between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, his brilliant success had finally recompensed his indomitable perseverance. The Nile at last became navigable with modern ships, thereby, adding a feather to its ancient history. The ancient Nile had religious relevance and importance to the Egyptians and her neighbours. Because it took its place with the gods. To many, Nile was an object of worship; Robin Fedden stated that the river's annual rising were seen as the tears of the blessed Isis weeping for Osiris, the famous god and goddesses revered among the ancient Egyptians. Nile was also regarded as the originator of life and from its breathless mud insect, bird, beast and man were generated.[74] Thus, the ancient Canal of the Pharaoh dug from the river called Pirava had added a religious dimension to the great work undertaken by the greatest world monarch in history. Egypt had always been a country that was relevant to every civilisation and human development. Her canal was equally vital in the modern world.

Even in the modern world the East and West were tied together in trade and commerce. They brought tigers from the Punjab and leopards from Afghanistan, wool from Kashmir and silk from China, furs from Tibet and sapphires from Ceylon, incense from Yemen, and spices from the Islands of Southeast Asia. All these riches and many more were brought from the East across the sand from Suez to Alexandria. Similarly, the West, especially the factories of Great Britain were in dire need of raw materials from the Orient. They needed copra, jute, ore and cotton. In return, the Occident supplied the East with the finished industrial goods. Therefore, the Occident relied heavily on the Orient and Egypt became more than ever before the melting pot of the world, where two worlds meet.

In appraising the importance of the Suez Canal in the modern world, Butchell, attested that:

> Certainly the nature of the Canal's location made it a unique instrument for bringing about peace and understanding. It stood at the crossroad of two worlds and had an infinite capacity to foster friendship between nations.[75]

This important fact mirrored the exceptional vision of the World King Darius Hytaspes, who far ahead of his time had cut the canal to bring the East and West economically and politically tied together in global unity in diversity. The canal after several centuries of neglect by the subsequent empires it was reclaimed by desert. Thus, it became sand-filled and un-navigatable. Once more, the West and East became separated by the hostile dunes of sand of the desert. Consequently, traffic between the two worlds became troublesome and costly, until on November 15, 1854 when two widely different personalities had found their destinies linked together to give a befitting gift to the world – Muhammad Sa'id, the Viceroy of Egypt and Ferdinand de Lesseps, the builder of the Suez Canal. Butchell said it was the day when power, at last, had become the ally of a dream. It was the historic day when the engineer sought the permission of the great Viceroy of Egypt to make his dream come to reality. After presenting the laudable project to the Egyptian towering figure, he waited patiently for his answer. It was the moment when this gift of the world hanged on the prerogative of only one man, Muhammad Sa'id, who with dignity of a great King said:

> I am convinced, he said. I accept your plan. We will concern ourselves during the rest of our expedition as to the means of carrying it out. You may regard the matter as settled, and trust to me.[76]

It was not the dream of de Lesseps that was brought to reality but that of Darius the Great, who several centuries earlier had given soul to this idea: *Aperire terram gentibus,* which means to open the

world to all people. The great builder was an indefatigable man; a seasoned diplomat and an expert negotiator; otherwise, he would have been overridden by the problems associated with 'the means of carrying it out'. But he had succeeded in bringing out what the ancient great Historic Personages had wished to see come to reality. Ferdinand de Lesseps linked the waters of the Mediterranean and Red Sea thus cutting 5,800 miles off, the distance of India to Europe by ocean voyage. During the ten years of its construction (1859-1869), the Suez Canal was the focus of world-wide attention. On opening day the Canal was 26 feet deep, with a minimum bottom width of 72 feet and a surface width of some 175 feet.[77]

No sooner was the Canal completed than it became the scene of international conflict in struggle for its control. In 1956, for instance, Great Britain, France and Israel stood on the verge of war with the United Arab Republic under their patriotic leader, Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser, over the possession of the waterway. Because in his bid to free Egypt from foreign domination, President Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal which he announced in a broadcast on July 26, 1956 on the fourth anniversary of the Egyptian revolution. However, in this conflict involving the World Powers over the Canal, United Nations intervened and subsequently decided that the Suez Canal did in fact belong to Nasser. Henceforth, the hundred mile channel had been the route of a profitable commerce and peaceful travel between East and West, and had thus been a force for world unity. Undoubtedly, this was a notable legacy of Darius the Great, the Qur'anic Zulqarnain that was reactivated, revitalised and re-accomplished by Ferdinand de Lesseps whose befitting gift was *Aperire terram gentibus.*

Ancient Egypt had also felt the impact of Darius on the growth of her sciences. In addition to his contribution to the Canal, he also helped the development of the sciences, which he catalysed to blossom for the overall benefit of all mankind.

Darius and the Growth of Sciences

Egypt, the cradle of civilisation must have impressed the Great King because of its ancient knowledge in sciences and arts. He had put a high premium on the Egyptian sciences which was then the best in the world, and as a humane and a just ruler he was motivated to help the sick and to advance more specifically, the growth of medical knowledge. He, therefore, sent back to Egypt a learned Egyptian high priest, who was then languishing in captivity in Persia, to *Sais*, a city of the Western Delta. He was charged with the responsibility of restoring the Egyptian Medical school, which was left in ruins. The Assyrian occupiers of Egypt were at last expelled by the Egyptian king, Psammetichus II who was advised by an Oracle to use the confederates of men of bronze who came from the sea. So, with the help of Ionian, Carian and Lydian mercenaries, the king succeeded in the expulsion of the Assyrians whom he drove as far as Ashod in Palestine in 655 BC. Having established the independence of his country, King Psammetichus – then founded a capital at Sais in the Nile delta and reunited his country. He also allowed an influx of Greeks into his country.[78] In just a little over a century, Darius the Great, came to re-establish the medical school of this ancient capital. He instructed that this important institution of learning must be restored.

The King's instruction was carried out, the school and probably a library were built. It then became functional as students from the best families from Egypt and beyond were sent to learn the art and science of treating the sick, so that more medical doctors would be produced for the healthcare service. Breasted wrote that in the Vatican collections at Rome, there was an engraved interesting account of how the order of Darius was carried out in the restoration of this important ancient school. In the Behistun inscription, Darius wrote: "His majesty (that is, Darius) did this because he knew the value of this art (the practice of medicine), in order to save the life of everyone having sickness."[79]

As a just and religious leader, and ad a great service to mankind, he had championed the cause of science and religions in his Empire. A policy of global religious tolerance and mutual respect of all deities he pursued with considerable success. An *au fait* account of Darius' contribution to the growth of medical science was also given by Alexandre Moret. Egypt then was a mart of the world, her prosperity was a global one so also was her civilisation. His contribution with respect to the art and teaching of medicine in the ancient world was a laudable effort, which helped Egypt to be famous in the art and practice of medicine. The ancient town of Sais was noted for the practice of medicine, and had a famous medical school known at that time as the school of the *Wise Magicians* or *The House of Life*, so called because medicine was then intimately bound up with religion and magical arts. In fact, a physician was considered a chief of secrets. Unfortunately, Cambyses destroyed this famous medical school, but Darius the Great restored it for the benefit of mankind and civilisation.

Undoubtedly, by this action, he had advanced the course of human civilisation several folds, as thousands of doctors graduated from the school who came from various parts of his world empire. Alexandre Moret stated that at Sais, in the temple of Neil, King Darius rebuilt the dilapidated school. According to this author, the man who rebuilt it wrote the following words:

> On the order of Darius, I founded (this school) with all its students, men of good birth and not of humble condition. Over them I set wise men of every order, for their work. His majesty caused them to be given all kinds of things suitable for doing this work. I supplied them with everything that was useful, with every instrument according to the books, just as they were before. His Majesty did this because he knew what was useful for this art, to make every sick man live, and to establish the name of every god in every temple.[80]

Egypt was a lucky country for many reasons; not only for her rich religious cultures, or her very talented people and long history of civilisation but for the contribution given to her by the Zulqarnain, which further strengthened her hold as one of the leading nations, in the history of the world. In this instance, like in many others, Darius the Great had proved himself again and again that he was a true religious leader who was impartial and compassionate. He wanted the prosperity of all his nations, not like a chauvinistic, racist, Alexander, who conquered his empire about two centuries later, only to project the interests of Greece. Could there be any Zulqarnain other than him? This being so, did the character of any world King ever remain so consistently unblemished like that of the Great King, or which appeared finer than this quintessence of nobility, who wanted to make every sick man in his empire well and enjoying good living? He was indeed a disinterested King surely worthy of the chief seat of Zulqarnain at any court of law, because he was not a racist or tribalist, but generous, humane and chivalrous in battles and magnanimous in victory, who was forever conscious of *Ahura Mazda* for all the favours He bestowed on him. With no mistaken identity this could be nobody else other than the Qur'anic Zulqarnain.

It was this true Zulqarnain who rebuilt a medical school and equipped it well, all in the service of humanity and God. More interestingly, this school was not restored only for the Persians his kinsmen but for the benefit of Egyptians and all his subjects. Contrarily, Alexander would have not only destroyed this school but would have transferred it entirely to Macedonia, possibly to his teacher Aristotle. To underscore this assertion, he neither built roads nor schools for growth of sciences in the Persian Empire he had conquered but carted away every literary object to his home country. The only military school he built was to conscript virile men, and train them as hellenised soldiers to fight for the selfish interest of the Macedonian warlord. He set these barbarians to rival the Greek

and Macedonian soldiers in order to achieve a predetermined aim and objective. It was no exaggeration, therefore, to say that the true Zulqarnain favoured Egypt. Because Egypt was coveted and possessed by many foreign invaders, but she was most prosperous under the rule of Darius the Great who had contributed immensely to her civilisation and its splendour. A testimony of this statement of fact was given, in a general survey of Egyptian culture and civilisation by another author Margaret A. Murray, she wrote:

> Darius the Great, who proved to be one of the best of all the foreign rulers of Egypt. He came in person to visit this outlying province of his empire. And when he saw that trade was the high road for its prosperity he at once set about preparing the way. He finished the canal that Necho had begun, thereby making a waterway from Nile to the Red Sea and eliminating the troublesome land journey. He rebuilt the temples and promoted the worship of the gods, he established schools, he reopened quarries and in every way he encouraged trade and raised the standard of living.[81]

This great king who came in person to visit the province of Egypt, showed he was in the habit of conducting personal visits to all other provinces, individually, under his suzerainty. It could be assumed rightly that he was the person who built that Iron Barrier mentioned in the Holy Qur'an in one of his tours of the provinces. In fact, most likely it was his expeditions that the Holy Scripture had mentioned. He was a King who was true to all and had no sacred cows because of his religious belief. "By the favour of *Ahura Mazda* I am of such a sort that I am a friend to right, I am not a friend to wrong", saith Darius the King. King Darius had excelled in all areas of good virtues and had worked indefatigably to ensure the prosperity of all his *Satrapies*. Consequently, he had uplifted both the spiritual and the mundane lives of his nations. His religious tolerance was excellent, because even in his social intercourse with the heathens and the polytheists, he proved himself a just king and ruled his world empire under a secular principle. He was not to

proselyte his own religion as a Zoroastrian; he thus, allowed freedom of worship of all gods and goddesses throughout his world empire.

In this approach, however, he applied the principle of the Seal of the Prophets, who came eleven centuries after him, because he knew that any religion other than the revealed monotheism was the faith of *Angra Mainyu*. Yet, he let each religion and its mode of worship to survive; furthermore, it was not his office to spread a universal form of religion, but to enthrone a rule of law in his administration of the world. That law must be in accordance with the laws of God or *Ahura Mazda*. His relationship with the gods and the goddesses of his peoples was based on the Islamic principle "That man of Faith holds fast to his faith, because he knows it is true." Thus, motivated by political expedience of the time and operating within the confines of his office, he rebuilt the temples and promoted the worship of the gods of his peoples. It could not be out of reality to conjecture that engraved within his hearts of heart was a total aversion of these religions of *Angra Mainyu*. Therefore, he must have applied this sacred principle in working for the peoples of the world; in order to play safe, but within his heart of hearts, he was saying: "I worship not that which ye worship, Nor will ye worship that which I worship. And I will not worship that which ye have been wont to worship, to you be your way, and to me mine" (Holy Qur'an 109:2-6).

As a world leader, he must apply this principle in order to discharge his duty with justice and righteousness. Darius the King had excelled in this field because having ruled the world for three and half decades he was unblemished in his reign. He was adjudged the best in the world, and this *ipso facto* could only be achieved by a true Muslim. Thus, he promoted the growth of not only trade and scientific knowledge but religion as well. As a corollary to this assertion, Egypt regarded him as the last lawgiver, Darius the Great

who could be compared with Umar the Great (r.a.), just as Alexander the Great was likened to Napoleon Bonaparte or Adolf Hitler in modern history. In both cases, the parallel motifs were striking. It could be deduced, therefore, that the *pax Achaemenica* was a prelude to *pax Islamica* while on the other hand, Alexander's world was an introduction to the Western global hegemony. That the world would thrive better under *Pax Islamica* was easily discernible to an impartial mind.

Moreover, in ancient world, Darius the King of Kings was no doubt *primus inter pares,* who succeeded in touching the lives of all the nations he had governed under a just rule, devoid of rancour and racism. His religious tolerance was unique demonstrating in effect that in *One man* ruling the world, nobody could do it better than a Muslim. Alexander's rule was a blessing only to the Greeks and a curse to other nations. Whereas the standard of living of all the nations improved during the reign of Darius King of the world. By ruling according to the laws of God, peace and the light of progress had shone evenly upon all the nations. Each nation was authorised to have cities of its choice, to worship its national gods, elect its magistrates and special laws so that harmonious co-existence prevailed all over his world empire. He showed unparalleled religious tolerance in his global meritocracy.

Darius' Respect for Religions

In his dominion of the world, Darius had affected the lives of his subjects in almost every sphere. He had, also attempted to provide basic comforts of existence to both the rural and urban dwellers. He had showed respect, as a religious man, for the various religions and religious worships of his peoples. The King had shown great concern for the religious sensibilities of his subjects, because he had not only advanced the growth of art and sciences but also religion, which equally had a high premium in his government. Both Cyrus

and Darius were religious, as well as their political liberalism reconciled to Persian rule the peoples of Syria, who had resisted so strenuously first their Assyrian and their Babylonia conquerors. In the eyes of the Phoenicians, Samaritans, and Jews, consequently, the Persians were liberators.

Egypt, noted for art and scientific knowledge was prosperous during the reign of Darius the Great. It formed his sixth *satrapy* with Cyrene, Barca and lower Nubia. This land of the Pharaohs was also known as a centre of multitudinous religious worships. He visited this ancient land in person, adopted an attitude quite opposite to the senseless policy of his predecessor Cambyses, the son of Cyrus. Darius showed respect for their high priests and did everything to win the support of the priesthood. As a just ruler, he brought from his capital Susa the high priest of Sais named *Uzahorresenet*, whom he entrusted with the reparation of the havoc wreaked by Cambyses.[82] Both Cyrus and Darius showed great respect for other religions and the religious sensibilities of their subjects. It was for administrative expedience that these great King appeared eclectic, they did not proselytise their faith but on the contrary were often initiated into the worship of foreign deities and taking them for their protectors.[83] This was a political strategy to win the support of various clergymen, which would help them consolidate their power. Even today, religion still remains a powerful instrument of acquiring and retaining power. The monarchs were therefore both political maestroes and religious men: they used religion where it served their own purposes. In fact, they were one at heart with Jews in exilic and post exilic period, as the book of Esther showed: "From the days of our fathers to this day we have been in great guilt... We are bondmen, yet our God has not forsaken us in our bondage, but has extended to us his steadfast love before the Kings of Persia, to grant us some reviving to set up the house of our God, to repair its ruins and to give us protection in Judea and Jerusalem."

The mutual respect and tolerance of peoples with different religious beliefs was exhibited in this case of the Hebrews. In fact, two active sacred shrines as a legacy in Persia were the tombs of the Prophet Daniel at Shush and of Queen Esther the Jewish wife of an Achaemenian King and her foster father Mordecai at Hamagdana. Thus, Darius was beyond dispute one of the greatest figures in history who had the 'idea of genius' of organising and unifying the world, and giving it a reign not only of peace and order but of religious harmony. The peaceful reign of the Great King was of Justice built on faith, not only in peace but the Great King had tried to conduct war with moderation and treated the conquered people with mildness and benevolence, allowing them to keep their religion, their laws and even their local chiefs; all these favours were to ensure the reign of peace in his world empire.

Despite his respect and tolerance for other religions, Darius the Great had remained consistent in his worship of Ahura Mazda, never once had he called upon any other deity. In fact, the royal religion acknowledged the worship of only One God.[83] They were monotheists; however, this does not mean they did not pay lip service to other gods in order to achieve their political objectives. The pristine Judaism was also of the First Religion of Islam which like its sister Zoroastrianism had both professed and taught Islam on a national scale. Darius the Great was a zealot in identifying himself with it, in fact, he remained unflagging in his support until the holy Temple of Solomon was rebuilt. For instance, the Jews were given the liberty to freely establish their Theocratic State in Judae.

Darius and King Solomon's Temple

Although Cyrus showed sympathy and consideration for the plight of the Jews in their second captivity in Babylon, Darius the Great had helped to accomplish what Cyrus had begun, the rebuilding of Solomon's Temple. Cyrus claimed that God had charged him to rebuild a Temple at Jerusalem. He too was a very religious

Zoroastrian with great respect for the gods of other people.[85] When Darius came to the throne in 521 BC, Zerubabbel and Joshua with the encouragement of the two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah led the people in the work of reconstruction of the temple. No progress was achieved in spite of the Jews' zeal and enthusiasm to rebuild the Temple until in the second year of Darius in 520 BC (see Hagai 1:1) when the work was resumed in earnest.[86]

This was because as soon as the work had started, an official inquiry into the matter was made. Tattenai, a high-powered official of this *satrapy* area Beyond the River (i.e. west of Euphrates), which included Phoenicia, Syria, Palestine, Cyprus and part of Arabia, was sent to inquire who had given permission to the Jews to rebuild the Temple. Tattenai then reported his findings to the Great King that permission was granted to them by the Cyrus decree. He, therefore, suggested that a search be made in the royal archives in Babylon in order to confirm their claim. Darius the Great then ordered that this authority be searched for and eventually, Cyrus' decree was found. Darius the Great then confirmed Cyrus' decree and added a decree of his own, demanding that the cost of rebuilding the Temple be met from the royal treasury. This great Temple of Solomon was then completed. The work progressed rapidly and was completed; he had completed what Cyrus had started. Darius the Great then wrote: "Eventually, by command of the God of Israel and by decree of Cyrus and Darius, the Temple was completed in the sixth year of Darius I, that is in the year 515 BC; between the months of February and March" (the month of Adar).[87]

It was important to posit that God must have charged Darius to expedite the completion of the Temple like Cyrus. Revelation to this effect must have come to him: "By command of God of Israel" was an important pointer to this. Incidentally, Kwesi Dickson had pointed out that the mention of Artaxerxes in Ezra 6:15 side-by-side with Cyrus and Darius was an error. Because Artaxerxes reigned after the death of the successor of Darius I, by that time the Temple

had been in use for about 50 years.[88] Darius the Great, the Zulqarnain mentioned in the Holy Qur'an had no doubt lived and ruled according to the vivid description of this Amazing revelation.

The reconstruction of the Temple was completed in 515 BC, but not until Nehemiah's arrival did the Jews really return to their traditional worship. Nehemiah son of Hecaliah, a Senior Jewish official at the Persian Court, was a cupbearer to King Artaxerxes. Being a cupbearer meant he was the wine and food taster of the King, it was a position of trust and intimacy and served as the screen between the public and the great King. He was the King's right hand man. Nehemiah lived in Susa, the world capital, the Washington D.C of the Day and a hub of international and national activities. But upon religious and national assignments he left for Jerusalem. As a governor of Judah, he immediately involved the whole community in the 52-day rebuilding of the holy city, an unprecedented effort of construction, for he had capitalised on Jewish national feeling to reinstate religious observances, especially keeping the Sabbath and outlawing mixed marriages.[89] The governor had rewritten many of the sacred texts combining old and new writings; he, therefore, created an authoritative basis for a newly flourishing Judaism.[90] Nehemiah showed a great capacity of organisation and administrative sagacity, which stemmed from the influence of King Artaxerxes, the Persian King.

Finally, commenting on the same event, Professor Toynbee wrote that Cyrus decree was traced in the archives at Ecbatana (Hamadana) and was confirmed by Darius I. He said that either Artaxerxes I in 445 BC or Artaxerxes II in 385 BC gave Babylonian Jewish butler Nehemiah, leave of absence from Susa, the Persain imperial capital with a commission to go to Judae and to refortify the city of Jerusalem. The famous historian also affirmed that both Darius I and Artaxerxes made a grant of imperial revenue and building material to the Jews for carrying out the public work at Jerusalem that they had authorised.[91] This public work was the building of King Solomon's Temple.

Thus, in a wonderful coincinnity the Holy Qur'an had given a detailed account of this great personage, his person, his rule, his faith and achievements, a man who had ruled the world for 36 years. He was the greatest King in ancient history. The Holy Qur'an gives three accounts of his expeditions with incidental details which were absolutely correct, as they vividly fit the historical Darius the Great. It is important at this juncture to bring these wonderful accounts and view them against the background of the Persian King.

Qur'anic Accounts of Darius' Journeys

The discovery of the remarkable and indeed outstanding achievements of Darius the Great has confirmed the truth, and the veracity of the sacred statements of the Holy Qur'an. There was no man in the history of the ancient world who had wielded such enormous power and dominion over the world like Darius the First, who in the real sense of his title was indeed the 'Great'. And the reason why he had surpassed all the kings before him was the unique favour bestowed upon him by Allah (s.w.t). He was given the unique ability to do and to possess all that he longed for. He was given "the ways and the means to all ends." This important fact could never be overemphasised. It was consequent upon this rare ability that he successfully became the master of "two Qarns." His monumental achievements were inscribed in stones which convinced everyone that he was a great king in his first epoch. However, he was far more celebrated in the second or modern epoch because of the Qur'anic accounts about this favoured historic personage. Therefore, the name Darius the Great betokens the end of One World epoch and the beginning of another.

Again, it was with this rare and unique ability, he had proved his mettle and some remarkable contributions to the world, which had changed the course of human history. His religion and manner of his administration have all been discussed. This would no doubt prepare us to appreciate and revere the Qur'anic account of his expeditions, some of which were indeed the prototype of the ones

discovered in *Behistun inscriptions*. How did the Prophet of Islam come to know of them, and expounded them with absolute veracity? This was indeed incontrovertible evidence that he was an Apostle of God who gave him knowledge purely from a Divine source, he was indeed a *Rusulullah*. The historic accounts showed remarkable similarity to the Quranic quotations. Darius the Great bestrode the world like a colossus and made it prosperous. He was both an Army Marshal, Road Marshal and a Navy Admiral who made numerous road links and embarked on extensive voyages. He was the powerful sea master of the ancient world and it was during his reign that Persia became a sea power. The Holy Qur'an gives an account of one of the king's voyages.

Darius' Sea Voyage

Darius as a religious leader who ruled with righteousness had made many voyages in his endeavour to reach out to his people, his subjects in their diverse localities. So the Holy Book tells us one of his missions or of his journey: "One (such) way he followed, until when he reached the setting of sun, he found it set in a spring of murky water: Near it he found a people: We said, "O Zulqarnain! (Thou has authority) either to punish them, or treat them with kindness." (Q.18:96)

In this voyage, the sun was about to set, when he reached the people of this locality. And looking at the people of this town, and sun setting far from the western horizon, the observer (Darius) saw the sun setting in a pool of "murky water." This was a common observation among sailors, and it was observable to anyone on the sea. Ustadh Abdullahi Yusuf had explained this phenomenon well enough.

It was a phenomenon of aberration to any traveller on the sea. Looking at the expanse of the turbulent sea, far from the horizon, it would appear to the observer travelling westwards that the sun was

setting into the sea. But it didn't. It did not mean he had reached the extreme west, which was untenable. This phenomenon occurs because of the spherical nature of the universe. And in like manner, a sailor travelling eastwards in the early morning, the sun would appear to be rising from the sea as he looked far from the horizon. The style of narration of the Holy Qur'an is God's style, therefore, full of wonders and wisdom but only to men of understanding. In fact, this was a scientific observation. What the verse Q.18:86 tells us was that when Darius was sailing westwards he reached a town or a locality when the 'sun was setting.' This meant he reached the town in the evening, giving a precise time of his arrival with setting of the sun. At this coastal shore therefore, Darius reached his subjects: Near it he found a people: We said: "O Zulqarnain! (Thou has authority) either to punish them or to treat them with kindness."

No doubt Darius the Great had stupendous authority over his lands. His subjects, even those living along the sea coasts, were aware of it. He too, was aware of this tremendous authority bestowed upon him for he said on the *Behistun inscription*. "By the grace of Ahura Mazda these lands have conformed to my decree even as it was commanded unto them by me, so was it done." This was re-quoted above for the sake of clarity. This plenitude of authority was bestowed upon him by the grace of God or *Ahura Mazda*. That was acclaimed even by his own subjects as the man of authority over things. And before laying their complaints before the Great King, perhaps, they praised him: "Hail, Darius!" "Hail, Darius!" He was no respecter of persons but of the laws of God; he surely must have punished the wrong doers to uphold justice and the rule of law. In fact, the essence of his journeys was to reach out to his people, to listen to their grievances, and to address them where possible. And possibly too to intimate them of the policy of his government. He must have treated the complaints of this people living on the coast. As the indefatigable ruler he then embarked on his eastern expedition. And the Holy Qur'an narrated this journey,

which was more likely towards the North Pole

Darius at the Polar Region

> Then he followed (another) way, until when he came to the rising sun. He found it rising on a people whom We had provided no covering protection against the sun (Q.18:89-90).

In this eastern expedition, Darius reached his subject at a time when the sun was rising. He must have embarked upon the journey quite early or must have been travelling overnight or round the clock. The 'rising of the sun' has a meaning corresponding to 'setting of the sun.' They are observable phenomena due to the spherical nature of the earth. After all the Holy Qur'an alludes to this sphericity of the universe. A fact confirmed by science, and here, one of the results of the sphericity of the universe was deviously cited. Here the important words to note: "No covering protection against the sun." Allah (swt) did not say that Darius had reached a people whom He had not provided protection from the sun's heat. What does Allah wish to inform us in His grandeur of style? It is only at night that the sun is veiled and cannot be seen. It is therefore, the darkness of night, which gives covering against the brightness of the sun. What if this covering is removed? This will result into continuous daylight.

In fact, the important point which He wanted us to understand was that in his expedition Darius reached a land where the sun set for only a very short time. It is now common knowledge in the Polar regions the sun does not set for nearly six months leaving the land in total daylight. The great traveller must have reached the Polar region (North Pole), during the six months period of sunshine leaving people, thereby, without the protective effect of the night. It is only in this region that the pattern of the day and night differs from the normal. Sheikh Muhammad Mitwalli Al-sharawi; a

distinguished Egyptian Islamic scholar was of the opinion that Zulqarnain had reached a land where the sun sets for only a very short time and did not follow the same pattern with the rest of the world.[92] The Holy Qur'an, is an all-pervading eternal miracle, with advancement in science and technology we are magnetically attracted to its unlimited knowledge, as we understand it more. To any unbiased mind and man of understanding, the exposition of this Holy Book with incidental details and surprising accuracy, are clear testimony of its Divine Authorship. Otherwise, how would the unlettered prophet know about the expedition of Darius the Great along his empire bordering Russia? The Holy Book told him with marvellous accuracy because it was the actual word of Allah (s.w.t.) not created but revealed to the human receptacle in the person of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) for the benefit of mankind. Then Zulqarnain travelled to an area most likely to be Southern Russia.

Darius at the Russian-Persian border

> Then followed he (another) way, until, when he reached a tract) between two mountains; he found beneath them, a people who scarcely understood a word. (Q.18:92-93)

In this expedition, Darius travelled by road along a tract between two mountains. In this valley he found, some people with whom he could not communicate because of language barrier. These two mountains were identified to be between Armenia and Azerbaijan.[93] The reason for this difficulty of communication was that Darius' subjects, the Zagros could not speak the language of their neighbours which Ali Akbar identified as the tribes of the Slavs and Teutonic or the Gog and Magog living along the Russian border. They caused mischief and wreaked havoc on his people because of their frequent inroads into Persia, which was causing a serious concern to them. These Persians living at this border, identified also as the tribes of Zagros, laid their complaints before their just King: "They said: "O Zulqarnain! The Gog and Magog

(people) do great mischief on earth. Shall we then render thee tribute in order that thou mightiest erect a barrier between us and them?" (Q.18:94).

The danger posed to the lives and property of his subjects was enormous and serious indeed. They even called for a partition to separate and protect them from these wild tribes from Russia. In putting their request, these people offered to pay some token amount of money or tribute so that a barrier might be erected between them and their hostile neighbours. This statement had shown how desperate they were in getting a permanent solution to their problem. It also pointed out the prevailing corruption of the time. Subject people must pay for the services of their Kings in kind (tribute) or in cash. But Darius the Great was different being the wealthiest and the most powerful man in the world of that time, and, more importantly, a religious leader who ruled with justice and righteousness had left his palaces, which littered his vast empire to come and see the conditions of his subjects, and to assess the impact of his reign on the overall well being of his people. In fact, he had seen what he had come for, so: "He said: (The power) in which my Lord had established me is better (than tribute). Help me therefore, with strength (and labour), I will erect a strong barrier between you and them." (Q. 18:95).

He was sympathetic to this (underprivileged) people's fearful and deplorable state. But more importantly, he was forever conscious of the Day of Judgement, when he would give his account to *Ahura Mazda*. And it was this Wise Lord, who had established his power not only in Persia but now the world over. This special favour bestowed upon him was far better than anything else, not just a paltry tribute from the oppressed people, whom he had come to liberate and not to exploit. Darius the Great was not unfaithful to his Lord neither was he an ingrate. He must have remembered vividly how the Wise Lord made him prevail over his enemies and in

addition made him succeed in all his undertakings. These and many others added up to his power, were far better than their tribute. It was for championing the cause of the downtrodden that made him great not their exploitation. In the *Behistun inscription* quoted earlier the king said: "On this account Ahura Mazda brought me help because I was not wicked, nor was I a liar, nor was I a tyrant neither I nor any of my line. I have ruled according to righteousness."

It is important to ponder this crucial point at this juncture, what Darius the Great had written on the *Behistun inscription*, was in support of what was reported in the Holy Qur'an. He got the help of God because of his rule of justice and righteousness. He continued, this benevolence to people even when he became the most powerful man and the wealthiest in the world. He then demonstrated an unsurpassed humility. So all he could ask for from his terrified subjects was: "Help me therefore, with strength (and labour)." And the great King was suddenly reduced to a mason, who actively participated in building a strong, protective palisade for his people. This was a practical demonstration of humility, which was never seen in the history of the ancient world; the Great Darius now had turned a bricklayer: "Bring me block of iron. At length when he had filled up the space between the two steep mountainsides, he said: (Blow with your bellows). Then, when he had made it (red) as fire, he said: pour over it, molten lead" (Q.18:96).

The head of the mason had built an iron barrier or gate and he was proud to be personally involved in its construction. The identification of this barrier referred to in verse 96 should help us have a good idea of the tribes or the people for whom it was meant. *Ali Akbar* has identified it as the seaward extremity of the Caspian Wall, otherwise known as Alexander's Wall, to the south of the Caspian Sea; "the wall is 50 miles long, 29 feet high in its entire height about 10 feet thick." It had Iron Gate or *Babul Hadid* and

numerous watchtowers; it formed a formidable defence for the Persian frontier.[94] Darius the Great had traversed every important nook and cranny in his vast empire, especially this important border of the great Persia. Alexander the Great might be an extensive conqueror but not a traveller engaging in journeys like Darius his predecessor, besides, Alexander was not known to have crossed the Caucasus, neither was he noted for justice and righteousness. And he was more of a destroyer than a builder.

It is interesting to draw a parallel between Darius the Great and Hadrat Umar (r.a.) the second Caliph of the last Apostle of God. They were all just, righteous and indefatigable leaders. They all had demonstrated great concern as leaders to their led. And they could go to any extent within the limit of the law to fight oppression to ensure that their rule was in accordance with the laws of God. And as leaders they both had demonstrated unsurpassed sense of humility. They were known to get involved personally in any public work aimed at the welfare of their people. Hadrat Umar Ibn Al-Khatab (r.a.) was also a ruler of the then world, yet, he demonstrated humility and fear of God, the love of the Prophet of Islam and the masses that astonished modern historians. When Umar the Great (ra) heard about Darius the Great from the sacred mouth of the unlettered prophet, with accurate incidental details; he became restive until he at least found one of the last legacy left by his brother, a fellow Muslim and it was discovered. What had really moved Hadrat Umar to find the wall of Zulqarnain? He was not in the least in doubt about the veracity of the story. Gary Miller, a Canadian mathematician had given the most important reason. He said:

> In concurrence with the advice given in the Qur'an to research information (even if it is new); when Umar was caliph, he chose a group of men and sent them to find the wall of Dhul-Qarnayn. Before the Qur'anic revelation, the Arabs had never heard of such a wall, but because the Qur'an described it, they were able

to discover it. As a matter of fact, it is now located in what is called Durbend in the Soviet Union."[95]

And the second reason was, perhaps, he heard the story of a great man like him with a lot in common. Thus, Darius the Great was like Umar the Great; they had a lot in common. And there were interesting similarities between the two great leaders. So the legacy of his brother must be found, and it was found! From the vivid description of the wall, it became easy to identify its location and the chief personality involved in its construction. And all pointed to no one other than Darius the Great.

Zulqarnain's Fortification Wall

The type of wall built by Zulqarnain was known as hill fort. It was a fortified enclosure which according to Forde-Johnston was the most common field monuments in the Celtic world, from Spain to the Balkans and from Alps to Scotland. These hill forts first appeared according to Forde-Johnston in his *History from the Earth* around 1000 BC in the North Alpine Urnfield culture, possibly based on knowledge derived from the Mediterranean world brought either by trade or through mercenary service by Urnfield warriors. It continued to be built and used throughout Iron Age times; to the Roman conquest when its construction was terminated (58-50 BC in Gaul, 43 AD onwards in Britain). Thus, construction of Zulqarnain's wall was a historic reality, the account of its construction was excellently given by the Holy Qur'an.

In spite of the term hill-fort, not all such enclosures were situated in a valley like that of Zulqarnain. For instance, Celtic forts were built on promontories, either coastal or inland, with part of the defences formed by natural features – cliffs or very deep slopes. They were also built, though, less frequently on ridges, cliff or plateau edges and in low-lying situations. "The term fort," Forde-Johnston said, "suggests a permanently manned military site." But it had other uses especially in the Celtic World. Thousands of forts,

which existed, were probably built for a number of different purposes, for example, as temporary refuges in times of danger, others as fortified villages or town, possibly some form of local or tribal capital.

According to the Holy Qur'an Zulqarnain built his fort to protect a town or a village in times of danger, notably against the inroads of the deadly Scythians. However, Forde-Johnston also noted that the protective use of fort extended to the farms involving very large enclosures, 50 or 100 acres in area, which perhaps, could have been intended for cattle, while small enclosures, an acre or less, may well have been farmsteads for a single family unit.[96]

The Principal use of fort was protection and the author also noted that the simplest defence was a bank of earth, derived from a V-shaped ditch, forming a continuous slope from the ditch bottom to the crest of the bank where the defenders would stand. The alternative form of rampart with a vertical, rather than a sloping outer face was built in a variety of ways: with a timber from front and rear in many cases, a core of filling of earth in between, or stone front with either stone or mixed stone and earth fitting. To resist outward thrust of the core, cross timbers running from front to back were used. It was also observed that a very special form of this 'timber-lacing' was developed in Gaul at the times of the Roman conquest, involving a complex timber framework, with iron nails at the intersections, contained in the core, and outer and inner faces of stone, such ramparts were thought to be resistant to attack by fire or battering ram.[97] Forde-Johnston noted that special attention was paid to the entrances. In the widely-used inturned type the ramparts turn inward, parallel to each other, to form a narrow entrance-corridor or roadway, with timber gates near the inner end. Rectangular guard chambers were often placed immediately inside the gates. Other types involved out-turned or inturned/out turned ramparts, overlapping ramparts and various forms of out works.[98]

From the preview of history of fortification, it could be seen that the account of the construction of Zulqarnain wall was the most sophisticated using high technology and skills. The detail account, as given by the Book that explained everything, the civil Engineering skills employed was far ahead of its time-a fort built using blocks, iron and molten lead. The Holy Qur'an gave this account of this form of physical security measure over 1000 years before our recent knowledge on this subject. With this introduction the reader would discerned the wonders of the Holy Qur'an. Darius the great, fitted well in this context because he travelled extensively around the Caucasus and the Balkans, where perhaps, he built many forts in different places.

The vivid description by the Holy Qur'an of how Zulqarnain built a partition wall or an iron barrier at the request of his subjects showed he was a compassionate King and an altruistic religious leader. He declined to accept a payment in the form of a tribute in order to build this wall to serve as a security against the incessant, and menacing attacks of the Gog and Magog. These Gog and Magog were people noted for mischief and nefarious activities, which they always perpetrated against their neighbours and as a result they were known for *Mufsiduna fil ardhi* or doing great mischief on earth. Since these notorious mischief-makers could not be exterminated completely, the best option, therefore, was to have a partition wall erected between the people and the Gog and Magog, otherwise known as *Yajuj* and *Majuj*.

Their victims were desperate to have this hill fortification wall erected. They were even ready to pay the King some token amount, because in the ancient world where might was right, the only way the weak could get things done, was through bribery. Thinking that this visiting King was a leader with no mercy towards his subjects, they proposed to him, "shall we then render thee tribute, in order that thou mightiest erect a barrier between us and them?" This people's proposal showed that corruption was prevalent throughout

the land. "Nothing goes for nothing." A price must be paid to a ruler to get his service done. But this King was a different one as he was unlike Alexander the Great, who left ruins and destruction in his wake as his monument. This one was a King with a fear of God and had a Divine mission to accomplish; his story typified excellent leadership qualities, worthy of emulation by all.

Darius was a leader with a discerning mind and with a clear recognition of the needs of this people. As a just, religious and righteous leader, he did not live in a dream world opposed to reality. He asked, what was the matter?" They replied, "we were under the siege of Gog and Magog, so erect a partition wall between us so that we would remain secured. We were indeed terrified greatly of this people." He immediately appraised the situation, saw that the problems of this people ought to be solved. He therefore, wasted no time in commencing the project. He did not put a heavy burden on these poor people under the pretext of "executing" a heavy project. Instead he said to them: "Help me therefore, with strength of labour. I will erect a strong barrier between you and them."

The provision of labour force was the easiest and cheapest thing the people could provide; every one was aware of the mischievous activities of the Gog and Magog and all wanted a protection against them. They easily recruited able-bodied men, and must have perhaps sent a town crier to call all young and strong men to serve as labourers to come and work for the security of their own community. Therefore, in no time, enough labour force was provided to the King, for the execution of this important protection - a security wall fence or barrier. Darius the King was personally concerned with the need of this people, he participated actively in the construction of their much needed barrier. He was not greedy but contented with what his Wise Lord had given him. The King was enormously wealthy with tributes he received annually from almost all the nations of his world empire. So he was ever conscious of the Blessings *Ahura Mazda* bestowed upon him. He showed his appreciation through the work of righteousness and good leadership.

In fact, it was due to his religious ideals that he became so humble and his leadership qualities were like that of our Umar the Great (r.a.). In ruling according to the laws of God, a leader must not exempt himself from participating in communal work of this nature but he should be seen to serve the people and not to be served by the people. Because the reward of a religious leader comes from God Almighty not through the exploitation of his subjects with a view to accumulating wealth. A leader seeks for God's pleasure at all times in discharging his duty. Darius, in spite of his wealth, power and influence had humbled himself to serve this people not because of any tribute but because of *Ahura Mazda*. He took charge of the construction work. He said:

> Bring me blocks of Iron At length, when he had filled up the space between the two steep mountainsides He said: "Blow (with your bellows)' Then, when he had made it (red) as fire, he said: Bring me, that I may pour over it molten lead." (Q.18:96)

To undertake a project of this dimension without imposing any heavy taxation on the people, proved a leadership with an overriding sense of religious duty, and this religion must be Islamic in nature. Darius, an utmost upholder of *Zoroastrianism*, demanded of them to supply the work force, while he provided the skills and the technical know-how in civil engineering in the construction of this barrier, fortified with molten lead a necessary protection against a formidable foe.

In this story of Zulqarnain (Q.18:94) Allah introduced the Concept of Technology and He cited example where it was employed both in transportation and in civil engineering. Iman Rashid Husain in the introduction of his book, *Quranology* made this exposition: "Verily, We established his power (Zulqarnain) on earth and We gave him the ways and means to all ends." "Giving him the ways and means of doing all things," the Imam observed , "is another way of saying, giving him a technological ability to enable him travel easily and faster on earth and also improving the

living standards of the people he met on his expeditions." He said in the Macropaedia Britannica (Knowledge in depth) Vol. 28 p.451; technology is defined as follows: "the systematic study of techniques for making and doing things." This concept was mentioned by the Holy Qur'an and also defined it with the same terms: "Ways and means to all ends." Thus, with high technology man could virtually do almost everything. The term technology was derived from a combination of the Greek *teche*, art, craft with *logos* word, speech, which meant in Greece a discourse on the arts both fine and applied. The Macropaedia further stated that by early 20th Century, the term embraced a growing range of meanings, processes and ideas in relation to tools and machines.

The Final Revelation – the Book – which explained everything has some of the applications of technology. When Zulqarnain applied his technological ability described in the Qur'an as following "one way he followed, he was able to move very fast and freely over a vast distance. This no doubt suggested a means of transportation facilities that covered the distance between the farthest East and the farthest West. Darius the Great by virtue of his possession of this technology in the ancient world in this context again fit the Personality of Zulqarnain.

Another use of technology mentioned in the Holy Qur'an was civil engineering. He constructed a fortification wall using blocks, molten lead, bellows and other instruments. He was also the historic personage that built the famous Royal Road using heavy equipment in the construction of 1,500 miles, the first of its kind in the ancient world. He was a King with heart for God who constructed the Barrier for the protection of his people.

The Engineer imposed no hardship on this people either economically or physically, since he became part of the work force: his entourage too, must have done the same. The labour and the materials, which included blocks, bellows, to melt the iron lead and

other items could easily be provided by this oppressed people who were all delighted to see their King and a great Engineer personally involved, in the construction of a physical protective barrier against the much dreaded Gog and Magog. The iron wall was built sufficiently high, perhaps with gates and watch towers to prevent this dangerous people from either digging through or climbing over, without being detected. At last, a security barrier was constructed and the just King said: "Thus, were made powerless to scale it or dig through it" (Q.18:97). As a religious leader, at the completion of this project, Darius must have addressed the assembly of this people who came to acknowledge their appreciation and gratitude. He used the opportunity to explain his welfarist policy to the multitude, of which they had just seen a practical example. His administration was aimed at providing peaceful co-existence among peoples of diverse cultures and religions. He further told the people about the international policy of his government and its concern for the application of the rule of law, and prognosticating future events, which he wanted the people to ever remain in anticipation.

The Hadith reported by Abu Huraira, may Allah be pleased with him, was clear in its allegory and could be understood in the context of the Scythians; and the hill fort constructed by Darius the Great. He said that the messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:

> Everyday *Yajuj and Majuj* are digging when they can almost see daylight on the other side, the one in charge of them says, Return and finish it tomorrow. Then Allah make the wall strong as it was before. This will continue until the time comes for them to emerge and Allah desires to let them loose against mankind. They will dig and when they can almost see daylight on the other side, the one in charge will say "Return and finish it tomorrow if Allah wills." So they will dig it and emerge against mankind They will drink up all the water and people will barricade themselves against them in fortresses. They will shoot their arrows towards heaven and they will return with blood stain. They will say, "we have conquered the people of the earth

and overcome the people of heaven." Then Allah will send worms in their necks, which will kill them.

The Holy Qur'an and the authentic Hadith of the Prophet were complementary to each other because of their sublime origin. They fit perfectly every epoch because both were paradigms shifters and were better understood with shift of paradigms. As a result with scientific progress their inexautible quarries of knowledge were more utilised. The Hadith quoted above could be better understood and its allegory more discerned, now than previously.

In this narration the allegorical words used with respect to the Gog and Magog were: breaching of the wall and their sallying forth; the drinking up of all the water, the shooting of the arrows towards heaven; their return with blood stains and their claim of conquering the heaven and the people of the earth. The meaning of this Hadith had puzzled many scholars and commentators for long because of these allegories, which made the identification of who the *Yajuj and Majuj* were extremely elusive. Because much emphasis was laid upon the literal meaning of the Hadith rather than its allegorical meaning, which was replete with meanings and specific to the point.

The digging of the Zulqarnain's wall which was a fortification barrier that had kept them within limited confines meant that thus the *Yajuj and Majuj* worked arduously to scale this wall. What this meant on further reflection was that the people were fighting tooth and nail to gain their political independence from the dominion of various nations. The scythians identification, therefore, fit this context so well. They fought and rebelled against the Medes, the Assyrians and the Babylonians, where their terror reverberated all over the ancient world. Yet, they were unable to establish a viable political system because they remained nomads with high mobility. The more they made inroads and inflict serious damages on various nations, often causing mass migrations of population, the less they made any substantive political control of lands other than the

Scythia. In spite of their high mobility in battles and expertise in archery with creative ingenuity, availed them little as they remained perpetually as subject people. This wild and lawless tribes were deluded by their talents, hence, they became arrogant terrorists of the ancient world.

Even though they were feared and dreaded by many nations, they were held in check by various powerful kings notable among whom was Darius Great. Perhaps, after the death of powerful Kings like him, which resulted in weak global policing and control at that time, *Yajuj and Majuj* made a decisive victory in battle to gain their freedom and exert political control over weaker nations. Thus, this time around they became masters of their own and in political control of lands, inflicting more atrocities than ever before. Therefore, people barricaded themselves against them in fortresses. Their political victory would ascertain anytime they confessed that victory belongs to God and used *insha* Allah in their campaign. Because the use of such words was not their character.

The second allegorical statement regarding the drinking up of water, explained some of the advantages of their political freedom or emancipation. They became oppressors in the land exploiting all the natural resources of the land they were in control. This severe constricting economic exploitation, leaving people in thirst and abject poverty, was aptly described as they will drink up all the water. The economy of every country was like water which nourishes living things. Any country that was heavily economically exploited, it became so pauperised like severe drought leading to famine, starvation and diseases. The Gog and Magog knew that the jugular vein of a nation was her economy, therefore, they went straight for it, thereby, pauperising all nations.

The third allegorical statement made mention of what *Yajuj and Majuj* would do with the 'waters' of all the nations they collected. By siphoning the wealth of every country they would become

extremely wealthy. They would then put a heavy economic yoke upon the neck of the nations they made poor. When they command the poorer nations they would simply obey. Economic Power was the strongest power in the world they reshaped to achieve their purpose. Thus, when they became extremely rich they would embark upon great ventures. In the Hadith the Prophet of Islam (swt) mentioned one of such projects: "They will shoot their arrows towards the heaven and they will return with blood stained to them."

This, "shooting of the arrows towards the heaven" meant Rocket Launchings into the Space, and the "return of the arrows with blood stained," meant a successful mission. A blood stained arrow meant an evidence of a kill or the evidence of hitting the target. This anecdote, therefore vividly explained that in the 7th century Arabia, the Muslims were aware of the successful Conquest of the Space by the Gog and Magog from Hadith of the Prophet (saw). In fact when the Rocket Appolo II discussed previously was shot up into space, it succeeded in landing man on the moon. And when the Astronauts came back from their mission they brought from space samples of rocks and other materials collected on the moon surface "as blood stained arrow". An evidence tendered to prove that the target was hit successfully. This confirmed irrefutably that they indeed had successfully landed on the moon.

The conquest of the space by the Gog and Magog was indeed an astonishing *tour de force*. Hence deluded by their achievements their Astronauts came with incredible story. That there was no God in the heavens; hence, they could have met him. The Russian Cosmonauts were haughtier and even more sarcastic in their utterances. As predicted correctly in the Hadith, Gherman Titov, the Russian Cosmonaut said: "Studying the cosmos and penetrating further and further into the depths of the Universe leaves no place for God on earth or in Heaven.[99] Interestingly, this was the type of statement that was predicted in the Hadith of Abu Huraira (r.a) and

it had exactly come to pass about 14 centuries later.

But despite their phenomenal achievements, "Allah will send worms in their necks which will kill them." This meant *Yajuj and Majuj* would hanker after immortality, which they would not achieve. Because Allah would send 'worms' or bacteria and viruses to kill them. They would die of one form of disease or another. The commonest route of microbial infection is via the mouth or the oropharyngeal route. And the route of transmission of these microbes described as 'worms' in the Hadith is through the mouth, throat and the stomach was mentioned. Hence the 'neck,' the middle of this route was mentioned, indicating death through various microbial diseases. The Hadith narrated, therefore, portrayed the growth and the evolution of this terrible people, and had pointedly shown who the Gog and Magog were.

Thus, this authentic Hadith related by Abu Huraira (r.a) was clear in its parables and specific to the Europeans. But it became clearer and more explicit with the occurences of the aforementioned events particularly the space expedition in history which explained them.. Hence with every shift of paradigm, the Holy Qur'an and the Hadiths of the Prophet, became more understood. The role of the Zulqarnain's wall in the sacred account of this great Historic Personage could now be better understood in the light of modern knowledge. and it was for their phenomenal achievements in science and technology that their habitual sinfulness that was so vile and heinous had become so manifest. This corresponded exactly with what al-Qurtubi reported in another Hadith that Arta Ibn al-Mundhir said *inter alia* that: "Yajuj and Majuj are destined for Jahannam."

Therefore it became imperative that people must barricade themselves in fortresses against them. The weaker nations sought the help and the assistance of powerful kings against this evil people. Zulqarnain did help a lot in this regard. A just king who had

different opinions expressed about him. The opinion of some scholars was that he was a Prophet while others was that he was an Apostle of God. He could be either of the two; there was an evidence of delivering a message in the form of preaching at the end of the construction of the barrier wall. This preaching might give us another clue.

The Preaching

World events were not static but dynamic as nations rose and fell; a mighty nation of today would be a weak nation of tomorrow. It was a changing world. But man should always keep his faith in God and to act in accordance with His Laws. He availed himself of this opportunity to preach to the crowd of the people that gathered before him. Because Darius was a man of God, he said although he was able to provide them with security fence against the Gog and Magog, nevertheless, this was a temporary measure. Nothing was permanent in this dynamic world, except *Ahura Mazda* the Wise Lord. So he made this clear to the people that they should consider this favour as a mercy from *Ahura Mazda*, and that he was only acting as His agent, discharging his duty as a ruler. Darius proved that he was not a mere King but a man who was in constant communion with his Wise Lord, and his heart belonged to Him the Creator of all things. And with a certainty of knowledge he told the poor peasants and their rulers that a time would come when the barrier would cease to serve its purpose. It would crumble into dust and these were his words: "He said: This is a mercy from my Lord: But when the promise of my Lord comes to pass He will make it into dust, And the promise of My Lord is true." (Q.18:98)

The king was in effect expounding Zoroastrianism the religion he professed. Darius the Great said that his Lord *Ahura Mazda* revealed to him that this iron barrier, which he built for them, would not remain permanently. When His promise comes to pass it would be reduced into dust. And surely that time would inevitably come,

because the promise of *Ahura Mazda* was true. Although, it was human to seek for physical protection against any harm, but man should not repose his confidence in physical realities alone, because all human precautions were apt to be futile. So no protection was absolute unless the help of *Ahura Mazda* and His grace. Because the best of all protective devices would crumble to dust when the appointed Day came and *Ahura Mazda* would give the final judgement.

In his explanation of this verse 18:98, Allāma Maududi said: As regards the time of Allah's promise, it had two meanings: (1) It may mean the time of the destruction of the wall, and (2) it may also mean the time of death and destruction of everything destined by Allah at the end of the world i.e. the Hour of Resurrection. Furthermore, the Wall could be assailed without its fallen to pieces, when the people confined within it developed a more sophisticated way of overcoming it. Thus, in both ways, it was not an everlasting barrier. This sacred verse indicated that Darius the Great was preaching eschatology exposed from Zoroastrianism to his people along this border.

The religious leader continued to preach to them the cardinal principles of Zoroastrian eschatology. Their attention was drawn to the constant remembrance of the Day of judgement, where the *Human triad*; good thoughts, good words, and good deeds of man in his earthly life would be weighed on a just scale, and be compared with his evil thoughts, evils words and evil deeds, and shall be judged accordingly. Man would be rewarded either with Paradise when his *Human triad* of goodness overweighed those of evil. He would be punished with Hell when his evil *Human triad* outweighed his goodness. And this Day of Reckoning was inevitable. Ahura Mazda said:

> On that day We shall leave them to surge Like waves on one another The trumpet will be blown And We shall collect them All together And We shall present Hell that day for unbelievers To see, all spread out (Q.18:99-100)

The monarch preached and explained how this Day of judgement would be like when everybody would be in a terrible state of agitation. And the Trumpet would be blown and all the dead would be brought back to life on the day of resurrection. All would be summoned before *Ahura Mazda* for the final judgement. Those who scoffed at Faith and the Day of Judgement would, alas, see the terrible Reality. All these were the pristine teachings of Prophet Zoroaster (a.s) which were revived and spread within his religious sphere of influence by Darius the Great. He preached this religion to his people of Persia bordering Russia which was within his religious dominion.

However, according to Brother Ali Akbar's explication with respect to the Holy Qur'an 18:99-100, the verses were about the strong enmity and hatred among the Euro-Christian nations because they neglected a portion of the Divine covenant, hence, this feud will grow to such dimensions that they would be drawn into conflict: "On that day We shall leave them to surge like waves on one another: The Trumpet will be blown. And we shall collect them All together." (Q.18:99)

He also said that this verse clearly pointed out how they would endeavour to conquer one another and so rush at each other's throat after gaining their material benefits.[100] That after much destruction from the strife, the war and hatred would act as a final warning and so bring them all together. Finally, he corroborated this point of view when he cited this Hadith: No one will have the power to fight against them (Sahih Muslim, 52:20). This prophecy would inevitably come to pass because the European nations were divided into groups and would "surge against one another" at the appointed time of cosmic calamity. They have already polarised into Christian capitalist West and Atheistic communist East both armed with weapons of Mass Destruction (W.M.D.) directed at each other, as

their enmity and hatred of one another intensified. One day, the keg of the gunpowder would explode. To avert this calamity, the British Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill warned that they must be kept from colliding with each other; "for if that happens, both Gog and Magog would be smashed to pieces...," he said. This was an important allegorical statement that lent credence to the purported antipathy between the two European nations. But the showdown could not be obviated at the appointed time. To find precisely the place of the hill fort the position of the barrier became very important. The iron wall was a useful indicator to its location and its builder, and Gog and Magog.

The Location of the Iron Wall

Having discussed Darius' teachings of Zoroastrianism to the people, it would be pertinent to identify both the people and the location of the iron barrier he built. In addition, the discernible personality of this King, his sense of religious duty and style of administration would combine to help us recognise who Zulqarnain was. The geography of the place in question, would also add to reveal both the people and the position of this important iron barrier. Darius, being a widely travelled King, in one of his journeys came to certain people, obviously with a language barrier for effective communication. The Holy Qur'an stated: "Until, when he reached (A tract) between two mountains, He found, between them a people who scarcely understood a word." (Q.18:93)

The King could not speak the language of his subjects; who solicited for his kind assistance, so he had parleys with them through interpreters, because he wanted to have the pith and tenor of what was being said (Q.18:94-98). Obviously, he could not have been Alexander the Great. Because this personality proved to be a humble, humane, just and a kind religious King, who was motivated by religious ideals to travel out to the remotest areas of his empire in

order to touch the lives of his subjects for good and to see the impact of his administration on the ground. In contrast, the Macedonian warlord was known for hauteur, wickedness, tyranny and avarice, who raided the Persian empire leaving ruins and destruction in his wake because his cruelty knew no bounds. Lockhart and Boyle wrote that Alexander in the Persian or National Epic was anathematised: "..In an older and more authentic tradition he is represented as the accursed Alexander the Roman, who urged on by the evil spirit brought havoc, destruction and slaughter into Persia, burned Persepolis and the Zoroastrian scriptures... and finally self-destroyed fled to hell."[101]

The mercilessness of the Macedonian conqueror was acclaimed by historians, Greek and non-Greek. Even his closest friends and allies alike had condemned him for wickedness. He never kept any friendship for long as he cast aside whoever accepted him for one reason or another. He was known to be an epileptic who was impetuous with sudden 'longing' for violence. His epileptic attacks were occasioned with rage and dangerous homicidal tendencies. To say that: "he was urged by the evil spirit to wreak havoc," was not altogether a character assassination. Although epilepsy was said to afflict only those favoured by the gods, Alexander's *compos mentis* was questioned by many. There was no way such a personality could be the Qur'anic Zulqarnain, as described in Q.18:94-98.

Another important consideration which confirmed his disqualification was that the geographical location and place of where the iron wall was built, was never traversed by Alexander. History had shown that he was never known to have visited the Caucasus throughout the period of his conquest of terror. Besides, the construction of an iron barrier of this magnitude and importance could never have escaped the eagle eyes of either the Greek or Roman historians. Yet, no one had ever mentioned that the celebrated King of Macedonia demonstrated this sense of welfarism towards his subjects. Although Ustadh Abdullahi Yusuf Ali de-

emphasised the importance of geography and places in Qur'anic stories and parables, which he considered irrelevant, yet, he used both to clinch his Zulqarnain's identification with Alexander the Great. He wrote:

> If then, the Barrier in XVIII:95-98 refers to the Iron Gate near Bukhara, we are able to proceed to a consideration of the Gog - Magog people with some confidence. They were the Mongols tribes on the other side of the Barrier, while the industrious men who did not understand Zulqarnain's language were the Turks, with their agglutinative language, so different from the language spoken in Western Asia.[102]

Similarly, Syed Maududi opined that in the selection of the ruler with the title applicable to him, he must have constructed a strong wall across a mountain pass to protect his kingdom from the incursions of Gog and Magog. This the great scholar said would help to determine as to who were Gog and Magog. It would further assist us to find out when such a wall was built and by whom and to which territory it was adjacent to. Thus, the application of geography or other branches of sciences would enhance our understanding of stories and parables mentioned in the Holy Scripture. They were, therefore, desirable.

Since Alexander was never known to have been in the Caucasus, where Zulqarnain was more likely to have built the Barrier, he shifted the goal-post to a different area in his attempt to make good his identification with the deified Alexander. Because as he stated there were two iron gates geographically apart but each had local associations with the name of Alexander the Conqueror. He further stated that incidentally, both were near the town of Derbend. Which of them corresponded exactly to the Qur'anic description was the crux of the matter. It is pertinent to posit that the local associations of these two Barriers with the name Alexander, therefore, arose from the wrong perception that he was the Qur'anic Zulqarnain. So that anything, which was associated or believed to



Source: *Story of Greece*, Macgregor, 1960

Socrates, the Divine Philosopher drank the hemlock in 399 BC.



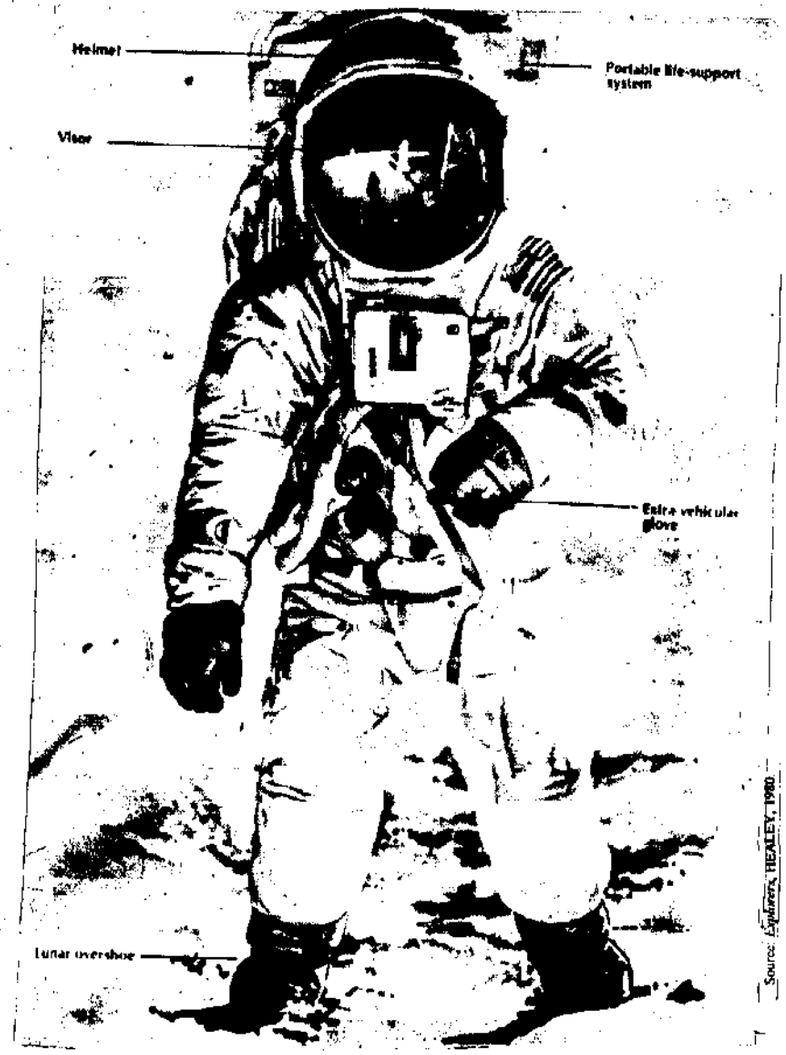
'As they "swarm swiftly to every hill" they have conquered the space here is an Astronaut in space suit, walking on the moon.

Source: Healey, *Explorers*, 1980



Source: Huxley (ed) *Mountains* (1962)

As 'they swarm swiftly to every hill', here is a mountaineer at the summit of Mount Everest the highest peak in the world, 8848 metres.



The Glorious Qur'an is the only Scripture, which predicts the space conquest (Q.55:33). Here an Astronaut is shown in space suit on the summit of the moon. According to Tim Healey the portable life-support system on the back supplied oxygen, and water to cool the body, through a network of tubes in the suit. The suit was made of flexible layers of aluminium, coated nylon and Teflon. The helmet had a visor to protect against thermal radiation, ultra violet and infrared light.



Source: *Explorers*, HEALEY, 1980

They were intrepid explorers. Here an explorer into the South Pole traipsed in the snow.



Source: Miller, *The Sea*, (1966)

As 'they sallied forth', they even conquered the sea. Here are Divers in Aqualung in *underwater world*.



Source *Concerning Brave Captains*, Mu[illegible] 964.

As 'they sallied forth', they explored and colonised every conceivable niche. Here British Military Officers are shown in the interior of Africa after a successful conquest of the Sokoto Caliphate in 1903.



Source: *Concerning Brave Captains*, MUFFETT, 1964.

Hadith says that: They (Yajuj and Majuj) will come out against people (colonial conquests) and drink all the water (exploitation of natural resources) and people will flee from them (because of military action to annex them). Here British Officers are shown in a military action, the conquest of Northern Nigeria in 1903, using 75mm guns.

be associated with Zulqarnain. was automatically attributed to Alexander the Great. Again another important point of deliberation was that Ustadh Abdullahi Yusuf had tied the identification of the Barrier with Alexander's story so closely and intimately that he shifted certain events to meet up or correlate with the story of the Greek warrior.

Thus, in order to find the location of the Barrier, we ought to tread or follow the foot-prints of Alexander in the sand of history. Although he had nothing to do with this historical Barrier, yet we were made to keep chasing a shadow. Obviously, a wrong diagnosis of an ailment would never lead to its good treatment. As to which of the Barrier had corresponded with the Qur'anic story, we must according to this line of argument have an additional tag, Alexander's footprints when he said: "the best claim to be connected with Alexander's story." But instead, what we should have done was to allow the Qur'anic facts to lead us to the right man, the place and the right position of the Iron Wall. Obviously, the choice of Alexander was a wrong one, so there was no way he could lead us to the best claim. Yet, in selecting, which of the Barriers was more ideal or with the best claim, he explained:

> The best known in modern times is at the town and seaport of Derbend in the Middle of the Western Coast of the Caspian sea. It is now in Soviet territory of Daghistan. Before the Southern expansion of Russia in 1813 it belonged to Persia. A spur of Mount Caucasus here comes up north, close to the sea. The wall in question is 50 miles long with an average height of 29 feet. As Azarbaijan (in Persia) is not far from this place, some writers have mixed up the Derbend Iron gate with Azarbaijan, and some with Caucasian town of Kharz (Kars), which is to the south of the Caucasus.[103]

But the Caucasian Iron Gate offered the best claim to this Barrier, which he also admitted that most writers claimed was the one mentioned in Holy Qur'an. This territory of Daghestan even at the time of writing this book, were fighting Russia under President

Boris Yeltsin for an independent Islamic Republic. It was a fierce battle in which modern weapons were used by the Russian army to crush the Muslims. The people of Chechenya their neighbours also were fighting for their independence to establish a free Islamic state from the Russian Republic. The Caucasus, therefore, since the time of Darius the Great was inhabited with religious people now imbued with an unflinching faith in Islam. There was, however, better evidence that the Barrier was located somewhere else. There were local traditions in the Astraghan region at the mouth of the river Volga, higher up the Caspian connecting this Caucasian Iron Gate with the name of Alexander. These traditions had only originated from the false notion that Zulqarnain was the historical Alexander the Great. It was based on this belief too that the Gate was wrongly named after him. The fact remained that the Macedonian Conqueror had never been to this area, yet a Barrier was named after him, which underscored this fallacious fact that Alexander was the Qur'anic Zulqarnain.

If this Gate in the Caucasus was accepted by Ustadh Abdullahi Yusuf, as the Barrier with the best claim, then it would be rather impossible to reconcile it with the fact that Alexander had never known the existence of such an area, let alone to have constructed a barrier for its people. This would no doubt box him into a corner. So having sensed this serious dilemma, he rejected this Caucasian iron Gate with plausible reasons. He gave four reasons why we should reject it, viz:

(1) This does not correspond exactly to the description in xviii 96 ("the space between the two steep mountain sides"). The gap is between the mountain and the sea. (2) Alexander the Great (assuming that Zulqarnain is Alexander), is not known to have crossed the Caucasus. (3) There is an Iron Gate which corresponds exactly to the description, in a locality which we know Alexander to have visited. (4) In the early days, when Muslims spread to all parts of the world, local legends were started by ignorant people connecting the places they new with places referred to in the Qur'an.[101]

At the outset, therefore, let us posit that if these words, "correspond exactly to the description", have any meaning, we must first apply them to Alexander himself. Did he correspond exactly to the description in the Holy Qur'an? The answer was no, he did not. Therefore, all his work which he did and those which were ascribed to him were vitiated on the ground of wrong identification. But for the sake of objectivity and truth, we should follow the argument to its just conclusion. His last reason gave the genesis of how Alexander was locally associated with Zulqarnain based upon assumption. History had now shown such an assumption to be baseless and unfounded. Alexander was never known to be a widely travelled man as a king but only as a conqueror who raided the world in a murderous conquest until he died without effectively ruling it absolutely. On the contrary, Darius the Great was a widely travelled man with dominion over the world. Perhaps, he had built the barrier in question in the two localities.

All the areas mentioned – Armenia, Azarbaijan, the Zagros and the Caucasus were all parts of his *satrapies*. He was in absolute control of all. Therefore, taking his credentials into consideration, he was in the best position to build the iron wall in ancient history. It would be pertinent to remember he built the Royal Road of 1,500 miles in length; he had dredged the Nile in Egypt, no doubt he was the most likely person to have built this Iron Barrier in the Caucasus. In fact, it was possible he had built them all. This Caucasian Iron Wall according to another writer had fitted exactly to the sacred description, "the space between the two steep mountains and the sea." And he added his weight in its favour. The author, Ali Akbar was in support of this Caucasian Iron Gate, and that it corresponded exactly with the Qur'anic story. He wrote:

> The barrier mentioned in verse 96 is the sea ward extremity of Caucasian Wall, otherwise known as Alexander's Wall, to the

South of Caspian sea. The Wall is 50 miles long, 29 feet high in its entire height and about 10 feet thickness. With its iron gates and numerous watch towers it formed a formidable defence to the Persian frontier. The Mountains mentioned are in Azerbaijan and Armenia.[105]

This Caucasian Wall, contrary to the opinion previously held, corresponded exactly to the Qur'anic story. A 50-mile length was a reasonable distance between the two mountains, one in Azarbaijan and the other in Armenia and people living in the coastal mountainous areas, especially with hostile neighbours no doubt were living in grave danger. Naturally, they ought to seek government assistance to provide them with physical security. A security fence between these two mountains was a capital project which only the government could execute; it was beyond the scope of communal effort. The people of this area, inhabiting the Zagros mountains, and Azarbaijan including Armenia, paid their annual tributes to the great King Darius. So he owed them certain obligations of this kind. Furthermore, it was in this area that the great Prophet Zoroaster was born. Consequently, therefore, the area had a sacred history. So he was the best person to treat their complaints religiously and administratively, not Alexander, a foreign invader who came to conquer them and to steal their resources. The best the people of the area could expect was to be made, 'an Island of Hellenism in the sea of barbarians', which was the international policy of Alexander the Great. Thus, this Caucasian Wall with Iron Gate referred to in Arabic as *Bab-ul-hadid* was built by Darius the Great.

Moreover, the Caucasian Iron Wall had gained the support of the erudite Syed Maududi. His exposition of the precise location of the Barrier was quite revealing. He wrote:

> Some people have entertained the misunderstanding that the wall attributed here to Zul-Qarnain refers to the famous Wall of China, whereas this wall was built between Derbent and

> Dar'yal, two cities of Daghestan in the Caucasus, the land that lies between the Black Sea and the Caspian. There are high mountains between the Black Seal and Dar'yal having deep gorges which cannot allow large armies to pass through them. Between Derbent and Dar'yal, however, there are no such mountains and the passes also are wide and passable. In ancient times savage hordes from the north invaded and ravaged southern lands through these passes and the Persian rulers who were scared of them had to build a strong wall, 50 miles long, 29 feet high and 10 feet wide, for fortification purposes, ruins of which can still be seen. Though it has not yet been established historically who built this wall in the beginning, the Muslim historians and geographers assign it to Zul-Qarnain because its remains correspond, with the description of it given in the Qur'an.[106]

But Ustadh Abdullahi Yusuf, having no convincing historical evidence to link the Macedonian conqueror historically, with this Caucasian Wall, shifted the location of the Barrier to Hissar district, about 150 miles south east of Bukhara or Sogdiana. He claimed that it was here near another Derbend in the Central Asia, that this historic Barrier was built. Simply because Alexander had traversed this area during his conquest. He wrote:

> We now come to the Iron Gate which corresponds exactly to the Qur'anic description, and has the best claim to be connected with Alexander's story. It is near another Derbend in Central Asia, Hissar District, about 150 miles South-east of Bukhara. A very narrow defile, with overhanging rocks, occurs on the main route between Turkestan and India: Latitude 380N Longitude 670E. It is now called in Turki Bughol-Khana (Goat-house)...[107]

Here again, too much emphasis was put on Alexander's visit, which created a vicious cycle of error. He was wrongly identified as Zulqarnain, and based upon this wrong notion he was used as the yardstick or a guide for identifying a barrier he allegedly built. But two wrongs would never make a right. Any barrier identified based on Alexander was more likely to be false and a misrepresentation. And even this very narrow defile with overhanging rocks, the

industrious people needed not have asked for assistance, for they could easily have built the protective barrier themselves. After all it was not as wide and as long as the Caucasian Wall, which would expose people easily to invasion and which no doubt needed government support in its construction. Because it could not be undertaken and executed by communal effort alone. But to prove his claim he stated that:

> ...We know from history that Alexander after his conquest of Persia and before his journey to India, visited Sogdiana (Bukhara) and Maracanda (Samarqand). We also know from Muqaddasi, the Arab traveller and geographer, who wrote about A.H. 375 (AD 985-6) that the Abbasi Khalifa Watthiq (842-846 AD) sent out a mission to Central Asia to report on this Iron Gate. They found the defile 150 yards wide; on two jambs made with bricks of Iron welded together with molten lead, were hung two huge gates which were kept closed. Nothing could correspond more exactly with the description in xviii:95-96.[108]

The testimony of Muqaddasi did not show convincing evidence of Alexander's participation in the construction of this small defile. If at all he had anything to do with it, we could have had a corroboration from Greek and Roman historians. Arrian, the great historian to the warlord would not have missed the imageries of his king busy working like a bricklayer. From history it was never claimed by any writer that he undertook such a project. It was not a historic reality but an imagination in the minds of people who believed rather dogmatically that he was the Zulqarnain. Even so the testimony of this Arab traveller and geographer was more of a temple than a protective Barrier constructed on passionate plea to a great King. Similarly, the testimony of the Chinese traveller, which he had mentioned equally proved the same thing but with a little elaboration. This traveller, Hiouen Tsiang, saw it on his journey to India, as two folding gates cased with iron and hung with bells and near it was a lake named *Iskandar kul*, connecting the locality with

Alexander the Great. From this Chinese account nothing could more exactly paralleled a temple or shrine after all it was called in *Turki Buzghol Khanu*, or goat house. Furthermore, it could be argued that a piece of work of this minor scale needed no outside help or assistance for its execution; besides, it was an area with overhanging rocks, which could be an added physical security. Unlike the mountainous seaside along the Persian-Russian border which made the inhabitants vulnerable to foreign invasions.

I must say that the people of this locality were even lucky, otherwise, Alexander would have destroyed it to be renamed after him, because such a thing was the hallmark of his love of power and over-ambition. He weighed every move he made on the scale of his ambition and his love of glory. His army moved like hordes of marauders destroying everything they came across. Consequently, within the years of his conquests, his name became synonymous with terror and destruction, a Frankenstein monster or a killing machine on the loose. We now know from history that Alexander undertook conquests not journeys and his conquest of India was one of the bloodiest and most terrifying. Even if he visited Sogdiana or Bukhara on his bloody conquest, he was not in the good frame of mind to listen to the "cry for help", from anybody. Instinctively, he was a killing machine, moving like a hungry lion on the sight of blood. It was also a time when he was loosing control of his army, signalling a decline in his career. Most of his generals were demoralised and tired of these 'senseless' campaigns, which had a beginning but with no apparent end. He must have passed through Bukhara in a raiding way perhaps to send shivers down the spines of Indians who were on the verge of confronting him in battles.

Evidently, the morale of his army was at its lowest ebb. Most of the generals he inherited from King Philip, were aged, weary and disillusioned with the whole campaign. In 327 BC, and after

celebrating his marriage with Roxana, daughter of Oxyartes at Bactra, he descended into the valley of the Indus and advanced as far as the Hyphasis (Sutlej) . The Indian Princes Porus and Taxiles submitted to the war-lord. He descended the Indus with the orgy to kill, and he was galvanised into doing so when he was wounded at Mali. His conquest of the Far East, was already discussed in chapter three of this book and his ruthlessness on his route to India is well known.

The Macedonian warlord died shortly after in 323 BC in Babylon. It was ironical if the Graeco-Roman historians could tell us that Alexander had personally put the torch of fire which burnt a magnificent palace at Persepolis but failed to tell us that their idol and god had built Iron Wall for the protection of certain people. So that posterity could judge him as a just and not a tyrannical King. However, the truth was that he never did a project like this type. Having discussed so much on the Wall, the reason for its construction would be equally be discussed in like manner. Although the debate on who were the Gog and Magog is beyond the scope of this book, it must be mentioned to lend further credence, that Darius the Great was the real Zulqarnain. It was imperative to delve into this subject because both Zulqarnain and this people, the Gog and Magog, were contentious issues which this book ought to clarify.

It could not be far-fetched to assert that the construction of this hill fortification wall was the single reason why the Great King had invaded Scythia, the land of the Gog and Magog. This expedition had provided the missing link of the main objective of Darius' expedition in Southern Russia. The Great King could proselyte his religion to the people of this area because they fell within the realm of his religious influence. And because it was a religious expedition it remained shrouded in secrecy. No historian could tell precisely

what King Darius did in Scythia.

Scythia was the name given by the ancient Greeks after about 800 BC to the homeland of the Scythians in the Southeast part of Europe, eastward from the Carpathian Mountains to the Don River. The name Scythia was sometimes applied by ancient geographers to the greater parts of South eastern Europe and Asia, from the Danube River to the mountains of Turkestan. But according to Herodotus definition, Scythia, was the section of the steppes bordered on the West by the lower Danube and the Carpathians, on the east by the Don River and the Kuban valley, on the South by the Black sea and the Caucasus, and on the north by the thick forest that stretches along the fertile grassland.

The extent to which Darius had traversed this area was shrouded in history. But from the Qur'anic account of Zulqarnain, it could be deduced that the religious leader came through Scythia into the Caucasus, where many Scyths remained on the Southern shores of the Black sea and in parts of Armenia at about 512 or 513 BC. There, the King constructed a hill fort for certain people, on request against these barbarians.

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Chapter Nine

THE GOG AND MAGOG

> They said: "O Zulqarnain! The Gog and Magog (people) do great mischief on earth.
>
> - Suratul Kahf

> And the Word of theLORD came unto me, saying, son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Mesheck and Tubal, and prophesy against him.
>
> - Ezekiel

A lot had been written about this people the Gog and Magog, otherwise known as Yajuj and Majuj. The common consensus of most writers about them was that they were people known to wreak havoc, to others, thus, aptly described in the Holy Scripture as people who: "Do great mischief on earth" or *Mufsiduna fil ardhi*. So who were they? Ustadh Abdullahi Yusuf Ali identified them as the Mongols while Brother Ali Akbar identified them as the Slavs and Teutonic tribes of Russia. Syed Maududi's opinion about this people was that:

> As regards Gog and Magog, it has been nearly established that they were the wild tribes of Central Asia who were known by different names - Tartars, Mongols, Huns and Scythians – who had been making inroads on settled kingdoms and empires from ancient time...[1]

This nqtion was more in line with the modern understanding of the subject. The Scythians who typified members of these wild tribes, were the most notorious of them all. Thus, in this discourse the term Scythians was to mean all members of this group. What applied to the Scythians more or less was applicable to each of them. He also held the view that the Gog and Magog were the wild tribes of North Eastern Asia, which from the very early times had been making inroads into settled kingdoms and empires in Asia and in Europe and ravaging them. According to Genesis (Chapter 10),

they were the descendants of Japheth, the son of Noah, and the Muslim historians have also accepted this. And according to the book of Ezekiel (Chapter 38, 39), they inhabited the territories of Meschech (Moscow) and Tubal (Tubalsek). According to the Israelite historian, Josephus, they were the Scythians and their territory spread to the north and the east of the Black Sea. According to Jerome, Magog inhabited the territory to the north of Caucasia near the Caspian Sea.[2]

While Abd al-Hamid in his book *Yajuj and Majuj* agreed with their human origin, he did not identify them. He simply stated that *Yajuj and Majuj* were descendents of Adam and Hawwa (Eve) but their phenotypic form and character differed to a certain extent from the rest of mankind. But the author pointed out sharply their cultural traits thus: "It is in their nature to wreak havoc on earth by destroying crops and herds and to be jealous of their neighbours and it is in their blood to inflict harm on all creatures on earth and in heaven."[3] This in fact, was in line with the opinion of many scholars and commentators. With their identity shrouded in mystery the writer, however, quoted Ibn Kathir to give both their ancestry and physical appearance.

Ibn Kathir stated in *al Bidaya wa an-Nihaya* that they were descendant of Yafith (Japheth), the father of the Turks. Yafith was a son of Nuh, peace be upon him. Ibn Kathir said in the same book that:

> They are people who have racial characteristics of the Turks, with small eyes, flat noses, and reddish hair and the same stature and colour. Anyone who claims that some of them are as tall as palm trees, and others have huge ears has delved into something about which he has no knowledge, and Allah knows best.[4]

This descriptive analysis of the Gog and Magog was appropriate and very much in line with the modern understanding of the subject. This people had two forms of phenotypic features: The

Europoeids and the Mongoloid. These varied forms of a features were derived from their two origins the Western and the Eastern respectively. Ibn Kathir vividly described only the Mongoloid features, perhaps, due to their preponderance in the Far East. While those with the Europeiod features were more commonly found in the West and the Near East. All these features were seen among the Scythians, before they finally misgenated to develop a more predominant Caucasian feature.

But in my opinion, the *Yajuj and Majuj* could more correctly be identified as the Scythians who had intermixed with many tubes and with both with the Slavs and Teutonic in Russia and became the dominant warring and fiercely dangerous tribes of Southern Russia. They were dreaded by all people, especially their neighbours because of their cannibalism and their propensity for both human and property destruction. Taking the testimony of Magnus Magnusson into account, we learned a lot about this people from the findings of Scythian excavations in 1929. He said that the Archaeologists in Russia opened a new chapter of their pre-history when they excavated a frozen cemetery of Scythian Princes. Magnusson who wrote about who the Scythians were said that:

> The Scythians were a fierce nomadic people who roamed the steppes of Russia north of the Black Sea on horseback some 2,500 years, when classical Greek civilisation was at its peak. The Scythians were the first of the Iron Age Russians and had close trade contacts with Greece. Throughout the nineteenth century many handsome gold and silver objects of Scythian origin had been found in scattered burial mounds, but these had attracted little attention in the Western World compared with Schliemann's find at Troy and Mycenae.[5]

Herodotus also had visited the Steppe in Russia and had given a vivid description of the Scythian burial customs in the following words:

> Then the body of the dead King is laid in a grave, stretched

> upon a mattress. Spears are fixed in the ground on either side of the corpse, and beams stretched across above it to form a roof, which is covered with thatching. In the open space around the body of the King they bury one of his concubines, and also his cup bearer, his cook, his groom, his lackey, his messenger, some of his horses... and some golden cups. After this they set to work and raise a vast mound above the grave.[6]

C. I. Rudenko, a Soviet archaeologist from the state Ethnographical Museum led an expedition in 1929 into the high Altai Mountains in Siberia where a group of these burial mounds had been discovered in a valley called Pazyryk, and were at an attitude of 1650 meters above sea level. Herodotus, had further described the Scythian's festive practices at the funeral, whereby they got drunk by inhaling the vapour of roasted hemp seeds in a partable booth made of poles and felt. Rudenko found a cauldron with a bundle of poles and felt sheeting.[7] This corresponded with great historian account.

Though there was considerable controversy about the exact origin and race of the Scythians, the weight of the evidence indicated that they were an Indo-European people who mingled with the Turks, Mongolia and Huns. Levin and Potapov, added a Siberian connection when they stated that among the people barrier in the Pazyryk barrows, there were some who were typical Mongoloids in physique latter than Europeiods as in the Black Sea region. This, therefore, meant that the culture of the Southern Siberian tribes in the middle of the first millennium BC, was related intimately with the Black Sea Scythian culture and intermixed with many ethnic groups. But most of the scanty linguistic and physical type of skeletal remains supported the Indo-European designation. Thus, Scythians were undoubtedly Europeans in origin. They were believed to have settled in Eurasian steppes in the Altai region, early in the second millennium BC., but until the 8th century BC, during the Chou dynasty of China, the Emperor Hauan drove the warlike Hsuing-nu from his borders. According to this school of thought a

cascade of reaction of mass migrations was driven to attack its Western neighbour. And at the end of the 8th century the Scythians were attacked by the Massagetae from the east and the Scythians in twin, crossed the Volga and fell upon the Cimmerians and drove them through the Caucasus into Anatolia.

But according to Levin and Potapov view on who created the Pazyryk culture wrote that the Pazyruk barrows were most probably left by rivals of the Mongolian Huns – the Eastern Scythians, Yueh-chih, who were known to the ancient writers as Massagetai. These Scythians or Yueh-chih had ruled the nomads inhabiting the Central Asia to the Kansu, including the Huns before the rise of the Huns in the third century BC. At the beginning of the second century BC., however, the Huns were liberated during the time of Shan Yueh Mo-leh. Having been liberated they, therefore, gathered momentum in 165 BC to expel the Yueh-chih who then moved to the West after they were completely routed by the Shan-Yueh Lao Shan.[8] These ferocious people sent many peoples packing as they migrated from the East to the West.

Most of the Scyths passed through the Caucasus and took over the region around the Lake Van. But before their expulsion to the West they mingled with various peoples on the East. They first appeared from Assyrian records during the reign of Esarhaddon (680-699 BC). They appeared not to have permanent friends but permanent interest. For instance, they fought against the Assyrians and later allied with them against the Mannai, Medes and Babylonians. They were sufficiently powerful to roam and plunder in whatever direction they chose. They conducted raids resulting into mass migration of people as far South as Egypt and in Palestine the city of Beth-shan (modern Beisan) was renamed Scythopolis, the city of Scythians, probably in testimony to Scythian occupation. Similarly, these coarse savages made inroads into Carphae (modern Haran, Turkey). The Scythians were at the zenith of their power in the 7th century. Herodotus even wrote that they ruled all Upper Asia

for 28 years. But with the rise of Median Empire, the might of these marauders was broken by the Median King Cyaxares. He made Madyes the Scythian chief and his strongmen completely inebriated in a banquet he organised in their honour and then murdered them. He expelled them from Media to gain his freedom.

The coarse savages went haywire as they moved to the West. Tamara Talbot Rice wrote that whilst being evicted from Medes, Scythians set Karmir Blur on fire destroying the ancient capital. This settlement was first known in the 7th century BC when the Urarlian Russa I, chose it as his administrative and military centre. He then renamed it to Teishabani in honour of the god Teishap. It became a beautiful city, with impressive palace citadel and many thatched houses. Unfortunately, Scythians burnt the city to ashes.[9] The Scythians finally moved into the Caucasus and Southern Russia. Rice appeared to agree with Herodotus when she wrote that the Asiatic plain had remained the nomadic preserve in the hands of the Scyth-Sakian tribesmen at the beginning of the first millennium BC. This, according to the author, was when Scythian and kindred Asiatic nomads roamed its vastness. She further stated that this confederation of tribes shared a characteristic culture and way of life of their own, though the various clans remained distinct and autonombus.[10] The Scythio – Sakians rule of the Asiatic steppes was subsequently replaced by that of the Huns.

Undoubtedly, Scythians appeared to have two roots of origins – the Eastern and Western. Although the origin still remained fluid, it could be hypothesised that the Western or European origin was from Russia and Asiatic origin was probably Iranian with language akin to old Persia. But Scythians of whatever geographical location had two distinguishing characteristics: "savagery and ingenuity." These helped them to terrorise peoples hence, they correctly fitted the Qur'anic description of *Mufsiduna fit-ardhi;* for unknown reasons at the end of the fourth century BC, the Eastern Scythians migrated into Europe where they intermingled with many peoples.

Although the Scythians were feared for their savagery, they were also admired for their prowess in war and expert horsemanship. They were also exceptional craftsmen who produced wonderful works of art of remarkable ingenuity. They produced art works which portrayed animals with considerable realism that was likewise observed by Siberia's early metal workers. This similarity in artwork had made some writers to hypothesise a relationship between Scythians and the early Siberian peoples. This hypothesis, perhaps might gain the support of the archaeological finds of Scythian Excavation of 1929 which showed that they were the first of the Iron Age people of Russia. Describing the technical skills of the Scythians, Tamara Talbot Rice wrote that: "They embraced a wide range of articles but it is in vessels, weapons and horse trappings that their artists are seen at their most characteristics."[11]

The Scythians worked in a wide variety of materials adding to Rice's list: wood, leather, bone, appliqué felts, bronze, iron, sliver, gold and electrum. The tombs of Pazyryk in the Altai revealed many well preserved articles of clothing that were trimmed with embroidery and appliqué designs; the clothes of the wealthy in Southern Russia were covered with tiny gold – embossed plaques sewn to the garments. The art of the ancient world was essentially an animal or soldier with an animal. The Scythians had undoubtedly excelled in this field. For example, the 6th century BC from the burial of Kostromskaya Stanitsa in the Kuban, was perhaps the loveliest of the gold stags. Similarly, the Tapioszentmarton in Hungary of 5th century BC and that of the Kul Oba in Crimea in 4th century were all Scythians *en resume* both by their mischievous activities and creative technical skills which were strong indicators that they were they Gog and Magog. This identification would be more convincing as we study Scythians in the West and how they caused, with their creative geniuses, the intellectual revolution in European nations.

The Scythians being a fierce nomadic type of people who roamed the steppes of Russia north of the Black Sea, must have collided with Darius the Great, whose reign was also at its peak about 2,500 years ago. This could be around 513 BC, which corresponded exactly with the time when the Great King quelled the Scythian incursions and their devastating inroads into Persia. He invaded the Scythians of Southern Russia, and subjected the Scythians who were across the Sea: Scythians with pointed caps and the Haoma growing Scythians. Darius the Great could have undertaken a voyage in his circumnavigation around the Black Sea, perhaps, it was this sea that was described as 'a spring of murky water' as he travelled north polewards. He must have also encountered these dangerous Scythian tribes bordering his empire. The King had always sought to engage the Scythians wherever he found them to settle his personal vendetta because a century earlier they had caused devastation of the Medes in Pars.

Although there were many Scythians scattered in Central and Western Asia and in Europe, the tribe in reference to the Qur'anic story were perhaps the Slavian Scythian tribes of Russia bordering Persia. Because Wright Miller had mentioned a certain group of Scythians who migrated from Persia in 700 BC, to settle in Russia. They spoke Persian language, wore luxurious carpets and worked in Iron as well as Copper. They were tribes with dominant cultural traits that easily miscegenated with other peoples. However, these Scythians were dreaded because of their tough nomadic habits and cannibalism. They used the skulls of their enemies as drinking cups, consequently, the Scythians remained a byword for barbarism among the later Russians.[12] The Slavs first to be identified in 600 BC were already living in the regions of the Dnieper, the Vistula and the Dniester river. They mixed with the Scythians and traded with the Greeks, Persians and Arabs. But largely they moved about by waterways plundering their neighbours in a devastating manner. These Scythians at some very early date settled at the sites of the most ancient Russian towns like Kieve.[13]

These Scythians were hordes of marauders and ferocious cannibals who were undoubtedly dreaded barbarians. Hence, they were most likely the people referred to as *Yajuj* and *Majuj* in the Zulqarnain's story. Since they moved along waterways, they might have used the Caspian Sea and the mountainous areas of Armenia and Azarbaijan to wreak havoc to the Persians living along the border. The best way to check their incursion was to erect an iron wall to serve as protection, a defensive wall between a mountain in Armenia and another in Azarbaijan. This was what Darius the Great did to safeguard his subjects from the perils of both human and property destruction by these wild barbarians.

As a religious leader and one who was in communion with God, Darius the Great knew there would be a time when the physical wall would no longer serve its functions. Because at the last hour the world would encounter cosmic calamity and all physical structures would be reduced to ruins. Darius the Great used the occasion to expound his Zoroastrian eschatology. Thus, it was better to repose faith and confidence in Ahura Mazda, rather than on physical or mundane things. The Wise Lord was ever a protecting friend nay Helper to all that seek His help. Although the Gog and Magog were wild and barbaric they were ingenious people. The Great King was aware too that at a time in distant future they would sally forth, thereby, making the barrier ineffective. It was interesting to see that the generations of the Slavs, who were known, for 'slavery' in the three century BC, and from the word Slavs, the word slavery was coined because at that time the word was synonymous with servitude. They were together with the Scythians, and produced generations with scientific and technological might to even colonise the space.

Therefore, from whatever angle you view the Zulqarnain story, it was beyond the ken of man to produce. Because what appeared to be a simple reply to a critic in the 7th century Arabia was loaded

with diversified fields of knowledge, which included Ancient History, Geography, Cultural Geography and Astronomy. All these could be expounded from the three expeditions of this great historic personage. This, however, excluded the spiritual lessons to be learned from the story, which is beyond the scope of this book. The world would always remain to bear witness to the miracles of the Holy Qur'an, the very Book which God Himself had authored and it was revealed and not created: That this is indeed a Qur'an Most Honourable" (Q.46:77).

Darius the Great had erected a barrier to keep his people against the menacing inroads of *Yajuj* and *Majuj* or Gog and Magog. It is still a contentious issue as who really these people were. The general acceptance was that they were wild and dangerous tribes. Ali Akbar as earlier pointed out had identified them as the Slavs and the Teutonic inhabiting the Russian border. So the great Persian King built a partition to protect his own subjects, the Zagros tribes, inhabiting the mountainous area of this border from their dangerous inroads. Many outstanding authors and scholars had proffered their views on this people with very obscure ethnohistory, notable among them was the celebrated Muslim genius. Ustadh Yusuf Ali identified the Mongols as the much-dreaded Gog and Magog. And he was of the belief that Alexander the Great was the Zulqarnain mentioned in the Qur'an, and who had built the Iron Gate or barrier. He posited his opinion about these wild people in the following words:

> The questions of *Yajuj* and *Majuj* (Gog and Magog) and the iron barrier built to keep them are of some interest. It is practically agreed that they were the wild tribes of central Asia that made inroads to settled kingdoms and empires at various stages of the world's history. The Chinese Empire suffered from their incursions and built the Great Wall of China to keep out the Manchus and Mongols. The Persian Empire suffered from them at various times and at various points. Their incursions into Europe in large hordes caused migration and displacement

> of population on an enormous scale, and eventually broke up the Roman Empire. These tribes were known vaguely to the Greeks and Romans as "Scythians" but that term does not help us either ethnically or geographically.[14]

The Scythain identification as Gog and Magog was correct both ethnical and geographical, therefore, the term did help us a lot. The Scythians, ethnically belonged to the Aryan race, therefore, Indo-European in origin but belonging to a sub-cultural group with nihilistic ethos. And philologically, their language was more akin to the Europeans than to the Indo-Persians, so also was their ethnography. Therefore, they, because of their dominant cultural traits, which rapidly diffused across many races, they easily became miscegenated. Consequently, the identification of *Yajuj and Majuj* became a geographical one, which made Ali Akbar's equation with the European nations a very plausible one. In another context the identification of Gog and Magog could be culturally typifying people noted for *Mufsiduna fil ardhi* or mischief on earth. And this cultural complex spreading to encompass many cultural regions, that could spread to make the identification a geographical issue. The Scythians as we shall see later in the book had fitted the description of Gog and Magog as their ethno-history would show.

Although the debate of who these *Yajuj* and *Majuj* are, is not within the scope of this book, however, it suffices it to say that in the opinions of the writers discussed so far, Darius the Great had played a significant role, whether along his border with Russia or in containing the inroads of these Eurasian wild tribes. The serious threats they posed to the lives and property of his people had necessitated the Great king to engage the Scythians. Their incursions into Europe in large hordes, causing migration and displacement of his peoples on an enormous scale had given cause to seriously deal with them. He had the security network and the efficient military might to conquer these wild tribes. Since it became imperative that Darius must engage the Scythians, he therefore, had

the Scythians in Europe. in the Southern Russian area inhabited by nomads of Aryan stock in view. They had to be conquered. The Persian King remembering the havoc these tribes had wreaked in near Asia, the menace of these Scythians must be militarily dealt with. He, therefore, decided to crush and occupy their cradle to put an end to their troublesome inroads.[15] He also wanted to avenge the terrible havoc they wreaked on the Medes, his people a century earlier. All these were enough motives to put "hooks into the jaws" of these barbarians.

This wild people must have been under military surveillance for quite sometime. Their inroads to his Persian-Russian border must have prompted the King to personally intervene to save his people by erecting an iron barrier against their incursions. But could these measures protect the people of this vast empire? It could not. He therefore, undertook his conquest of the Scythians. Because this would no doubt address the issue once and for all; they were indeed terror in the land.

Even Legrand's account of the Scythians had portrayed the same thing, the recurring decimal of 'Mischief on Earth', with ferocious anthropophagous culture that was unparalleled in the history of the ancient world. They were ingenious, yet, very deadly in *Chronicle of the world*. Legrand opined that:

> The Scythians have acquired a reputation as fearsome mounted warriors, especially admired - not to mention dreaded - is their ability to fight on horseback with powerful bows, which are made of both wood and bone rather than single pieces of wood, to give them great strength and accuracy. But the Scythians are also considerable Craftsmen, with vigorous and individual styles of pattern and design, often based on animal motifs.[16]

The Scythians with their high efficient mobility and lethal weapons had terrorised various nations both the weak and the powerful, often causing their mass exodus. In 715 BC, they drove the Thracians to find new homeland in the West, fleeing with their

families to Eastern Europe. They decamped to give way to the advancing Scythian horsemen, who forced them out of their lands as they moved from their native steppe region beyond the Black Sea, with herds of fine and highly bred horses that facilitated their carnage on earth. Hence the Scythians constituted a formidable foe with ravaging onslaughts which caused not only the migration but extermination of various peoples, making them not only unique but also notorious for *Mufsiduna fil ardhi*. In his account of this ubiquitous wild tribe that went on dangerous prowl in 715 BC, Legrand again wrote:

> A new force has appeared to disrupt the existing order in the Middle East and the Caucasus. Groups of nomadic warriors the Scythians, are pouring into Western Asia to threaten the frontiers of Assyria as well as heading for the Black Sea to harry the peoples of Europe.[17]

It was on this rampage that they swept along the Thracians. With ethno-history still shrouded in mystery, it was believed that they came from the steppes of Central Asia around the River Volga. But since they were nomads, living in tents and shifting from pasture to pasture with their herds of animals, it was hard to be sure of this, however, and the Russian origin was more definitive. There was no known reason known that prompted the barbarians to move southwards, forcing the Cimmerians of Southern Russia into subjugation as they sallied forth, taking nations one by one along their line of marches. From Central Asia, Scythians swept through Syria, crushing all opposition as they moved swiftly on horseback using their deadly bows and arrows. From the saddle they swept through Syria, until the barbarians advanced to Egypt. Psammetichus II the Egyptian king had acted decisively to thwart the plundering of his country by the Scythians in 630 BC, which Legrand wrote that with: "Smooth talking and a huge bribe in gold by Psammetichus, the King of Egypt, have saved his country from domination by the Scythians."[18]

Egypt could not repel the advancing savages who had made successful raids into Assyria and Palestine, their advance guard had reached the Egyptian border. So with his country in imminent danger of destruction, having no other alternative, the King went out to meet the barbarians in Palestine and bought them off and Egypt was saved from destruction. Assyria was one of the most powerful countries in the ancient world with stupendous wealth and sophisticated system of government, yet, the Assyrians had not been able to scuttle the deadly inroads of these cannibals; consequently, the country was laid waste. The Assyrian King Ashurbanipal, was forced to swallow his pride to make alliance with the Scythian Chief Madyes, but this had not prevented successful raids into Assyrian territory.[19] The human eaters were no respecters of property and these anthropophagous barbarians were no respecters of human lives either. They lived in tents but moved wholesale into settled territory, plundering villages and terrorising the local inhabitants. A clear demonstration of *Mufsiduna fil ardhi;* only Zulqarnain could contain these highly mobile but deleterious barbarians.

It was for this reason, perhaps, the Lord told Prophet Ezekiel (Zilkifli) that "He will put hooks into their jaws"; the cannibals with hooks in their mouth and which tied their jaws, would be rendered innocuous and they would no longer harry nations any longer. Their menace to all peoples had incurred them the wrath of the Lord - (Ezekiel 38:3-4). The Almighty God here perhaps referred to the Scythians who devastated Southern Russia sending various peoples to flee and leaving ruins and destruction in their wake. This explained the reason why the Lord was against them because of their *Mufsiduna fil ardhi.* He put many barriers against them referred to as "hook in their jaws." The Lord sent King Darius to serve as one of the 'hooks' to counter and check the excesses of their nefarious activities in and around the Russian territory. Darius the Great was indeed a hook in the jaws of the Scythians; no sooner had he come to power than he mitigated their atrocities in the land. He

pacified the more docile barbarians and invaded and quelled the belligerent ones. King Darius, therefore, had navigated through various difficult situations to give the world peace and prosperity. He undertook many expeditions to ensure among other things, the rule of law was obeyed by every nation.

Darius' European Expedition

In all the expeditions of Darius the Great, the European expedition was the least understood by historians. It was the only one with a 'missing gap' as the objective of this mission was unknown. I hasten to add that, perhaps, this missing link could be filled up with the Zulqarnain Qur'anic story. This attempt could not be an entirely a far-fetched idea, because I had always pondered over this notion and often asked, why did the Holy Qur'an expound only three journeys of Zulqarnain? There were many historic events, which could be told about the Great King to serve the same purpose. Yet, only three of his expeditions were given to answer the celebrated question. There was always a definite purpose in every word in the Holy Qur'an. We were able to grasp some but not all of the reasons and the meanings of Zulqarnain's expeditions as contained in the Holy Qur'an. We would make another speculation in this conquest of the European territory.

Cyrus had conquered the eastern coast of the Mediterranean. Cambyses had completed and secured that conquest on the south by the subjugation of Egypt. Darius then took the conquest of Thrace to complete the security of his empire on the north. The Thracian race was warlike; having spent eight years in consolidating his power over the vast empire, Darius had made adequate preparation for his European expedition. Many historians were of the view that Thrace was not the primary target of the Great King but an attempt to subjugate the Scythians of the Steppes of Southern Russia. Thrace, therefore, was merely the way to Scythia. Why did Darius

contemplate the conquest of Scythia? He went into the land of Yajuj and Majuj to do precisely what? Answers to these questions lay in the understanding of the Scythians, their dispersal and characteristics. Prophet Jeremiah had vividly described the Scythian invasion, thus: "They shall lay hold on bow and spear; they are cruel, and have no merey; their voice roareth like sea; and they ride upon horses, set in array as men for war against thee, O daughter of Zion" (Jeremiah 6:23).

In his description of Scythian invasion of Media, Prophet Jeremiah had vividly described this wild tribe whom cruelty was their character trait such as we seldom saw in the rest of the Indo-European tribes. The Scythians were undoubtedly coarse savages with exceptional horsemanship skills. They had swept through the Media with terrifying destruction; "their voice roareth like the sea," the Prophet said. He was perhaps warning Judae to be prepared against the inroads of these Gog and Magog because they might. "Set in array as men for war against thee, O daughter of Zion." The warning of this Prophet of Palestine became a reality when they occupied Beth-shan and as a testimony of their occupation renamed it Scythopolis – the city of the Scythians. Thus, Scythian Expedition became necessary to mitigate their *Mufsidtuna fil ardhi* and to protect human civilisation from collapse. Darius, therefore, for this and other reasons invaded Scythia.

The Scythian Expedition

There was no consensus among historians as to why Darius undertook the conquest of Scythia with utmost zeal. In the lands, north of the Danube, a place called Wallachia and Moldavia (now Romania), area between the Danube, the Carpathans and the Pruth, lived tribes, which were similar in many respects to the tribes south of the river. The Greeks included these tribes under the general name of Scythians, which they applied to the whole series of peoples who dwelt between the Carpathians and the Caucasus.

While the most easterly of them had similarity in language to the Persians, the westerly tribes had theirs similar to the Thracian.[20] These Scythians could unmistakably be described as the Gog and Magog or Yajuj and Majuj mentioned in the Holy Qur'an as people who "Do great mischief on earth." Darius was in fact aware of them and their hostilities to their neighbours beyond the Danube, whose frozen waters invited them to cross in winter to cause havoc. These hostile tribes might be a frequent trouble to Persian rule in Thrace. He, therefore, had to cross the Danube. It was not an easy expedition. Cyrus had come into conflict with the peoples inhabiting the present Turkestan at the cost of life. And this time it was Scythia in Europe, Southern Russia, inhabited by nomads of Aryan Stock but not Slavs Darius went after.[21] But perhaps a mixture of both. It was undoubtedly a conquest of the Yajuj and Majuj notorious for *Mufsiduna fil ardhi*.

No one knew the primary reason of Darius 'expedition through the Steppes of Scythia. It was a perilous expedition, which the King ventured without any regard to the rivers, which had to be crossed, the leagues which had to be traversed and the want of supplies.[22] For two months the Persian army made a military promenade in these barren solitude. It lost men, suffered from disease, and had great difficulty in obtaining provisions, which had to be brought from the base, since the country yielded none and the Scythians had destroyed the fodder and filled up the wells.[23] However, the uniqueness of this expedition could easily be discerned. Darius the King appeared to have a longing to invade Scythia the land of *Yajuj and Majuj*. But quite unlike him, he just went directly to hold the bull by the horns, perhaps, he underrated the Gog and Magog. And again quiet unlike him he left no historic account, on any discovered inscription except when he crossed the Bosphorus and paid handsome reward to Mandrocles who made the bridge shaft across the fishy river. Oddly enough, this conquest was shrouded in mystery, and had become a subject of controversy. But what was behind this oddity?

At the Delta of the Danube, it was reported that the King took a cord in which he tied sixty knots, and said to the Greek captain, Histiaeus, in charge of the bridge of boats: "untie one of these knots everyday, and remain here and guard the bridge till they are all untied. If I have not returned at the end of that time, sail home..."[24] Darius and his army then marched over into Scythia. But both the King's purpose and what he did in this remote corner of the world, were hidden in a cloud of legend.[25] Oddly enough not even a clue could be obtained from the great inscription of Behistun or Naqshi-i-Rustum. But this dangerous and precarious expedition undertaken with great anxiety and minimal loss of lives and untold hardship could not be without a purpose. And it could not be farfetched to say that the purpose was a divine mission. A sacred mission ordained to the Great King to mitigate the mischief of Yajuj and Majuj and to create a protective barrier against them to certain people. Speculations about the aim of this great expedition abound and none was convincing: that his chief object of the diversion beyond the Danube was to lay hand upon the gold mines of Dacia, which was then in the land of Agathyrsi.[26]

This was very unlikely because a gold mine could not be an attractive bait enough to make the king undertake such a dangerous conquest. Besides, the Great King had vast amount of gold deposits in Persia. If his real object was a campaign against Greece, as it was speculated, it would then mean that he wished to conquer Scythia in order to protect himself against a flank attack by the barbarians during the expedition. This was unlikely because it was attaching far too much importance to these barbarians. Because if he had wished, instead of annexing Thrace and accepting the submission of Macedonia, he could equally well have moved southwards and attempted an attack on the Hellenic cities.[27] And to hang the expedition on retaliatory motivation, a revenge of Scythian invasion

to Media a century earlier was to push personal vendetta beyond the pale.

From the mist of these speculations it is not easy to discern a clue, of the cause of this Scythian invasion but Herodotus in his anecdotes stated that:

> Darius the King, with his vast host passed through the steppes of Scythia, as it were through fairyland, without any regard to the rivers which had to be crossed, the leagues which had to be traversed the want of supplies. He carries him to regions beyond the Don, and transports the river Oaros, on which Darius built his forts, from the neighbourhood of the Danube to the neighbourhood of the Maeotic Sea, placing his imaginary march of the Persians in the midst of a poetical picture of the Scythian folks and the Scythian land.[28]

From this legend of Scythian expedition we had a strong clue and a swathe to a better understanding of Zulqarnain's expedition. Perhaps, it could be that all the three expeditions of Zulqarnain's story were the account of Darius' European expedition. Because in one of these expeditions, the Great King was said to have erected a fort on a river named Oaros, a name otherwise unknown but evidently a tributary of the Danube. The Danube, Dnieper, Don and many other rivers flow into Black Sea. Could the Danube be the "spring of murky water" described in the Holy Qur'an? This first question should wait while the second was asked, so that both could be succinctly answered.

But it was on river Oaros, Darius built his forts, which extended from the neighbourhood of the Danube to the neighbourhood of the Maeotic Sea. A fort is defined as a strong building or place that can be defended against enemy. A strong iron wall falls within this definition. But we were not told for whom and why was this fortification constructed by Darius. We were also aware of the fact that certain people whose language he could not speak had asked Zulqarnain to build a fortification for them against

"he Gog and Magog (people) who do great mischief on earth" (Holy Qur'an 18:94). This barrier erected was identified rather inconclusively as Alexander's wall in the Caucasus. Could this fort between two neighbourhoods provide the answer? Perhaps, what in history was described as the "Scythian legend," might turn out to be a great event with religious significance. Moreover, we knew also that on his sea voyage, he found some people near 'a spring of murky water' (Qur'an 18:86).

This 'murky water' was strongly suggestive of Black Sea. Because Black Sea possibly got its name from the dark colour of the water when thick fogs cover it. That the word 'murky' means 'darkness' was a correct description of this sea and Bosphorus strait. The Sea of Marmara and Dardanelles linked this Black Sea to the Mediterranean Sea. In the north, the Kerch Strait connects Black Sea to the Sea of Azor. Hence this important sea was central to the expedition of the Great King because of its strategic location.

The Black Sea was a large sea lying between southern Europe and Asia. It was bound by Bulgaria, Rumania, Turkey and Russia. The Bosphorus was a narrow strait in Turkey and was one of the world's greatest waterways. It linked the Black Sea to the Dardanelles Strait and the Mediterranean Sea. And it was part of the border between Europe and Asia situated at the north-east corner of the Sea of Marmara. The Bosphorus divides Europe and Asia. Its strategic role in history was indicated by the fortifications that line its banks. The Bosphorus was of great importance to Russia because it was the only ship outlet, which Russia could use all round the year. Because all Russia's northern ports were closed by ice in winter. This European expedition, therefore, was into these important areas. Furthermore, the Persian dominion over the eastern part of the Balkan Peninsula lasted for about fifteen years and it was increased by the acquisition of the Islands of Lemnos and Imbros. This Peninsula was bounded on the West by the Adriatic Sea and

Ionia Sea, on the east by the Black Sea and in the West by mountain ranges and river Danube flows to the Black Sea. The Danube could alternatively lay a claim to the "spring of murky water."

The Black Sea was undoubtedly very important in the expeditions of Darius in the European territory. It also formed the northern boundary of the Persian Empire where the Caspian Sea, the Caucasus and the Black Sea formed the northern boundary. With a panoramic view of these areas in, mind, it could easily be conjectured that the journeys of Zulqarnain; were likely to be this European expedition by Darius the Great. From the Black Sea the King could reach the Caucasus to erect the Iron Barrier. He could have travelled towards the north pole into Russia, because it was a European territory. Thus, we were in a better stead to appreciate these strong and ordinate assumptions: That Darius the Great was the Personage mentioned as Zulqarnain in the Holy Qur'an, and that the Scythians could be rightly identified as the notorious Yajuj and Majuj. Even the fortification erected between the two neighbourhoods by Darius on river Oaros, was very much likely to be a protection of one of the neighbours against the dangerous inroads of the Scythians especially in winter when their rivers and sea were frozen. They came out ravenously looking for food, eating up everything along their way thereby leaving ruins and destruction in their wake. There was no any other tribe to be more correctly described as people who 'Do great mischief on earth' like the Scythians in ancient history.

The choice of the European expedition in the account of the journeys of Zulqarnain by the Holy Qur'an was a pertinent one. Because Allah (swt) knew that both the Europeans and their ancestors, the Scythians inclusive, as barbaric as they were then, would be the next holders of civilisation. Darius being a man of God might be aware of this important prophecy too. So he considered his expedition into the European territory as a religious

duty rather than a political or military conquest. This explained perhaps why most of his activities in these areas were kept in secrecy. He was not out to exterminate the Scythians but to perform his religious duty as ordained to him by Ahura Mazda. In another convincing evidence, Geoffrey Barraclough in *The Times Atlas of World History* claimed that Darius' military enterprises was repulsed by the Scythians of the Ukraine in 513 BC. This was to mean that the Great King had entered deep into Russian territory as was rightly postulated. Along the line of march the Great King encountered various peoples with different cultures, in his move to curtail the excesses of the deadly barbarians. With this preview, therefore, we could go into the discussion of these Yajuj and Majuj and their invasion by the Great King.

Darius Conquest of Yajuj and Majuj

As a prelude to the understanding of the objectives of Darius' campaigns against the Scythians, one needs to review Syke's account of the devastating impact of these nomads if they were allowed to hold sway. Because according to this great historian Scythians were from every point of view coarse savages whose success would have been a calamity for mankind! Allah (swt), the Most Compassionate One in His infinite Wisdom used some people to check the excesses of others, so that mankind and its civilisation could thrive in accordance with His Divine Plan. Lest we forget, the Great Wall of China was first built about 300 BC to prevent nomadic tribes from invading China. Under the Chin Emperor Shi-Huang-ti the separate sections were linked up. It was further extended under the Han dynasty to protect the Kansu corridor with its highway to central Asia. By 100 BC it reached Tung Huang the beginning of the Silk Road to the West.[29] China was endowed with industrious and ingenuous people who, a century after the erection of their protective Wall, emerged as a World Power. Thus, safely secured against the incessant and destructive inroads of Scythians

and other hostile barbarians, they prospered economically and industrially: trade and commerce blossomed within the walled cities.

But there were many less endowed and less fortunate nations, who undoubtedly would become an easy prey to these ferocious cannibals. In view of this, Allah (swt) in His infinite Mercy raised Kings in successive Empires to among other things curtail the dangerous activities of these coarse savages, so that the ancient world became congenial for survival of civilisation. Therefore these wild peoples were saddled with barriers in order to prevent them from becoming a powerful nation, lest they mauled the weaker nations in their predatory inroads. This notion could be easily derived from the Holy Qur'an specifically with respect to Yajuj and Majuj, thus: "Until the Gog and Magog (people) are let through (their barrier); And they swiftly swarm From every hill." (Q.21:96).

In his commentary of this verse, Ustadh Abdullahi Yusuf Ali, stated that the name Gog and Magog stands for wild and lawless tribes who will break their barriers and swarm through the earth. This will be one of the prognostications of the approaching Day of Judgement. However, if they were not let through their barriers they would remain powerless. These 'barriers' became subject of interpretation by many scholars. To my own understanding the barriers imposed on this wild and lawless people were in three forms; political, religious and intellectual barriers. It was the political barrier, for example, which Darius went to execute in this invasion of Southern Russia because his power and might could be felt and dreaded by the Scythians so that their activities weakened. First let us discuss this political barrier. The *cultural heart* of the Scythians was in the Southern Russia, so Darius the Great went to conquer and impose sanity and the rule of law, in this area inhabited by pernicious tribes nihilistic to constituted authority. And this type of barrier included the construction of hill forts, and other security measures undertaken by kings or rulers to maintain peace and order.

Although, most historians had poorly understood Darius' main objective in this conquest of Scythia, it was an action left open for various interpretations among various writers, Sykes quoted that; *Grote termed it that insane expedition, while Noldeke on the other* hand saw it as merely the desire to conquer the unknown, by Darius the King. "He may also have had reasons of which we are ignorant," said Percy Sykes. No historian could, therefore, say categorically why Darius the Great had embarked on the Scythian expedition because it was a religious duty performed by the Great King, which he ordinately refused to publicise, perhaps, to be comprehended in his second epoch. And the Holy Qu'ran had championed this later epoch more than any book of history.

But according to Bury, three facts seemed to emerge from the mist, as to why Darius crossed the Danube into Scythia. The first, he said, was that the Agathyrsi were active in opposition of the march of the Persians; the second, that he erected forts on river Oaros, a tributary of the Danube and the third, that his communication with the fleet awaited his return were for some time cut off, and the Greek commanders were tempted to sail away and leave him in the lunch. However, the second reason was more in concord with the Zulqarnain story. In this expedition Darius had erected an Iron Wall, perhaps, on the river Oaros. This river being a tributary of the Danube, which could be another alternative to lay a claim of "spring of murky water." The Black Sea, the Danube and the last but not the least the Oaros. And the Meiotic Sea was not altogether neglected in this speculation, of "spring of murky water."

Similarly, H. A. Davies, an erudite historian, quoted on many occasions previously, was also oblivious of what the King did in the land of Yajuj and Majuj. He wrote his own version thus:

> Darius had been much troubled by attacks of the warlike Scythians upon the northern and north-eastern parts of his dominions, so he determined to teach them a lesson and march to their homes in Southern Russia to do it. He crossed over into Europe at Bosphorus and for sometime waged an unequal

> contest in what were known as Roumania and Bulgaria, against enemies who avoided pitched battles and hung upon his flanks and rear, causing infinite annoyance and no small degree damage - the methods, which many centuries later enabled the Russians to defeat Napoleon.[30]

Therefore, from its preparation and execution, this conquest of the Yajuj and Majuj or the Scythian expedition was not purely a military one. Undoubtedly, there was something significantly missing in the mist of history: the objective of his campaign against the ferocious and lawless people. Because both the King's purpose and what he actually did in the Balkans nobody really knew. This missing gap could be filled, perhaps, from one of the accounts of Zulqarnain's expedition as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. It could be conjectured that he went to this expedition to impose his dominion on this people and make them subjects governed by his laws. This political barrier was of crucial importance; because it was meant to render the venomous tribes into a perpetual servitude, tamed, docile and compliant with laws and order. This most important fact could not be overemphasised. It was also mentioned in the Holy Qur'an that Zulqarnain had built an iron barrier wall against the Yajuj and Majuj. Perhaps, this wall was the one erected in the Balkans when Darius the Great had gone in his expedition against the Scythians. In this regard Professor Richard N. Frye gave two important clues which were of paramount importance to this speculation. He said that apart from the lengthy account of Darius' expedition against the Scythians of Southern Russia by Herodotus in about the year 510 BC, we have two interesting precise evidences for the Achaemenid's struggle with the nomads. He wrote one of this points clearly:

> One is the inscription at the rock-hewn tomb of Darius at Naqshi-i-Rustum where the Saka across the sea are mentioned together with the Skudra or Thracians as tributary to the King.[31]

This was an indication that all the Scythians in their different geographical locations were made subject to the Great King during

his just rule. The Saka or the scythians across the sea, as mentioned earlier had constituted their *cultural heart,* in Southern Russia and were not fully subjugated by his military expedition. Thus, it became inevitable, as the Professor rightly observed that: "In the inscription of Xerxes at Persepolis the Skudra are still mentioned as subjects but not the Sakas of Southern Russia which coincided with the account of Herodotus."[32]

This meant that the imposition of the political barrier on these savages was not an absolute one and the hill fort erected became less effective so soon. The reason could be found in the Holy Qur'an as verse 21:96 had indicated. Whatever might be the barrier imposed against Yajuj and Majuj was surely a temporary measure because in the nick of time: "They would be let through these barriers as they swiftly swarm from every hill." The Saka-Scythians must have broken their allegiance to the Achaemenian kings immediately after the death of great Darius but the rest of the barbarians were made under the law. Besides, according the Hadith of the Prophet *Yajuj and Majuj* could not be exterminated. The second piece of the evidence adduced by Frye was given thus:

> Another evidence of Darius' famous campaign is a fragment of clay tablet with an old Persian cuneiform text found in Roumanian... It was probably made as a foundation document of a building somewhere in the Balkans, hence proof of an occupation by the Persians, the western most extension of Achaemenid rule.[33]

This Old Persian cuneiform text found in Roumanian aroused my interest seriously, although, it was said to be a foundation document of a building somewhere in the Balkans without specifying the type of building. Even then this had given us a strong ground to guess that it could perhaps be the building of fortification against the Yajuj and Majuj as described by the Holy Qur'an chapter eighteen verse ninety four. Our speculation had become stronger from the fact that Herodotus did mention that Darius had built a fort

between the neighbourhood of the Danube to the Meiotic Sea. And Meiotic Sea was the name the Romans gave the sea of Azor, after the neighbouring tribes to whom it was known as Temerend or 'mother of waters'. It was a shallow sea receiving some of the principal rivers of Russia located at the northern arm of Black Sea. Its surrounding swamps and labyrinthine watercourses supported the belief for a long time that it was directly connected with the northern sea.

There was indeed, a connection in pre-historic times with the Caspian Sea. Could it be that after building his forts around the two neighbourhoods, Darius found his way through the 'mother of waters' to the Caspian where he built that Iron Barrier in Caucasus? Another question, which immediately arose was: could this Roumanian document be the historical records of Darius the Great about the building of this fort? Because of paucity of facts and knowledge of these areas the answers to these questions could be difficult to answer by the writer; however, some historians could come up with the precise location including pictures of its relics in the future. However, they helped us a lot in making some reasonable conjectures and even to propound a theory. The Danube is the second longest river in Europe with outlet to the Black Sea. It crosses an area of limestone and loses a good deal of its water through underground seepage. Thus, it could also fit the Qur'anic description of "spring of murky water." Because this river from its point of confluence downstream, the Danube forms the Roumanian - Russian boundary. Hence, it could easily be theorised that the Barrier mentioned in the Holy Scripture was likely to be around this border. Because, according to Herodotus, a fort was built between the neighbourhood of the Danube and the Meiotic Sea or Sea of Azov. Perhaps, the fort was in a tract between two mountains and of iron and molten lead in nature, as it was described in the Holy Qur'an.

The Roumanian - Russian border could explain the language barrier the visiting King had encountered. The Roumanian clay document or other relevant materials could help us to unravel the mystery of the location of Zulqarnain iron wall with absolutism. Otherwise these could be mere guesses, which might not make any important dent on the issue. Another speculation put forward was that the fortification built by Darius the Great in the Balkans could be identified as the Wall in question, because it separated the Turkish Thrace from Anatolia. The city of Istanbul stands at its southern entrance with Uskudar (Scutari) on the Asiatic shore. In this last conjecture, the Turkish neighbours separated the Scythians of Thrace referred to as the Skudra. Zulqarnain or Darius the Great could not understand the language spoken by the Turks, with their agglutinative language, so different from the languages then spoken in Western Asia. This, still was groping in the dark as it did not help us with a precise and absolute location of this great historic wall, better than that of the Caucasus. The Balkans is the name given to six countries in South-eastern Europe: Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Rumania, that part of Turkey, which lies in Europe and Yugoslavia. They formed the Balkan Peninsula, which is bounded on the west by the Adriatic Sea and the Ionian Sea, and on the east by the Black Sea and the Aegean Sea. Mountain ranges cover much of the western part of the Balkans. To the north and east, in Bulgaria and Rumania the land is a fertile plain through which the great River Danube flows to the Black Sea. Darius the Great was known to have extensively traversed these areas, while Alexander the Great did not.

Another explanation of the varied evidences of hill-forts construction was that King Darius had built more than one of such fortification barriers. This made the precise identification of the one mentioned in the Final Revelation rather a difficult one. But we have reliable evidence with, which to clinch our identification with certainty. Syed Abul Ala Maududi wrote:

Ibn Jarir Tabari and Ibn Kathir have recorded the event, and Yaqut has mentioned it in his Mujam-ul-Buldan that when after the conquest of Azerbaijan, Hadrat Umar sent Suraqah bin amr, in 22 A.H. on an expedition to Derbent, the latter appointed Abdur Rehman bin Rabi'ah as the Chief of his vanguard. When Abdur Rehman wanted to advance towards Derbent, Shehrbraz informed him that he had already gather full information about the wall built by Zul-Qarnain, through a man, who could supply all the necessary details and then the man was actually presented before Abdur Rehman. (Tabari, Vol. III, pp. 235-239; *Al-Bidayah wan Nihayah*, Vol. Vii, pp. 122-125, and *Mu'jam-ul-Buldan*, under *Bab-ul-Awab*: Derbent).

Two hundred years later, the Abbasid Caliph Wathiq (227-233 A.H.) despatched a party of 50 men under Sallam-ul-Tarjuman to study the wall of Zul-Qarnain, whose observations have been recorded in great detail by Yaqut in *Mu'jam-ul-Buldan* and by Ibn Kathir in *Al-Bidayah*. They write that this expedition reached Samarrah from where they reached Tiflis (the present Tbilisi) and then through As-Sarir and Al-Lan, they reached Filanshah, from where they entered the Caspian Territory. From there they arrived at Derbent and saw the wall (*Al-Bidayah*, Vol. II, p.III, Vol. vii, pp.122-125; *Mu'* jam-ul-Buldan: Under *Bab-ul-Abwab)*. This clearly shows that even up till the third century of Hijrah the Muslim Scholars regarded this wall of the Caucasus as the wall of Zul-Qarnain.[34]

With this elaborate explanation from the great Muslim Scholar, and with historical facts to support it, we could claim with absolutism that among the hill-forts constructed by the Great King that of the Caucasus, was the one referred to by the Holy Qur'an. Thus, among the great conquerors who had passed prior to the Final Revelation, there was none to whom the characteristics of Zulqarnain were most applicable like Darius the Great. Allama Maududi, also mentioned that Yaqut in his *Mu'jam-ul-Buldan* had further confirmed the same view, the location of the Iron Wall at the Caucasus, in a number of places. That the writer under Khazar (Caspian), wrote:

"This territory belongs to the Turks, which adjoins the Wall

> Zul-Qarnain just behind *Bab ul-abwab*, which is also, Derbent'. In the same connection, he records a report by Ahmad bin Fadlan, the ambassador of Caliph al Muqtadar-billah, who has given a full description of the Caspian land, saying that Caspian is the name of a country whose capital is Itil (near the present Astrakhan) right through which flows River Itil, which joins the Caspian from Russia and Bulghar.
>
> Regarding *Bal-ul-Abwab* he says that this city is called both *Al-Bab* and Derbent, which is a highly difficult passage for the people coming from the Northern lands towards the south. Once this territory was a part of the kingdom of Nausherman, and the Persian rulers paid particular attention to strengthening their frontiers on that side.[35]

The object of Scythian expedition undertaken by Darius the Great, which many classical historians did not know, perhaps, could only be understood in the context of the Qur'anic account. He was ordained to undertake some expeditions, three of which were mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. In this European expedition the great King had travelled towards the North Pole to experience different climatic changes and to build a fortification barrier against certain wild lawless tribes collectively identified as the Scythians. He in the process had imposed his dominion over them and subjected them to his laws. What we have discussed so far was only the political barrier, which for long the *Yajuj and Majuj* had broken through. The first barrier, therefore, had been surmounted, then what of the second? The second barrier was "Intellectual Wall," which only God could remove because He gives knowledge to whom He will. The intellectual barrier imposed which again they have broken or were let through, was that they would finally succeed in having both the mastery of nature and its control to a large extent through their advance in science and technology. Hence their identification as the powerful European nations was an apt one; they were powerful and even very ingenious in the ancient world, Athens and the Scythians were left alone by the Zulqarnain because they were to form the

nuclei of Western nations and their civilisation of *Angra Mainyu* or Iblis, and his civilisation would last till the end of time because of the respite given to him by the Wise Lord.

Some people claimed that the expedition of Darius beyond the Danube, as to make an impression on the Scythian was ineffective, because shortly afterwards the Scythians came raiding Thrace and driving the tyrant Miltiades from Chersonese.[36] This claim was, however, far from the truth; it only underscored the fact that it was a religious excursion and not a military conquest but it served as an encumbrance to the menacing tribes, which could only be comprehended when the Qur'anic story was brought to bear on the missing gap. Had the Great King taken a ruthless military campaign against these barbarians, undoubtedly, the story could have been entirely different.

Herodotus, delightedly dealt with this campaign in full. The great Historian stated that Darius sent an emissary to the Scythian King with the following message:

> Thou strange man, why dost thou keep on flying before me, when there are two things thou mightest do so easily? If thou deemest thyself able to resist my arms, cease thy wanderings, and come, let us engage in a battle. Or if thou art conscious that my strength is greater than thine, even so shouldest thou cease to run away: thou hast but to bring thy lord earth and water, and to come at once to a conference.

Sending earth and water to a king signified a surrender or allegiance to a king. It was indeed frustrating because the Scythians could not dare to engage the Great King in a battle and their guerrilla attacks followed by disappearance like shadowy figures was too demanding and time consuming. But the King's demands were rebuffed by the Scythian Chief, and he even was supercilious in his reply thus: "This is my way, Persian, I never fear men or flee from them... Earth and water I do not send; but thou shalt soon receive more suitable gifts."

Immediately, the Scythian Chief sent his gifts to the Persians which were: a bird, a mouse, a frog, and five arrows. And when the herald was asked about the significance of this message, he replied sarcastically that: "The Persians, if wise, would find out themselves." So it was in addition a test of their aptitude. King Darius then summoned a council to decipher this strange reply. Perhaps, he thought the Scythians intended to surrender, and the "mouse and frog" symbolised "earth and water." But Gobryas, his father-in-law, however explained the real meaning thus: "Unless, Persians, ye can turn into birds and fly into sky or become mice and burrow underground, or make yourselves frogs and take refuge in the fens, ye will never make your escape from this land, but die pierced by our arrows."[37]

The Persians passed the test, yet, they were not engaged in battle. Because the Scythian plot was to allow them to wearily die of thirst, hunger and fatigue as they gálloped in the vast expanse of the hostile territory of Yajuj and Majuj. Then lurking in the shadow they would emerge to have a field day. But this manoeuvre flopped, the Great King left Scythia with minimal losses.

These wild tribes were highly mobile and elusive, their shadowy figures were sometimes sighted but not within target of attack. They were no ordinary enemies to contend with because it could be remembered a century earlier they had terrorised the powerful Assyrian King Ashurbanipal when his territory suffered their onslaughts. Almost at the time the Egyptian King Psammetichus II had to placate the barbarians into accepting a heavy bribe of gold to save his country from their devastation. Therefore, they were not ordinary foes. No one dared to invade their cradle except the Great King could venture into the lion's den.

The Scythian chief thought he had got the Great King between the devil and the deep blue sea. With the shaft bridge across the Danube destroyed the Persians were, therefore, left in the lurch.

Thus, instead of sending earth and water as a sign of surrender, he sent a silent message because he intended to kill his foreign invaders slowly and silently; the chief was confident that they had no way to escape. Even if they could escape they had to become either fish, mice or frogs or birds to fly, otherwise, they could not escape the deadly spears of the Scythians. But little did he know that Histiaeus to save his own skin had deceived the savages; he did not completely cut the bridge across the Danube, at their behest.

Even then, the enemies of the Great King had made them suffer from lack of supplies and the environment, a barren land, was as hostile as its inhabitants, who were to aggravate the situation by destroying fodder, closing wells and harassing their visitors from the flanks. Although, they were deleterious in battles, yet, they could not face the armies of the Great King. But they let them to promenade wearily in the barren lands before they attacked the weary armies for the final kill. Fortunately, Darius the Great conducted his undisclosed mission in the lands of *Yajuj and Majuj* in Southern Russia and re-crossed the Danube safely back to Persia unscathed because it was a holy mission. This frustrating technique of warfare was used by the Russians several centuries later to defeat Napoleon. This method which they learnt from their Scythian forebears was no doubt both lethal and effective.

Finally, it was for security reasons that the great king had engaged the Scythians to put a stop to their dangerous inroads. This would no doubt bring in peaceful co-existence between the diverse peoples in his kingdom. And in a wonderful concinity, the Holy Qur'an had summarised the person, faith, the people and the reign of this great historic personage. This man, had dominated the world, with an amazing display of power and authority throughout the 36 years of his leadership. These three expeditions mentioned in the Holy Book told all you needed to know about Darius and even more, and indeed there was *ibra* in his story. Even when Darius the

Great summoned the King of the Scythians to submit, the latter merely replied with a silent message, to which Gobryas gave an ingenious explanation, as already discussed. In the meantime the Scythians were negotiating with the Greeks that the latter might cut the Danube bridge, but the tyrants after each proposal, refused reflecting that their position as tyrants at home depended on the support of the King of Persia. Darius recrossed the Danube without trouble and returned to Sardes, leaving eighty thousand men in Europe under the command of Megabyzus, who subdued the Greek cities of Thrace and obtained the submission of Macedonia and its King Amyntas.[38]

The Scythians could in fact, as we had see, be identified correctly with the Gog and Magog because their mischief to people was beyond description. They were known to travel in hordes on horseback and on waterways to wreak havoc to their neighbours. They were notorious cannibals and were fond of using the skulls of their enemies as drinking cups. So everybody wanted a protection against these wild barbarians. They were dreaded for their *Mufsiduna fil ardhi.* The Holy Qur'an is abundantly rich in stories, and parables of instructive values for mankind. Whenever this Zulqarnain story is researched into, at whatever age and time, it will always verify the veracity of Prophet Muhammad's (saw) Messengerhood. The story will be more comprehensive and clearer with the passage of time. This is but one of the wonders of the Holy Qur'an. The Holy scripture is rich in historic facts.

In the autumn of 485 BC, Darius the Great died. A little before his death, he had designated Khshayarsha or Xerxes as his successor. He succeeded his father to be the next king of Persia. He was the grandson of Cyrus. His mother Atossa the daughter of Cyrus, was said to have influenced his succession, not only for her personal influence over the Great King but by virtue of her position and rank in the royal court. Characters speak of man: the qualities of

Darius that endeared him to friends and foes and had combined to give him a unique unimpeachable individuality in the ancient world, before which the modern world would bow with awe and reverence of Zulqarnain. But no matter how great a man could be, he was only a mortal being and therefore, had his entrance and exit in this finite world, as Shakespeare pot it.

Darius' Character and Death

Sir Percy Sykes, the renowned historian quoted copiously had paid a glowing tribute to Darius, in which he spoke of his character in an *au fait* presentation that I feel tempted to finally quote again his befitting encomiums to the Great King. He wrote among other things:

> Darius, who was great to the end, prepared to deliver a still more serious attack on the Hellas, and at the same time to quell the rebellion in Egypt. Had he lived five years longer, it would have gone hard with Greece, but in 488 BC, in the thirty-sixth year of his reign the Great King died.[39]

The forever memorable words in this tribute were "Darius who was great to the end," because "all is well that ends well." This aphorism had succinctly summarised the career of this towering personality, who bestrode the East and West like a colossus and remained unblemished in his thirty six years of ruling the world. He lived above board with observation and application of Islamic principles throughout his eventful career. He was highly straight-laced about obscenities and was full of decorum. He was polygynic with wives kept in his harem in seclusion like a purdah system. They were neither seen in the inscription nor in the sculptures because as a Muslim, his wives were not for the lusvicious eyes of men to lust. The Great King was noted for his abhorrence to concupiscence. His wives and the women under his religious dominion moved in veils and on journey, they had litters with

closely drawn curtains being employed. All these were positive pointers to the fact that Darius the Great was truly the Qur'ānic Zulqarnain, an excellent administrator who believed in *ex acquo bono* from beginning to the end.

Sir Sykes was an erudite historian who not only understood the Great King properly but he had given a balanced and disinterested account of the World King. He also viewed and judged the King in a better perspective than most of the contemporary historians especially in his encounter with the Greeks, when he said that:

> But if writers on Greek history have exaggerated the force and weight of the blows inflicted on Persia in the repulse of the Great King, it is almost impossible to exaggerate the importance of the victories to Hellas and to modern civilisation. Cyrus, after the defeat of Croeses, had annexed with conspicuous ease the Greek colonies on the coast of Asia minor and the adjacent Islands, and Darius after the Scythian war had detached of a force which had extended the Persian Suzerainty to the borders of Northern Greece. Then, when the great expedition was launched, most of Northern and central Hellas submitted...[40]

It could be reiterated that both the Greeks and the Scythians were destined to form the roots of the present Western civilisation. Hence even if the Greeks were not able to repulse the invasion of the Great King, this important destiny could never be changed. So the assertion by many writers (Sykes inclusive) that the victories not only for Greece but for mankind was fatuous. Because the Persian rule, though totalitarian was neither tyrannical nor retrogressive. It was a just, global administration that allowed the progress of every nation to proceed according to its innate intelligence and natural resources unhampered. It was an administration that never interfered with the internal affairs of its subject nations so long as they paid tributes. It was a prototype of Islamic rule which several centuries later, conquered both the Persian and the Roman (an extension of Greek) empires but the Roman civilisation had progressed without

restriction to the Western civilisation.

We could discern his relationship with Greece and the Scythians or the Yajuj and Majuj in a better perspective. It was not the office of Zulqarnain to conquer them but rather to hold them in check and to curtail their excesses. In other words to sustain the barrier imposed upon them. This he did with marvellous successes. Had he lived longer, to fight Greece, the Greek nation would have always been saved from the storm because the conquest of the Graeco-Roman Empire and the great Persia was destined to be carried out by the office of Islam. The Muslims in a short span of time that was unprecedented in the annals of history conquered the powerful Romans and the Persians. Islam had done this with a remarkable rapidity. This was captured sharply by Henri Pirenne, in the following words:

> It was checked; its first expansible energy was exhausted, but it had sufficed to change the face of the globe. Whenever it had passed the ancient states, which were deeply rooted in the centuries, were overturned as by a Cyclone, the traditional order of history was overthrown. This was the end of the Persian Empire, the heir of Assyria and Babylon; of the Hellenized regions of Asia which had constituted the Empire of Alexander the Great, and had thereafter continued to gravitate in the orbit of Europe; of the ancient Egypt, whose past was still living beneath the Greek veneer that covered it since the days of the Ptolemies, and of the African Provinces which Rome had won from Carthage. Henceforth, all these regions were subject, in religion and political obedience, to the most powerful potentate who had ever existed, the Caliph of Baghdad.[41]

This colossal achievements by Islam had never been recorded in the history of the world. Because as the writer had pointedly stressed, all this was the work of a nomadic people (the Arabs), which had hitherto lived almost unknown in its rock-strewn deserts, that were disdained by all conquerors and numbered infinitely fewer than Germany. But this nomadic Arabs had done what no nation had

ever achieved in history. This great feat was quite unlike any other human beings could have done and this in itself was a testimony of Divine intervention. Moreover, the author made this fact more discernible when he wrote: to evince the reader of its divine power thus: "But this people had just been converted by a Prophet who had been issued from its womb. It had shattered all its old idols, and had suddenly adopted the purest monotheism, and its conception of its duty to God had a formidable simplicity."[42]

Undoubtedly, Persia was lucky to have been blessed with two great monarchs in successive generations, which wrought their geniuses to bring their country ahead of most nations. These were Cyrus the Great and Darius the Great and were impeccable in their conduct and style of administration. Appraising the personal character of Great Darius, Sir Sykes wrote:

> Darius, equally deserving the title the 'Great' won constantly against desperate odds, but, more than this, he had the genius for organisation. His persona stood very high. He was remarkably intelligent and reasonable, and even his bitter enemies, the Greeks, wrote of him with utmost respect... Indeed, but for his organising genius, super added to signal capacity for war, the empire would not have lasted as it did, through generation and generation, until Alexander the Great defeated the craven Darius who occupied the throne of his mighty forbears. The number of great Kings who have ruled over Persia is not small, but, due weight being given to the conditions of the time, Darius is among the greatest of them all, *indeed, he ranks very high among the greatest Aryans of* history.[43]

All that could be said; wonders are many but none is more wonderful than the Holy Qur'an because the Holy Scripture made this exposition fourteen centuries ago that summarised this expose very succinctly when the Revealed but not created stated that: "Verily, We established his power on earth, and We gave him the ways and means to all ends." (Q.18:84) Darius the Great was

bestowed with a great son Xerxes who continued the work of his father. He quelled the rebellion, kept the Scythians and Greece in check. In the wonderful porch of Xerxes, with its massive gate that was flanked by winged bulls, was the trilingual inscription, which read:

> I am Xerxes, the Great King, the King of Kings, the King of many tongued countries, the King of this Great universe, the son of Darius the King, the Achaemenian. Xerxes, the Great King saith: 'By the grace of Ormazd I have this Portal, whereon are depicted all the countries.

The name *Ormazd* was another name for *Ahura Mazda*. Thus, like the father, like son. But the son could not fill the shoes of his father which were extra-large. Even then we were told in the Book of Esther about his greatness and the extent of his power. In the Bible, the name of Xerxes was A-has-u-erus. "Now it came to pass in the days of A-has-ue'rus, (this is Ahas-u-erus which reigned, from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces)" (Esther 1:1).

This Esther's account was in support of and had corroborated King Xerxes trilingual inscription quoted above, indeed, he was a great King of splendid majesty. This was confirmed by Esther when she said:

> In the third year of his reign, he made a feast unto all his princes and his servants; the power of Persia and Media, the nobles and the princes of the provinces, being before him:
>
> When he showed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honour of his excellent majesty and many days, even a hundred and fourscore day (Esther 1:3-4)

Thus, the account of the power and greatness of Darius eanred him the title Zulqarnain in the Holy Qur'an and that of his son Xerxes was given in the Book of Esther as A-has-u-e'rus. These two Holy Scriptures had given an account of one family. This was indeed a favour unto them by *Ahura Mazda*. The Biblical accounts

of both the father and the son showed them to be great Kings who were upright and benevolent. As a befitting sign of respect, Sir Percy Sykes had personally visited the Rock Tomb as the Great King known as *Naqsh-i-Rustum* and carefully examined it with deep reverence. His vivid description of the royal funeratory was given thus:

> Externally the tombs are identical and represented the façade of a place with four semi-detached columns, between which is the entrance. Above is an entablature which sustains a throne consisting of two stages, each supported by figures in the style of the Hall of a Hundred columns. The King stands, holding a bow in left hand, while his right is raised in adoration to the god Ahura Mazada, who hovers above. One of them which I examined with deep reverence, is proved by inscriptions to have been the tomb of Darius. With interior dimensions of 60 by 20 feet, it was arranged to hold nine corpses, and a few of the stone lids which covered the deep cavities cut in the rock for the reception of the remains of Darius and his family albeit in a broken condition.[44]

Sir Sykes was a remarkable historian who had traversed the paths followed by the false Zulqarnain in his conquest of the Far East. And had come to Persepolis to pay his homage to the tomb of the true Zulqarnain, he said; "I examined with deep reverence" this was because it was a tomb of a holy man, a *mumin* and not a *mushrik*, and one of the greatest historic personages in history.

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QUR'AN ON HISTORICAL FACTS

And We have sent down to thee Book explaining all things.
- Surat an-Nahl

The Glorious Qur'an, the sacred Book of all Muslims, the future constitution of the world has in all respects a unique character and position among all books and Holy Writs of the world. Because apart from its sacred character it forever remains incorruptible; the Holy Qur'an is the grandest Holy Scripture the world has ever seen. An everlasting fountainhead of knowledge for feeding the intelligence of all men, in all generations. It's adaptability to the ever-changing world is as inimitable as its textual purity. A perspicuous Holy Scripture, which explains virtually all things with compelling lucidity. There is history in it; there is poetry, philosophy, science, biology, geology, embryology, exploration, geography, astronomy, oceanography and the host of other related and unrelated disciplines. It is no doubt, a quintessence fountain of knowledge and wisdom.

Yet, the Holy Qur'an remains forever unshakeable a Book of Guidance for mankind and a constitution of the world. It is the storehouse of instructions and illustrations for every form of human emotion, for every phase of human character, for every incidence of private live, for every kind of military, social and political institution suitable to all generations of mankind to the end of time. Its compendium of unlimited knowledge remains inimitable in all aspects. When compared to any Holy Writ in history, it makes it pale into insignificance as the fiery splendour of sun surpasses the cold pale glamour of the moon. This is Qur'an, Most Honourable.

The Holy Qur'an is not a book of history, however, the superb style in which the Holy Qur'an has discussed the different phases of the lives of various nations, their rise, development, decline and collapse, as well as the causes underlying these changes, has no

parallel in the historical records of the world.[1] It is not only that the Holy Qur'an has no equal but will for ever remain an Amazing Revelation, it has so much information contained in it whose source cannot be attributed to anyone other than Allah (swt), as the Divine Author. Furthermore, the Holy Qur'an is not only held in awe for its wealth of information by even the renowned Western scholars but revered for its unique style of narration and its concinnity. God Almighty equipped His Prophet with a weapon, the Qur'an, that apparently belonged to the same category of works of the other scriptures but possessed unique and astonishing characteristics that were beyond the capacity of man to reproduce. The inimitability of the Holy Qur'an has for ever remained a miracle. Hence, this Holy Scripture was revealed, not created.

The Qur'anic concept of history was yet unmatched, its accounts of the past was as flawless as the accurate and orderliness of the Awesome Cosmos, consequently, in the course of over fourteen centuries it made a decisive impact on human history. Allahbukhsh K. Brohi gave a keen insight on how the Amazing Qur'an succeeded in liberating and transforming the lives of the peoples who might have come under its spell and influence. He pointedly observed that:

> The birth place of the Prophet and, therefore, the rise of Islam is strategically placed in the geographical middle of the then prevailing civilisations of the times - the Graeco-Roman civilisation of the West and the Egyptian, Babylonian, Phoenician and Persian civilisations of the Near East and the Indian and Chinese Civilisations of the Far East. The emergence of Islam from the landscape of Arabia in the larger vista of history is to be likened to the radiant light emanating from a brilliant lit lamp placed in the middle of a world that had sunk into thick and impenetrable darkness. The Prophet of Islam, no wonder is described in the Qur'an as a Shining lamp and in that image is befitting addressed as Mercy to all the peoples. Mankind cannot be grateful enough to him for what he had done for it.[2]

When the past of mankind was presented in the Holy Qur'an, the rise and fall of political authority was discussed. But was this past? In answering this question Brohi stated that the Prophet of Islam, peace be upon him, proved beyond all doubt the validity of all truths about human life revealed to him through the Word of Allah (swt) which we find enshrined in the Holy Qur'an. "We must therefore," he said, "accept the past of mankind revealed to us by Allah and thus we should go back to revelations in order to reconstruct the history of man in this earth."[3] The Holy Scripture was a unique reliable source of historical data quite unlike the historical methods, which gave version of the past of mankind which could not be proved with documents and material evidence. Thus, to make Revealed Knowledge an absolute reliable source of history, the Final Revelation, challenged and corrected the Jewish and Christian fabrications and interpolations contained in their Holy Writs by later generations (Q.2:40-42,99) indicating, thereby, that it was the only dependable and trustworthy source of knowledge of the past.

Because of the range and scope of this past, according to Brohi, it embraced the whole of mankind from man's first advent on the earth till the doomsday. However, this included the future of mankind which primarily was not the realm of history but religion. But the past of mankind narrated in the Qur'an and further explained in the Hadiths of the Prophet should be considered as portions of human history.[4] The penetrating range of the Final Revelation in its historical account of the rise and fall of nations, or the moral, economic, racial, cultural and social history of mankind was far reaching than man's limited investigations into his own past have revealed. For the simple reason that it was a Sublime account of history given by one who Has created and equilibrated all things. Consequently, this super range had certain characteristics, which were at variance with that given by ordinary mortals. These peculiarities were noted by Brohi though they were denied by the

Rejecters of Faith. The erudite scholar then stated that:

> Instead of accepting religious statements modern historians have borrowed from biology the concept of evolution, from anthropology the concept of races, from sociology the concept of social change and hence the evolution of civilisations and cultures and from Archaeology the cultural patterns of Man in different ages.[5]

All these concepts and many others were borrowed to cover up the grave defects of the investigative method, hitherto, believed to be absolute and accurate. This was necessary because as more light was shed on certain accepted historic fact like the evolution of man, which they might be compelled to alter or modify their conjectures and conclusions, especially about the early man about whom there was no written record. These historians did not consider God's statements as valid because they have nothing tangible to prove or disprove them.[6] The question had gone far beyond that because it was a manifestation of obstinate denial of God and His Revealed knowledge.

Therefore, the Qur'an concept of history, differed markedly from the Jewish and Christian concepts in spite of their similar flamework. Because it was in agreement with scientific investigations including exploration and archaeological excavations. The bottom line was to verify the scientific findings and hypotheses in the light of Islam:

> Do they not travel through the earth and see what was the End of those before them? They were more numerous than these and superior in strength and in the traces (they have left) in the land: Yet all that they accomplished was of no profit to them (Q. 40: 82).

In recent years a number of archaeological excavations had uncovered many ancient cities and towns. Each with its own form of civilisation. Because for many generations to take inordinate pride in its own single achievements in science or skill became ridiculous

if the broad stream of history was to be taken into consideration. The present state of scientific achievements are only the cumulative works of previous civilisations. Archaeology is the scientific methodology which finds out; "and in the traces (they have left) in the land":

> Say: Go ye through the earth and see what has been the end of those guilty (of sin) Q. 27: 69.
>
> Say: Travel through the earth and see what was the End of those before (you): Most of them worshipped others besides God (Q. 30: 42).

And Archeology as a branch of science corroborated history. Thus, the Holy Qur'an had advocated the use of expedition and archaeology in understanding the past of mankind. Because there was a moral lesson to be learnt in the rise and fall of human civilisation, and mightier cultures perished in the common ruin as well as in vanities. Hence the Qur'an manifesto was there for all to see willy-nilly because it is all-embracing and comprehensive.

This "weapon of the Prophet" is intended to be an eternal miracle, revealed to make science and learning blossom among men. It has in its unique style provided man with all the necessary guidance, by means either of recalling the circumstance leading to the revelation of various verses, or of recounting of historical narratives describing the events that took place with marvellous concinnity and accuracy. These accounts were couched in various similes and metaphors that touch on all the different human departments of thoughts so as to guide man in the direction of highest degrees.[7] Thus, by analysing the stories and events contained in the Qur'an, it would be possible to deduce certain fundamental principles. Despite its remarkable comprehensiveness and richness, with respect to its world view, historic and scientific content, and its ability to guide the individual and society, the collective aim of the Holy Book is primarily: 'the guidance of man.' "This is the Book, in it is guidance sure without doubt, to those who fear God." (Q.2:2).

Professor Abdul Hamid Saddiqui stated that:

> The Divine Book narrates the events of the past as *ibra* (instructive value) is because events occurring in the past and in the present have meaningful relations between them, or in other words, they have a common law behind them.[8]

This is the law of judgement, by which all nations both present and the past, are judged according to their actions. In his explanation of this law the erudite Islamic scholar, martyr Murtadha Mutahhari, stated that the rise and fall of the Israelites as mentioned in the Holy Qur' an (17:4-8) was in accordance with this law governing all societies: "But if you repeat (the crime), we shall repeat the punishment." Indicating that the nation of Israel was referred to and not an individual. This law of justice was the one governing all societies, present, past and the future, because events were usually re-occurring. Mutahhari explained this universal law in these words:

> The Holy Qur'an explains that nations and societies (not just individuals living in societies) have common laws and principles that govern their rise and fall in accordance with certain historical processes. The concept of fate and collective destiny implies the existence of certain definite laws governing the society.[9]

The Holy Qur'an, therefore, narrates the events of the past to serve as moral lessons and to provide us with *ibra* or instructive value. This is because events in the past, present and future are so inter-twined, interrelated and often recur. T. S. Elliot, aptly described this inter-relationship: "Time Present and Time Past are both contained in Time Future and Time Future contained in Time Past."

The Islamic view of history is universal, it is neither time-bound nor space-bound. It does not examine the role of a 'chosen people', but discusses the role of entire humanity in its attitudes towards truth and righteousness.[10] The Holy Qur'an, therefore,

repeatedly exhorts man to see not only the outward manifestation of the different happenings of human life, but to scrutinise the undercurrent of ideas and motives, which recast and shaped those happenings. These historic facts and responses were discussed not merely for the enrichment of our factual knowledge but to systematise and generalise the past and to take moral lessons from it. This act of mercy by the Most Compassionate One should be properly utilised by any society as it was the surest means of success both in this world and in the hereafter. Because past events were discussed for the moral lesson of the present generations, and this gives a cue for the future society.

In a similar vein, "the divine purpose of a parable is to enrich us with wisdom and insights," said Shaykh Muhammad Mitwalli, "In fact, the only two Holy Persons in the whole of the Qur'an who are called by their complete family names are Mary and Jesus."[11] The reason for this identification, he said was that their miracle was not to be repeated, it was final and sealed. But other parables can be repeated in the history of mankind. Shaykh Mitwalli, then expressed his opinion about parables as contained in the Holy Qur'an in the following words:

> When dealing with parables in the Qur'an, one should not be too concerned with names, names for their own sake have no significance and neither add nor detract from the moral lesson which the parables are intended to teach.[12]

On the contrary, I believe that name and place should be of concern to us, not in all cases but in most of the cases, we should endeavour to find them. Parables provide us with added benefits, as *ibra* or instructive value, to be imbibed for our moral and spiritual ascent. The other aspect though apparently insignificant, that is, name or place demonstrates the miracles of the Qur'an. So unless we are handicapped by paucity of knowledge or scientific means, we must allow the Qur'an to show its wonders and facilitate it. It

sufficed to say that it was in concurrence with the advice given in the Qur'an to research information, that Hadrat Umar Al-Khatab (r. a.) sent a group of men to find the Wall of Zulqarnain. It was because of his story, which was told in the Holy Qur'an; by finding this wall the Miracle of the Book of Allah was attested. Gary Miller, gave another example where the Holy Qur'an gave accurate historic facts. He stated that based on the historic facts as revealed in the 89th chapter of the Holy Qur'an, the Book mentions a certain city by the name of Iram (a city of pillars). This city was unknown in the history of the ancient world. And which as far as historians were concerned it had never existed at all. But this city was mentioned in the Holy Qur'an 89:7-8: "Of the (city of) Iram with lofty pillars, the like of which were not produced in (all) the land."

Here, even the city was mentioned by name; that they have advanced in architecture with lofty pillars, which were unique in their time. Here again, the Apostle of God had mentioned the existence of this beautiful city, which the world came to know only through his Divine inspirations. And to prove beyond doubt the Divine Authorship of the Holy Qur'an this city of Iram suddenly came to limelight in the West, in the December edition of National Geography of 1978. It mentioned that in 1973, the city of Ebla was excavated in Syria. The city was discovered to be 43 centuries only. The Canadian mathematician described the most amazing thing about the archaeological findings in the following words:

> Researchers found in the library of Ebla a record of the cities with which Ebla had done business. Believe it or not, there on the list was the name of city of Iram. The people of Ebla had done business with people of Iram![13]

Furthermore, it was important to stress that if we had not considered the names and places mentioned in the holy text as important, the publication of this National Geography of December 1978 would have escaped our attention, and an important miracle wrought by the Holy Qur'an would have been missed for

generations. It is my candid opinion that the Holy Qur'an wrought miracles daily and continuously, we only do not have the means and the knowledge of both detecting and demonstrating them. Even those who are more advanced relatively in science and technology fear to divulge the information, which they believe could bolster our belief in the Holy Qur'an, and advance the course of Islam. For instance, it took five years to publish the result of their archaeological finding in *Ebla*. Similarly, there are many scientific findings in astronomy, archaeology, oceanography, etc. whose publications were perhaps withheld for fear of advancing the course of Islam. The Holy Qur'an is indeed an Eternal Miracle. Sayyid Musawi Lari concurred:

> So let us know the Qur'an better. Prophet-hood and Messenger-hood are closely and inseparably linked to the miracle that proves the relationship of the claimant to prophet-hood, with the supra-natural realm; the miracle is the clearest and most *objective that disarms those who would illogically deny* prophet-hood, for it demonstrates that the claim of the prophets is founded on a reality.[14]

Today, as witnesses to the Everlasting Miracle of the Glorious Qur'an we must endeavour to prove it, show it, advance it and spread it. And not to relent on this effort either by hiding under interpretative arguments, thereby, shirking our responsibilities in the process, or by developing an utter dislike or contempt of scholarship, which the Holy Book encourages and values. Miracles vary with the sophistication of the people, the Miracles of the Holy Qur'an tally perfectly well with our modern world. For instance, certain sacred statements of the Holy Qur'an which, hitherto, were declared "God knows best" are now with advancement of knowledge reopened and subjected to research with highly enriching wonders of the Holy Qur'an uncovered in the process. Musawi Lari also stated that:

> For Muslims, the miracles of the Qur'an, is a matter of religious belief; for scholars and researchers, it is a matter of religious

> belief; for scholars and researchers, it is a matter of scientific belief. The Qur'an possesses a remarkable comprehensiveness and richness; with respect to its world-view and scientific content, and its ability to guide the individual and the society. There are still many matters contained in the Qur'an that call for investigation and await discovery for further research.[15]

The essence of the extraordinary richness of the Holy Qur'an which demands encyclopaedic knowledge for its comprehension still stands as a permanent and Everlasting Miracle, which is living, seen, touched, read and a universal proof for the veracity of the claim of the Seal of the Prophets. We have to advance the course of this Amazing revelation, which repeatedly invites man to turn to faith on the basis of knowledge and thought, and not just a mere professing of dogmatic belief. The only method available to us is science, the scientific language with which the world understands and vows. It is this and other methods that have to be used against our vainglorious enemies. However, in doing so we have to acquire and master all the other branches of knowledge and in all their ramifications so that we make the Holy Qur'an better understood and better appreciated than previously. This would help to fine-tune the commentaries of the Holy Qur'an in the light of current knowledge and latest proven scientific discoveries, which are compatible with the main text of the Holy Qur'an and Hadiths of the Prophet (s.a.w.).

It is in view of this that I humbly believe, in spite of my little knowledge of the Holy Qur'an, that we must revisit our position on the identification of Alexander the Great as Zulqarnain. He did not meet up with the Qur'anic description, as such we must not relent our efforts to search for the great historic personage who had fitted such descriptions, rather than adopting a lazy attitude of hiding in interpretative passivity and crowning it up with 'God knows best'. Fine-tuning our views of Zulqarnain from Alexander the Great to Darius the Great does not in itself constitute any harm unto the sacred verses of the Qur'an, rather it had advanced our

understanding of, appreciation in and reverence for the Holy Qur'an on historical facts. "Nay! This is a Glorious Qur'an." I think it is in line with this that Shaykh Mitwalli expresses his opinion in the following words:

> When the Qur'an was first revealed to Muhammad, the human race lacked the basic knowledge necessary for understanding and perceiving the complex facts it contained. Because of this paucity of knowledge, many phenomena such as the sphericality of the earth and its movements in the solar system, or the notion of relativity, embryology, were simply touched upon in the Qur'an, leaving their profound exploration and identification to the inquisitive minds of future generations.[16]

We are the generation, so we ought to explore with profound inquisitive minds in order to appreciate and show the miracle of the Holy Qur'an, as it yields its knowledge to each mind within its capacity and degree of intellect. The Holy Qur'an helps and encourages us to imbibe not only an inquisitive mind to explore the physical universe with knowledge, but to be thorough and meticulous like scientists. God had equipped each man with *census communis* and charged him to apply the use of *reason;* the Holy Qur'an invites mankind to study the cosmos, the wonder of creation and the causes and effects of all things that exist in the planet and beyond. So that through the grandeur of His creations, man will know God Almighty, he will revere Him and accord Him worship as enshrined in the Revealed Qur'an. Man could not achieve this without knowledge. The search for knowledge is, therefore, incumbent on a Muslim both male and female alike.

Therefore, in the Holy Qur'an the word *al-ilm* or knowledge, and its derivatives are used more than 780 times[17] It also contains more than 750 verses, which refer or exhort to reflection of natural phenomena. Man, is asked to think over the physical phenomena in order to recognise Allah through His signs.[18] In the field of history, the Holy Qur'an had given many stories and parables that among many other things stimulate our inquisitive minds as we are

requested to 'research' that which we are ignorant of. And because names are not mentioned in these parables, they are to serve not only for moral lessons but as academic exercises as well. Because in trying to identify place, name or time, we are bound to acquire knowledge, and by acquisition of knowledge, which is mentioned over 780 times in the Holy Book we are, therefore, in a better stead to understand and advance the course of the Holy Qur'an and Islam in the world.

Finally, I would like to point out the interrelationship of the past, present and the future in the light of history. As it is said that history repeats itself, one can say without fear of contradiction that the ancient world had witnessed Zulqarnain of its time. He was a Darius the Great, a true follower of Prophet Zoroaster. Who would be the Zulqarnain of our modern world? It is inescapable, that a righteous and religious man would emerge to rule this world of North and South divide and to dictate to it as one man ruling the whole world. This great Zulqarnain of the modern world would be a true follower of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.). Oh, Allah (s.w.t.) bring us this Zulqarnain of this modern world soon! In addition to the Ibra one gains in the Zulqarnain story, there are many other lessons to be derived from it. These are briefly mentioned and elaborated in the subsequent pages.

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Chapter Eleven

LESSONS FROM ZULQARNAIN'S QUR'ANIC STORY

We sent thee (Muhammad) not, but as a Mercy for all creatures.

- Surat al-Anbiyaa

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and the Holy Qur'an were the two most wonderful things, which the world had ever seen. Since they were unique events in the annals of history they, therefore, became objects of criticism from the unbelievers. Muslims and non-Muslims alike had said a great deal about the Prophet of Islam. What was being said, however, by both adherents and non-adherents of Islam, was essentially or largely coloured by his preconditioning of religious or atheistic background. For instance, the question of Muhammad's Prophethood was for Muslims an indisputable fact. But there are others who might perhaps deny the fact that it was God rather than Muhammad who founded Islam. Thus, these critics of Islam were protean, as they were bizarre. These critics questioned the Prophethood claim of Muhammad (bpuh) by raising frivolous questions and casting doubt most of, which were coloured with prejudices and envy. One important point to be highlighted was about the changing nature of their critique. How did the Holy Qur'an respond to all these critics, from the 7th century to the 21st century and beyond?

The Holy Qur'an and the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) were two sides of the same coin because Hadrat Aisha (r.a), the wife of the Prophet spoke of the moral character and deportment of this greatest man in history and the Seal of the Prophets in the following words that: "His moral being had been the Qur'an." This meant that he had shown perfect and exemplary adherence to the precepts of the Holy Qur'an; he was in fact, *Qur'an in action.* Then how did the

prophet respond to his critics? With reference to the Holy Qur'an, and to the sayings of the Prophet or Hadith, all had consistently indicated that Muhammad (pbuh) was indeed the Prophet of God and His Messenger to mankind. The Holy Qur'an was not of his own making but its divine receptacle from the Most High. It was therefore, divinely and not humanly inspired "(This is) a Message sent down from the Lord of the Worlds", (Holy Qur'an 69:43). Undoubtedly, the Holy Scripture was revealed and not created.

Since the Holy Qur'an was not humanly but divinely inspired, responses to its critics should, therefore, be divinely and should not be humanly inspired too. It was for this reason that the Prophet had never attempted to defend the Holy Qur'an because he was not its author. In fact, this was an important indicator of the authenticity of his prophetic claim. The Prophet was sincere in this action for allowing the Author to defend His work. Had the Prophet been the sole defender of the Holy Qur'an against criticisms, who then would defend it after his death? At the outset, therefore, God Almighty was the defender of His Holy Qur'an, He is Everlasting and All knowing. He answered all the questions and the criticisms of the sceptics right from the seventh century to the end of time. Any question raised by a critic during the prophetic era, the answer given, thereby, became a reply to all critics with a similar reservation till the end of time. This approach was undoubtedly superhuman. Thus, we were left with the Holy Qur'an defending itself correctly against all spurious allegations. This fact was not an imposition external to it, but came from within, so let the Qur'an speak: "Do they not consider the Qur'an? Had it been from other than Allah, they would surely have found therein much discrepancy." (Holy Qur'an 4:82)

This was a clear challenge to the non-Muslim critics. "If this Holy Book is not what it claims to be, then all you have to do is this or that to prove that it is false,"[1] said Gary Miller, the Canadian mathematician. The Holy Qur'an had challenged all its critics from

the 7th Century till end of time to apply this "falsification test," in order to disprove its claim. For over 14 centuries now no one was able to and presumptuously no one could ever disprove this Divine Authorship. Allah (swt) had challenged the idolaters several times, including those in the present modern world of science and literature noted also for generation of prolific writers of books that was unprecedented in history to imitate the Qur'an or compose ten Surahs or even a Surah resembling His Qur'an:

> And if ye are in doubt as to what We have revealed From time to time to our servant. Then produce a Sura like thereunto; And call your witnesses or helpers (If there are any) besides Allah, if ye are truthful. (Holy Qur'an 2:23).

In fact, this challenge was even more directed at the men of the twenty first century and beyond. Because it was in this millennium that man had perfected the art of making books in diverse fields of knowledge. Well armed with the aid of science and technology, the modern man could boast of having the finest scholars in the annals of human history. These were men who conquered the challenges of the cosmos and had sent man to the moon. The modern man claimed by achieving this gigantic feat to have been able to make the heavens the abode of man. He had successfully accomplished great achievements in the land, the oceans and the cosmos. But was humbled by the Holy Qur'an, as no one had accepted this most celebrated challenge to produce a single Sura, because it is inimitable.

The Holy Qur'an had given its critics how to get started in disproving its claim, those who suspected the Prophet of forgery were also challenged: "Or do they say, 'He forged it?' Say: Bring then a Sura like unto it, And call (to your aid) Anyone you can. Besides Allah, if it be ye speak the truth!" (Holy Qur'an 10:38). The modern man with his high technological and scientific knowledge was the most appropriate person to tackle this *concrete test,* which had defied the wisdom and sagacity of peoples of the ancient world.

In our modern world, this could have been a feat to win a Nobel Prize in literature. It would also be an opportunity to put the 1.2 billion Muslims world-wide to ridicule and shame. Something, which the Western World would have wished to see happen, that an energetic writer or writers had composed ten Suras like those of the Holy Qur'an or at least a single Sura for that matter. Alas, the modern man realised that it could not be done because it was beyond the scope of human mind of all generations.

The modern man was challenged to apply both the *falsification test* and the *concrete test* against the Holy Qur'an if he was indeed sincere in his criticisms and vainglorious utterances. If the Prophet could author a book of this magnificence and elegance then, undoubtedly, the modern man could rival it by "bringing a Sura like unto it." Again alas, the modern man had failed to make good his claim. He, therefore, admitted pointedly or deviously that the Holy Qur'an was of Divine Authorship; Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was not the remarkable composer of an influential Book – the Holy Qur'an, as he oft-repeatedly asserted. The modern man like all men of all generations would for ever remain humbled, contrite and defeated by the inimitability of the Holy Qur'an because it was beyond the ken of man to compose.

The critics of the ancient world had woefully failed in their polemic attacks against this Holy Scripture, their criticisms warped and they all died in shame and in disgrace. The Holy Qur'an remains an Everlasting Miracle; still challenging men of knowledge to apply all the possible tests they could frame, to disprove or to verify its authenticity. The Amazing Revelation had then given a very important clue to assist the modern man because of his abysmal failure on how to separate a true revelation from the false one: How do we know that there is revelation, and that it is from Allah? Here is a concrete test to be applied:

The Teacher of Allah's Truth has placed before you many

> Suras. Can you produce one like it? If there is any one besides Allah, who can inspire spiritual truth in such noble language, produce your evidence or is it that your doubts are merely argumentative, refractory against your own inner light, or conscience? All true revelation is itself a miracle and stands on its own merits.[2]

The important point here is this statement: *All true revelation is itself a miracle and stands on its own merits.* This was exactly what the Qur'anic Zulqarnain stood for and epitomised. The whole Qur'anic text was divinely revealed, the Zulqarnain story was taken as a prototype for clarity and elucidation. It provided a maze of lessons both spiritual and mundane. In this story we could see glaringly the Miracles of the Holy Scripture in Allah's style.

Allah's Style

Allah (swt), the All knowing, had created the world and its contents. He created mankind with their different stages of development and bestowed them with knowledge until the Last Hour. He revealed His last Testament to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in the Arabian desert in the 7th Century. This greatest Prophet, therefore, was the Seal of the Prophets and his revealed scripture, the Holy Qur'an, the Final Revelation, which would serve mankind as divine guidance till the end of time. The Holy Qur'an, therefore, is an everlasting scripture. But the Holy Prophet on the other hand was holy but human, therefore, a mortal being. He could not live beyond the 7th Century, yet, he was destined to be the Prophet of subsequent generations of mankind till end of the world. How could a mortal being last till end of the world, a span of countless years the number known only to God Almighty? The prophet died in 623 AD and the Holy Qur'an still exists and is adaptable to every generation and its sophistication. Our learned scholar whom I quoted copiously, Shaykh Muhammad Mitwalli Al Sharawi in his book titled, *The Miracles of the Qur'an* helped to shed more light on this apparent paradox. He wrote:

> The Miracle of the Qur'an sent to the Prophet Muhammad differs from those of other Messengers and Prophets in many respects. In the Qur'an there are many miraculous aspects which demand a considerable degree of contemplation before their secrets are unlocked. When this happens it becomes apparent that within the Qur'an are layers of meaning which throw new light on the superficial significance of its verses. This miraculous feature may be in one single letter, which alone may denote immeasurable meanings. For each successive generation, the Qur'an offers new relevant meanings, proportionate to the development of knowledge and the growth of that generation's intellectual aptitude. In other words, they are applicable to the constantly changing perceptions of the human race, expanding in meaning as man's exploration of the universe and his search for knowledge about his life and existence increases. From this we see that the Qur'an was not intended solely for one people or nation, but came for the benefit and guidance of all, as a complete and comprehensive religion, providing knowledge for all generations. If these teachings were limited to one century or generation the divine everlasting objective of the Qur'an would have long since diminished. But the Qur'an is constantly regenerating new meaning, providing a continual source of guidance. Thus, today we are able to perceive from some revelations subsequent meanings to those of our predecessor.[3]

Most of what this learned international scholar said could be proven from the Zulqarnain's Qur'anic story, especially the expandable meaning of the sacred verses. Besides, what he referred to as 'miraculous features' of the Qur'an were equally described by Dr. Maurice Bucaille, a French scientist and surgeon in his book called *Qur'an and Science,* as "Hallmarks of authenticity." These obscure passages scattered throughout the Holy Qur'an were only obscure because men of the early time were only able to grasp their apparent meaning and men of the present generation were able to grasp their real meaning. This was possible because of advancement in their knowledge of Literature, Science and Technology. The fact that these obscure passages, though, not fully understood at that

time, were not tampered with was another prove of textual purity of the Holy Qur'an. Hence the erudite scholar referred to this phenomenon as benchmark of textual purity.

Similarly, there are some passages whose meaning men of the present generation do not understand much. However, with further advancement in Science and Technology, future generations will grasp their real meaning with a shift in the paradigms. It is my fervent belief that some of the verses will be more explicitly understood after the conquest of the space and colonisation of the moon and perhaps other planets by man. This view cannot be said to be far-fetched because the Holy Qur'an adapts to the changing phase of every human civilisation. The Holy Qur'an anticipated the conquest of space by man fourteen centuries ago, when there was little or no progress in the knowledge of the space or the cosmos. The Holy Qur'an said: "O ye assembly of Jinns and men! If it be ye can pass beyond the zones of the heavens and the earth, pass! Not without authority shall ye be able to pass!" (Q. 55:33).

Although this sacred statement of fact was undoubtedly obscure to the 7th century generation, who could only grasp the apparent meaning of the verse, yet, it was retained to survive to a generation with enough knowledge to grasp its real meaning. These 'hallmarks of authenticity' not only proved the miracles of the Holy Qur'an but clearly demonstrated that the Holy Scripture was pure and devoid of tampering. A textural purity that would remain till the end of time.

The present generation, therefore, is lucky to be eyewitnesses to the conquest of the space by man, when man was given the final authority by the Most High to traverse beyond the zones of the heavens. This permission was granted in April 1961 when the Russian Cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first man to be in outer space in orbit round the earth. In 1969 the first human to set his foot on the moon was Neil Armstrong, an American who stepped out on the moon surface at precisely 10.56 p.m. on 20th

July, 1969. Edwin Aldrain followed him after a few minutes, while Michael Collins remained in the spaceship. President Nixon of United States while making the first ever phone call to the astronauts on the moon said, "The heavens have become part of man's world." Little did he know that the Holy Qur'an had made this prediction 1400 years ago. "If such verses have been tampered with", it could be argued "they would have prevented us from establishing their conformity with modern knowledge." Thus, the Holy Qur'an would have suffered the same fate, like the previous scriptures. Fortunately, this did not and could never happen because God had so jealously guarded the Holy Qur'an from any form of corruption. Consequently, these hallmarks of authenticity littered the Holy Qur'an and we would discuss some of them in relation to the story of Zulqarnain.

Thus, we could rightly conclude that it was Allah's style to litter His Holy Scripture with obscure verses to serve as hallmarks of authenticity of the Holy Qur'an, and thereby making the Holy Scripture adaptable to the changing phase of every civilisation. We could identify some of them in the Zulqarnain's story. This story, though, succinctly presented contains more than half of the entire ancient history of the world. Because in the attempt to understand who Zulqarnain was, one needs to know Persian history, history of Greece and the evolution of Gog and Magog. These, therefore, constituted almost the knowledge of the entire ancient history.

Ancient History

Earlier in the book we have discussed the important implications of the question posed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) by the learned Syrian Jew; "who was Zulqarnain?" A question, which undoubtedly the Prophet personally could never have answered. Not only because he was secluded in the Arabian Desert, which was cut off from all forms of civilisation, not only because of his

educational background as an unlettered Prophet, but because the nature of the answer was right, succinct and peculiar, and so, far beyond the human ken.

A careful study of the answer proffered showed that although it was asked by a 7th century critic, it was an answer in a nutshell to all the critics of the future generations till the end of time. Because it was laden with hallmarks of authenticity with which to convince the various pundits of all ages. The general thinking of people at that time was that the end of the world was very much at hand. So human answer to this celebrated question would precisely be narrow and strictly to the point. Even such a narrow answer could not have been posited by the personal effort of the Prophet. Because this Divinely Inspired answer was so deep as it was wide in scope. One of the expeditions of Zulqarnain had touched the areas around the Caucasus Mountains, which as we would see was the most variegated ethnological and linguistic area in the world. His journey, therefore, had introduced us into a vast realm of ancient history. A study and careful research into Zulqarnain story, therefore, would make one be conversant with the ancient history. Knowledge of this melting pot of the world was a vast and deep understanding of the ancient world. It was a comprehension and knowledge of entire ancient history, especially the history of Eurasia. Moreover, the historic personage in question, who was most likely to be Darius the Great had lived about one thousand and hundred years earlier and apparently without trace. How did the Prophet know about him? Of course, he was divinely inspired. In this story of Zulqarnain, his leadership qualities were some of the lessons to be learned.

Administrative Qualities

The first thing that strikes one as he reads the story of Zulqarnain is his keen sense of administration depicted as the main theme of the story. Since time immemorial the basic essence of administration had been the development of human competence and

responsiveness within the individual citizens and the society as a whole. The administrative savvy of Zulqarnain was unsurpassed in the ancient world. His monumental achievements during his reign showed an intelligent organisational skill in handling the affairs of such a colossal World Empire, which he bequeathed to his successors had underscored this important fact. His World Empire had lasted for over one millennium, though, punctuated by the conquest of Alexander two centuries after. It continued to drag on until its final dissolution into Islam in 642 AD. He was able to achieve this greatest feat due to his faith in God primarily and to his leadership qualities secondarily.

In each of his expeditions, many of these leadership qualities were exhibited. He succeeded in organising and directing both human and material resources at his disposal to achieve his desired goals – to make the world peaceful, progressive, productive and above all conducive to the worship of Allah Most High and the establishment of His rule in Persia and beyond. All these he demonstrated with remarkable success in his control of the Eastern and Western Kingdoms. When his journeys were analysed, as it was done already, his glaring leadership qualities shone brilliantly into focus. Allah (s.w.t.) uniquely favoured him, to achieve his set objectives, consequently, he put his intellect, physical ability and faith in motion throughout the period of his reign. One of the lessons to be learnt, therefore, was that this world could only thrive in peace and progress if all nations were ruled or administered under the Laws of God. The successes of Zulqarnain's reign had again underscored this assertion. A comparison with Alexander's rule showed just that.

In fact, Zulqarnain's leadership style and qualities were mirror reflections of that of Umar the Great (r.a.); each was worthy of emulation for every well meaning citizen irrespective of colour and creed. If Zulqarnain was far off in the ancient world then his brother Umar Ibn Alkhatab (r.a.), one of the greatest Caliph is within reach, as literature about him are abound with in both Muslim and non-

Muslim countries. They're there for reading, reflection and emulation.

The success of Zulqarnain as an administrator was lauded by all as he was described as the "international shopkeeper." This arose primarily from within his person; and his faith in Allah (s.w.t) that was veritable and unflinching. He never flagged both in turmoil and in triumph, in victory and in defeat, as a victor or as a vanquished, and he traversed the vicissitudes of life with an unalloyed faith in God. Even his number one enemies the Greeks, held him in high esteem. He was a visionary leader who through good planning and formulation of welfarist's policy had executed wonderful projects world-wide, some of which were far ahead of their time. This was one of the good attributes of a good administrator a keen sense of forecasting and planning coupled with the ability to accomplish the set down objectives. His government appeared to be free from redtapism and buck-passing, because he always reacted to problems with spontaneous immediacy in tackling all issues of national or international importance. Zulqarnain never showed any bureaucracy in carrying out decisions and he dissuaded his subordinates from unnecessary formalities. Thus, with good network of roads and waterways, he with alacrity travelled to the sensitive areas in all the provinces, which demanded the attention of the Great King.

As we have already seen he was never parsimonious but generous to all his officials both junior and senior and irrespective of their nationalities because he was a just King of the world. Consequently, the morale of his subordinates were constantly high and were full of love and respect for the Great King. From the generals down to the rank and file of his soldiers, each was equally motivated in accordance with his performance and the net result was that one man ruling the whole world that effectively stabilised which allowed each nation to progress according to its intellect and the resources at its disposal. Contrarily, Alexander's tenet, "the Army does the work and the general reaps the benefits" was not employed. Therefore, Zulqarnain was able to control and direct the

affairs of the whole world with his sublime administrative qualities, to the extent that even the beasts in wilderness had peacefully thrived. The Monarch, retained absolute power but he delegated authority to his *Satraps* and other high ranking officers in his global meritocracy; he shared his glory evenly to all the participants in his epoch making ventures. And with the heart of a lion he undertook risks and shouldered responsibilities, thus, he successfully conquered the world and ruled it absolutely, in a feat that excelled Alexander's racist global hegemony.

This politico-administrative maestro was very canny in the appropriate use of carrot and stick in his unique leadership styles. About morality, the Great King was strait-laced against indecencies and was abhorrent of corruption in all its ramifications. As a great lawgiver he was an utmost upholder of Human Rights and treated women with dignity and respect, for he himself had lived above board. In ancient Persia, especially during his reign women were not used as chattels or as lascivious objects of sensual gratification for men. They were generally kept in purdah, and moved outside their homes in veils. Zulqarnain was a strict moralist; so also was his administration as it did not allow heterosexual commingling, or the homosexual immoralities of the Greeks to thrive in Persia. Administration or management of every country was no doubt a gigantic task not to talk of one man ruling the world. And these excellent leadership qualities were indeed enunciated by Darius the Great whole ruled the world with faith in God, justice and righteousness. Consequently, his shoes were too wide for Alexander to fill, no matter his undeserved epithet – "the Great."

In a passing reference and while expounding the answer as to who Zulqarnain was, the Holy Qur'an had given an evidence to show that our universe was spherical in shape. The personality in question was a widely travelled man on earth. He must have seen things which were suggestive of spherical shape of the universe. There was an allusion to this in the story. In addition, a concept of

technology could easily be derived from the story. Without the technological means Zulqarnain's journeys could not have been possible.

Concept of Technology

The Holy Qur'an stated in the story of Zulqarnain that: "Verily We established his power on earth, and We gave him the ways and the means to all ends" (Q.18:84). From this sacred verse, it could easily be inferred that for a successful global hegemony it must be backed with technological power. This is exactly what we are witnessing today in the World of today, that is governed and controlled by the European nations because Allah (swt) had given them "the ways and means to all ends." This simply put means the "technological" means to govern and to control the world. Therefore, in this vein, Zulqarnain was the first man to possess the technological know how to single-handedly control the world.

Imam Rashid Husain, another erudite scholar, in the introduction of his book *Quranology* had made a similar exposition, where he defined technology according to Macropaedia Britannica as: "the systematic study of techniques for making and doing things." This could be translated to mean 'ways and means to all ends'; a concept of technology as defined by the Holy Qur'an. As a corollary, Zulqarnain could never have achieved such monumental successes and the absolute control of the world without the technical power of doing so. Undoubtedly, he had technological power, which he used in civil engineering construction and in his expeditions. And it was this same power that was given to his Indo-European race. With this technology, they even successfully explored the space.

In space exploration, one of the most significant date was the 4th of October, 1957. It was the day the Soviet Union put into Orbit Sputnik I, the world's first artificial satellite. It weighed 184 pounds

and travelled in an elliptical orbit that took it around the Earth every one and half hours.[4] Hence a new chapter in the field of exploration was opened, the heavens was penetrated, in line with what Goethe said "what we don't know is exactly what we need." Consequently, the need to know the cosmos became more intensified. And two years later, the first moon probe Lunar I, was launched again by the Soviet Union in January 2nd 1959. It flew within 4,660 miles of the moon's surface, broadcasting data back to earth.[5] This stimulated a lot interests and intense competition among many countries, particularly with the United States. Because not only were the Russians the first to try for the moon, they were also the first to approach the planets – Mars and Venus.[6] Hence the Americans felt beaten.

During exploration both the knowledge and the power of equipment of the nation improved enormously. Thus, Science of rocketry and space travel quickly improved especially with the keen participation of the United States. The Russian Scientist Konstantin Tsiolkovsky was the first to understand the use of rocket and designed several and solved theoretically how reaction engines could escape and re-enter the earth's atmosphere. This was indeed, a major break through in space exploration.

However, the American Scientist, Robert H. Goddard combined both theory and practice to advance the technology of Rocket Propulsion. And after the Second World War, many German scientists including Von Braun surrendered to the Americans to boost its space technology. Thus, with the collaboration of many scientists: prodded by their charismatic President John F. Kennedy, the Americans succeeded finally, in beating the Russians in landing man on the moon. When Neil Armstrong slowly descended the nine-rung ladder of the Module, at 10:56:20 p.m. (EDT), on July 20th 1969, he made his first step on the lunar ground. "That's one small step for a man one giant leap for mankind," he said. While testing his footing, Armstrong vividly described what he saw and felt on the moon. He said:

> The surface appears to be very, very fine grain, like a powder... I can kick it loosely with my toes. Like powdered charcoal. I can see footprints of my boots in the small fine particles... No trouble to walk around... It's quite dark here in the shadow. I can't tell if I've got good footing.[7]

This was indeed a giant leap for mankind nevertheless it was an event that was predicted over 1400 years ago by the Glorious Qur'an. It was a feat already being expected right from the seventh century AD. in the Arabian Desert. While Neil Armstrong described the moon, Aldrin described how he viewed the world from the summit of the moon. At 12:46 p.m. (EDT) on the 17th July 1969, he said:

> The view is out of this world. I can see all the Islands in the Mediterranean... Majorca, Sardinia, Corsica, a little haze over the upper Italian Peninsula, a few cumulus clouds out over Greece, sun setting on the eastern Mediterranean now...[8]

It was indeed one of the greatest successful expedition undertaken by Gog and Magog in the flights of Apollo II. It was an event viewed live by an estimated one billion people world wide, all the actions of the Astronauts were relayed from the moon and televised all over the globe. The world was thrilled with excitements to see the *Lunar Walk* performed by Armstrong and Aldrin all in Space Suit. The two Astronauts walked on the moon to collect about 20 kg of rock and soil sample from the surface of the moon. They also planted the American flag on the lunar surface and returned to the Module, after spending 21 hours and 36 minutes on the moon. The third Astronaut, Michael Colin remained throughout inside the Module preparing for their return. It was a mission successful.

It is at this juncture that we are now in a better stead to comprehend the Hadith of the Prophet (s.a.w.) with respect to *Yajuj* and *Majuj*, space conquest, and the evolution of the European

nations to a great height. Abu Hurayra, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that the Prophet, May Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:

> They will come out against people and drink all the water, and people will flee from them. They will shoot their arrows into the sky and they will come back blood stained. They will say, we have defeated the people on earth and we are superior to those in heaven in strength and might (al-Tirmidhi, al Hakim and Ibn Maja).

The allegorical meaning of this Hadith now can be easily discerned. "The first part of it dealt with the colonisation and exploitation of the world by the Europeans in their ascendancy. Because they would be out to forcefully subdue the world, so "people will flee from them." When all the peoples were subdued they would, "drink all the water." This meant the people would be exploited of their "natural resources," which was allegorised as "water." All nations' wealth and natural resources would be carted away to Europe. As a result this great nation would become wealthy, powerful and out of control of any one. It described Europeans in triumph. The second part of the Hadith predicted exactly what was described in the last few pages. "They will shoot their arrows into the sky," meaning they would embark on space explorations shooting "Rockets" allegorised as "Arrows" up into the space. And their mission would be successful because their arrows, "will come back blood stained." This meant they would bring samples from the moon and other planets from distant galaxy as evidence of their successful conquest. Then as people who had both successfully colonised the people on earth and had now broken the force of gravity, they would be full of braggadocio. This is Europeans in absolute global hegemony. This is exactly what we are witnessing today. Is it not wonderful how the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith of the Prophet explained everything in detail? This is indeed a portent sign for man of understanding.

Allah (s.w.t) exhorts us repeatedly in the sublime Qur'an to "explore our world" again and again, to undertake expeditions and embark on researches because without these endeavours, man, would not have the control of "ways and means to all ends" or simply the technological power. Although now, the Gog and Magog appeared to be in absolute control of everything, but it is the Believers who would finally inherit the earth. Therefore, success in this world and in the hereafter belongs to he who works for it. For the Bible says: "Ask, and it shall be given you, seek, and ye shall find, knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matt. 7:7). Therefore, all we need to do is to ask, to seek and to knock with pertinacity until *victory a certa!* Because the inspirational values of the Holy Qur'an, the lyricism in which it was frequently couched, and it intellectual challenges of its exegeses, all combined to give Islam resilience and vibrancy, and Holy Qur'an a potent shifter of paradigms. It is indeed a befitting future world constitution. In his expedition around the world, Zulqarnain must have seen its physical shape, and in fact, an allusion to the elliptical shape of the universe could be inferred from his story.

Spherical Shape of the Earth

Allah (s.w.t.) knew that in the course of time there could emerge sceptics and vainglorious writers who would proclaim the decline of the age of divine power and herald their allegiance to the power of Science. Science would become the all in all, valued, cherished and revered as the ultimate wisdom. Allah (swt), therefore, to foil this impious misconception and to subdue these critics with a burden of proof, He supported the Holy Qur'an with many scientific facts to deal with the present and future critics. The seventh century critics, however, were given accurate historic facts about the personage in question and were humbled beyond recall.

In narrating the expeditions of Zulqarnain by Allah (swt), there were some obscure verses loaded with scientific facts. Zulqarnain

was a widely travelled man on earth and the earth is round and with climates and climatic variations. These facts could not be comprehended by the Arabs of the 7th century generation because they lacked the means to do so and were kept in seclusion by the Arabian desert. Yet, the Holy Qur'an had told them about them in a wonderful style, a style which was undoubtedly that of God Almighty Himself. In the first expedition of Zulqarnain the Holy Qur'an said that he followed a way: "Until when he reached the setting of the Sun" (Q.18:86). What does Allah intend to inform us? Could man walking on this earth reach the place of setting of the Sun? This obviously was very unlikely because in a number of places the Holy Qur'an made allusions to the sphericity of the universe. For example: "And when the Earth is flattened out" (Q.84:3). This means the earth is globular in shape, at its dissolution, it will lose its shape as it will be flattened and cease to exist. Therefore, man could never reach the setting of the Sun, in the globular earth. In his explication of verse 18:86, Ustadh Abdullahi Yusuf Ali said: "Reaching the setting of the Sun," did not mean, "the extreme west," for there is no such thing. West and East are relative terms. It means a western expedition terminated by a spring of murky water. "The limit where the sun set," Syed Maududi said "does not mean the place of the setting of the sun." And according to Ibn Kathir, "It means that he marched to the West conquering one country after the other till he reached the last boundary of the land, beyond which there was ocean."[4]

However, a careful study would show this to be an observed phenomenon of aberration by a traveller on the sea, who looking far and the Sun would appear to him as if 'setting' in the west and in the sea, but in actuality it did not. Here the Holy Qur'an told us one of the proves that this world is round in shape. According to the Holy Qur'an since the world is a globe, a traveller on the sea on the eastern expedition, while looking at the expansive horizon of the west, the Sun would appear to be as if "setting in the sea" in the

evening. While travelling from the west he would observe a similar aberration, because the Sun would appear to be "rising from the sea" in the east as he viewed from far in the horizon. If the world were flat, these phenomena of aberration would not occur.

Thus, the Holy Qur'an had provided an evidence of the Earth's sphericity, a fact that was confirmed by Science, which was only recently known. This sphericity of the earth was perhaps discerned by Zulqarnain in his voyage thousands of years before the circumnavigation of the earth by Ferdinand Magellan and his crew. No traveller going round the world by land or sea had ever encountered an abrupt edge over which he would fall. If the Earth were flat Zulqarnain on his extensive sea voyage would have experienced it. Instead what he saw was evidence of the sphericity of the earth through the phenomenon of 'Sun setting' or 'Sun rising' in the sea. This is analogous to the ship's visibility in modern Science, as an evidence of globular universe. When a ship appears over the distant horizon, the top of the mast is first seen before the hull. In the same way, when it leaves the harbour, its disappearance over the curved surface is equally gradual; the top of the mast is the last to disappear. If the earth were flat, the entire ship would be seen or disappear all at once.[9]

It was remarkable how the Holy Qur'an revealed this knowledge 14 centuries ago, which had remained obscure until our generation. The Story of Zulqarnain, therefore, could never have been told solely by the Holy Prophet without divine intervention. Another evidence of the sphericity of the earth could also be cited from the Holy Qur'an 70:40, where Allah (swt) said: *"Rabb al-Mashariq wal-Magharib"*, which means: The Lord of all points in the East and the West.

The splendour of Sunrise and Sunset at different phases through the Solar system is Allah's grandeur of Creation. The phenomena of

the rising and setting of the Sun at varying points, are an allusion to the globularity of the Earth made by the Holy Qur'an 14 centuries ago, which is in concordance with modern science. The multiplicity of easts and wests implies the globularity of the earth, because as the earth rotates, there will be numerous easts and wests - points at which the Sun rises and sets. Every point on the globe is, at some moment, the east for a certain group and the west for another group of people. The allusions to the spherical nature of the universe made by the Holy Qur'an either by the phenomenon of aberration of setting and rising of the Sun in the Sea as observed far from the horizon or by the multiplicity of the easts and wests, undoubtedly had confirmed without doubt the veracity of the Prophet's claim of being a *Rasulullahi* (Apostle of God). Incontrovertibly, he would not have known these scientific facts without having His intervention, through Revelations. Do truths such as these not serve to make us be better acquainted with the profound truths of this heavenly Amazing Revelation? They ought to keeping malice, prejudices and mutual envy away. Thus, scientific facts had undoubtedly proved that Muhammad was an Apostle of God.

It became only recently known by Meteorologists and Geographers that the Sun rises and sets at different times in different places. As the earth rotates from West to East, places in the east see the Sun earlier than those in the West. If the earth were flat, the whole world would have sunrise and sunset at the same time.[10] Thus, the Lord of the easts and the wests was also inconsistent with advanced astronomy. There is no such thing as one static east or sunrise or one static west or sunset for any country there are many, due to the unsensed daily progression of the season and the corresponding shift in the angle of Sunset and Sunrise.[11] It was also known recently that during a single rotation of the earth, every place has its particular sunrise and sunset, in an ever changing pattern, as the earth moves along its orbital path around the Sun. In other words, the Sun never rises or sets at the same angle as that of the

previous rising or setting, even though the direction remains unchanged.[12] Therefore, all these combined to show that the Holy Qur'an was revealed, not created.

In his explication, of this verse, Q. 18: 86, Malik Ben Nabi in his book, *The Qur'anic Phenomenon* added some important facts which were also in agreement between the Qur'an and contemporary scientific knowledge. He said:

> At first sight this strange verse appear to be rather naive. However if we are willing to consider, the meridian of Mecca as a starting point, the 'sunset' would be at 90° longitude West. This longitude passes through the regions of the Sargasso Sea, in which the Gulf-stream is generated: This navigable river carries the beneficent warmth taken from its "hot spring" to the coasts of Northern Europe. It was in the same regions that the French engineer George Claude succeeded in using the thermal energy of the sea.[13]

The 'hot spring' to the coasts of Northern Europe must have peculiar characteristics of its own. This enabled the engineer to tap the thermal energy generated by the sea in this region. The agreement between the sacred statements of the Qur'an and the modern verified scientific data were no longer coincidences, in fact, they were two sides of the same coin. Moreover, Nabi's explanation lent credence to the allusion made in this book that Zulqarnain's expeditions were undertaken in the European Territories.

The Holy Qur'an shows its miracles in various fields of knowledge: some were known to man, some would be known to him later as he advances in knowledge. The Holy Scripture spoke about universal and scientific facts unknown to Arabs or any other nation at the time of its revelation. It was only lately that Science had discovered some of these facts. This proved beyond doubt that Allah (swt) was the Revealer of the Qur'an because it was beyond the human capacity to compose it. In the next expedition of

Zulqarnain we would encounter another scientific fact, a variation of the climatic conditions of the universe.

Climate and Climatic Variations

In his circumnavigation, Zulqarnain reached another destination as he followed another way: "Until when he reached: A people for whom We had provided No covering protection against the Sun" (Q.18:90). The key words here to be stressed were: "No covering protection against the Sun." Obviously, the natural covering protection against the Sun is darkness or nightfall. It is only at night that the Sun is covered and cannot be seen. Here Zulqarnain arrived at a new destination where he met people with entirely a different climatic condition with continuous sunlight without night. Assuming Zulqarnain to be Darius the Great, the story then became easily comprehensible. The widely travelled King left the Russian Persian border by the Black Sea where in his first expedition its water was described as 'murky'. He then ascended North Pole-wards into Russian territory where he experienced this climatic variation. As nobody could change this prevailing condition therefore: "(He left them) as they were: We completely understood what was before him" (Q.18:91). Because it was a period of continuous sunlight for at least 6 months.

Naturally, he had to leave them as they were because their weather condition could not be rectified by the power of any king except the Almighty God. Moreover, the people had acclimatised with their harsh condition, so they did not complain about the scorching sun to the visiting king. He left them to enjoy their peace and tranquillity in their own way. As a visitor to their place he might have sensed the environment to be too harsh. Because he was not acclimatised to this severe weather condition. Darius the Great must have been amazed at the grandeur of Ahura Mazda's Creations, especially the glaring disparity of the climate with respect to the Day and Night, in the Russian territory or in the North Pole.

In His grandeur creations, God Almighty made special distribution of climatic elements over the surface of the earth, with great variations in the weather from place to place. Although this knowledge was only recently known to Geographers and Meteorologists, an allusion to it was made already 14 centuries ago as contained in the Holy Qur'an. Because the Creator of this awesome universe was the Author of the Glorious Qur'an. The variation of the lengths of day and night could now be fully explained. What had puzzled Darius the Great in the polar region could be now grasped scientifically. The axis of the earth is inclined to the plane of the *ecliptic*, the plane in which the earth orbits round the Sun, at an angle of 66½°. This gives rise to the different seasons and varying lengths of day and night.[14] Had the axis been perpendicular to this plane, then all parts of the globe would have equal days and nights at all times of the year and there would have been no place "without covering protection against the Sun."

However, in the Northern Hemisphere in winter or December as we go northwards, the hours of darkness steadily increase. At the Arctic Circle (66½°N), the Sun never rises and there is darkness for the whole day in mid-winter on 22 December. But beyond the Arctic Circle the number of days with complete darkness increases, until we reach the North Pole (90°N) when half of the year will have darkness and the other half bright daylight. Perhaps, Zulqarnain's expedition to the polar region in the Russian territory was undertaken in summer or in the month of June. Because daylight increases as he travelled pole-wards. At the Artic Circle, the Sun never 'sets' at mid-Summer or 21st June and there is a complete 24 hours of sunlight and at the North Pole, there will be six months of continuous daylight. Darius the Great, the King of the ancient world must have been amazed with these wonderful creations of his Wise Lord, which he saw in his expeditions both in the land and in the sea.

Darius the Great, was aware of the Equinox when the Sun was

vertically overhead at the Equator on two days of each year. These equinoxes meaning 'equal nights', occurred usually on the 21st March and September 21st. On these two days the World has equal days and nights. The world King celebrated his annual festival of *Nau Ruz* on the 21st March. His knowledge of climate and climatic variation was widened by his sea voyage towards the North Pole. In his final expedition Zulqarnain, went another way:

> Until, when he reached (A tract) between two mountains He found, beneath them a people Who scarcely understood a word. They said: O Zulqarnain! The Gog and Magog (people) Do great mischief on earth: Shall we then render thee Tribute in order that Thou mightest erect a barrier Between us and them? (Q.18:93-94).

The important key words here were: two mountains, Gog and Magog and the Barrier erected. All these have already been discussed fully in the book. They all pointed to one place: Russian-Persian border or generally, Europe-Asian border. The two mountains were in Armenia and Azarbaijan, the Iron barrier was located in Durbend in the District of Daghestan, which before the Russian expansion in 1813 was part of Persia. The next important thing of discussion was the identification of the Gog and Magog; an extension of the early presentation in the book. Another lesson to be learned is collectively referred to as the Gog and Magog or Yajuj and Majuj, hence, their evolution.

Evolution of Gog and Magog

One important aspect of human behaviour that could be derived from Zulqarnain story by keen discernment is evolution of people referred to as the Yajuj and Majuj. This is in fact a realm of anthropology and sociology and both will help us in the understanding of the evolution of the people with habitual sinfulness. In the context of anthropology, culture is the civilisation of a given people or nation at a given time or over all time; its

customs, its arts, and its conveniences. Culture system is a broad and all inclusive one, hence, it is impossible to examine the whole of a regional culture in one piece, but be broken down into units and parts in order to be fully understood. The smallest unit of culture is termed a *culture trait.* In the mastery of style, the Holy Qur'an portrays this minutest element, yet, a very important part of a culture system in the evolution of a people, in one of the journeys of Zulqarnain, Holy Qur'an 18:93-94: "Until, when he reached (A tract) between two mountains, He found between them a people who scarcely understood a word."

Here we should be able to understand one important fact lest we would miss an important point: a cultural diffusion is taking place, which inevitably led to a conflict of cultural traits between two peoples. Although the visiting King was unable to understand the language of one of the people he found, he was able to parley with them through interpreters. The next verse explained: "They said: O Zulqarnain! The Gog and Magog (people) Do great mischief on earth: Shall we then render thee Tribute in order that Thou mightiest erect a barrier between them and us?"

Here the people with grievances, complained against the Cultural trait of certain people, they called Gog and Magog, with a culture of 'doing great mischief', which was so terrible that they seek the protection in the form of a physical barrier against their deadly inroads. In anthropology this 'doing of mischief' is the distinctive behavioural trait of Gog and Magog and is inherent in them – a habitual sinfulness. This related single culture trait that go together in practice form culture complex. The Holy Qur'an here teaches us some important aspects of anthropology or sociology that is why the name of the belligerent people the Gog and Magog was mentioned. Everything done by the Qur'an was with a purpose and replete with meanings. Thus, the distinctive behavioural trait of Gog and Magog was 'mischief' or *Mufsiduna fil ardhi* and was inherently engraved in their ways of life and conscious behaviour of habitual sinfulness or *chataah* in Hebrew.

Furthermore, culture complexes in different culture systems may be refractory and antagonistic and might result in communal clashes. Here the case of the people who put their grievances before the just King Zulqarnain, viewed that doing great mischief or *Mufsiduna fil ardhi* was an anti-social behaviour, therefore, acts of barbarism. Consequently, they held the Gog and Magog in contempt and wanted to get rid of them, because of their obnoxious cultural complex. But the Gog and Magog were a powerful people, so they sought the help of the King. A large assemblage of culture complexes fit together into a culture system. A specific territory, for instance, inhabited by a population following a particular system form a *culture region.* The Gog and Magog, were alien to the area where they persistently wreaked havoc, thus, they were considered as weird people who came from a different culture region to do 'great mischief'. Their weird behaviour might be shared among some peoples in their neighbourhood, who perhaps, having mixed up with this people through marriage consanguinity were assimilated into the same culture region with them, because they would have imbibed their cultural trait over the years. This would be consequent upon cultural diffusion, which took place slowly and steadily.

This people with habitual sinfulness being a powerful as it could be deduced from the verses quoted, their culture system, therefore, was dominant with rapid rate of diffusion. Its diffusion was facilitated through marriage assimilation or imposed through conquest and subjugation of other peoples. They had a large number of regions related to their cultural system that practised these characteristic traits. This is known as *culture world* or *a culture realm.* But some people who opposed the diffusion of the reprehensible traits, consequently, they sought protection against it, as exemplified in the story of Zulqarnain. In this respect the Scythian identification of Gog and Magog was correct and in order.

As discussed in this book, Scythians were the people who fitted like hand in glove to the vivid descriptions of the Gog and Magog, especially with respect to "doing great mischief on earth," because, wherever they were, the Scythian culture rapidly spread in the region, manifesting many of their core ideas and basic practices, which were first formulated in a localised part of the large territory by a closely related groups of people who shared in their development. These ideas and practices then spread to nearby groups of people, or were carried by migrants moving from the home locality, so that a large area come to share in its core ideas and basic practices. The local region in which the initial and most important ideas and practices were formulated is referred to as *culture heart,* the identification of the place where Zulqarnain met Gog and Magog would be their cultural sub-region and their place of origin their culture heart. Even today, the pernicious European culture is following the same mode of spread but with the fastest rate of diffusion to all nations. Now the decadent is on the verge of becoming universal.

Thus, the mentioning of Gog and Magog by the Holy Qur'an has very important implications some of which would be enumerated again in the context of anthropology and sociology. The Amazing Revelation introduced certain people who were ubiquitous, ingenious and deadly because of their notoriety as 'mischief makers'. The word 'mischief' as defined by *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English,* means injury or damage done by a person or other agent, especially on purpose. Thus, by telling us. "The Gog and Magog (people) do great mischief," the Holy Qur'an had given us a very important clue, towards the identification of these, "great mischief-makers." They were referred to as the barbarians in the ancient world. To make good this clue, a close study would help us unravel the mystery surrounding this identification. This was a prelude to the next point



Source: *History from the EARTH*, Forde-Johnston, 1974.

Maj.-Gen. Sir H.G. Rawlingson, the discoverer and decipherer of Behistun Inscription, from 1837 to 1846. He brings the monumental achievements of Darius the Great to lime light.



Darius the Great.



Source FRYE, *The Heritage of*

King Darius enthroned at Persepolis. The King is holding a sceptre and a lotus, which symbolise royalty: behind him stands his son and heir, Xerxes. They are receiving a high court dignity, who approaches the Great King with reverence and respect, while the air is performed by incense burners.



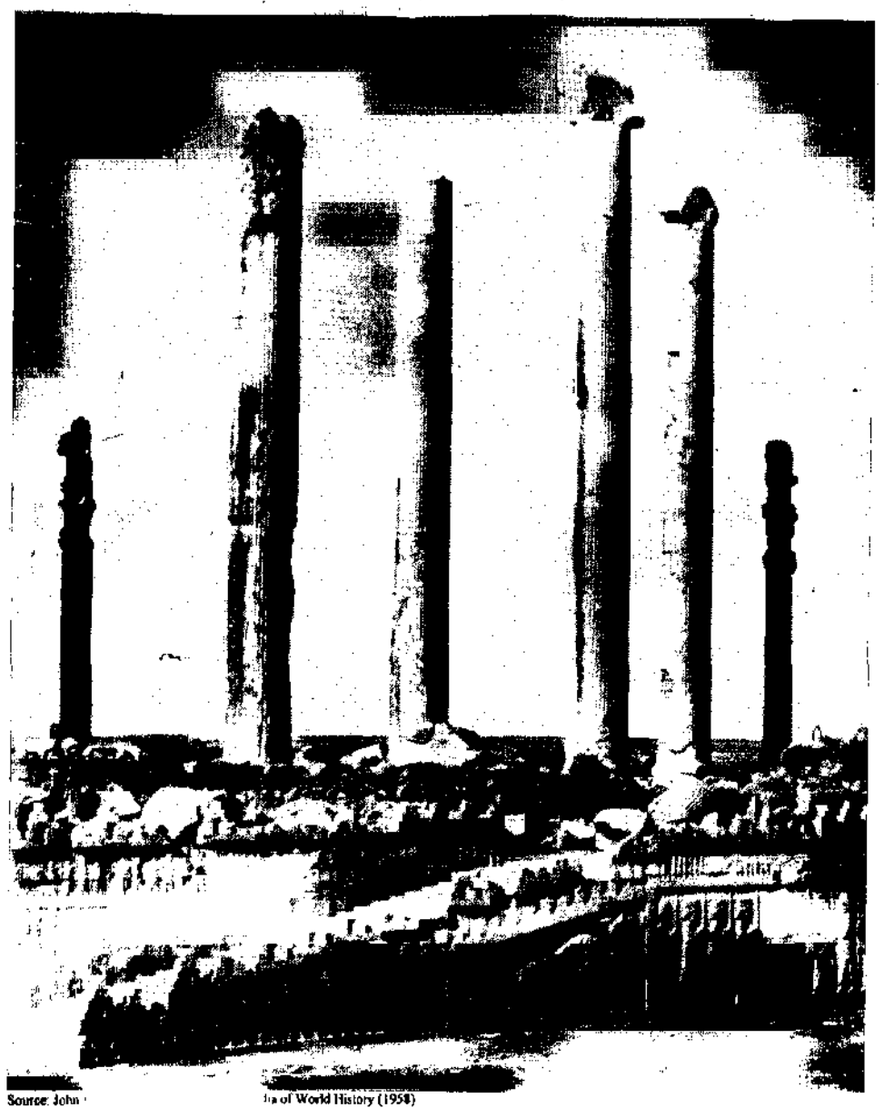
Source: FRYE, *The Heritage of Persia* (1962)

The Head of Darius carved at Behistun.



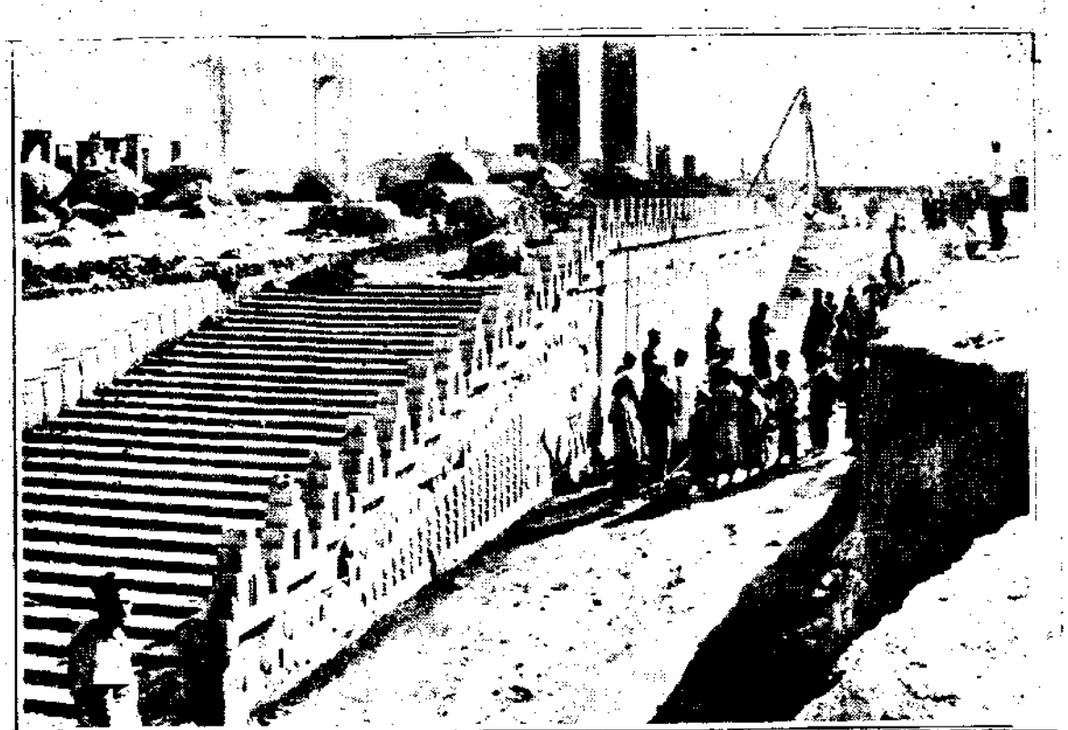
A carving at Behistun showing Da[illegible] and the vanquished rebels. The Great King, third from left, is shown receiving the homage of the defeated rebels, with his left foot marching the belly of Gaumata (the ring leader) lying naked on the ground. He faces the symbol of Ahura Mazda and pointing his index finger symbolising Divine unity and his thanks to Him who gave him "the means to all ends."

Source: *History from EARTH*, Forde-Johnston, 1974



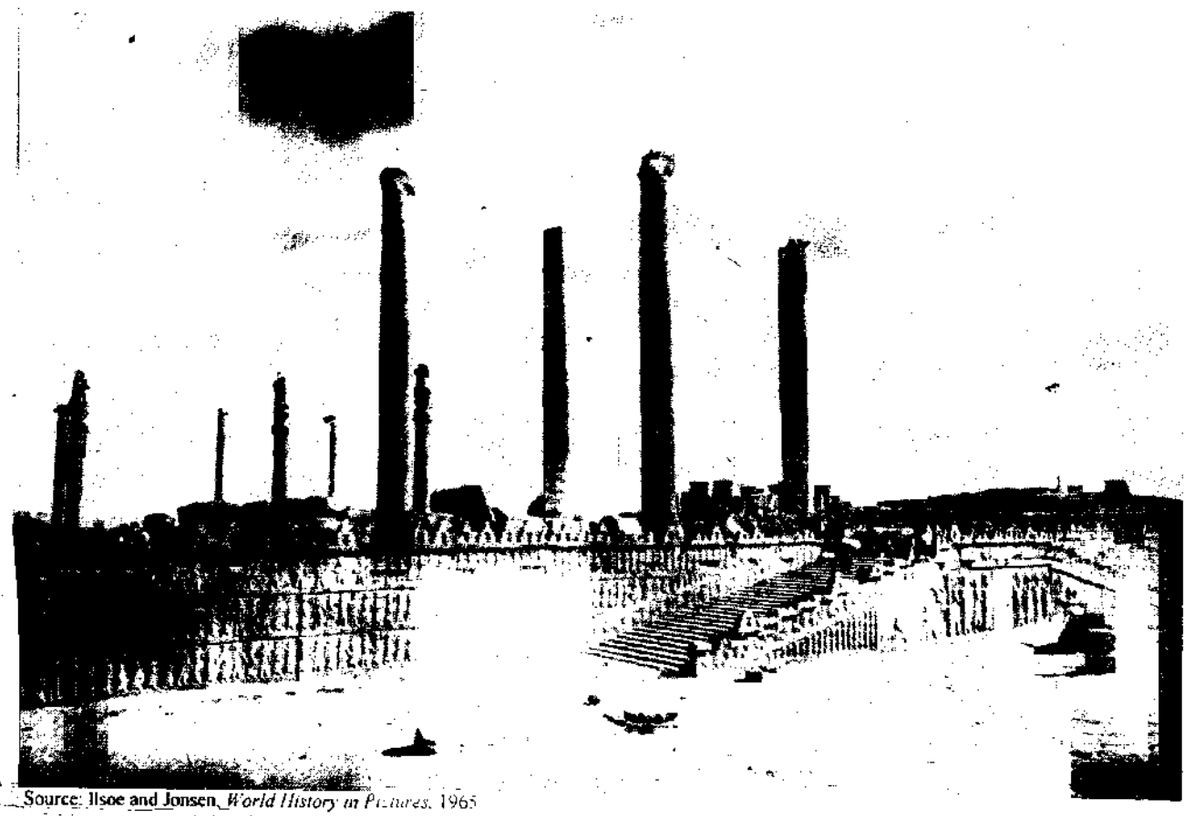
Source: John [illegible] ia of World History (1958)

Darius first raised a vast platform or terrace, 1000 by 1600 feet in size, faced with a massive stone 50 feet high built of gigantic blocks. Achaemenid period fifth century B.C.



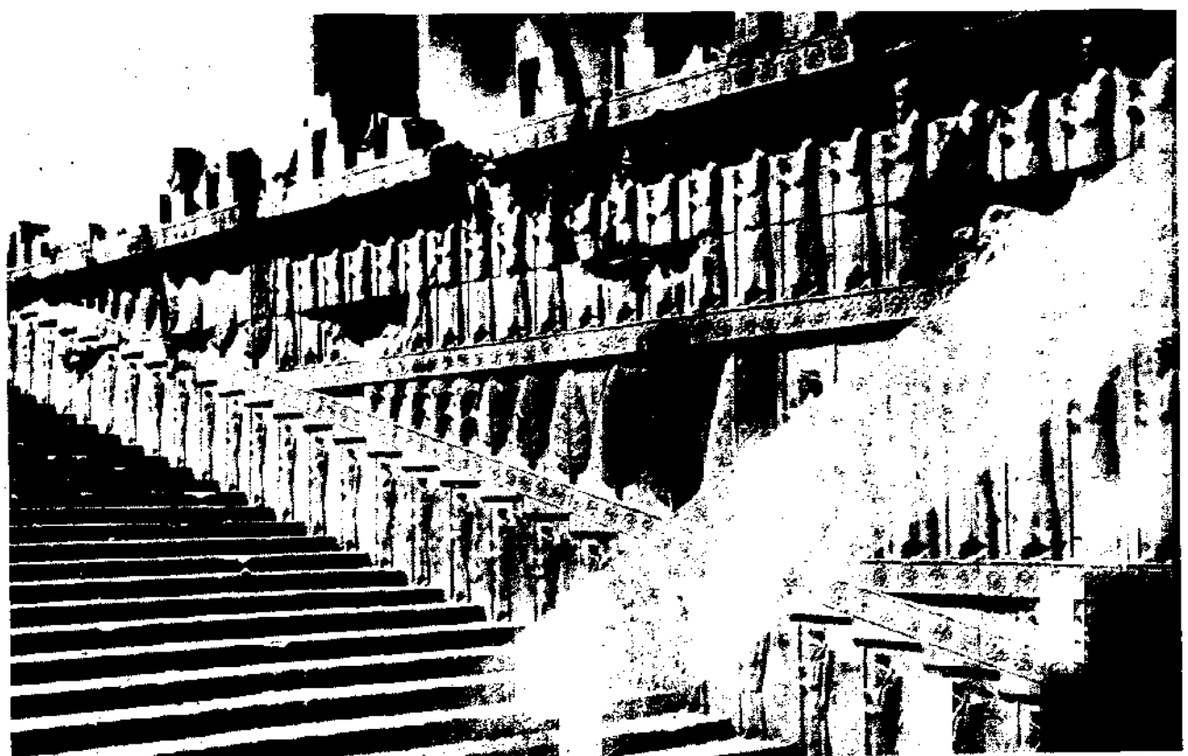
Source: Breasted, Ancient Times A History of the Early world.

Excavation of Grand Stairway leading to Apadana the Great Audience Hall of Darius the Great. The twin staircases of 111 steps is about 300 feet in length.



Source: Ilsoe and Jonsen, *World History in Pictures*, 1965

One of the twin returning staircases of III steps at the entrance to the Apadana, the throne room in the palace of Darius the Great at Persepolis C.500 B.C.



Source: John Boyle (ed), The Concise Encyclopaedia of World History 1958

Decked with beautiful relief sculptures in gold and silver inscriptions, here is shown a procession of Susian and Persian guards from the eastern stairway of the Great Audience Hall, revealing the remarkable art of the Persians in the days of Darius the Great. Achaemenid period fifth century B.C.

of discussion. The *Yajuj* and *Majuj* or Gog and Magog, who intended to create a universal *culture world*, thereby reshaping the ancient world into its own image. This nefarious intention exists up till today.

The Holy Qur'an wants us to understand the sociological and anthropological evolution of the Gog and Magog. Their cultural *milieu* and its impact on the emerging civilisation. We know that culture is the product of human societies living in a particular region of the earth over extended periods of time. For each society that product is the created and assembled, and maintained but steadily readjusted, to form a distinctive tradition of a way of life. Each tradition is unique in its aesthetic, social, economic, political and ethical codes of behaviour. All members invariably share the same ideology, habits, customs, procedures and technical skills. In addition, each society primarily utilises the resources of its own region, and each society's activities imprint on the surface of the inhabited region a distinctive expression of human occupancy. All these and many other things we ought to know with respect to the evolution of the Gog and Magog as a nation, so that we could comprehend fully the message of the Amazing Revelation. A scratch on the surface would only lead to confusion and misunderstanding, on a topic, which was clear, lucid in presentation and pregnant with a lot of meanings. This group of people, which we were required to meticulously study, were destined to play a crucial and important role in the annals of modern history and intended to make the world their personal estate. The Gog and Magog (or Yajuj and Majuj) topic, in view of the above, therefore, must be well treated within the scope of my understanding, especially now when they have become a very powerful, almost an unconquerable nation.

Brother Ali Akbar's explanations of the allegorical meaning of these verses were reasonable enough to clear the mystery. His

identification of Gog and Magog as the European nations with stupendous might due to their scientific and technological superiority could not in the final analysis be faulted. In fact, I shared some common grounds with him. He said *inter alia* (with reference to Q.18:99):

> It is true to say that no outside power can overcome the European nations of our day, and this verse also clearly shows that they will be divided into groups and *surge against one another*. And as we can see today, the European nations are, in fact, divided into two major groups. One group still carries the cross around their necks and the other group are nothing more than atheists. Their enmity and hatred have reached such a point that they hold positions in every part of the globe, ready to press the control button and destroy each other with the disastrous weapons manufactured with their own hands.[15]

Although with the collapsed and ignominious regression of the communist bloc, the global bi-polarity was said to be over; America had won the cold war and now leads the world, at the end of this century. This, however, was more theoretical than practical. Though, ravaged by poverty due to economic debacle of Russia, it still retains some deadly stings, which the Western world is aware of. But what is more terrifying to the West, is the inevitable resurgence of Islam as a world power to contest the global hegemony with the West and America in particular. Consequently, Russia vented her anger and frustrations on her innocent neighbours – Chechenya and Daghestan who want to be independent Islamic states. At the time of writing this book, these innocent countries were at the peril of annihilation by the Russians while the United Nations witnessed the pogrom with keen interest. The rest of the Muslim world could only pray for Allah's help and support to preserve His people and Faith against these most powerful nations in the history of mankind.

Brother Ali Akbar's identification of the European nations as

the Gog and Magog, could not be faulted because of its Indo-European basis and closely linked with the Scythian factor. The Scythians were deadly and highly warlike people, who were ubiquitous and spread from Southern Russia, the Balkans and Asian countries. They were the Aryan race but with a unique *Cultural trait* of *Mufsiduna fil ardhi*. His quotations from the book of Ezekiel in the Bible to prove his point were most appropriate. In Ezekiel 38:2-4 we read: "And the word of the Lord came unto me saying son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the Chief Prince of Me'sheck and Tubal: And I will turn thee back, and hooks into thy jaws..."

In Akbar's explanation, the three names mentioned in the Bible Rosh was meant to be Russia, Me'sheck or Moscow and Tubal or Tobalsk. In fact, this learned scholar further clarified the point that Russia was the name of the country, Moscow its capital city while Moskva and Tubal were the names of the rivers situated to the north of Mount Caucasus. On the latter Moscow was situated and on the former Tobalsk, both of these were famous cities in Russia.' This deposition had undoubtedly clinched his identification of Gog and Magog as the Anglo-Saxon and Russian races with convincing scholarship. According to the Bible, "the Lord will put hooks into the jaws of Gog and Magog," that is, to put barriers against them because of their mischief. The Scythian factor, therefore, was a central thread that linked up important identification.

The Scythians according to archaeological findings of the famous Scythian Excavation in 1929, showed that they were the first Iron Age people of Russia. They were warlike, ferocious, who subjugated and intermarried with many peoples including the Slavs and the Teutonic. So, there were Slavic and Teutonic Scythians mixed breeds. This was in support of and corroborated well with Biblical records from the book of Ezekiel. These Scythians showed ubiquitous cultural complexes which rapidly spread through the

Balkans, to the Thracian Scythians of Greeks, the Aryan Scythians of Media and Parsa and finally to the Eastern Asia the Scythians around the Samarcand and Sogdiana. Regrettably, the reprehensible culture even now tends to be global. As ubiquitous people, the Scythians perfectly fit this unique cultural ethnohistory as the study of their evolution showed.

Therefore, through the spread of the Scythians with their cultural traits, cutting across various lands and peoples, they were able to establish their *Culture System* in these areas. This, later, became dichotomised into Eastern and Western Cultural regions. This might explain Akbar's allusions to: "The name Gog refers to Eastern nations of Europe, and Magog to the Western nations of Europe"[16] The Bible also mentioned an aspect of a 'prophesy about them'. Perhaps, this was what the author meant with respect to this futuristic statement that "the Gog and Magog will be destroyed in the land of Israel." In addition, this verse; "Persia, Ethiopia and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet" (Ezekiel 38:5) indicated a national coalition against them because the Lord too was against the Gog and Magog as a result, "He will turn against them and put hooks into their jaws." The combined hatred against the Gog and Magog was culminated in the Persian invasion. Ethiopian and Libyan Satrapies were under the great King Darius. This verse could perhaps be an allusion to his Scythian invasion of Southern Russia in 513 BC during his European expedition. This could mean, therefore, that the Scythians of the East and West could be our Gog and Magog, as this was strongly suggestive. The Lord sent king Darius to put hooks in the jaws of these barbarians, who wanted to make the entire universe its *Culture world* where their ethos would take sway.

Moreover, with archaeological and Biblical support we could make the inference of Scythians as the notorious Gog and Magog; we then look at this people in the context of emerging civilisation. Similarly, many classical historians had written about the *cultural*

trait of the Scythians which was in accord with the Holy Qur'an's description 'great mischief-making'. Throughout the ancient world there was no race more destructive in their behaviour and sinfulness in their habit than these deadly barbarians.

Sir Percy Sykes, the renowned historian whom I quoted now and again, recalled also in his account on the deadly *cultural trait* of the Scythians, which made them the most dangerous people in the ancient world. They moved so swiftly, deadly and in hordes destroying one civilisation upon another, thereby, making Europe and Asia their *cultural complexes* nihilistic to civilisation that was based on divine laws of God. I think, it was these basic characteristics that were essentially damaging and unholy that made up the Gog and Magog a world social and cultural phenomenon rather than their racial or geographical entity. Whence these obnoxious habits were removed you find that you have an amorphous sets of peoples stretching across Asia into Europe. This most monstrous behaviour of habitual sinfulness of *Mufsiduna fil Ardhi* was a threat to civilisations in all its ramifications. Sykes, the learned historian said:

> ...But they had this in common; That they gave rise to an overwhelming danger, for in place of the absorption of one civilised state or some of its provinces by a neighbouring state which was also more or less civilised, the whole civilised world was threatened by hordes of Scythians or nomads, who devoured their aged relations, held their women in common, and were from every point of view coarse savages whose success would have been a calamity for mankind.[17]

The Holy Qur'an was right and accurate when the Gog and Magog were described as people who 'Do great mischief on earth'. Could there be anything worse than what Sir Sykes had vividly described above? All the activities of these "coarse savages" were inimical of and antithetical to any form of standard civilisation. It could be pertinent to draw up a parallel motif between the ancient anti-social behaviour with the present form of savagery and moral

decadence perpetrated under the guise of modern Western civilisation. Although, they did not devour their old relations but they abandon them in Old People's Homes: suffice it to say it was an old wine in new bottle. The Europeans were a civilised nations, yet, nihilistic to the laws of God as enshrined in orthodox religions particularly of Islam.

The Scythians like their present generations were powerful and highly ingenious people. But their growth and power were scuttled, otherwise, they would have set the hand of the clock of civilisation backward. "Fortunately, for civilisation they were not", said Sir Sykes. The generations of the Scythians had at present amassed weapons of mass destruction and the wealth of all nations, this made them at present unconquerable nations. Their countries are now the *culture hearts* of nefarious and evil habits of *Mufsiduna fil Ardhi*, which spread to make almost every country its cultural sub-region. Although Sir Percy Sykes was of British extraction he did not hide his aversion to these deadly barbarians. He also cited an instance of the malicious activities of these lethal 'nomads' when the Scythians of the Eastern Asia struck. The Yuech-chi nomads or Tocharians, driven by Huns clashed with the Scythians, beyond the river Jaxartes. The Scythians then destroyed the Graeco - Bactrian Kingdom on their way southward to the Punjab. Sykes gave his account thus:

> In 200 BC, China first became a world power, and at this period the tribes termed in Chinese history the Hiung-Nu or Huns fought with the neighbouring nomadic nations of Yue-chi, which was defeated and fled west to the Ili river. Finding the local tribes too strong to be sacked in this district, the horde swung south on the Sakae, who in 163 BC were displaced from their habitat in the Tarim basin. They in their turn advanced to the Sir Daria and Bactria, where they broke up the Graeco - Bactrian Kingdom.[18]

The Chinese Empire suffered from both their incursions and

ferocious cannibalism and as Ustadh Abdullahi Ali had pointedly observed; their incursions into Europe in large hordes caused migrations and displacements of population on an enormous scale. However, the Sakae people and their dangerous activities were kept in check under the Satrapal authority of Darius the Great. Richard N. Frye, the Professor of Iranian observed that, in Central Asia, the Scythians were pacified and were made to submit to the rule of King Darius. But the most deadly and notorious were the Scythians of Southern Russia. We should then focus our attention there.

The ubiquity and the rapid rate of cultural diffusion of the Scythians was also observed by Sir Henry H. Howorth, in his *History of the Mongols*, he opined that:

> In Europe they occupied the whole steppe country north of the Black Sea, and also Hungary, were in early times they were known as Scyths and Scoloti, and in later times as Alans, Roxolani, Getae, and Dacians. In Asia they extended across the steppes of the modern Kirghiz and Kazaks and occupied the borderlands of the Jaxertes or Sihun and of the Oxus or Jihun, and were there known as Sakae and Juts. Thence they invaded Northern India and destroyed the Bactrian Empire. They were practically of this same race as the Parthians, who again were Parsis or Parsians.[19]

In view of the aforementioned characteristics, the identification of Scythians as the Yajuj and Majuj was not a far-fetched one, nor was its translation into our modern European nations. The *cultural trait* of the Scyths was one with fastest rate of diffusion in the ancient world and very dominant. Its *cultural realm* was the widest in scope in history. Bernard Pares, a Professor of Russian History, literature and language who in *A History of Russia*, with respect to the domineering influence of Scythians in Southern Russia, opined that:

> Here in the steppes of the south, the time of the first historical references to Russia, those of Herodotus in fifth century BC, Ionian and Dorian Greeks had established themselves along the

> coastline of the Black Sea from the mouth of Dniester to the Sea of Azov, in the colonies of Olbia, Chersonese, Panticapacum, Tanais and Phanagoria; but the hinterland was occupied by other peoples, under the headship first of Cimmerians and then of Scythians. Both these dominant tribes were in race akin to the Persians and were therefore members of the Indo-European family.[20]

In fact, the dominant impact of the Scythians was felt far and wide from Asia to Europe, conquering a large territory physically and imposing their *cultural complexes*. In the ancient world, therefore, Scythian became a term applied to the whole of the area and all its peoples, who apparently spoke as many as seven different languages. Professor Pares then stated that: "The Scythians whose principal nucleus was called the Royal Scythians, spoke a language which has been identified by the Philologist Safarik and others with the Iranic or Persian branch of the Indo-European family."[21]

Philologically, the English language belongs to the *Indo-European* group or family of languages. The Indo-European language consists of a collection or vocabulary of the present European languages together with most of India and Persia from where they descended, from the Aryan race many thousands of years BC, starting perhaps. from somewhere near the Hindu Kush mountains. The language began to spread both west and east, as the tribes that spoke it migrated in both directions. The Indo-European family of languages showing kinship and common ancestry was divided mainly into two groups, the Eastern and Western along the direction of migration of tribes. From there it became subdivided into Eastern Group, which included the following: Balto-Slavic, including all the Slavonic tongues. Indo-Iranian, including the Sanskrit-derived Indian and Persian, Armenia and Albanian. The Western Group on the other hand consisted of Hellenic, Italic, Celtic and Germanic.[22] The other language were divided by Philologists between the Semitic family which included Hebrew, Arabic, Phoenician, Syriac, Maltese,Ethiopic, etc. And the Turanian

family which were subdivided into the Scythian group viz: Turkish, Hungarian, Finnish, Lappish, and Mongolian, the Dravidian group vice: Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and the languages of North-eastern Asia.[23]

Almost all the members of this Indo-European family tree, had suffered from the Scythian inroads in central and north-eastern Europe and in all parts of Asia. Stuart Piggott in *Ancient Europe* had shown the telltale signs of Scythian devastation in Europe. He wrote:

> The archaeological evidence suggests that there were not only trading activities between the Hallstatt and Scythian worlds, but actual Scythian inroads into central and north-eastern Europe... In the burnt and destroyed remains of several late Urnfield forts in Poland and adjacent areas such arrow heads have been found, in one instance in the ribs of a man slain at the hill-fort gateway, and some of the local population seem to have taken refuge in caves during this time of troubles around 500 BC. The similar arrowheads stuck in the fort walls at Karmir Blur, over 2000 miles away in Russian Armenia, archaeological witnesses of the Scythian attack in the sixth century are a reminder of the vast distance that could be traversed by the nomadic peoples of antiquity.[24]

From the Piggott's account of the deadly incursions of the Scythians into Europe, we had archaeological evidences in many places where hill forts were built to serve as physical protection against these fast spreading wild tribes. It could be recalled that the Holy Qur'an captured an instance where a hill fort was built by Zulqarnain on request against the ravages Yajuj and Majuj. This from all indications could be our notorious Scythians during the troubles around 500 BC. The fort-walls at Karmir Blur, he cited, was an interesting one, perhaps an important clue to the type of iron wall or fortification built by Zulqarnain, which was believed to be a tract between two mountains at Armenia and Azarbaijan. Hence a construction of hill-fort was a tradition followed by the Great King

killed in battle in 673 BC and was succeeded by Partatau.

This Kingdom of the Scythians might well have been centred in the Mukan steppe of Azarbaijan, for this area served as pasturage for the Il-Khanid Mongols and other nomads of later times. They then dominated Media for three decades until their expulsion by Cyaxares the Median King. This King became powerful to establish a Median confederacy, which was first primarily composed of Medes, Mannai and Scythians. A development, which hastened the admixture of various peoples. King Cyaxares, became the first ruler to arrange troops according to their weapons: archers, lance carriers and cavalry. He reorganised the Median army and state: these combined to hasten its emergence as a powerful Empire.

About the skills of the metallurgists, the ingenuity which was shown must have impressed any one who read the Qur'anic account of Zulqarnain building a fortification for certain people using iron and molten lead. The origin of such skill with bronze, of which the Scythians were known to be experts, could help us to make some reasonable conjectures. The work of Godard, one of the principal authorities on bronzes, told us that the bulk of this work was started at the end of the Kassite rule in Mesopotamia about 1200-1000 BC when Hittite metallurgists could have come to the Zagros mountain following their loss of power. He then postulated that the development of the Kassite art of Luristan by the Mannai or Mannaeans was passed to the Scythians when they occupied Media about 680 BC. Thus, the peoples of Azarbaijan and the Zagros must have been conversant with metal works.

This could partly explain why when Darius the Great came to build the iron barrier somewhere around the area, he found no difficulty in recruiting the labour force and with his own technical skills in metallurgy, he built the fort for the people. This was even more plausible when we realised that the Scythians brought this art

to Southern Russia where the Sarmalians imposed a new taste on it, thus explaining the Scythian - Luristan connections.[30] The Scythians and Cimmerians from North of Caucasus invaded Urartu and it was possible that the northern parts of Urartu finally fell to the onslaught of northern invaders, although Circa 590 BC was given as the year of the fall of the city of Tushpa to the Medes. However, the discovery of Scythian objects (arrow heads) in Karmir Blur the ancient Teishebaini, made Piotrovskii, the excavator to postulate that the city was destroyed by the Scythian invaders from the north of Caucasus.

This preview was necessary for the reader to appreciate the conglomeration of various peoples around the Caucasus and Southern Russia with some degree of civilisation including metallurgy before or after the invasion of Darius the Great in 513 BC. In these areas, therefore, it was most likely that Zulqarnain built the iron barriers. In summary, the evolution of the Gog and Magog to powerful nations could be typified by the development and progression of the Slavs, who were known in the Fourth Century BC for "Slavery." In fact, the word was derived from their name "Slavs," but who had now, with the passage of time evolved to possess a technological might to intimidate other nations. Another area of interest which the Holy Qur'an introduced was the concept of Journalism, in its narrative style that was easily discernible in the Zulqarnain story.

The Art of Journalism

The Holy Qur'an is respected by all knowledgeable people; Muslims and non-Muslim alike, for its vast knowledge. There is nothing of importance and relevance, that has not been touched by the Amazing Revelation. Even the style of its reporting news is replete with subtleties; with power to shape opinions and to bring action in

were driven were also skilled metallurgists, who had established their kingdom since the ninth century BC which was destroyed by the Medes in 585 BC westwards in Anatolia were the Phrygians, who had founded a state on the debris of the Hittite Empire. The Cimmerians had deprived them of their eastern possession and made way for the eventual take-over of power by the Lydians.

It was perhaps during these 'troubled years' of agitation and aggression that Zulqarnain came to the region to bring law and order and to check the menace of aggression of the Scythians, who fit the description of Yajuj and Majuj. The Holy Qur'an, an Eternal Miracle, had narrated this timely intervention by the just King, in an area mostly likely to be the Caucasus. Frye, the Professor of Iranian whom I quoted copiously had aptly described this area in the following words:

> The Caucasus mountain is probably the most variegated ethnologic and linguistic area in the world. It is not a melting pot as has been said, but refuge area par excellence where small groups have maintained their identity throughout history. The descendants of the Medieval Alans, a Scythic Iranian people, live in the north Caucasus today and are called Ossetes. The Iranian cultural influences were strong among the Armenians, Georgians and other peoples of the Caucasus and many in history large parts of the area were under Persian rule...[27]

The choice of words, phrase, historic and scientific facts by the Holy Qur'an was beyond the capacity of any human genius to produce. The Zulqarnain story was related to a very important and most active area in antiquity; the most likely area was the Caucasus, the melting pot, or 'refuge area' of the ancient world. The Azarbaijan was on trade routes over the Caucasus as well as on east-west route to the Black Sea. Armies marched over these routes as well as migrating tribes, and unity was hard to organise. To ensure the security of this refuge area. Therefore, Darius the Great as Zulqarnain went in person to police the area down Southern Russia

in order to maintain law and order, which were essential for the survival of human civilisation.

By the Holy Qur'an's introduction of certain people named as Yajuj and Majuj, we were introduced into one important branch of knowledge - anthropology. It is a study of humanity in all places and all times. Disciplines, such as psychology, history, philosophy and sociology, study humanity in its broadest aspects. However, anthropology is the only field, which provide humanistic, scientific, biological, historical, psychological and sociological views of the subject. Precisely, what the Amazing Revelation introduced was cultural anthropology. As a field of study, it describes, interprets, accounts for, and explains human behaviour, thus, generating a valid general knowledge.[28] Therefore, from all these facts around us, we could build up a story, a convincing one, of course; that the people who "Do great mischief on earth" were mostly likely the Scythians. Because these coarse savages not only devoured their aged relations but also were known to use the skulls of their enemies as drinking cups. So that one could imagine how their towns were littered with human skulls. Human lives as such were of low value, therefore, nothing to them. They were nihilistic to any set of law and order.

Historically, the Cimmerians lived in Southern Russia before the eighth century BC., but neither their extent nor their origin was clear. Their activities in the Near East were centred mostly in Cappadocia and in Azarbaijan. They too suffered the attacks of the Scythians. In Azarbaijan a more formidable foe, the deadly Scythians or Ishkuza soon replaced the Cimmerians to form *Shkudha*?[29] According to Herodotus, the Scythians invaded Southern Russia from the east, drove the Cimmerians across the Caucasus Mountain, and followed them into Media. Frye, then concluded that it was likely that these Scythians too had established a Kingdom at this time because of their King Ishpakai who was

because there were many such fortifications erected against the Scythian inroads in Poland and Karmir Bur in Russia.

These archaeological finds further confirmed the veracity of the Qur'anic story, which in addition had mentioned a skill in metal work in the construction of a fortification wall. Stuart Piggott shed some light on the subject, and which gave us a corroborating evidence that, in the final analysis, brought into sharp focus the wonders of the Holy Qur'an. He wrote:

> ...We saw in the last chapter that at the end of the third millennium BC., a vigorous animal art was represented in metal work on both sides of the Black Sea, as at Maikop on the north and Alaca Huyuk on the south. We saw too that some Hittite stone culture suggests its continuance in Anatolia well in the second Millen ium, when too workers in bronze gold were developing a splendid animal style was being developed in the Caucasus and northern Persia by workers in bronze and gold. The Timber-Grave culture lay immediately to the north of the Caucasus, and by the eighth century, as we saw, pushed across the mountains in its now historically Scythian form. The incorporation of the Caucasian metalworking province into that of the Scyths would provide a likely contributory stimulus to final emergence of Scythian art, as we know it.[25]

In the Qur'anic story, reference was made to the use of iron and molten lead in building the fortress, which, in effect, was an indication of the knowledge of metal-work in the locality. What Zulqarnain, perhaps, did was to use his technical skill in the art and with a labour force, to build the barrier. This was likely to be the Caucasian metal working province, which the Scyths had provided both stimulus and ingenuity to develop. The Yajuj and Majuj, like the European nations of modern world, were both highly ingenious and ruthlessly destructive. Like in the ancient world they were hated not because of their technical know-how, but because they "Do great mischief on earth", said the Holy Qur'an. Although the Scyths were of Indo-European race but because their hostilities knew no

bounds, they had to be kept under the international law of the Achaemenid. Their evil habits must be checked and their reprehensible *cultural traits* kept from rapid diffusion. It was because of these and other reasons that Spiggott said that:

> ... Historically, the Scyth are known as speakers of an Indo-European language and, as we have seen, from the eighth century BC., they followed their Cimmerian Onslaught by establishing themselves in what had been Urartian territory, allying themselves with the Assyrians and even raiding into Egypt in 611 BC. Westwards they moved into the Carpathians forming local groups of Scythian culture in Transylvania and on the Hungarian Plain, and well pursued by Darius about 512 BC. As we shall see later, there is evidence for Scythian trade and even raiding into north-eastern and Western Europe.[26]

All these accounts showed that there was no people who fit the Qur'anic description of Yajuj and Majuj so perfectly like the Scythians who were among the forebears of the European nations. These barbarian tribes of Eurasiatic steppe land like their present generations were ingenious, excellent craftsmen with distinctive skill in metal work and a style of fantastic animal art. Yet, they excelled in doing great mischief; concupiscence and were a deadly ferocious tribe as discussed previously. They were highly mobile, expert horse riders and archers with a rapidly diffusing *cultural complexes*. The Cimmerians as we have seen, were, by the late eighth century BC, according to Assyrian records, a 'distant people', who were located in the West and north of the Euphrates and lake Urmia. They were called Cimmerai, but known to the Greeks according to Herodotus as the *Kymmeroi*. They had been driven out from their homeland north of the Caucasus, across those mountains into the Phrygian and Urartian territory. It was, therefore, suggested that the north Pontic culture represented the Cimmerians before the Scythian aggression of the eighth century BC.

The Urartians, to the borders of whose territory the Cimmerians

the described direction all of which, would make the modern professional journalists agape with awe and reverence for its unique style.

The style of reporting news or stories by the Holy Qur'an as enunciated in the Zulqarnain story was unique and unparalleled. The news coverage was interestingly wider than what was being covered. In modern convention news, is defined as any event, idea or opinion that interest or affects a large number of people in a community and that is capable of being understood by them. News is always revealing, has no geographical boundaries and is what interests people.[31] The style of the Holy Qur'an was both grand and lofty, as could be seen shortly in this sacred story. The Zulqarnain story originated from the reply to the question posed by the Syrian Jew. The Muslims in Makka who were with the Holy Prophet must have been astounded by a Jewish emissary who came from such a far distance as Syria with just a mission to ask a question: who was Zulqarnain? But being with the Prophet, the greatest man in history, nothing could astonish them more than the Living Qur'an and its receptacle – the Holy Prophet. The arrival of the Jewish delegation had led to a Breaking News. So whenever 'breaking news' was made, they were all lynxed ears and paying complete attention, till the Revelation was explained to all. So in response to the question, this verse was revealed: "They ask thee concerning Zulqarnain. Say "I will rehearse to you something of his story" (Qur'an 18:83). Here a Breaking News was made.

What makes news? Experts claim that human interest is the most important factor. "They ask thee concerning Zulqarnain", reveals in professional journalism the background to the news as it provided the why and which, wherefore that were necessary to stimulate such an interest. With its background introduced, the people's interests were, therefore, aroused, not only of those present at the scene of the event, but even those of countless centuries after

it. Thus, the story remained ever refreshing at all times. And from this background, we knew then that the story, which was narrated had stemmed from a question posed to the Prophet. This showed also that it was a group of people who came to ask the question, because of the word, "They are thee." The choice of the personage's title but not his name was an excellent one because the name 'Zulqarnain,' prodded or excited curiosity much more than his name.

Moreover, the mention of his name, could not with such dramatic subtleties, or spontaneous immediacy extract the same impact like this title Zulqarnain that was, hitherto, unheard of. So, like a magnet, it attracted everybody to it. Unless a story has such a magnetic appeal, it wouldn't have exacted its desired effect; now the reader or listener is both interested in 'Zulqarnain' and his story because it was something new and unheard of in Arabia at that time.

Thus, the attention of the reader was aroused; magnetically attracted to the news or story, and his attention riveted till the end. The follow up or the first paragraph achieved this effect. Because to a reader, what is important is not only reporting an event but its continuity to the end. "I will rehearse to you something of his story." This is an excellent curtain raiser, everybody wants to hear something about Zulqarnain, this therefore, captivates more attention. A curtain raiser, as the name indicates, is a story on what is likely to happen and not a report on what has happened. It raises the curtain to show what is about to unfold; "something of his story." It is to a news event, what an appetiser is to a meal. It whets one's appetite to know what is going to come, as one becomes curiously excited. All these styles and elegance of news and story of modern professionalism are contained in the Holy Qur'an revealed some fourteen centuries ago. This could not have been the effort of the Prophet but a testimony of a Divine Intervention.

In all news and stories there is one aspect, which in modern

In the past men without spiritual eyes had dabbled for mischievous reasons into the interpretation and commentaries of the Holy Scripture with malicious intention. Individually or in groups, they ventured to translate the Noble Qur'an; greatly influenced by their own prejudices and with the predetermined end in view to cause great mischief in the spiritual empire of Islam. The *Yajuj and Majuj* in the guise of Orientalists and their nefarious activities were, however, curtailed when King Fahad Ibn Abdul Aziz, the Custodian of the two Holy Mosques built a "Zulqarnainian wall" to protect the Holy Qur'an, against the malignant incursion of the Orientalists who were all out to "Do great Mischief." This strong "Wall of Fahad" was, in the form of a Royal Decree. King Fahad, enacted a Royal Decree No. 1988 16/8/1400 AH, authorising the General Presidency of the Departments of Islamic Researches, Ifta, Call and Guidance to vet, edit and select any translation and interpretation of the Holy Qur'an in any language before such work goes to public.

It was understandable from Ustadh Ali's *au fait* account that the comprehension and translation of the Holy Qur'an was beyond the ability of the untutored. Therefore, this body was empowered to select a reliable translation devoid of personal prejudices and subtle columnious attacks against the Book of Allah (swt). It was indeed a great service to Islam, otherwise, we would have witnessed a proliferation of collections of illicit historiettes full of reprehensible innuendoes all in the forms of "An authoritative translation of the Koran." Once more the evil forces of Gog and Magog were timely repelled.

Similarly, as Khalifa had pointed out, an important peculiarity, is the graceful Arabic feature of writing, the practice of bringing forward part of a sentence in order to give it an extra emphasis. He then gave this example for clarification: "In God we trust" and "we trust God" The meanings are not quite the same, in the former the emphasis of trust in God is far stronger than in the latter. The style of the Qur'an was God's style and without adequate knowledge, and

training, it could not be comprehended. Such nuances, therefore, required a well-versed Arabic linguist in order to be fathomed and well translated. Ustadh Ali, an outstanding figure in the field of translation and commentaries of the Holy Qur'an gave some warnings in respect of this matter of interpretation of the Holy Scripture when he said:

> I think the art of interpretation must stick as closely as possible to the text, which it seeks to interpret. Every serious writer or thinker has a right to use all knowledge and experience he possesses in the service of Qur'an. But he must not mix up his own theories and conclusions, however, reasonable, with the interpretation of the Text itself, which is usually perfectly perspicuous as it claims it to be.

However, owing to poor and faulty Arabic knowledge, some mischievous Orientalists dismissed both the chronology and genre of the Holy Qur'an as hysteron proteron because they could not appreciate the subtlety of this style. Similarly, the criticism levelled against its "limited lexical range", stemmed from the lack of linguistic understanding of the work under attack. No one could make a proper reasonable criticism of a subject without having a full grasp of the language. Thus, one can understand the frustrations of the Orientalist who with a limited knowledge of Arabic and with a wrong notion that the Qur'anic style was like the style of the rest of the Scriptures. He dabbled into an area he was least qualified. Consequently, got lost in the process, but instead of blaming his paucity of knowledge and wrong assumption, he vented his anger upon what he had grossly failed to understand. Khalifa then clarified the allegation of mechanical repetition thus:

> Among the styles of elegance in Arabic and poetry is the repetition of a clause or short sentence a few times in the passage to repeatedly remind the reader as he reads through of the important information it carries. Such a repetition, when masterly designed, should sound like a sweet melody that recurs at the appropriate moments during a symphony. It may, alas, sound like a 'mechanical repetition' to those who miss the point or have no taste for the music.[35]

So it attracted all the journalistic skills and styles to make sure that it was well understood and comprehended with the passage of time. But its comprehension was in *pari passu* with sophistication in knowledge and development of the people. It was not, far in distant past, that the world of art and science came to respect artistic styles in news and stories. The Holy Qur'an, therefore, could not be comprehended without having knowledge in diversified fields. Knowledge, therefore, is the prerequisite of understanding the Holy Qur'an. It was reported in a Hadith where the Prophet said:

> To be present in a circle of learned men is better than prostrating oneself in prayer a thousand times or visiting a thousand sick persons and attending a thousand funerals." It was then said, "Oh Apostle of Allah, is it better than the reading of the Qur'an?" To which he replied, "what good though is Qur'an except through knowledge.

With advance in knowledge in all fields of human endeavour, the Holy Qur'an is viewed as the quintessence of Miracle ever to be wrought in the history of human civilisation. The narrative style of the Holy Qur'an was, undoubtedly, God's style. Previously, the Orientalists put the Amazing Revelation at parity with other ancient Holy Writs hoping, thereby, to draw up parallel motifs, unfortunately, they got confused. But with the light of knowledge shining brilliantly everyday, the miracles of the Holy Qur'an were seen to be incomparable to any of the previous Scriptures.

To its style of writing the story, the Holy Scripture was far ahead of time. It was only recently that this aspect of style could be appreciated. In our advanced society today news and stories are held at high premium as very important subjects in Information Technology. Therefore, news or story in the modern style of professional journalism consists of three parts: the headline, the first paragraph or introduction and the remaining story. The headline is the first to attract the reader: giving an appropriate headline is an art itself. The Holy Qur'an shows this mastery of the use of captivating headlines and with the introduction or the first paragraph couched in

different phraseology, which all combined to give the story a fresh stimulus of interest and excitement, which rivets the listener or reader to his seat and with rapt attention. This belied this Western Orientalists' claim, that the Qur'anic style was: "Mechanically repetitious, of limited lexical range, filled with clumsy Syntax, unjustifiable Pleonasm and rhetoric embellishments in many parts and with ellipsis hysteron proteron in many others."[34]

This confusion of the Orientalists arose because European translators failed to grasp the unique style of the Holy Qur'an. Ustadh Abdullahi Yusuf Ali, in a lucid expose', gave some of the distinguishing characteristics, the extraordinary richness and the very meanings of the passages of the Holy Qur'an. The outstanding scholar said:

> Even though one particular shade of meaning may be predominant in any particular passage, the others are latent. So in a ray of light when a prism analyses it, we may look at a portion of the field where a particular colour predominates, but other colours do not escape our glance. An Arabic word is often a full ray of light; when a translator looks at it through the prism of a modern analytic language, he misses a great deal of its meaning by confining his attention to one particular colour. European translators have often failed in this respect and sometimes even landed in absurdities because these delicate rich tone are not studied in their languages or literatures, and they do not look for them or appreciate them in the examples of oriental style. If they despise them or think them fantastic, they had best leave the interpretation of oriental literatures alone. This is all the more so in religious or spiritual literature. No human language can possibly be adequate for the expression of the highest spiritual thought. Such thought must be expressed symbolically in terse and in comprehensive words, out of which people will perceive just as much light and colour as their spiritual eyes are capable of perceiving. It is possible that their prism will only show them a dark blue while a whole glorious symphony of colours is hidden from their eyes... And so the parables of stern morality in the Qur'an, its mystic earnestness, and its pictures of future beatitude are distorted into idle fables, incoherent effusions, and a sensual paradise!

journalism is referred to as 'the hidden story'. It taxes both the patience and the sagacity of the reader to plough through, because it requires a careful search and thoroughness, which can be very rewarding, when the gist in the hidden story is laid bare and understood. Otherwise, it will be missed unknowingly. This is one of the secrets of the Holy Qur'an, which is referred to in the Holy Scripture as the hallmark of authenticity. The Zulqarnain story is replete with these obscure passages or hidden meanings or in journalistic term "the hidden story," the hidden corollary.

Having digressed much, let us come back to the theme of our discussion, the narrative style of the Qur'an with respect to Zulqarnain story. Some of these narrative styles of the Holy Qur'an are now being appreciated in the light of modern knowledge of professional journalism. In the Zulqarnain story, one could see an appropriate choice of a headline; "One (such) way he followed," (Qur'an 18:85) as a caption for one expedition. In the subsequent two expeditions we get; "Then followed he (another) way" (Qur'an 18:89). And the same "Then followed he (another) way," (Qur'an 18:92) was lastly repeated. For everything the Qur'an does, there must be a lofty purpose. A complete verse was used to introduce every expedition of Zulqarnain. Why?

It strongly suggested the importance of a headline to a story, which in modern journalism, equally, could not be over-emphasised. Secondly, each story was distinctly unique and different from one another even though they gave the account of one and the same historic personage. One, therefore, should expect to harvest a new, fresh lesson in each of the narrated expedition. Hence, each attracted a caption of its own, which was in accordance with the standard methods of captions of headlines in our modern information technology.

Because in modern journalism, headline message is usually tense, abrupt and often startling. The whole idea is to make the

reader stop and look. Because the headline seeks to arrest, capture, hold the attention and compel the reader to read the story. "One (such) way he followed," this undoubtedly, was a very captivating caption, as it stimulated curiosity that was necessary before listening or reading any story. This style, is exploited by the press in both the print and electronic media in dissemination of information.

Similarly, in all the expeditions, the caption and the first paragraph (or the lead) took the reader into the story. Because if the lead was not sufficiently arresting, interest would lag and attention may be diverted. Owing to the flagging interests, the reader's eye may wander on to something else as both interest and attention are lost. This perhaps, explained, at the end of the first story, "Then," was introduced to add potency to the caption, which would refresh the reader's interests, as he became absorbed into the second and finally the third accounts of the expeditions. In the modern convention, the lead or even the caption must answer the five 'Ws' questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How?[32]

For instance, as the curiosity of the reader was aroused he might want to know who was that person that followed the way, what was he going to do? How did he follow the way? etc. Both the conciseness and concinnity of the Holy Qur'an were miracles that were beyond the human ken, and indeed, incontrovertible testimony of its Divine Authorship. As the world becomes more educated everyday, the miracles of the Holy Qur'an will similarly, become more glaring to everybody. Take a cue from Goethe's famous comment on the Qur'anic style, he said: "As often as we approach it, it always proves repulsive anew, gradually, however, it attracts, it astonishes and in the end it forces admiration."[33] The celebrated German also remarked that: "This book will go on exercising through all ages a most potent influence."

The Zulqarnain story was a news of important value because it was a testimony of Prophet Muhammad as the Messenger of God.

Again the late Ustadh Ali, the famous translator and commentator of the Holy Qur'an had given an insight into the inimitable amazing styles of the Holy Scripture, he said: "Every earnest and reverent student of the Holy Qur'an, as he proceeds with his study, will find, with an inward joy difficult to describe, how this general meaning also enlarges as his own capacity for understanding increases. It is like a traveller climbing a mountain: the higher he goes, the farther he sees."

Another revealing testimony of Divine Authorship of the Glorious Qur'an was its prediction on the victory of the Gog and Magog. A final triumph of the barbarians, which ushered in a new phase in their evolution that began from the Dark Ages.

The period between the fall and the division of the Roman Empire to the rise of the Christian Empire of Charlemagne the Holy Roman Empire in 800 AD is now described as the Dark Ages. It was a period of heightened turmoil and upheavals that was characterised by war, tyrannicide and great destruction. It was a time of great mischief on earth when the expansive energy of the *Mufsiduna fil ardhi* was simmering to boil. Because it was the nick of time when the Gog and Magog were let loose and were in collision with Christianity, the creed that intended to sanitise them and to mellow down their habitual sinfulness.

It was the age of great upheaval and invasion. of the Huns, Goths. Visigoths, Vikings and Saxons, fresh and active in aggression and *Mufsiduna fil ardhi*. It was a time when the Yajuj and Majuj settled in Europe with Scythian treasures and their cultures from Scythia were found in Britain and all parts of Europe. This period of time when the Gog and Magog were finally let loose, was aptly described as the Dark Ages. Christianity was temporarily able to chain these barbarians in the Medieval era but they broke the spirituals in the Renaissance.

The Dark Ages

The wild tribes of Asia and Southern Russia collectively referred to as the Scythian migrated *en masse* to the West, where they created a culture world. These wild tribes had terrorised the ancient world for over one thousand years, and were mostly of Indo-Aryan extraction. In their evolutionary process, however, all had made efforts to scale their barrier as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an thus: "Until the Gog and Magog (people) are let through (their barrier) and they swiftly swarm from every hill." (Qur'an 21:96).

It was in the divine plan of Allah (swt) to use some people to hold in check the activities of others for the sake of survival of mankind and civilisation. The people held in check could be said to be kept in 'a barrier'. The nomads were kept in this type of barrier and they had made efforts to scale through (their barrier) to become independent. The Bible stated that the "Lord put hooks in the jaws of Gog and Magog," thereby preventing them from causing harm to others, as another type of barrier imposed on the barbarians. The barriers mentioned here were the political; the intellectual and the religious.

However, when the barbarians had secured their independence and were "let through (their barrier), they could settle down to farming states and become more amenable to law and order. Then there was another barrier on all people, which only Allah (swt) alone could remove to whom He will. This type of barrier is the intellectual barrier. Thus, we could see from the history of the nomads, and how they "are let through (their barrier)", both the physical and the intellectual barriers, and they have now emerged triumphant as masters of Science and Technology. Yet, they continue to terrorise the modern world with the Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). It was in this respect that Brother Ali Akbar had made this observation when he wrote that:

> ...This is exactly what we find in the case of European nations, up to a certain time were confined to their own native lands, and they sallied forth to subjugate the rest of the world, so that they are now in actual possession of all other countries or wield such an influence over them that their movements are guided and controlled by Europe.[36]

This feat of domination, they were able to achieve only when they: "are let through their intellectual barrier," as a result of which they controlled the world. The erudite scholar then explained the breakthrough of this intellectual barrier in the following words, when he said: "..Allah does not give anyone His power over nature. What Allah does give to mankind is the natural power of material knowledge, and this we can see has been well developed in the European nations."[37]

It was indeed fascinating how these peoples, who, several centuries earlier, were coarse savages had now developed into great nations with the world economy and resources at their disposal. When these savages: "are let through (their barrier) And they swift swarm from every hill." What do we expect to see? We should expect to see as we have seen already, they would avidly exploit the economic resources of every country, "Every hill" could be inferred to mean every country. Herman Schreiber in his *Teuton and Slav* quoted Johann Gottfried Von Herder, who quite aware of the history of his own European nation made this declaration: "The historian should be beware of interests in any one race of mankind at the expense of others whose circumstances denied them the opportunity of prosperity and renown... No European nation has ever risen to civilised status by inherent merit."

In the subsequent pages we would see the veracity of Von Herder's statement; "No European nation has ever risen to civilised status by inherent merit," because several centuries earlier, they were coarse savages who were known for *Mufsiduna fil ardhi* or who "do great mischief on earth." A large segment of these peoples

was described as the nomads, and the Scythians the dominant group were already discussed. But what remained was the evolution of these barbarians from 500 AD and beyond. The fifth century AD was chosen because it was a period when the barbarians reappeared with more expansive energy, before they finally settled into farming states, after passing through various stages of evolution to attain their intellectual liberation.

The nomads were illiterate herdsmen who were constantly on the move looking for greener pasture for their flocks in the grasslands, hence, were collectively referred to as the nomads. They occupied the Steppe zone of Europe and Asia. This was the stretch of grassland extending from Southern Russia to Manchuria. They were very few in number but very lethal: "small but dangerous," so to say. Although, they were very few to have presented a serious threats to the great empires but, according to Colin and Sarah McEvedy in their book, 'The Dark Ages', in war, numbers were not the only factor, cavalry was the crucial and decisive arm. So with apparently few in number they could inflict serious damage to these great empires. Thus, those who were known for *Mufsiduna fil ardhi* in the ancient world could not boast of numerical superiority but were diminutive few and deadly. As Colin and Sarah McEvedy put it: "the nomads in saddle, nomad armies might be small but they were all cavalry and this made them formidable."[38] Even today they are still diminutive few but deadly.

There were three main races on the Steppe, in the fourth century AD the Huns, the Turks and the Mongols. Each consisted of many races and tribes and the tribes were constantly crossing each other's paths. The Huns were barbarians of another race having no Indo-European blood in their veins who had been penetrating Europe from Asia. The Turks and the Mongols belonged to the Scythian group of Turanian groups of languages.[39] Perhaps it was for this reason that Ustadh Abdullahi Yusuf Ali identified the

Mongol tribes as the Gog and Magog who were on the other side of the Iron Barrier, while the industrious men who did not understand Zulqarnain's language were the Turks, with their agglutinative language, so different from the languages then spoken in Western Asia.[40] Although, the Mongols could be identified as *Yajuj and Majuj* because they qualified for the title but their reign of terror was several centuries after the Scythians, and their scope of destruction far lesser. The Holy Qur'an references with respect to the Zulqarnain story were more likely to be of the Scythians than the Mongolians. However, most of these tribes had intermingled with each other and had assimilated the Scythians' cultural complexes. They all dispersed into different regions in a bid to gain their independence. Finally, when the veil of their intellectual barrier was removed, they excelled in creative works and technical skills.

The Hun Chieftain, for instance, was said to be the first to set up the first nomad ruled state in North China. China, therefore, had these barbarians in its northern frontier and by 400 AD, it had lost half of its territory to these wild tribes. Other empires were luckier, because they were not in direct contact with the steppe and they had natural barriers that attenuated their incursions. Indians, for example, were protected against their deadly inroads by the mountains of Central Asia.

The Persians on the other hand had the protection of their powerful monarchs who constantly repelled their invasions and occasionally attacked these barbarians to hold them in check. They also had a buffer state in the Kushan Kingdom. The Kushans were nomads who had been driven off the steppe by the Huns and now ran a half-nomad, half-farming state that extended from Turkestan via Afghanistan to northwest India.[41] The Kushans had become thoroughly Persianised: and they were swept away by the white Huns (440), a Mongolian tribe, which migrated, from the Altai region at this time, consequently, Persia lost a shield rather than an

enemy. The newcomers proved to be extremely aggressive, terrorising both the eastern provinces of the Persian Empire and the remnant of the Kushans in Afghanistan.[42]

The Romans also had the protection of a buffer on their frontier, these were the German peasantry. When the Western Huns moved into Europe it was the Germans who suffered first. These barbarians had penetrated Europe from Asia. Henry Breasted described them in the following words: "...These people were the Huns. They were the most destructive of all the barbarian invaders. They pushed down upon the lower Danube, and the West Goths (often called Visigoths), fleeing before them, begged the Romans for permission to cross the Danube and settle in Empire.[43]

The ravaging effects of these invaders were enormous and devastating. The Romans fought for their lives and their country. Yet, Italy was subjected to two series of invasions, in which the Eastern Empire had not been able to control the inroads of the Huns who had forced the West Goths to flee across the Danube. These unfolding events were interesting to us because they had been foretold in the Holy Qur'an: "And they swiftly swarm from every hill." Indeed, all the physical barriers did not stop them as they sallied forth when they were let through their barrier, as it was foretold in the Scripture. Consequently, the Huns succeeded in establishing their Huns Empire under their powerful King called Attila (433-53). The kingdom of Huns, therefore, steadily grew in power and the empire extended from Southern Russia to the Rhine. Attila, made the Eastern Roman Empire to tribute to him. By 450 AD, Attila, and his hordes of barbarians swept down upon Italy in a most destructive way, the type of which the South had never suffered.[44] Therefore, the Western Germans and the West Goths combined their efforts to check the terrible incursions of the Huns. In a fierce battle at Chalons, in France in AD 451, Attila was defeated and he died two years later. The Hunnish Empire,

consequently, fell to pieces and the inroads of these barbarians into Europe were extenuated. The destructive reign of Attila was described as 'Scourge of God' to Europe.

Similarly, the Scythians had inflicted serious damages several centuries earlier before they finally settled in Euro-Asia. Like the rest of the nomads, they were all known for *Mufsiduna fil ardhi*. In their evolutionary stages they had broken the barriers imposed on them by other civilised peoples because of reasons among which Colin and Sara McEvedy had mentioned thus:

> The great empires made up civilised world. Their cities contained the schools, the craftsmen and the administrators necessary to keep a complex society functioning. Their libraries contained the accumulated experience of mankind; if they fell to the assaults of the barbarians, civilisation itself would be in Peril.[45]

It was for this and other reasons that Allah (swt) kept the Gog and Magog under barriers. The expansive energy of these barbarians was exhausted and their onward inroad was temporarily checked. They remained quiet for sometime, during which they crossbred with the general population in Europe and elsewhere with their cultural traits and cultural complexes diffusing rapidly. These nomads were not only a threat to the civilised world because of their incessant aggression but because of the debauchery inherent in their cultural complexes, which became entrenched among most of the Europeans. Cultural habits and norms such as immorality, sensuality, alcoholism and other social vices became part of the European life style. The barbaric instinct of killing and arson was mellowed down and had taken a different colouring, as they were let through their physico-political barriers.

The identification of the Gog and Magog after their integration and assimilation into European nations became a cultural one, notable among which was *Mufsiduna fil ardhi*. Even after the barbarians had settled in farming and city-states, this cultural

complex became dominant and pervading. The European nations, which Akbar identified as the Gog and Magog, could be viewed in the context of their national character. These included social behaviour, basic beliefs, thinking and attitude and mannerism all had not been entirely different from their forebears; the Scythians of the ancient world and the Huns, the Turks and the Mongols. It was the case of new wine in old bottle.

The spread and diffusion of the cultural traits of the barbarians in Euro-Asia were easy and fast because in the ancient world down to the medieval era, they had shared a common enclave. Colin McEvedy wrote:

> In the Medieval period, the nations of Europe and the Near East formed community, the members of which constantly reacted on each other but were almost completely cut off from the rest of the world by physical barriers. We can think of the Europe-Near-East area as a cul-de-sac, the rough outline of the sack being formed by the Arctic circle, Atlantic Ocean, and the Sahara desert ... The Southern limit can be carried around to the Arabian Sea and the lips of the sack drawn together by bringing up the upper down along the line of the Ural Mountains and the lower up the Suleiman Range. The mouth is thus reduced to the region of the Oxus and Jaxartes rivers (Russian Turkestan) and it can be said that significant contact between Europe-Near-East area and the rest of the world took place via the Turkestan...[46]

Apart from sharing a common enclave, these wild tribes who were collectively known for *Mufsiduna fil ardhi* had not been content with a static role within this cul-de-sac or more precisely, within the most variegated area in the ancient world; the Caucasus Mountains, aptly described as the 'melting pot' of the ancient world. They were not confined in this Europe-Near-East as an entity. Unfortunately, these barbarians sallied forth and their aggressions brought a common factor into the history of India, Europe, and the Near East. Undoubtedly, therefore, the Scythians and their allies; the Huns, the Mongols and the Turks were part of the story of each other.[47]

The Gog and Magog in the light of what had been so far discussed were of the Indo-Aryan extraction, but had miscegenated with many races by their movements and invasion from Asia into Europe. During their barbaric invasions especially into Europe, there was the continual contact and mixing, all were factors necessary to spreading their cultural traits and characteristics evenly throughout these populations, before their expansive energy finally died down. The commingling of these barbarians with the rest of the population especially in Europe, brought along with it changes in language and social behaviours. This gave an indication of the ancestry group as well as sensitive index of its peculiarity in their settled populations. Language, race and culture were a single complex and that of the *Yajuj and Majuj* was a dominant one.

In their settled populations, the Europeans had passed through various stages before they finally surmounted their intellectual barrier. From the Dark Ages, to the Medieval period, era of Enlightenment, Renaissance, Reformation, and finally to the present state of science and technology. These stages, however, were not discrete but continuous. Having this preview in mind, it could then became easy to understand and comprehend the accuracy of Akbar's European nations' identification as the Yajuj and Majuj. Moreover, this scholar, Akbar had quoted *The Times, London* of 10th November, 1951, which reported some passages of Sir Winston Churchill's speech at the Lord Mayor's Banquet at Guildhall in London. He wrote:

> It seems that they (i.e. Gog and Magog) represent none too badly the present state of world politics. Like the history of Gog and Magog, are very confused and much disputed. Still, I think there is room for both of them.
>
> On the one side is Gog, and on the other is Magog. But be careful, my Lord Mayor, when you put them back, to keep them

from colliding with each other; for if that happens, both Gog and Magog would be smashed to pieces and we should all have to begin all over again and again from the bottom of the pit.[48]

This was Sir Winston Churchill's historic speech, which he delivered on the 9th November, 1951; on the occasion of the restoration of the effigies of Gog and Magog, it was not only replete with meaning but had led the cat out of the bag. The history of Gog and Magog was confused and disputed because, of their notoriety for *Mufsiduna fil ardhi*. And they were coarse savages, which no nation would want to be identified with in their own history. Yet, they were destined to rule the modern world. Wherever crisis of international politics was mentioned at the time of Churchill, it invariably referred to the world bi-polarity, which Gog and Magog had then represented, "The Communist East and the Capitalist West." Furthermore, in the historic speech of Sir Churchill what was revealed from its hidden story was that the Gog and Magog were nothing more than the belligerent capitalist West and the Communist East of the European nations that were in Cold War. If they collided with each other due to cut-throat competition for global material acquisition, and dominance, nuclear war could occur and inevitably they could be smashed to pieces. So they must be kept apart. The former British Prime Minister had corroborated deviously Akbar's identification of who the generations of Gog and Magog really were.

The emerging British Empire was vast and colossal with colonies littering the whole wide world that it used to be said: "sun never sets in the British Empire." It was an empire built with the wealth and sweat of many nations. But with far more contributions by the Africans, who were captured through raids on their homes, made by African neighbours who acted as agents for the European ship, who would take the captives to America and other European nations as slaves. According to Philip Mason, this had caused a frightful disruption and degradation in Africa. It also created a new

dimension in race relations: imperial powers ruling neighbours, but now we have a whole service class imported to serve a dominant group who were also foreign to the soil and whose declared beliefs and ideals were completely inconsistent with the Kind of Society they had established. And the ebullience, the artistry, the emotional intensity of the captured people also added something new to human history.

Undoubtedly, a new human history was not to be created, "until the Gog and Magog (people) are let through (their barrier). And they swiftly swarm from every hill" (Q.21:96). Philip Mason, had just mentioned one of the many consequences of when Yajuj and Majuj gained the control over human and natural resources of the world. In this dispensation, it was not only race relations that were reversed but everything was not only antithetical to the norms but was in topsy turvy. The relationship between man to man became exploitative, in a cut-throat competition for material acquisition. And the worst of all, the relationship of man and God, his creator and nourisher was turned upside down. In a reprehensible dualism, God became man and man became God, an impossibility that was foisted on the minds of men. This was a reaction against Revelation and monotheism, which started in Athens and reached its perfection in this new dispensation – when Gog and Magog were let loose.

Their final onslaught began in 1900 AD when the Renaissance period ended and after the attainment of intellectual superiority. They emerged and sallied forth to colonise the African countries and the rest of the developing world. It was during the period of enlightenment in the late seventeenth century and eighteenth century that they succeeded in achieving this intellectual emancipation, hence, Britain became "Great Britain." Thus, the European nations were let through their last barrier. They are now masters of the world; the Gog and Magog had even conquered the space and are on the verge of colonising the heavens. Therefore, we have seen what

we were expected to see when: "they swiftly swarm from every hill." As they swarmed into every country, they evolved a unique culture, which would be well comprehended from their cultural anthropology. It was a culture that was evolved, when the Religious Barrier was finally broken. As they were let loose, so also they let loose numerous horses of apocalypse looking for riders. So that the culture of *Mufsiduna fil Ardhi* becomes global.

Horses of Apocalypse

Through the study of their Cultural Anthropology, we had learnt the behavioural pattern of the Gog and Magog in their evolution from the nomadic life to the settled and to the sophisticated modern life styles. In like manner, we should study their behaviour in their city life styles. Especially when the core of their behavioural pattern became patent after breaking through; political, intellectual and finally religious Barriers to emerge as powerful nations.

James A Clifton defined cultural anthropology as an area of inquiry concerned with the varieties of human behaviour. As a field of study, it describes, interprets, accounts for or explains human behaviour thus generating, valid general knowledge, and the Glorious Qur'an is unique in its versatility, and comprehensiveness and as fountainhead of general knowledge, any human behaviour of significance in the history of man could not escape the sacred pages of this Holy Scripture. Therefore, the Holy Qur'an introduces in the first ten and the last ten verses of Suratul Kahf a pernicious culture, which gave birth to numerous horses of apocalypse that necessitated a cultural anthropological study with respect to this people with this devilish culture What was this abominable culture? It was a culture of habitual sinfulness aptly described as *Mufsiduna fil Ardhi,* and an ultimate embodiment of infidelity.

The word 'Culture' was defined by Edward Burnet Tylor, regarded as the founder of cultural anthropology defined it thus:

Culture, or civilisation is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, custom and many other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."[49] Hence culture was as old as man particularly when he became gregarious living in organised population. But no sooner had man evolved the system of living in communities than he also became rebellious to his Creator by cultivating unbelief, immorality and decadent customs, in contrast to the codified divine ethical rules revealed by God to His chosen Apostles to mankind. The Holy Qur'an in reference to this culture, which now threatens to consume the modern world said: "Do the unbelievers think that they can take my servants as protectors besides Me? Verily We have prepared Hell for the unbelievers for their entertainment." (Q.18: 102)

The warning is directed to those whose ideas of God degraded religion in supposing that God begot a son; 'for God is One and is High above any ideas of physical reproduction.' The unbelievers eked out this blasphemy from the pigment of their evil imagination. As described somewhere in this book, Revealed knowledge was scoffed at in classical Greece and heathen theosophy supplanted it. Thus, by introducing this subject of cultural anthropology, we were expected to study the content and pattern of beliefs, ideas, values, traits which may possibly be specific to European societies or patterns which may be found distributed among them, and the world in general. This was necessary because European or Western civilisation would not only influence the world but it controls, and intends to recreate the world in their own image.

Therefore, this ethnographic approach would take a cross-section or cut out of the complete history of Europe and developed a full-scale portrait of the way of life of the *Nasara* within brief time limits. Because many scholars of cultural anthropology insisted that the objects of study, of man and his culture were fundamentally historical phenomena, and that understanding and explanation of

social phenomena could only be sought through a chronologically ordered detailed recitation of series of antecedent events. Historicism, therefore, emphasised a preferred mode of accounting for or explaining the nature of a cultural system. And there was no cultural system in history worth studying in its minutest detail like that of the Gog and Magog. And its first characteristic was its affirmation of anthromorphism that gave birth to Polytheism.

Polytheism

The present concept of anthropomorphic God had emanated from ancient Greece, where civilisation based on the law of individuals instead of on the laws of God also germinated. Apostle Paul, whose background was partly Greek and partly Jewish was in a better stead to give the difference between the Jews who believed in Revelation and the Greeks who did not and he said: "The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek for wisdom." In other words the former believed in miracles and revealed messages of God Almighty while the latter only believed in their innate intelligence and knowledge of the seen.

The fundamental reason why the culture system of the Europeans must be studied and understood was because of its denial of God; deceptive nature coupled with their ingenuity. Because God Almighty had given them the knowledge of the Physical World and they were grossly defective in the knowledge of Supra-physical Reality: "They know but the outer, (things) in the life of this world: but of the end of things they are heedless" (Q.30:7).

It became absolutely essential to understand the content and form of their language, beliefs, material possession, ideas, values and behaviours, because they could be very dangerous due to their inherent defect a tubular vision with which they see: "They know but the outer (things) in the life of this world." This was the core of

the ancient Greeks and the basic foundation of their civilisation. As we would see soon, wisdom alone was not enough ingredient to build up a viable, virile and sustainable civilisation upon but, unfortunately, it formed the bedrock of Western Civilisation (an extension of Graeco-Roman culture), and is therefore, inherently defective. A benevolent super-civilisation must be built on the amalgam of both Wisdom and Revelation.

But it was ironical how Judaeo-Christian religious complex became an integral part of Western civilisation noted for its irreligiously and ontological world view. This unholy alliance with the European heathen culture slowly eroded and finally undermined the Judeo-Christian religion through divisions in the 'church' and creation of 'heresies'. These slowly ate away the foundation of its monotheistic base, and subsequently, a cascade of religious events followed from 625 AD, the days of Constantine the Great down to our time. This occurred because the Church thought erroneously that Western Civilisation was an important vehicle of evangelisation to be used. Weber put it thus:

> Western Civilisation has been intimately associated with Judaeo-Christian complex. Whenever the civilisation has spread it has been placed by its Christian Missionaries, who have felt the call to take their religious message to people they regarded as heathen and superstitious. Conjointly, Western civilisation has borne a strong rationalist tradition which has insisted on subjecting Judaeo-Christianity to the test of reason (Weber, 1958 :13-27).

By subjecting Judeo-Christianity to the test of reason, Christianity became the butt of much wrangling in the late 17th and 18th centuries due to the mighty surge of pietism that reflected the pent up yearning for salvation. In Medieval times, rationalism found its expression in the theological endeavour to demonstrate that reason and faith were complementary in reaching the Truth.

Compatibility of Christianity with reason became the touchstone of its authenticity. With the passage of time, the application of reason became even more critical and from the eighteen century, onwards, increasing numbers of scholars endeavoured to dissent or debunked Judeao-Christianity and its Holy Scripture by showing that these institutions and artefacts were the consequence not of divine revelation, but conventional irrational process occurring everywhere in human society.[50]

But at the outset, the Church had aligned itself with the mighty imperial power of the Europeans and had thus carried the Gospel beyond the Jewish borders, with disastrous consequences. Firstly, as Gentiles the Graeco-Romans who had previously rejected their Messengers were unworthy of salvation, because in this dispensation holy things and salvation were both meant for the Jews only. Jesus Christ had predicted the outcome of taking the gospel to the Gentiles, and warned seriously against christianising the non – Jewish, an event that would be followed with severe consequences. It was for these reasons that Apostle Matthew said: "Give not that which is holy unto dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet and rend you." (Mtt. 7:6).

His prediction became a reality as their cultural trait had consistently indicated that as far as monotheism was concerned, they were 'swines' who could not value 'pearls.' and their conscious behaviour was to do great mischief on earth, they only reciprocated the holy gesture by tearing Christians into pieces. Because they only believed in their Olympian gods and hence could not be divorced from their Homeric ballad. This prediction made by Apostle Matthew had come to pass. Because no sooner was Christianity taken to the Romans than they began to persecute the early Christians known as the *Nazarenes*. Emperor Nero, the Roman Governor was famous for his gruesome massacre and many inhuman cruelties made against the early Christians. He tore the creed to pieces.

Hence by going against the scripture and history, the Gentiles were given the Children's bread, the result was Ominous. Thomas Paine a celebrated writer in his work *titled 'The age of reason'* remarked that: "I believe in One God and no more." The scholar explained the final outcome of Christianity when it was given to the Gog and Magog. He wrote:

> As to the Christian system of faith, it appears to me as a species of Atheism, a sort of religious denial of God. It professes to believe in a man rather than in God. It is a compound made up chiefly of 'Manism' with but little Deism, and is near to Atheism as twilight is to darkness. It introduces between man and his maker an opaque body which it calls redeemer; as the moon introduces her opaque self between the earth and the sun and it introduces by this means a religious or an irreligious eclipse of light. It has put the whole orbit of reason into shade.[51]

What the author had pointedly observed was that it was the underhanded work of *Yajuj and Majuj* on Christianity that defiled it because in its pristine form of the credo, it was a monotheistic faith. Paine continued:

> Of all the systems of religion that ever were invented there is none more derogatory to the Almighty, more unedifying to man, more repugnant to reason and more contradictory in itself, than this thing called Christianity. Too absurd for belief, too impossible to convince and too inconsistent for practice, it renders the heart torpid, or produces only atheists and fanatics.[52]

Thomas Paine's exposition had summed up the consequences of what the Holy Writ had predicted 2000 years ago, when Christianity was taken to the Gentiles, especially the Gog and Magog . And the result was that the "Pearl" was trampled upon by the "swines." But what made the heart torpid was this most monstrous saying that: "God hath begotten a son" A heathen anthromopism of classical Greece resurfaced in Christianity. Jesus Christ (pbuh) an honoured servant of God Almighty was taken as a

exploitation of the weaker nations by the mighty, a period historians aptly described as a Neo-colonial era. But by the end of 18th century, both the American and the French revolutions loudly proclaimed a free society of equal rights. But this claim was a ruse, and very deceitful. And Philip Mason avouched this knavish affair. He wrote:

> ...There had been a contradiction at the heart of Western society ever since Constantine made Christianity the official religion of Roman Empire. Now it was openly proclaimed. Yet the United States did not abolish slavery until almost a hundred years after adopting a constitution, which proclaimed freedom as a universal right; nearly a hundred years later it was necessary to organise protest marches in order to win Civil Rights for the descendants of the slaves. The French, indeed in the first flush of revolutionary enthusiasm, did free the west Indian Slaves in San Domingo but the mood did not last even till the restoration of the Bourbons. By the last quarter of the century, the French Third Republic was again proclaiming democratic principles at home but annexing large parts of Africa. Britain's domestic record in the nineteenth century included a steadily widening of the franchise and early in the next century a beginning was made with redistributing wealth by death duties. But if male suffrage was to be rule at home, why not in India or Algeria.[57]

Evidently, this inherent contradiction in democracy like in all other ideas or belief evolved or arose out of irreliogiosity and eked out of the megalomaniac imaginations of people with habitual sinfulness. Because no system could survive without a recourse to God Almighty and His laws. The wisdom that was so revered and orchestrated in the Western World as the bedrock of sustainable, virile and elegant civilisation had fallen short of expectation as evident in this rule of democracy. A system that was characterised with the rhetoric of liberty, freedom and "plenty for all" or the welfare of the many, as Pericles described it. There's no doubt, any nation who rides this horse of apocalypse is inevitably doomed.

Under this study, democracy, means a lot to them, and in this

context, freedom and liberty of all men means their separation from God and His laws partially or completely. This became necessary in order to enthrone *Mufsiduna fil ardhi*. Prophet Jeremiah had bewailed this treachery when he asked: "How can you say, we are wise, and the law of the Lord is not with us? But behold the false pen of scribes has made it into a lie" (Jer. 8:8). Indeed, it was rather ridiculous to establish a civilisation operated only by the agents of *Angra Mainyu* and where God and His laws were banished. Hence it was not feasible to have human equality, liberty and freedom in the real sense of the words under this diabolical system.

Because of the potential impact of Judaeo-Christianity on the Western Civilisation and to save billions of people from perdition, Jesus Christ insisted that: "For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished" (Mtt 5:18). This was because the laws of God always have a positive fruitage upon any human civilisation. Therefore, any culture devoid of Allah's laws was characteristically defective and could only thrive in agnostic, atheistic and heathen societies. This was epitomised in the present world of democracy, which the West had both championed and orchestrated as the best evolved system of government in history.

Despite its grave defects, United States spent an enormous amount of money to democratise the world, even though, any established system without a stamp of spirituality was a sham. Mason, an expert in Race Relations concurred:

> There was a double consequence to these contradictions at the heart of the western democracies on the white side, the continuance of imperial rule faced every white man with a dilemma of which, of course, few were conscious. If he believed in democracy for himself, he could justify denying it to colonial subjects only on the grounds that they were permanently inferior, or that they were not yet ready but were learning and would be ready one day. Many took the first course and believed, without formulating the belief very clearly, in

> permanent inferiority others-and this was the official doctrine-took the paternalist or assimilationist line that it was a matter of learning, of maturing. There is a distinction between the strictly paternal view and the assimilationist. The British, the most paternal of the colonisers, assumed that one - day a long way off - their subjects would be ready for freedom. The French, the most assimilationist, believed they could imbue them so deep with French civilisation that they would not want to be free. In Britain, a small minority took the third view that Ireland and India should not be denied what Englishmen regarded as their birthright. But few were so altruistic as this; the pressure of self-interest was to find some justification for keeping things as they were and was thus towards either racialist or the paternalist answer.[38]

In spite of all these rhetoric about Democracy, no nation could fully be democratised in the real sense of the word because of the ill-understood concept of Human Rights that was firmly attached to it. Used in this context, it means each individual must live freely, first and foremost must not be governed by the laws of God, because they are now perceived as undemocratic and retrogressive. These laws, which Jesus Christ insisted that 'not an iota, or a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished' are scoffed at with jest as archaic and impracticable in this modern Democratic world. Thus, all religious ethics must be thrown overboard to render man fully liberated and as free as the air. This notion evolved because Gog and Magog know but the outer (things) in the life of this world but of the end of things they are heedless (Q:30:7). What fundamental Human Rights really means is the rejection of Shari'a or the right way to Religion. And they are poised to make this illicit concept global, under different guises, democracy inclusive.

But in reality, democracy is hedonism shrouded in a new garb, making it difficult to distinguish between the two. Because by the use of Human Rights, individuals are rendered hedonists *albeit* without realising it. However, if this assertion appears false, take a look at America, of today, the champion of democracy in the world,

almost all the iniquities for which many nations in the past were destroyed have been legalised. Sodomites are now referred to as Gays and are formally recognised in the societies with even legal backing to get married with full respect accorded to the 'couples'. Due to this perversion, Rev. Billy Graham an international Christian Evangelist once said that: "if God allowed America to go scot-free then He would have to apologise for His action at Sodom and Gomorrah." These were towns who were destroyed during the time of Prophet Lot (a.s) because of their homosexuality. Now America has not only perfected this immorality but it had spread it across the globe, all in the name of Fundamental Human Rights of individuals..

Similarly, Lesbianism rivalled homosexuality in scope, degree and global spread. This evil concupiscence, like most evils, had also emanated from Greece in 600 BC, from Sappho the great Lesbian Poetess. She was born In Lesbos, where she founded a boarding school for young women of the island, and taught them poetry, music and other social manners. It was from this school, Sappho, encouraged the girls to show affection for one another.[59] This involved sexual contacts amongst themselves, thus, a habit so evolved was named after her home town Lesbos or lesbianism. Sappho's poems were said to be full of passion and sensuality.

The sensual Poetess must have been motivated by the prevalence of homosexuality, which was more or less institutionalised in Greece at that time. Now, several centuries after, both forms of immoralities and many others have been institutionalised under the protective roof of Human Rights. Democracy, therefore, is the modern form of hedonism. Indeed, on further reflection it would show that the free world of pleasure of comfort orchestrated in democratic principles are hedonistic in intent, form and pattern. So what is hedonism?

Hedonism

So the world was not to see the full scale of *Mufsiduna fil Ardhi* in all its ramifications, "until the Gog and Magog were let loose," an event that had already taken place. This highly ingenious and ubiquitous people had now occupied almost every conceivable niche on this planet and in most of these areas do great mischief in their bid to seek absolute pleasure, which was the basis of Fundamental Human Rights as enshrined in the Democratic principles. Because according to Aristotle: "the good life for man is a life of happiness. Men ought to behave so as to achieve happiness." This belief and many others emerged as formulated ethics to replace Divine ethical laws. Ethics, refers to a code or set of principles by which men live.

The modern world would have been saved from the pursuit of sensual pleasure had the divine philosophy of Socrates not been rejected outright by the Athenians of classical Greece. As Cicero puts it, Socrates, brought philosophy from the Heavens, to teach the Greek moral ethics or a code of principles by which they should live. Unfortunately, little was known about his moral philosophy. Plato, one of the close disciples of Socrates, deviated from the divine principles of his teacher. Plato himself believed that "moral standards were superior even to God; goodness is anterior to God and God is good if and only if he acts in accordance with such a standard."[60] This evil notion was antithetical to his master's divine philosophy. Ethics, since then became a subject formulated by every Tom, Dick and Harry but all in opposition to revealed codified Laws of God.

Epicurus, disagreed with both Platonism and Aristotelian Philosophies to become an exponent of a new type of philosophy, which had persisted down to this time. His view sometimes called Hedonism has now pervaded the thought and lifestyle of most Europeans. He held the doctrine that "pleasure is the sole good." His doctrine, therefore, became the acceptable standard ethics of

Nasara. It consisted of two forms: Psychological Hedonism and Ethical Hedonism. Psychological Hedonism was the doctrine; stated that men do pursue pleasure and only pleasure in their lives.

All activities, according to this theory, were directed towards the acquisition of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. Hence, this doctrine had precisely revealed the psychological insights of people with habitual sinfulness far more accurately than any other theory: "the doctrine that pleasure is the sole good," while the Ethical philosophy was mainly for advice for living moderately but pleasurably. Therefore, Ethical Hedonism was the view that men not only in fact seek pleasure, but further than that ought to do so since pleasure alone is good.[61]

This theory stroke the aim and essence of Western Civilisation, which was to create a world of freedom and absolute pleasure where man seeks for all forms of pleasure without restrictions or encumbrances. Man, therefore, must be backed with the fundamental Human Rights to do so. And by seeking for pleasure he ought to have the means to do so too. Thus, when his animal instinct was stirred up, he was consequently, moved to greed and selfishness which propelled him to a dangerous acquisition of wealth, which resulted into the evolution of a culture referred to as materialism. This acquisitive instinct of wealth, made him ruthless on his path to seeking pleasure, which alone was "the sole good." Thus, Hedonism as the complex moral philosophy became the foundation of Western civilisation. On the other hand, the divinely revealed truth, which emphasised the role of absolute moral ethics as measures to combat the prevalence of obscene immoralities in the societies were trampled upon and rejected outright.

The Gog and Magog had always perceived the laws of God as both shackles and manacles to the attainment of absolute pleasure. Hence, they had broken away from this "barrier" centuries earlier. They are now to liberate the entire world, therefore, the aim of

democracy could now be more clearly appreciated. The entire human scientific, social, economic and political means were utilised to maintain a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The powerful nations of the world exercised their authority over the weaker nations to perpetuate their economic power and global hegemony. But under this dispensation, man could not, senselessly pursue his own pleasure in contradiction of all religious ethics without either denying the existence of God Almighty or simply paying Him lip service. To aid such a man, therefore, Fredrich Nietszche (1844-1900), a German Philosopher at the beginning of the last century declared that "God is dead."

Nietzsche's declaration that God was dead in his own dramatic style, was not in any way surprising. Because people with habitual sinfulness had obstinately denied the existence of Supra-Reality, hence, he only lived up to expectation with this evil logic. But the philosophers remark had serious and frightening implications. First, it paved room for perpetration of *Mufsiduna fil Ardhi,* which this people were known for. Secondly, it allowed the creation of another object of worship that was in conformity with their way of life, a liberty and freedom – in a bid to pursue all forms of pleasure. Further reflections would also show that money, the "almighty dollar," became the object of worship in this Godless society. Consequently, a dangerous behaviour of acquisition of money became their second nature. Money, therefore, became a means to an end. And the end in this context was absolute pleasure. Money became the 'god' of the modern world and sought after by all.

In this material society, money was raised to the highest premium, far worth more than human life. Thus, for the love of self, all forms of crimes, immoralities and other iniquities were perpetrated. Because something may not be worth doing or having in itself, but it became necessary to have it in order to enable us to achieve certain goals. In this respect money could be said to be

intrinsically valuable. And in a pleasure seeking world where everything is for sale, one is said to be "dead without money." Lastly, Nietzsche's blasphemy led to the surprise of adherents of various forms of theories of ethics in the European Civilisation, comprising to scoff and ridicule both Messengers of God and their Revealed Ethics. Thus, this democracy devoid of divine ethos was an institutionalised hedonism. Nietzsche, was not the only philosopher who denied the existence of the Creator of the universe, he was only audacious enough to certify Him dead. This meant, therefore, He had existed previously, which was in contradiction to Atheism, a well known belief amongst the Gog and Magog and the Glorious Qur'an was well aware of it.

In a subterfuge to scare men of God away from scientific pursuits, they made it appear that there is a causal relationship between Atheism and scientific achievement but this was a ruse. A religious disbelief had no causal relationship whatsoever with scientific breakthrough, Islam had dispelled this concept beyond doubt. The Holy Qur'an, was the only Unique Scripture in history, where science and faith were in agreement. An idea of immense encouragement provided by the Qur'an for the cultivation of learning and reasoning they were constant exhortations in it to believers to know, to see, to observe, to think, to ponder and to deduce.

Firstly, the Holy Scripture was consistent in advocacy for the acquisition of knowledge or *al – ilm*. One eighth of the Holy Book put emphasis upon this important aspect of human civilisation, in more than 780 of its sacred verses. The acquisition of knowledge must go in *pari passu* with the reflection on natural phenomena or *taffakur*. And the Holy scripture contains more than 750 verses, another one eighth of the Book, which refers to the reflection on the physical world, and people were asked to think over them in order to recognise Allah (swt) through His signs. There was no Holy Writ

protector besides his Creator. Thus, both the content and pattern of beliefs, ideas, values and cultural traits of *Nasara* could not be separated from those of their ancient Greece. Undoubtedly, Polytheism was a second habit of the Nasoreans, second to atheism. It was a culture that was cultivated right from classical Greece, which formed the main root of Western Civilisation. The splendour of art and artefacts were more valuable than any religious work. It was a culture, which put art at a very high premium over religion, and artists over clergymen. Now, a work of art has become a fashionably, fast-running horse of apocalypse.

Work of Art

There was another crucial factor that formed an integral part in the cultural evolution of Europeans. It pervaded their thinking and reshaped their behaviour in an unprecedented degree, which made it a religion on its own right. This was work of art. It could be remembered that the Scythians were exceptionally gifted in the work of arts: their ingenuity had greatly influenced the ancient world. They were excellent creative geniuses with technical skills. In appraising the contribution of this ingenious people, Tamara Talbot Rice wrote:

> Our interest in the past tends to centre upon the great civilisation which embody mankind's finest achievements. In consequence, we are inclined to disregard the peripheral culture which flourished as offshoots of the main creative streams and render ourselves the poorer thereby, for many marginal societies succeeded in ancient times in evolving artistic cultures of considerable merit. Though the number of major masterpieces which they add to our store of outstanding may be comparatively small, the majority of their works are nevertheless both surprisingly fascinating and extremely interesting. Instead a remarkable liveliness of mind, sensitivity of eye and manual dexterity. These accomplishments enable artists from the peripheral cultures to create works of lasting quality and to evolve distinctive, essentially national styles, even when adopting motifs, mannerisms and idioms from their more gifted neighbours.[53]

The most notable of these peripheral cultures, the author made reference with was that of the Scythians. The impact of Scythian art on Western Civilisation was perhaps second only to that of Greece. Inquiry into this aspect of European behaviour was as revealing as it was interesting. Raymond V. Schoder highlighted the historic role of Greek Art and its impact on the present civilisation. He wrote:

> ... Only after Alexander the Great toward the end of their long history, did the Greeks fuse with other nations into a culture. Until then, they were largely a world to themselves in way of life, language, literature and art. Within that small world marvels appeared with amazing frequency and variety of philosophers, scientific pioneers, poets, dramatists and every type of literary genius, artists of super power and originality, great military leaders, champion of civic freedom, creative thinkers in every line of human endeavour. The impact of all this produced a unified culture of extraordinary quality, and injected into the life-stream of Western Civilisation elements which nourished its healthy growth and still contribute much of its vigour and momentum.[54]

Art, either consciously or subconsciously, had successfully replaced religion not only in ancient world but in the contemporary world of science and technology. So much time, wealth and human resources were being spent to improve various artistic works with the expressed aim of beautifying world. The ancient works of art and artefacts are now the most precious and most valuable objects in the eyes of most Europeans, perhaps, second only to sensitive scientific equipment. The permeating and dominating aspect of art had become eminent right from the classical Greece. Schoder had rightly pointed this thus:

> A naturalness which makes it easy for all men of any era and culture to understand and enjoy it; an exaggerated realism which shuns the esoteric and restrains the elements of allegory and symbolism that occasionally tempt it, a sure instinct for beauty which is found in rational comprehension of intrinsic

> pattern, proportion, symmetry, the intelligence form radiant in its clarity and meaningfulness, an honest delight in the beauty found which is esteemed for itself, and as an inspiration to noble use of mind; a love of clarity, simplicity, relevance, and an insistence on seeing the relationship of parts to the whole and of the art object to the reality in the larger ;a search for universal significance in things, their changing essence and nature beyond the limits and inadequacies of the particular - things as they should be, not just as they are; a sane idealism, emphasising what is most admirable most -- true, most humanly uplifting in things, rather than their defective, sordid, or merely ordinary aspects, a pervasive humanism of outlook which finds man and his nobler qualities the chief element of interest, with Nature and the animal world significant mainly in their relationship to man and his needs; a spontaneous, unforced motivation in producing art objects which are an authentic expression of the feelings and the vision personally experienced by the artist, and therefore without posing or sham; and a remarkable agility of mind, alert to all human experiences and their significance, quick to learn, progressive, imaginative, always driving to perfection of technique , abhorring carelessness and stagnant conventionalism, always vital, energetic, creative, alive. The result is an art which is eminently sane and constructive, of lasting human, value, by nature 'classic' and universal worth.[55]

If all these features are what produced a 'classic' art of universal worth, therefore, art claimed the total attention of man – his time, energy and money far more than the religion of man. Thus, completely immersed in his work of art in his bid to embellish the world, he becomes wittingly or unwittingly oblivious of the Creator and the Designer of this universe. Hence religion or religious beliefs paled into insignificance. He works tirelessly to beautify a world he has not created just for his love of aesthetics and in which his life span is but a bubble. Yet, he spends all his precious time only for beauty. For John Keats said: "A thing of beauty is joy forever"

It could be discerned, therefore, to most Europeans works of art, had conveniently replaced religion, and this was not an over-

exaggerated statement. Although, work of art is important to man, it must not become his obsession and be carried beyond the pale as to replace his religion. Because the Almighty God, purposely created man to worship none but Him. He subdued the world for him to make man His vicegerent on earth. But man by nature has always been a rebellious creature. In condemnation of this deplorable culture, the Holy Qur'an describes such works as wasted efforts: "Say: Shall we tell you of those lost most in respect of their deeds?" (Q.18:103) Obviously, those who prided themselves in the production of classic works of art in their life, lost most in respect of their deeds. They spent their life span, working indefatigably to beautify the world not because of religious duty but simply to beautify the world to make it comfortable and more luxurious. In consequence, they relegated religion to the background. And undoubtedly, they would find their works to be of no avail. The Glorious Qur'an gave the reason why, because, they were: "Those whose efforts have been wasted in this life while they thought that they were acquiring good by their works?" (Q.18:104)

This sacred verse referred pointedly to the European Civilisation where men were noted for totally dedicating their lives, to work for the progress of mankind in every sphere of human endeavour. The culture was lauded as the best evolved in history, because it was altruistic and humane. Those who distinguished themselves through inventions and discoveries were selected for public honours, for their service to mankind and not to God. These were the winners of the much-coveted Nobel Price. Undoubtedly, the winners thought they were acquiring good by their works. These inventions and discoveries undertaken to improve the quality of human lives were not bad in themselves. In fact, they were encouraged in Islam, Prophet Muhammad (swt) described these noble deeds in these imperishable words: "The best among mankind is he who brings benefits to them." Since every action is judged according to intention, therefore, every work undertaken for the

upliftment of the quality of mankind must be done primarily because of God or *fisabilillah*, and material benefits that followed it as secondary. Unfortunately, a super civilisation was created which like Frankenstein monster recoiled to dehumanise man his own inventor. Because all works that were done to improve the quality of his life were primarily done not because of Almighty God. Man therefore, was caught up by nemesis and he was left in the doldrums ever since.

Characteristically, most of those who won these prizes were either atheists or nominal Christians but who have become famous in various fields of knowledge in the sciences or humanities. They became international celebrities and most of these eminent scientists were treated as kings or presidents in every country they visited. Now, a decadent culture has re-emerged that it is fashionable to first of all deny God in order to be really identified as a great thinker or scientist in this Western civilisation. The wonderful Book of Allah accurately mentioned their features the winners of these Awards and Prices such the Nobel Price, the Academy Award, the Grammy Award and Oscar Award and other forms of worldly honours bestowed upon them thus: "They are those who deny the signs of their Lord And the fact of their having to meet Him (in the hereafter): Vain will be their works, nor shall we, on the Day of Judgement give them any weight" (Q18:105).

Hence, in this contemporary European culture, a progress in science and technology leads to religious dissent. However, the dissenting scientists, philosophers and artists having been well grounded in knowledge and conspicuously seen the signs of their Lord denied them to appease the world. Because disbelief in religion tended to add glamour to a precondition to their eminence. So it is a civilisation where irreligiosity has become a habit and a dominant character. For instance, a musician, a poet, an actor or actress who won an Academy Award, Oscar Award, Fashion or

Beauty Award and Grammy Award in a glitzy ceremony, he or she would not have achieved this feat without contravening religious ethics. Thus, religion is now perceived as retro-progressive and so indeed, "vain was their works." And on the Day of Judgement, Allah (swt), would not give them any weight, so they would be severely punished. Because as people with habitual sinfulness, they had only one eye, and a tubular vision with which they see only this physical world.

They, therefore, put much emphasis on the works of art in derogation to and to supplant religious duty because primarily, they only hankered after world glory. A vain glory indeed, a glory that was particularised with the obsession of this world of vanity. Hence, in this world they received many honours and encomiums in the forms of Certificates, Awards, and Money. But in the Hereafter they would also receive another reward thus: "That is their reward, Hell; because they rejected Faith, and took My Signs and My Messengers by way of Jest." (Q.18:106).

Perhaps, the very limited scope of knowledge given to man by God had made him think he was greater than his own shadow. Otherwise, how could he be so deluded as to deny Allah (s.w.t.), His religion of Islam and His Apostles? Signs and Messengers were sent as a special and personal mercy from God. Men who were well grounded in knowledge should not be beguiled either by their parallax view or their importance in the society and therefore, fail to pass the test of Allah (s.w.t.) in their probation in this transitory world. Because life in this world is like a bubble. And Allah's knowledge is incomprehensive but we were given a glimpse of it thus: "Say: If the ocean were ink (wherewith to write out) the word's of my Lord, sooner would the ocean be exhausted than would the words of my Lord, even if we added another ocean like it, for its aid." (Q.18: 109)

In their arrogance and pigheadedness, they consistently opposed

the divine intervention of God in the affairs of man in this world. Consequently, they invented many ethical and social theories with which to govern mankind in their social intercourse, thereby, derogating those of the Most High. Yet, these were laws beset with many internal contradictions, always fell short of expectation; pushed man deeper into the doldrums. Democracy was one of such stratagems invented by the Gog and Magog. At present, almost every nation is forced to saddle on this popular horse of apocalypse.

Democracy

In the study of the cultural anthropology of Europeans, there was a very important characteristic feature of this was their civilisation that was crucial to an overriding love for freedom. This unlimited degree of love for freedom included primarily freedom from the laws of God in all their ramifications. However, this love for unlimited freedom had finally gravitated into what is now called Democracy. Similarly, the content and pattern of this belief or idea had stemmed from the ancient Greece. Democracy, arose in Athens to finally settled in America, who using everything necessary, intended to make it a global culture. The Greek emphasis on the freedom of the individual led to the rise of limited type of democracy as a form of government.

Leften S. Starrianos, stated that the word democracy came from two Greek words *demos and Kratia,* meaning rule by the people. Greece was, therefore, credited for this form of government, for the first time in human history. A government in which all men except slaves and newcomers were free to participate in an equal basis was established in Athens in the fifth century BC. In fact, their victory over the great Persian Empire had given them the right impetus at the right time to have both faith and confidence in their new art of governance. They, as a result, became certain of the superiority of their ways of life over others. In this regard, Pericles, the eminent

Athenian leader bragged about it when he wrote:

> We enjoy a form of government not copied from the laws of any neighbouring state. Rather do other states copy ours. And since our constitution considers not the benefit of the few, but the welfare of the many, we call it democracy. The state regards all men as equal so far as their private differences are concerned; but it selects for public honour those who have shown their ability in the public service, nor those poverty prevent any man from his worth. As a citizen. In brief, our city is a model for the whole of Greece.[56]

What became a model for the whole Greece has now become a model for the whole world, perhaps, due to the impact of Hellenism spread by Alexander the Great. Characteristically, and as a recurring decimal this idea too was devoid of spirituality. An integral part of civilisation that hinged heavily on the power of man as a free individual. Thus, this seed that was planted in Athens, watered by various cultures had finally grown into a big tree and already also begun to bear fruits. But a negative fruitage indeed.

And no sooner had the *Yajuj and Majuj* been let loose than this brand of governance blossomed; tinted with hedonism and was spread to all nations. The acceptance and practice of democracy by any country became her bargaining chips in securing loan from International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank or receiving financial assistance from the Industrialised Nations. Since freedom was an integral part of democracy, right from its inception, liberty and Human Rights were integrated into it. America then emerged as the world's champion of Human Rights and Democracy. A civilisation was thus established on irreligious foundation. And it was orchestrated that democratic was the best for all nations.

However, this giant and beautiful edifice was inherently defective, hence, full of flaws. Because a global society was intended to be formed and stratified according to race, economic power and ideology, in order to systematise and maintain the

in history with these attributes. The aim of Islam was to buttress science not only for its role in the advancement of mankind but primarily for its significance in knowing God. Thus, the Holy Qur'an spurred the rise of science amongst the Muslims from the 7th century AD onward in all Islamic Societies.

Consequently, Islamic Civilisation was not only the custodian of scientific knowledge of Greek, Indian, Chinese and other sources, but many Islamic scientists and philosophers had broadened their horizon, after saving it from destruction by Europeans in the Dark Ages, and Islamic Civilisation was the motive force behind their Renaissance. Moreover, all these were symbolised in Professor Muhammad Abdus Salam (d. 1996) the first Muslim Noble Laureate, who with quotations from the Holy Qur'an received his prize in Physics in 1979, a prize he shared with Steven Wernberg, an Atheist.

It was in this regard that the late Nobel Laureate Professor Abdus Salam, explained in Al Tawhid, Vol. iv, No.4, Shawwal-Dhu al-Hijjah, (1407 A.H.) p.61, and the compatibility of Qur'an and Science, he said:

> Let me say at the outset that I am both a believer as well as a practising Muslim. I am a Muslim because I believe in the spiritual message of the Holy Qur'an. As a Scientist, the Qur'an speaks to me in that it emphasises reflection on the laws of nature, with examples drawn from cosmology, physics, biology and medicine, as signs for all men:
>
> What, do they not consider how the camel was created, how heaven was lifted up, how the mountains were hoisted, how the earth was surfaced (Q.88:17).
>
> Verily in the creation of the heavens and earth and in the alternation of night and day there are signs for men of understanding (3:189-190).

Thus, there was no casual relationship between scientific achievements and atheism whatsoever. So what is atheism?

Atheism

Atheism "is the theory that there is no God, or if there is, He cannot in any way affect human existence." This is similar to the denial of monotheism emanated from Ancient Greece where polytheism was deeply rooted and had taken sway. The Greeks were at the outset inclined to atheism. This atheistic belief was extended to the Modern Civilisation, where atheists supported their contentions with evidence from the current knowledge of the physical world and human behaviour. They proffered that the universe came into being rather fortuitously. Controversy, therefore, arose between the Creationists who offered that God Almighty created the world *ex-nihilo* and the Evolutionists who believed in its spontaneous evolution.

From the rationalist side of the divide, a powerful system emerged called communism in the early part of the 19th century. It arose sequel to the Revolutionary Socialist Movement based on the dialectical materialism or scientific socialism expounded by Karl Max and Fredrich Engel (1820-1895). Communism suddenly took hold of the Eastern European nations. It was an ideology noted for its abhorrence of religion, which it described as the "opium for the masses." It was a social system where the dictatorship lay with the proletariats and not with the bourgeois as in the case of capitalism of the Western European nations.

The Union of Soviet Socialists Republic (USSR) therefore, became the active proponent of this socialist movement and Russia spent its wealth and technical superiority to spread this atheistic philosophy. It sustained this system in the Eastern European nations with its own wealth and spread it to the developing countries. This pernicious system was famous for its rejection of God and religion. Consequently, the world was polarised into Capitalist Western

European nations with America as the leader and Eastern Communist European nations with Russia as their champion. A cold war then ensued and existed from the end of the Second World war in 1945, between the two super-powers which came to an end in 1989 with the collapse of USSR. In this global bi-polarity, the two leaders were both armed to the teeth with weapons of mass destruction. However, India led another group referred to as Non-aligned Nations. They remained neutral because they saw no wisdom in participation in this dangerous competition of spreading two opposing ideologies.

The Glorious Qur'an had predicted this development 1421 years ago, and spoke of how the atheists and their reprehensible system of Communism and how they would be vanquished. Allah (swt) was quick in His retribution to the atheists, because atheism meant a complete removal of any opposition to *Mufsiduna fil Ardhi.* Allah (swt) in His Book said:

> The unbelievers spend their wealth to hinder (men) from the path of Allah, and so will they continue to spend; but in the end they will have (only) regrets and sighs; at length they will be overcome; and the unbelievers will be gathered together to Hell (Q8:36).

Although the verses referred to all unbelievers but it contained two predictions that were more or less specific to the Russians, the purveyors of communism and the generations of *Yajuj and Majuj* who were unique in their denial of the existence of God Almighty and were abhorrence to His religions on earth. Firstly , USSR spent colossal amount of her wealth in fighting religion and they did this simply to: "hinder (men) from the path of Allah." Undoubtedly, there was no nation in history who came out with all its might in the name of communism and arraigned her arsenals to annihilate religion on the surface of this universe like the Russians.

Furthermore, USSR at the zenith of its technical superiority

was dreaded by all nations for its weapons of mass destruction. Even during the era of cold war, Russia was rated as the number one Super Power. She was far advance in Cosmology, being the first nation to establish a permanent Space Station on the moon, otherwise known as Station Mir. Deluded by their technological superiority in a characteristic braggadocio, her cosmonauts even claimed that there was no God in the heavens, otherwise, "they could have seen him." "But in the end they will have (only) regrets and sighs." This aspect of the prophecy about Russia was specific as it was remarkable. Then suddenly USSR collapsed towards the end of the 20th century, with a hiss of a punctured tyre. It was a mighty falling that was unprecedented in history.

In a silent cataclysmic explosion, the Super 'Power disintegrated, and had been sinking into the abyss of oblivion ever since. It was the worst ignominious fall from grace in history, there was no war fought and not a single shot was fired, yet, there was the mighty falling. If military arms could save a nation, USSR could not have disintegrated. It was not conquered or vanquished by any nation. USSR collapsed due to economic pleasantries for over half of a century, when it had been spending its wealth like a drunken sailor on weapons and communism. Consequently, the economy could no longer sustain the bashing, and it therefore, collapsed beyond redemption. This confirms the saying, "at length they will be overcome." Indeed they are now reduced to a beggar nation, seeking for assistance donations from the Industrialised Nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. But such assistance had kept evading them like tantalising will-o-the wisp, and they are only left with "regrets and sighs."

Hence, there was no nation having 'regrets and sighs' like the Russians, which was once a Super Power but in a twinkle of an eye, were reduced to a Pauper Nation. With a battered economy and without help in sight, Russia became a pitiful country. Crimes, drug

addiction and prostitution among her youths have escalated by astronomical proportions. The country is being ravaged with many diseases including Tuberculosis, HIV and AIDS due to poverty and starvation. At the time of writing this book, Cable Network News (CNN) frequently showed the pitiful faces of mothers weeping because they were forced by circumstances to abandon their babies because of poverty. The degree of poverty is indeed enormous as to force mothers to abandon their babies leaving them, thereby, full of 'regrets and sighs.' These babies left in the lurch were adopted by foreign nationals most of them from the ex-enemy – the West. Russian girls left the country *en masse* to the industrialised countries in the West in search of a greener pasture to do odd jobs and prostitution. Indeed the Holy Quran is a Book *par excellence* which explains everything. In fact, the plight of Russians is far beyond economic down turn. It is a "scourge of God" as predicted by the Glorious Qur'an. We are now witnesses to their "regrets and sighs" in this world. And by Allah's Grace, we shall be witnesses to the final prediction: "And the unbelievers will be gathered together to Hell." Atheism was like a cyanide capsule, it kills a nation quickly and ignominiously. Therefore, the most dangerous horse of apocalypse, is atheism, you might as well ask the Russians, if you are in doubt.

Nothing was as bizarre as it was outlandish in philosophical and culturological theories like atheism. Because it was a blatant way of denying man metaphysical needs of the human mind, as it was persistently driven to reflect on ethical and religious questions, propelled not by material needs but by an inner compulsion to understand the world as a meaningful cosmos created and well designed universe that was subdued for man, for a particular purpose to worship the Supreme Being in accordance with His divine rules as codified in revelation. Consequently, the autochthonous values of revealed knowledge ought not to have been denigrated. But owing to the senseless rivalry set by *Yajuj and*

Majuj with the Creator, Revelation became the first casualty in their world view. Yet, the quest for religious belief ingrained within the heart of hearts of man could not be effaced neither could it be suppressed nor replaced by any pernicious theories, which oozed out of the figment of imagination of people noted prominently for their *Mufsiduna fil ardhi*, because this spiritual desire did not exist outside the heart (and mind) of man but rooted deeply within it. Yet, the Gog and Magog remained adamant and recalcitrant in their attitude. Thus, in order to satisfy this human crave and instinct and at the same time to maintain disbelief in God's Revelation, Deism, another horse of apocalypse was propounded during the Age of Enlightenment in Europe.

Deism

Deism, was a theory propounded dealing with the nature of God. It maintained that there was a Divine Being or Divine Power separate from the physical world, which it created or started but that this Divine Being or Power exercised no direct influence or force on events occurring within the universe as it now exists.[62] This view in compared to atheism, both were a conundrum separated by a thin line of difference like twilight to break of the day. Atheism, as was enunciated in the attitude of Pierre Simon Laplace, the mathematician mentioned earlier, who when he was explaining to Napoleon his theory of how the Astronomical Universe came into existence, was asked where God fitted into these schemes. He replied, "I have no need of such an hypothesis."[63] Because the atheistic contention was that the questions that formerly were answered in terms of God could now be answered in terms of Scientific knowledge. Yet, his theory had failed to achieve the scientific absolutism he arrogantly thought.

The use of rationalism to demur religion or to obliterate it completely to project their geocentricism had always been

untenable, and the shift of the centre of this onslaught from atheism to deism was an indicative of diminishing tempo. Rationalisation, a process which included intellectual classification, specification and systematisation of ideas concerning man's conception of himself and his place in the universe, could if objectively used be complementary and not antithetical to Revelation. Because Scientific Knowledge could not attain the state of absolutism where it perfectly offered answers to everything, hence there was this subtle shift of emphasis to a notion, a belief in the existence of Supreme Power, who created the universe but became powerless in its governance. Hence a man who was not privy to the creation of this Awesome Planet arrogated to himself, with the technical know-how and the intellectual savvy of not only the mechanics of it operation but he was a virtuoso in its administration.

Deists, therefore, believed that God was the Creator of the world but handed off the world and left it to its own devices. This was the view of the first group among the exponents of this theory. They created a unique role for themselves; since God left the world to its own ways, then they became the valuers, managers and the engineers who specialised in how to operate the universe and explain the position of man by formulating many ethical and scientific theories. The second group, believed in a continuing Providence guiding the material development of the world but He was unconcerned with human spiritual aspects. This group divided the world into two: the material and the spiritual, the former left in the hand of the creator to nourish while the latter left entirely in the hands of man. Since the essence of man's creation was to worship Allah (swt) alone, this group denied it and argued that Providence had no interests in the spiritual and moral affairs of man. Therefore, man by nature was a free being to do as he wished, a notion that escalated immoral profligacy in the form of *Mufsiduna fil ardhi.* The third group believed in God as a source of moral truth. But this truth was subjected to the interpretation and the censorship of man,

using his own intelligence and cognitive power. The last group of deists admitted to a wide range of tenets acceptable to Natural Religion but did not accept Revealed Religion. The former was that knowledge of God, could be acquired and demonstrated by the use of man's innate reason. While the latter was meant to be that body of doctrine and its exegeses, which could be deduced from God's revelation to mankind.[64]

In general, therefore, Deism may be taken to be a doctrine equivalent to Natural Religion. The persistent intransigence of the Gog and Magog against Revelation had not changed a bit instead it became more intensified since from the ancient world. The bug remains an old wine in new bottle. The essence of deism demonstrated that it was religious movement with a body of doctrines supposedly based entirely on reason and completely stripped of revelations. It arose as a reaction to Christianity in England in the 18th Century. A materialist described a deist thus: "...a deist was the sort of man who was not weak enough to be a Christian and not strong enough to be an atheist."[65]

The Age of Enlightenment was ostensibly characterised by the rise of various forms of Academic Religions in the 18th century. Having outrightly rejected Revelation as the source of knowledge, yet, the quest for the metaphysical needs of man, increased unabated with intensity as it was irrepressible, the soul of man yearned for inner peace, serenity and for a true joy. Obviously, Natural Religion, could not slake this scorching thirst. Thus, desperately looking for solace, he abandoned his Academic Religions to seek for shelter in Mysticism in a surge of pietism that reached a crisis point at the beginning of the second millennium, aptly described as the Age of Neo-cultomania, a horse of apocalypse created to certify the inner quest of man for salvation, and to enthrone global evilness.

Neo-cultomania

The confidence reposed in scientific knowledge was betrayed due to the alarming discovery that it had woefully failed to answer all questions with absolutism. An increase in scientific knowledge had steadily and consistently proved the existence of God in absolute control and independent of all things but wholly dependent upon by all things. The unquenchable burning desire of the spiritual needs of man, had forced the modern world into a bizarre form of spirituality, despite, the absolute comfort and luxury, which the world of science had provided. There emerged in a cataclysmic explosion of religiosity in the heart of the modern world, the United States of America (USA). In the 1970s America was hit by a religious thunderbolt from there it boomed and spread quick like wild fire to other countries.[66]

This new religious trend was noted by many writers of the day, among them Professor Richardson of the University of Nevada, the author of many books and essays on modern Mysticism . According to Richardson, the mysticism movement among young people had become particularly wide-spread.[67] Pavel Gurevich, a Marxist of Russian extraction wrote about this phenomenon, which threatened to become global. He wrote:

> Yet, at the same time, millions of people in the West have been caught up in mystic insanity. They retire into the desert in the hope of meeting gods from some distant supercivilisations. Like the ancient Pythians they inhale poisonous vapours from a fissure in rock and proclaim the imminent collapse of the world. They go begging in the streets flooded with neon light while their prophets ride in armoured limousines. They huddle in the dark basements of New York and San Francisco, paying homage to the devil. They study the behests of Jesus Christ, who they claim, left the Earth and made his home on the planet venus. With shaven heads and wearing yellow robes, with a white circle on the bridge of their nose, they beat tambourines, ring silver bells and clap their hands, proclaiming the end of skyscrapers and industrial giants. They fete initiates into black and white magic. They wait their fantastic apotheosis on Judgement Day.[68]

This was a vivid description of the new bug afflicting the world from a specialist in Ideological Trends in the Western World. This bug was a re-emergence of Graeco-Roman cultism to fill in the religious vacuum in the West. The Gog and Magog seemed to be intensely agitated and were in search of true faith. Guverich posited a very crucial question the answer to which would give not only the account of but the reason why they behaved in this manner. He asked: "what makes people look for an exotic faith to raise them above the crowd, to bring them solace and order to the world?"

Firstly, the question proved the failure of the world dominated by *Yajuj and Majuj* in three fundamental areas: "Faith, solace and orderliness." And they were the cause of Russia's demise as a World Power. This in itself showed their potency and efficacy, and their paramount importance in the elevation or the debacle of any civilisation. Faith, here could be defined as a religious belief based on the knowledge revealed to mankind by God through His chosen Apostles. Without religion, therefore, there could never be peace, solace or serenity in the hearts of men, as a result of which there would be chaos and confusion in the world, which no civilisation could withstand. The importance of orthodox religious belief could never be emphasised.

This current mystic madness, which spread to the world with a meteoric rise would be a temporary one. Because it would be supplanted by the Truth. Furthermore, this craze for mysticism underscored the fallacy that scientific knowledge could provide all the answers and solutions to all problems. Melvin Berger, in his book the *Triumphs of Modern Science* paid a glowing tribute to the 'almighty' science. He said that our lives were dominated by modern invention from which he listed a few: Radio, Televisions, Telephones, Aeroplanes, Nuclear reactors and artificial satellites, which, according to the author, had made a tremendous impact on the lives of us all. In fact, to this list could be added Fax, E-mail, Internet and various other inventions.

Yet, Americans armed with the most sophisticated science and technological knowledge in the world, and living in the most affluent society could not have abandoned their cities seeking for inner peace elsewhere. But this was necessary because science could never replace Revelation. Toynbee, the great historian after his survey of human society came to the conclusion that those features on which man's existence, survival and well-being depended could not appear directly in archaeological records because they were not material but Spiritual.[69]

Thus, there was no way the spiritual world could be investigated and understood through material means. While Bertrand Russel (1872-1970), a renowned British philosopher in his impact of science on society came to the same conclusion. "Science and technology" he said, "are neutral disciplines leading mankind to such an intellectual field that it is necessary to evoke the Christian concept of charity and love in order to preserve humanity."[70] No doubt, science and technology dehumanised the very persons that created them. Religion would attenuate this accelerated dehumanisation of man by the Western Civilisation. It was for this reason that Aldous Huxley said: "Technological progress has merely provided us with more efficient means for going backwards." Ultimately, the solution to all these problems lied with Islam, and not neocultomanism.

Gurevich explained the uniqueness of the upsurge of the new preposterous mores and a changing tidal wave of Mufsiduna fil Ardhi. He said: the current wave of mysticism has its own specific features and forms. In the past mysticism openly confronted science and was firmly lodged in areas of social consciousness where science had not yet asserted itself. Today, even many well-established scientists appear to have fallen for the mysticism. Some of them for example, discuss the magic of numbers or some unheard

of cures, and speak about the fantastic aura which, they claim surrounds every living being. Scientific journals print discussions on whether the world is developing according to Moses or to Darwin. Some Western Scientists are fascinated by the idea of the biologisation of the social aspects of human life, others speak about some sort of astral, unfathomable divine dimension of history.[71]

Europeans have for too long been turning to other beings than God to fill in the psychological vacuum that every human feels. They out the right feeling in the wrong place. This partly might be due to their history which may change with time. Because most European thinkers shrunk back from the conception of God as presented in the teachings of the Church. In view of this, therefore, Sir George Bernard Shaw, a celebrated British intellectual made this prophecy:

> I have prophesised about the faith of Muhammad, that it would be acceptable to the Europe of today. Medieval ecclesiastics either through ignorance or bigotry, painted Islam in the darkest colours. They were in fact trained to hate both the man Muhammad and his religion. To them Muhammad was anti-Christ. I have studied him the wonderful man, and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the Saviour of humanity. I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving the problems in a way that would bring it the much-needed peace and happiness. Europe is beginning to be enamoured of the Creed of Muhammad. In the next century it may go still further in recognising the utility of that Creed in solving its problems and it is in this sense that you must understand my prediction.[72]

The chronicity of the spiritual malaise of Europe could only be remedied by Islam. Now Europe runs away from Islam because of her ignorance of its quintessence utility. The assimilating capability to the changing phases of human existence combined to make Islam the religion of the West. Even though it has now taken science its own "almighty god" the prophesy of Sir Bernard Shaw will come to pass.

There was this initial euphoria about the triumphs of science, that it was all-embracing but slowly and perceptively, it was discovered to the chagrin of all its proponents that science was both grossly limited in depth and scope, and could not with absolutism provide solutions to all the problems affecting man and the relationship of man with his Creator and the Hereafter. The Spiritual Realm was far beyond the reach of science. Thus, the earlier exaggerated confidence in science was later replaced by disenchantment; as a result, most Europeans went berserk in search of God in a bid to have a peaceful co-existence in this world. Having this overview would make the reader appreciate in a broad perspective the socio-historical and historico-cultural reasons of the rise of cultism among the Europeans in this contemporary world of super-technology. Manned flights in outer space over the years had led to the rise of many bizarre forms of cultisms with faith in the gods of supercivilisations or the 'aliens' who have allegedly visited the earth to receive homage and sacrifices from their votaries.

Escape into mysticism by the Gog and Magog was sequel to the startling discovery of the failure of science in many facets of human endeavour but it was like running from frying pan to fire. This, however, was inevitable because as the 'house of almighty science' caught fire, in the frenzied attempt to escape the inferno, they ran blindly into mysticism, which might inevitably gravitate into pantheism, polytheism or even atheism. They were thus caught up in a revolving wheel, the wheel moving faster and faster while they remained on the same spot. The only way forward should be a retreat into the *Daral-Islam*. Fortunately, as a good pointer, some Western Researchers even used archaeological discoveries to prove the creation of the universe *ex nihilo* in opposition to the Darwinian theory of evolution. In America today, many colleges and universities had banned the teaching of Evolution, where man's ancestry was traced to the apes.

The answer to the question posed by Gurevich earlier on, as to why the wave of neo-cultomania was gaining currency has been given already. Even the upsurge in in religiosity in response to the grave defects discovered in scientific knowledge were perhaps a dawn of a new era in the history and cultural anthropology of the Gog and Magog. The reasons for the development of this new phenomenon as I said previously, the answer was proffered by the Holy Qur'an where Allah (swt) said: "Soon We shall show them our signs in the furthest Regions of this earth..." As keen successful explorers, the Gog and Magog had crystally seen these Signs of Allah (swt) in their billions from atom to the outer space and within the planet and using the scientific methodology they believed in. Science, the only language they respected, understood and belief told them several times that: "There is a Supreme Power." They saw yet, they disbelieved. But the most pungent evidence that had sent the Gog and Magog into agitation and apathy, lay in the second half of the same sacred verse: "and in their own souls, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the Truth" (Q. 41:53).

The prophecy made by Sir Bernard Shaw, a great British intellectual, about the acceptance of Islam by Europe had begun to show signs of becoming a reality. Because everyday the true colour of this fastest growing religion on earth is becoming clearer and magnetically attractive to the West. The sublime qualities of Islam have not only been observed but they had been practically tested and proven to be the only panacea of the problems that now bedevilled not only the West but the World in general. This was in line with Bernard Shaw's augury that should Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) creed be accepted by the Modern World, it would succeed in solving the myriad problems that beset it.

With a dramatic turn of event at the last decade of the last century, another illustrious son of Britain, and one of the

outstanding figures of our time, spoke with the frankness and candour of a great King. It was the voice of the celebrated Prince of Wales, calling for a mutual co-existence between Islam and the West in a historic lecture he delivered at the Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford on 27 October 1993. It was a historic day because it was a day when a new chapter was opened that would re-shape the world; arrest its drifting into apocalypse, and usher in the much needed peace and tranquillity into the world. It was a lecture on one of the most important issue in the world – Islam and the West.

Europe as predicted by Sir Bernard Shaw had already begun to be enamoured with the Creed of Muhammad (s.a.w), the saviour of mankind. This was indeed discernible from both the august lecturer and the content of his lecture. Furthermore, His Royal Highness had graciously agreed to be the Patron of the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies. This in itself had symbolised both the gradual disappearance and the diminishing poignancy of medieval ecclesiastic bigotry and enmity of Islam in the West. Because half century earlier Islam was only a pet anathema. Secondly, H.R.H. had availed himself with the opportunity to remove the interwoven web that enmeshed the good mutual relationship between Islam and the West. And he had succeeded to a considerable degree because his historic lecture had reverberated all over the world and had percolated into the warp and woof of everyone, as it was perceived as a sign of good omen. Lastly, and most importantly he could not have achieved this feat without having Islam flowing in his blue blood. He as a great personality; was not paying a lip service to the world. Because the potential great King said during the course of his lecture that: "What comes from the lips reaches the ears. What comes from the heart reaches the heart." And His Royal Highness had talked straight. The Patron gave the reason why he ventured into a complex and controversial field, talking about Islam and the West: "The reason is that I believe wholeheartedly," he said:

"That the links between these two worlds matter today than ever

> before because the degree of misunderstanding between the Islamic and Western worlds remains dangerously high, and because the need for the two to live and work together in our increasingly interdependent world has never been greater. At the same time I am only too well aware of the minefields which lie across the path of the inexpert traveller who is bent on exploring this difficult route...[73]

But His Royal Highness as an expert traveller, had bulldozed the minefields unscathed because of his goodwill not only for the people of the West but for all the peoples in the World. And as a potential great king, history would adjudge him as one of the best rulers in Britain, if not in the world for his deep concern for the West and for Islam – the two greatest ideologies in history. Standing on the podium, verved with imposing charisma of a great King; with his audience lynxed ears, Prince Charles delved into the cause of the misunderstanding between Islam and the West reaching to the present impasse and provided some of the ways forward. He dispelled all the allegations made against Islam and effaced the darkest colour, which Islam was painted with in the past. Furthermore, the celebrated Prince, dissuaded the use of disparaging remarks like "Islamic fundamentalism" in order to present the fastest growing religion in bad light. He averred that:

> ...We need to be careful of that emotive label, 'fundamentalism', and distinguish, as Muslims do, between revivalists, who choose to take the practice of their religion most devoutly, and fanatics or extremists, who use this devotion for political end...
>
> At the same time, we must not be tempted to believe that extremist is in some way the hallmark and essence of the Muslim. Extremism is no more the monopoly of Islam than it is the monopoly of other religions, including Christianity. The vast majority of Muslims, though personally pious, are moderate in their politics. There is the 'religion of the middle way'. The Prophet himself always disliked and feared extremism.[74]

What was most interesting about this historic lecture was its

radiating truth and sincerity of purpose. The great lecturer was faultless as he gave a balanced account of both the past and the present interactions between the two ideologies. And another important point that was conspicuously striking about the Patron was he spoke the truth with orbed mind regardless of whose ox was gored. He pointedly observed that the judgement of Islam had been grossly distorted by taking the extremes to be the norm. It is like judging the quality of life in Britain by the existence of murder, and rape, child abuse and drug addiction," he said. The extremes exist, and they must be dealt with. But when used as a basis to judge a society, they lead to distortion and unfairness." It was also remarkable how the Prince of Wales defended Sharia in London Europe's centre of excellence and in Oxford the international hub of intellectualism, when he said:

> ...People in this country frequently argue that the Sharia law of the Islamic World is cruel, barbaric, and unjust. Our newspapers, above all, love to peddle those unthinking prejudices. The truth is, of course, different and always more complex. My own understanding is that extremes are rarely practised. The guiding principle and spirit of Islamic law, taking straight from the Qur'an, should be those of equity and compassion. We need to study its actual application before we make judgements. We must bear in mind the sharp debate-taking place in the Islamic world itself about the extent of the universality or timelessness of Shari'a law, and the degree to which the application of that law is continually changing and evolving.[75]

One could not help but to congratulate Oxford Centre for Islamic studies, for having chosen such a towering intellectual of Royal ancestry as its Patron, and an intellectual King with a heart for God, and with a sincere love for mankind. He is *Primus inter pares* in Europe of today; a jewel of inestimable value not only to the West but also to the World in general. A great man who would speak to all the Europeans of today that:

> ...Islam is part of our past and our present, in all fields of human endeavour. It has helped to create modern Europe. It is part of our own inheritance, not a thing apart. More than this, Islam can teach us today a way of understanding and living in the world which Christianity itself is the poorer for having lost...[76]

A great man he is with such audacity of speaking the truth, undoubtedly, he was not only born great but had grown great and he would be remembered as one of the greatest Aryans in history. He is, in fact, the Socrates of our time. Because of his belief in moral ethical values. As a hidden corollary; "and it is in this sense," Sir Bernard Shaw, said: "that you must understand my prediction." It is now left not only to Europe but to the World to hearken to this clarion call of this great Prince. Because there was no nation that was created and predetermined for eternal perdition. But every man is the architect of his fate; with his freedom of will, the choice is his, and the ball is in his own court.

Having digressed much let us return to the major theme of discussion, but not the horses of apocalypse but the quest for exploration by the Europeans and its impact on their intellectual horizon and their ascent on the global hegemony. This would provide an overview and perspective, which the reader would find useful for understanding the contents of subsequent topics.

If they had palpably seen the Signs of Allah (s.w.t.) in His Universe but attributed them to nature, what of the Signs of His Majesty in their own souls? This could not be easily obviated without having severe consequences, some of which the Russian Marxist had accurately pointed out: "Faith, solace and order in the world." The metaphysical quest could not be satisfied by scientific means, or the denial of God. Because the food of the soul is faith in God through Revealed knowledge. Thus, the world of *Yajuj and Majuj* strongly agitated in the electronic paradise they created became topsy turvy. Western Researchers revealed from their discoveries that suicide rates, diseases and accidents were more

prevalent among the Atheists than among similar population of those who believed in God. And atheists had more psychiatric illnesses than believers in the Supreme Being and who were consistent in His worship. The myriad of problems bedevilling most European nations, the current wave of mysticism would, perhaps, push its centre of gravity to Islam where science and Revelation are in accord; working in concert with each other in a beautiful harmony. They would finally accept Islam; 'until it becomes manifest to them that this is the Truth' and I have seen light down the tunnel!

Another important dimension to Zulqarnain story was expeditions. Expeditions paved way for the Europeans to conquer the world. This would be evident in the subsequent pages.

Explore Your World

Goethe said: "Happy the man who swamped in this sea of Error, still hopes to struggle up through the watery wall; what we don't know is exactly what we need. And what we know fulfils no need at all." The importance of exploring into the unknown was highlighted above by the famous German Poet. But over a millennium before his time, the expeditions of Zulqarnain, a great King were recounted by the Holy Qur'an to show the importance of journeys. Thus, the Arabs in the 7th Century Arabia were aware of, "what we don't know is exactly what we need." Because the Holy Qur'an called man repeatedly to explore this world in order to see His Signs in the physical phenomenon.

Moreover, when Prophet Muhammad (saw) was asked who Zulqarnain was, Allah (swt) replied with three stories of the expedition of the King. Why? There were many historic events about Zulqarnain that could be told but only three of his important journeys were related. Expedition, therefore, was of crucial importance to man. The Glorious Qur'an highlighted the relevance

of this venture in a number of verses. From these verses we could get the reasons why the account of the most important of his explorations were mentioned; One (such) way he followed (Q.18:85, 89,92). The Sublime Qur'an was a unique perspicuous scripture that explained all things, and a fact that it pointedly mentioned: "and we have sent down to thee the Book explaining all things ..." (Q. 16:89).

Through exploration man would be exposed to Allah's grandeur of creations. If we explore the heavens and the earth we shall see the wonderful things in His creations; such as the moon and the other planets, the lakes and the seas, the desert and the wild forest its various forms and shapes of animals, insects and reptiles, the mountains and the Iceland of the polar regions. The explorer also would be exposed to the various cultures, religions and habits of various peoples, thus the Holy Qur'an prodded man to cultivate the habit of exploration for obvious reasons. For example, Allah (swt) commanded His beloved Prophet to, "say: Travel through the earth and see how God did originate creation; so will God produce a later creation for God has power over all things" (Q.29:20).

This sacred verse was revealed over one thousand years, urging Muslims to undertake scientific voyages but they made little or no effort at all. It was only when the people came and undertook various perilous expeditions in the land, air and sea only to falsify the truth that Muslims were awakened from their slumber; when unfortunately an irreparable damage had been done especially about the origin of creation which was the result of the creative Power of God, over all things, and this power was denied Him point blank.

The most notorious case in mind was that of Darwin's Origin of Species. This example would show conspicuously, the paramount importance of expedition and its impact on the relationship between man and his Creator and Nourisher, God Almighty. Charles Darwin (1809-1882), in 1831 went abroad H.M.S Beagle as a naturalist, on

a five-year voyage around the world. On this trip he saw the profusion of life, skeletons of animals long extinct but resembling living species and found numerous fantastic creatures that existed nowhere else on earth. Darwin also saw various variations of creation. The keen observation on variety of creations by an honest traveller was mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, thus: "It is God Who begins (the process of) creation; then repeats it.." (Q. 30:11). Had Darwin not been an atheist this would have been the reasonable explanation of his analysis on the creation of species.

But in 1836, Charles Darwin returned to England so puzzled and pondering over this grandeur of creations. And two years later he propounded a theory that: "It was the struggle for existence that decided which offspring lived." Thus, according to this theory Nature 'selected' the variant most fitted to survive. He called this mechanism *Natural Selection*. This produced all species of life on earth from perhaps a single original living cell. Darwin then published his historic book, *On the origin of species*, in which he propounded a theory of evolution based on natural selection. Whereas, "God did originate creation, so will God produce, later creation" were highlighted by the Holy Qur'an over a millennium earlier. This theory led millions to perdition because it ran counter to the creation, *ex-nihilo* by God, who has power over all things. It outraged all the supporters and the believers in the religious account of creation, especially when it claimed that man himself was not created but evolved from a monkey. Whereas, Allah's creative Power was veritable: "See they not how God originates creation, then repeats it: truly that is easy for God" (Q.29:19).

Unfortunately, those who went on the voyage, first were Gog and Magog, so they falsified what they saw because of their infidelity and would bear the burden of deluding others with falsehood. The origin of creation, was the creation of primeval matter. The repetition of the process of creation goes on constantly.

For every moment new processes are being called into being by the Creative Power of God, and according to His laws. And to see this Creative Power of Allah Most High more glaringly, then travel through the earth and the heavens. Thus, the importance of exploration could never be over-emphasised. Journeys would make man see the Signs of the Omnipotent and Omniscient God. The Holy Qur'an gave another important aspect of exploration thus: "Do they not travel through that the land, so that their hearts (and minds) may thus learn wisdom and their ears may thus learn to hear?" (Q. 22:46).

Exploration into every conceivable niche of this planet; the sea, the land and, into the heavens, would undoubtedly give man abundance of knowledge, widen the scope of his vision and increase his fear of God the Creator, and the Designer of this Awesome Universe. He would assuredly, thereby, increase his faith in Allah, having been well grounded in knowledge. The Holy Qur'an also pointedly mentioned another important aspect of expedition because: "On the earth are Signs for those assured Faith" (Q 51:20). Both the earth or the heavens were not the only repertoires of Signs of Allah (swt), there were also His signs in Man himself: "As also in your own selves: will ye not see?" (Q. 51:21). Allah's signs are countless in His creations, clear and specific for all to see willy-nilly. But the Holy Scripture brought this point into focus thus: "And how many Signs in the heavens and the earth do they pass by? Yet they turn (Their faces) away from them!" (Q 12:105)

Interestingly, not only could we learn through the Scripture of the working of God's Providence in human history and the history of individual souls, the Signs of God were scattered literally throughout nature – through all forms of creation for all to see. And yet man was arrogant that he turned away his very eyes from them! Because as Gog and Magog were, most of the explorers who saw these signs were atheists or Polytheists. And the Holy Qur'an was

aware of this too thus: "And most of them believe not in God without associating (others as partners) with Him" (Q.12:106).

In the language of the Qur'an it was discernible, therefore, that the field of exploration was so important that it ought not have been left in the hands of this people and their allies. Hence when an important question of who Zulqarnain was, was posed to His Apostle to test the veracity of his Prophethood, Allah (swt) replied by giving three accounts of the expeditions of the historic personage, to emphasise both the relevance and the crucial importance of explorations. It also epitomised the conduct and attitude of the explorer when he saw the Signs of Allah Most High. Zulqarnain was benevolent to the peoples he encountered. This symbolised also that he respected the rights of animals and plants, insects, and reptiles in their symbiotic relationship with man in the ecosystems, created and nourished by Almighty God. Thus, Zulqarnain could be viewed as a great explorer, the first to give expeditions both humane and spiritual approach in recorded history, for he was an environment protector.

Zulqarnain's Explorations

In a quintessence of style, the Holy Qur'an mentioned the explorations of Zulqarnain in three of his journeys undertaken on the sea and land. The Holy Scripture had hence introduced the first Indo-Aryan to have undertaken such a venture, a field later to be dominated by the Europeans who were members of his own race. He could, therefore, be regarded as the "Father of exploration" in history.

Darius the Great, the Qur'anic Zulqarnain, was motivated with and fascinated by Egypt's Pharaoh Necho II (609 – 594 BC), in a number of ways, two of which were conspicuous. Herodotus wrote that in about 600 BC, Necho II planned to dig a canal between the Red Sea and River Nile to facilitate navigation through the

Mediterranean Sea. However, Pharaoh abandoned this laudable project. But it was a century later undertaken and accomplished by the Great King. The other area where Necho II had influenced the Persian Monarch was his quest for exploration. Determined to improve navigation in Egypt, he decided to find an alternative route to the Mediterranean, which could perhaps be found by sailing round the uncharted coast of Africa. Therefore, Necho II chose Phoenicians for the voyage, for they were famous throughout the ancient world for their seafaring skill. A small feet was gathered and left Egypt via the Red Sea. The voyage was an astonishing feat, a trip of more than 20,000 kilometres. Darius the Great must have been fascinated by the success of this navigation.

The Great King, therefore, took a keen interest in naval affairs; so he employed the services of an Ionian admiral Scylax of Caryanda instead of the Phoenicians. He ordered the great sailor to navigate the Indus river, the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Coast then to Egypt. A voyage that took the Ionian thirty months to accomplish and he submitted his findings to Zulqarnain who must have been thrilled by the report.[77] It was equally not improbable that the Achaeminids sent other ships to explore Africa. Perhaps, even circumnavigated Africa.

Consequently, Darius undertook his expeditions about 500 BC, the accounts of some were given in the Holy Qur'an. Unlike Necho II, the Great King was personally involved in the perilous trips of discovery of new lands. Thus, this made Zulqarnain the first explorer amongst the Indo-Aryan race. And this made the recorded voyage of Pytheas, the Greek explorer of the 4th century BC the second rather than the first, who in about 310 BC set out into the Atlantic Ocean sailing north on a great voyage of discovery that was to last six years. Pytheas, visited Britain, which was then known as the Tin Isles.[78] This was about 200 years later than the voyage undertaken by Zulqarnain.

As an explorer, Zulqarnain, showed what a Muslim should do during his expedition; his behaviour must be in accordance with what the Holy scripture enshrined and must act in accordance with the religious dictate. He must use the journey both as a religious duty and as a school of learning to increase in both faith and wisdom and attribute all the signs of the grandeur of creations to Allah Most High and must believe wholeheartedly that it was truly easy for Him to create anything He wished: "For God hath Power over all things." His observation of the physical phenomena must be with perceptive imagination; looking for His Signs like in the Holy Scripture. He must also give assistance to any primitive people he encountered in any way necessary and to give solace even with kind words and protect the environment and the wild life. Finally, he must spread his religious belief in the form of missionary activity. Exploration, therefore, must have moral, scientific and religious underpinnings, all aimed at improving the quality of life of mankind, animals and plants in this world, through the spread of knowledge and faith.

Thus, the aims and objectives of his journeys were contrary to that of the people with habitual sinfulness who attributed all the wonders of creations to Nature and occurring rather fortuitously, though, catalysed by 'Nature." A frightful ambiguous term taken to mean rather different things to different people. The word 'nature' according to hair - splitting philosophers could have no less than one hundred meanings. So it was used as a subtle manoeuvre to deny the Creator both the credits of His creations and the creative power, an impossible task indeed. And it was often used by the atheists and agnostics who unashamedly had turned away their faces from many Signs of Allah (swt) littered all over the heavens and the earth, which they had come across. From the moon to the highest mountain summit and to the deepest seas and oceans; they all thronged to every conceivable ecological niche and in all these places, it was exploitation that paved their way. With the invention

of Aqualung, the modern breathing apparatus in the underwater world, they had succeeded in making the bottom of the ocean a part of man's abode. There was no race on the surface of this globe that was so ubiquitous; endowed with high perceptive imagination, indomitable courage and patriotic zeal, like the Gog and Magog. Indeed they have a vast knowledge of this universe.

Moreover, it would be interesting to note that the importance of voyages as advocated by the Holy Qur'an could not be over emphasised, because they escalated the ascent of man in every sphere of human endeavour. There was one important aspect of expedition, which the Glorious Qur'an mentioned and was confirmed by many explorers: "Do they not travel through the land, so that their hearts (and minds) may thus learn wisdom and their earn may learn to hear?" (Q. 22:46). Journeys into the unknown enriched and broadened the wisdom of man in enormous proportion as explained previously. But another important thing that was of equally crucial importance was: "their ears may thus learn to hear?" Exploration widened the keen perception of man because it exposed him into a different environment, with various cultures and customs, and with varieties of animals, birds and with beautiful landscape of plant trees, marches, etc. Or Expedition may expose him into the scorching heat of desert featuring special means of adaptations by people, animals and plants or ever exposed him into the extreme cold of the Iceland and how the living things coped with their harsh environment, in the Polar regions..

He would encounter various cultures and customs of different people and places. Consequently, man would by such exposures learn to speak some of their languages, and their arts. Most explorers returned to their parent country as polyglot and often with a gift of the garb, owing to the varieties of languages they heard and, "thus learn to hear." The multitudinal cultures which such trips exposed man, made explorations extremely educating and thrilling.

No explorer was immune to the addictiveness of exploration, which was said to be especially powerful in the case of Africa. Because the vast continent provides the traveller with countless avenues of excitements in myriad forms due to its immense human and natural resources, and abound with peoples with different tribes, cultures and arts. The fascination of the wildlife, the splendid weather condition and the aesthetics of various environments with beautiful flowers plants and trees; all combined to give Africa a powerful addictive effects that was as powerful as it was irresistible to anyone that journeyed through it. Consequently, many explorers returned to the "Dark Continent" after they discovered that it was a 'Paradise on Earth.' Man, by nature is Homo aesthetics, no one, therefore would wish to miss the beautiful scenery of Africa. Allah (swt) knew the environmental influence of man as he explored the earth; pointed this in His Holy Scripture. The word 'heart' (and mind) quoted from the above verse was indicative of feeling of affections and emotions all of which deeply influenced the traveller during his exploration.

The Holy Qur'an also mentioned that journeys helped man to learn wisdom. Here wisdom is not defined in the narrow philosophical concept but it meant a penetrating discernment of Signs of Allah (swt) the Creator of all these wonderful things, as he traversed through the turbulent sea, seen wildlife, met different peoples in the cities in the and ruins with orbed mind. Thus, with use of his active faculty of reasoning and understanding; discerning mind, he would come to the conclusion that indeed Allah had not made these wonderful creations in vain. There must be a purpose behind these wonderful creations that he must seek. But 'Truly it is not their eyes that are blind, but their hearts which are in their breasts (Q 22:46). As a result of this type of blindness, the moral and spiritual lessons of expeditions were relegated to the background in favour of material benefits.

In addition, journeys into the unknown from exploring the

atom, to the celestial Universe, all combined to broaden knowledge and increase the creative power of man given to him by God. He should, therefore, reciprocate these gifts bestowed on him by his Lord by being fervent in his prayer and worshipping none other than the Most High. But a mind clothed with materialism sees only the physical world; its abundant resources and beauty with open eyes and blind heart. Hence would never get a true wisdom because he would not see the Signs of God's providence and God's wrath in nature as he ventured into the unknown areas. Undoubtedly, the discovery of anything, hitherto, unknown to the world was associated with immense unquantifiable and unqualifiable pleasure.

The Holy Qur'an always proved to be a perspicuous Book, which explained everything. The reader could now appreciate in perspective the importance of narrating the expeditions of Zulqarnain on the account of who Zulqarnain was. This in itself was an incontrovertible and tenable evidence of its Divine Authorship. the Holy Qur'an also highlighted the obstinate denial of the Most High by the Gog and Magog after knowing the physical world in great detail. So as peop-le with habitual sinfulness, they have their unique type of exploration in the modern style.

Modern Explorations

These unbelievers undertook explorations mostly only for material gains and for the acquisition of political power so as to freely perpetrate *Mufsiduna fil ardhi*. No sooner they were let loose than they explored and occupied the moon, deep sea, the mountains, the forest, desert, arctic and the antarctic regions. There were many reasons why the later explorers ventured into the unknown. Mountfield, had enumerated some, with examples, he said: Hernando Cortes, the Spanish conqueror was motivated by the lust for gold; Marco Polo to exploring rich trade route; David Livingstone went to Africa as a missionary; Rene de La Salle

explored North America in order to build an empire, and Horace De Saussure was driven by scientific fame to launch the world's first true mountaineering expedition.

Undoubtedly, an urge to conquer the unknown was part of human nature that must be done with moral and religious underpinnings, as typified in the explorations of Zulqarnain. But most of the modern explorers several centuries after him, who undertook the venture were dishonest and wanted to cast shadow upon the glory of the God Almighty. And most of these explorers undertook the dangerous trip for the fun of it, to have a feel of the thrill and the excitement of discoveries for their own sake spiced with the penchant for the wild life. Captain James Cook, an Englishman, confirmed that the quest for honour was a motivating factor in undertaking expeditions when he said: "The pleasure which naturally results to a man from being the first to discover, even was it of nothing more than sands or shoals."[79] The motive force, therefore, was either fortune or fame.

Hence, most of them were motivated by the pleasure, excitement of the peril involved, patriotism, and fame that were associated with discovery of new lands. In this feat, many showed indomitable courage in their perilous journeys and died for the love of honour in this world, only because they denied the Hereafter. The North Pole was discovered by an American called Robert Edwin Peary after heroic expeditions through extreme cold and frozen snow, on April 6th, 1909, the explorers finally found the exact position of the Pole, and he placed the American flag there. He wrote in his book: "I knew that we were going back with the last of the great adventure stories – a story the world had been waiting to hear for nearly four hundred years."[80]

Similarly, in his expedition to the South Pole and chosen by the British Government in 1901, Robert Falcon Scott, a young Scotsman, was sent to lead the team of the explorers into Antarctic.

After many arduous attempts, they finally reached the South Pole on January 18th, 1912 but Roald Amundensen (1827-1928) a Norwegian and his team had got there earlier, and had beaten the British team by thirty-three days. Unfortunately, Scott and his team were killed by terrible snow storm. Their bodies were found in their tent eight months later. Although, Captain Scott, lay dying of cold and starvation in his tent in Antarctica, he had no regrets about the way he had chosen to live his life. In his diary, he wrote: "How much better all this has been than lounging in too much comfort at home."[81]

A further reflection on Scott's last legacy showed an overt revelation of a rigidly cultivated habit of Gog and Magog. A persistent love of this world and a corresponding aversion to the hereafter. All religious scriptures condemned this rigid behaviour. They had no *Fisabillillah* – for the sake of God, *insha* Allah or *Deo volente*, that is, by God's will in their vocabulary, because these words were absent from their conscious behaviour. These unbelievers only believed in their own power and ingenuity and dogged determination, which they utilised to control the world with patriotic fervour. The Bible equally condemned this obsession with the mundane. Apostle Matthew asked: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mtt. 16:26)

But the people with habitual sinfulness were always unhesitating in trading the hereafter for this world, so that they might gain the absolute control of this world to freely have their pleasures, honours and excitements, because the hereafter only exists in the Religious Scriptures of those who believed in them. Nothing awaits man tomorrow except worms, so for the sake of glory, he must hand his name to posterity before death overtook him. How could these people, therefore, see the Signs of Allah (swt) in their explorations and to honestly report them? Undoubtedly, this must be the responsibility, of the Muslims. The explorations of

Zulqarnain, therefore, was unique and different from the later generations of Indo-Aryan several centuries after. More that ever before, expeditions like the ones described were vital to human civilisation because explorers widened the frontiers of human knowledge. The Holy Qur'an confirmed this important aspect of journeys on earth and in the heavens: "Do they not travel through land, so that their hearts (and minds) may thus learn wisdom and their ears may thus learn to hear?" (Q. 22:46)

Example of how explorers enriched the world with knowledge abound in history. Let us take two of such instances. The Phoenicians were famous for their sea-faring enterprise as they were great navigators. And from their circumnavigation of Africa, Herodotus wrote about a new knowledge they acquired that sailing around Libya they had the sun on their right hand. "I for one do not believe them," the great historian said, "though others may." From their voyage Phoenicians brought new knowledge to the East that seemed to be extraordinary to these peoples. That: "as they sailed around Africa, the sun was to their north. Seen from any land known to them, the sun always rise and set to the south. Hence one of the worlds greatest voyage of discovery was even doubted by the greatest Greek historian. Yet, this observation suggested that the voyage really did take place, for in order to sail round Africa, you have to cross the Equator beyond this line, the sun does appear to your north. It must have made a frightening impression on the Phoenicians,[82] who since they were sailing westward, the sun was to their north (instead of to their south as they always experienced) and it puzzled the peoples who heard of it including Herodotus. Thus, without such enterprises, new knowledge would not have accrued to that part of the world.

Another world's greatest voyage of discovery was made by Zulqarnain. He was the first to discover that the world was round. This account as given by the Holy Qur'an was already discussed at length earlier in the last chapter. The elliptic shape of the universe

was already known to the Arabs of the 7th century AD. But until about 500 years ago, people did not know that our world was round. They thought that if they sailed across the sea they would come to the end of the world and fall off. Therefore, men dreaded to sail very far in search of new lands until in 1271 when Marco Polo (C. 1253-1324) explored the East and brought back many wonderful stories.

Marco Polo, nudged exploration into the right path. A maze of explorers, consequently, emerged like Christopher Columbus (1451-1506) who discovered the New world. A Portuguese and a contemporary of Columbus named Vasco Da Gama in 1497 set out on an important voyage to discover India. Another famous Portuguese navigator called Ferdinand Magellan (1470-1521), travelled round the world. Magellan's voyage was in some ways the most wonderful made by any sailor. He was a harsh, silent, unfriendly man with iron will and ruthlessness that alone enabled the great mariners to drive weak ships and often unwilling crew over the unknown seas.[83] Magellan was motivated by the successful trip of his contemporary Vasco Da Gama. So he sailed for his famous trip. And as he entered the shore of an expansive sea he was reported to have made this historic remarks: "We are about to enter an ocean where no ship has ever sailed before, said Magellan, may the sea always be as calm and benevolent as it is today. In this hope, I name it the Pacific Ocean." The date was 28 November 1520.[84]

"The cradle of European Civilisation as everyone know, was the Mediterranean basin," Mountfield wrote, "indeed it was not only the cradle but the nursery, the study, and the kitchen garden." Two important factors, however, helped the spread of this culture. The first was the conquest of Alexander the Great, which went side by side with the spread of Hellenism. This was in the 4th century BC. The second crucial factor came into play several centuries later, "until the Gog and Magog (People) are let through (their barrier) and they swiftly swarm from every hill" (Qur'an 21:96). And

explorations undertaken by various European nations were prelude to their eventual global conquest and spread of their civilisation, in a feat that was unparalleled in history. The spread of this civilisation would take place only when the Europeans were let loose into various countries. And they first and foremost, "swarmed swiftly" into every continent of the Universe, occupying every conceivable place; the earth, the seas, the mountains and at the height of their power the heavens.

But unlike the explorations of Zulqarnain that were essentially motivated by religious and administrative callings, they were spurred by a number of reasons. The strongest incentive according to Mountfield was pecuniary, he wrote: "The strongest motive for the exploration of unknown lands has always been trade. Curiosity, religious zeal, lust for conquest, a spirit of adventure all these at times outweighed commercial interest, and often a number of different motives combined to send an expedition into bush But trade was the most common, and trade was surely the first."

Although these were the obvious reasons for the European conquest of the unknown, there was in addition the invisible hand of destiny that drew them into these venturesome accomplishments. This, according to the Holy Qur'an, was because they would invade every country to colonise the world. Thus, they were endowed with great imaginations, physical strength of will driven by over-ambition and coupled with dauntlessness. With these physical and mental powers, "They were let through (their barrier) and they swiftly swarm from every hill." Hence they were unstoppable in their dogged determination to uncover the unknown through various forms of expeditions. In their gallant endeavour they would cast away any part of their body so that the rest might live in glory and honour. For instance, some of these explorers, wrote in private letters to friends about their ordeals. Tim Jeal quoted a private letter written by Livingstone in 1870, thus: "Had I known all the hunger, hardship, toil and time required, I might have preferred a strait-waist

coat to undertaken the task but having taken it in hand, I could not bear to be beaten by." The resolute and unshakeable determination of these explorers was epitomised also in a letter written by Stanley in 1876 as quoted by Richard Hall, in which he said: "I can die but I will not go back." All these were evidences of demonstration of irresistible quest to embark on expedition that was ingrained in the heart of the Europeans. And nothing improved and widened the intellectual horizon of people like expeditions.

Explorations, helped man to expand the frontiers of his knowledge specifically and the world in general. Hence the Holy Qur'an urged men to undertake this venture because, "their hearts (and minds) may thus learn wisdom and their ears may thus learn to hear?" (Q. 22:46). The word for ' heart' in Arabic speech, according to Ustadh Ali's exegesis imports both the seat of intelligent faculties and understanding as well as the seats of affections and emotions. Expeditions therefore, improved both seats among the Europeans and made them learn versatile knowledge of Allah's creations. They also learned to hear the languages of the people they encountered during their voyages. As they dispersed into every nook and cranny of this planet, explorations helped to put them at the top of the ladder in various spheres of human endeavour. Thus, they were worth their while. The success of Marco Polo's trip to the East had led to a torrential cascade of explorations on an unprecedented scale, in a fashion described by the Holy Qur'an: "They swiftly swarm from every hill." They appeared in land and through the sea, propelled by the burning desire to uncover the unknown, for material acquisition and the domination of the world.

Long before the compasses were invented, the first explorers had learnt various methods of finding their way at sea. Tim Healey, mentioned some of the ancient methods used by early navigators. Sailors knew the positions of the Pole Star and other constellations in the northern sky. These gave them the position of North. And

sailing south, they discovered that the new stars appeared over the horizon. Every one knew that the sun rises from the East and sets in the West . All these empirical knowledge combined had helped to give the ancient navigator his bearing during his journey. But this presented difficulties in cloudy weathers. In solving this problem the Vikings discovered crystals of a mineral called corderite which refract light, thereby, helping the sailors tell the sun's position in a dull weather.[85]

Early navigators also used the strange ability of birds to find land even when far at sea. By observation of birds' migration, they could tell where land lay from a distant horizon. They sometimes carried ravens and released them when in unfamiliar waters. If the birds flew back home, they knew that the nearest land was close by. However, if the birds flew onwards, they knew the nearest land lay ahead. Thus, during expeditions man was challenged by the harsh and dangerous environment he found himself. Consequently, he brought into action his intellect in full to cope with the challenges. Hence he became wiser as he improved steadily both the power of his observation and his instruments.

As man was challenged in his perilous enterprise, he ascended in wisdom and also improved the quality of his instruments, to help him surmount all the dangerous obstacles that lay on his paths to discoveries of new lands, ideas or things. Because of the immense benefits derived from these journeys, in 1946 the Portuguese Prince, Henry the Navigator founded a great School of Navigation to encourage exploration and improve compass and other instruments. Similarly, the strength, speed and capacity of ships used both for wars and voyages were steadily improved. From the age of galleys the principal warships, gallies with two (biremes) or three (triremes) rows of oars, one above the other also were gradually improved to enhance and facilitate the journeys of man on the high seas. However, the developments were not confined to one country but to

all the European countries, who combined their efforts to expedite the ascent of man in various fields of human endeavour. Explorations was an important issue, which the Holy Qur'an had advocated in 7th century Arabia, a fact that could never be over-emphasised.

Man, had always been conscious of time and space for centuries although he had relied solely on his instinct. Instinctive navigation was as old as the search for food, where man navigated when hunting, directing his way into the wilderness and on the sea to a very definite purpose and precisely recognising landmarks. This attitude was referred to as Homing and had to be learnt by all living creatures. For example, sea birds could detect the motion of the sun across the sky and had a very accurate timing ability. Primitive man probably learnt from watching the habits of sea birds. Therefore, Homing consisted in finding position from senses of sight, hearing sound and touch and using the memory for recognition, obviously, all these perceptive senses improved steadily with constant practice and time. Apart from Homing, Anderson wrote that sooty sterns fly straight out from the land in the morning and after a day's flying to and fro in search of fish, set course straight back to land in the evening. The presence of such sea birds, according to Anderson, could tell the instinctive navigator that he was close to the land and their behaviour at dawn and dusk would also tell him where the land lay.[86] The homing method, therefore, helped the primitive man in harnessing and controlling his environment. He used animals, birds and invented instruments all to aid him in exploiting the subdued world.

The Final Revelation explained everything like the Homing method and the perils of sea voyages were mentioned a millennium before the enterprises became known to the Europeans. In describing how the navigator found his bearing, the Holy Book of Allah (swt) said:

> And He has set up on earth mountains, standing firm, lest it should shake with you; and rivers and roads that ye, may guide yourselves, And marks and sign-posts, and by the stars (men) guide themselves (Q. 16: 15-16).

This vivid descriptions of the Homing methodology was in consonance with modern knowledge on ancient navigation, which helped man to control the waves. The Holy Qur'an had gone further than that by describing the nutritional and material benefits derived from sea voyage, thus:

> It is He Who has made the sea subject, that ye may eat thereof fresh and tender, and ye may extract ornaments to wear; and thou seest the ships therein that plough the waves, that ye may seek (thus) of the bounty of God and that ye may be grateful (Q. 16:14).

The Prophet of Islam (a.s.) secluded in the Arabian Desert, expounded in great detail the high sea expedition that would no doubt astound the seasoned and the most experienced navigator. Yet, he had never been to the seas. The rational explanation was that his knowledge of everything was divinely revealed. Otherwise, how could he have known about fresh fruits, meats and ornaments that were obtained on the sea voyage? In addition the vivid description of the ship on the sea: 'That plough the waves' These and others were absolute indicators of his communion with God Almighty. Furthermore, the Holy Qur'an described the tempest of the sea with remarkable precision, thus:

> He it is Who enableth you to traverse through land and sea; so that ye even board ships; - they sail with them with a favourable wind, and they rejoice thereat; then comes a stormy wind and waves come to them from all sides, and they think they are being overwhelmed: they cry unto God, sincerely offering (their) duty unto Him; saying if Thou dost deliver us from this we shall truly show our gratitude! (Q. 10: 22).

'Ship floating on the sea, was an act of Mercy from the Lord,

that man even board ships. But such means of transport was occasioned with hazards – a storm in the sea. It was one of the most harrowing experience which sailors encountered and which all dreaded: "wind and waves come to them from all sides, and they think they are being overwhelmed." This was an excellent description of the horror a sailor faced in the tempest of the sea. Alone in the expanse of the sea with waves upon waves tending to submerge the ship and the wind conspiring to capsize it. Thus, man with nobody to turn for help, cried in bitter anguish to his Lord and Saviour, with utmost sincerity. The experiences of the great Samuel Pepys in the Great Storm in 1684 was an important example of the terror and horror of a stormy wind on the sea. The veritable dangers faced by Pepys in this storm made him prod the British Government to improve navigation with the help of scientific instruments. Subsequently new equipment were invented and the ones already in use were improved upon.

An hourglass was invented in about 1850, for keeping time at sea before the inventions of high precision clocks and chronometers. Otherwise, journeys into the unknown would have appeared to be dull and extremely boring. Thus, it became imperative to record and keep time, location and the direction of the sailor onshore so as to ascertain his precise position at all times. The Chinese, for instance, made true compass at the beginning of the 12th century, which revolutionised sea faring subsequently. Consequently, man to help him explore the unknown, invented other devices. Many were used to find the precise lines of Latitude, the lines which tell you how far north you were. The use of Astrolabes was improved. And the explorer could give his location from the use of latitude and longitude. In 1714, the British Government offered a reward of 20,000 pounds to any one who could find a way of determining longitude at sea. This meant making a very exact clock that would keep time over long journeys despite rough seas and changes in temperature.

This reward was offered according to Anderson, when the British people were shocked to find that Britannia no longer ruled the waves. This, perhaps, became veritable from the experiences of the great Samuel Pepys in the Great storm in 1684. Pepys wrote:

> We are very solicitous in our disputes and opinions touching our draughts and log lines and things when we are at a loss for our ways. But as soon as ever we see land everybody endeavour to make himself be thought to have been in right. Hence it comes that the science of navigation lies so long without improvement.[87]

To be at loss in a stormy sea was indeed a most terrifying experience. Hence, improvement in navigation became long overdue, and called science to her aid. With such a tantalising award many scientists tried to invent a device of determining longitude. Finally, in 1763, John Harrison invented the Harrison's timepiece to clinch the award. And as they sallied forth into every country they were able by virtue of their expeditions to make, correct and improve world maps. While other nations were in slumber, this people slowly spread to occupy everywhere in this universe. They dominated the fields of exploration in all spheres, to remain unequalled and unrivalled. Because as "they were let through their barrier," they sallied forth into every country.

This people with habitual sinfulness swiftly swarmed every country through the sea on land, desert and the forest. The African continent had more than enough share of these explorers. They left their footprints in the sands of every country. David Mountfield, wrote:

> The History of Africa until quite recent times, meant little more to European than the history of European activity in Africa. It began with the Portuguese voyages in the 15th century and rapidly flipped the years up to the establishment of European colonial rule at the end of the 19th century.[88]

Undoubtedly, European exploration was a prelude to its world's

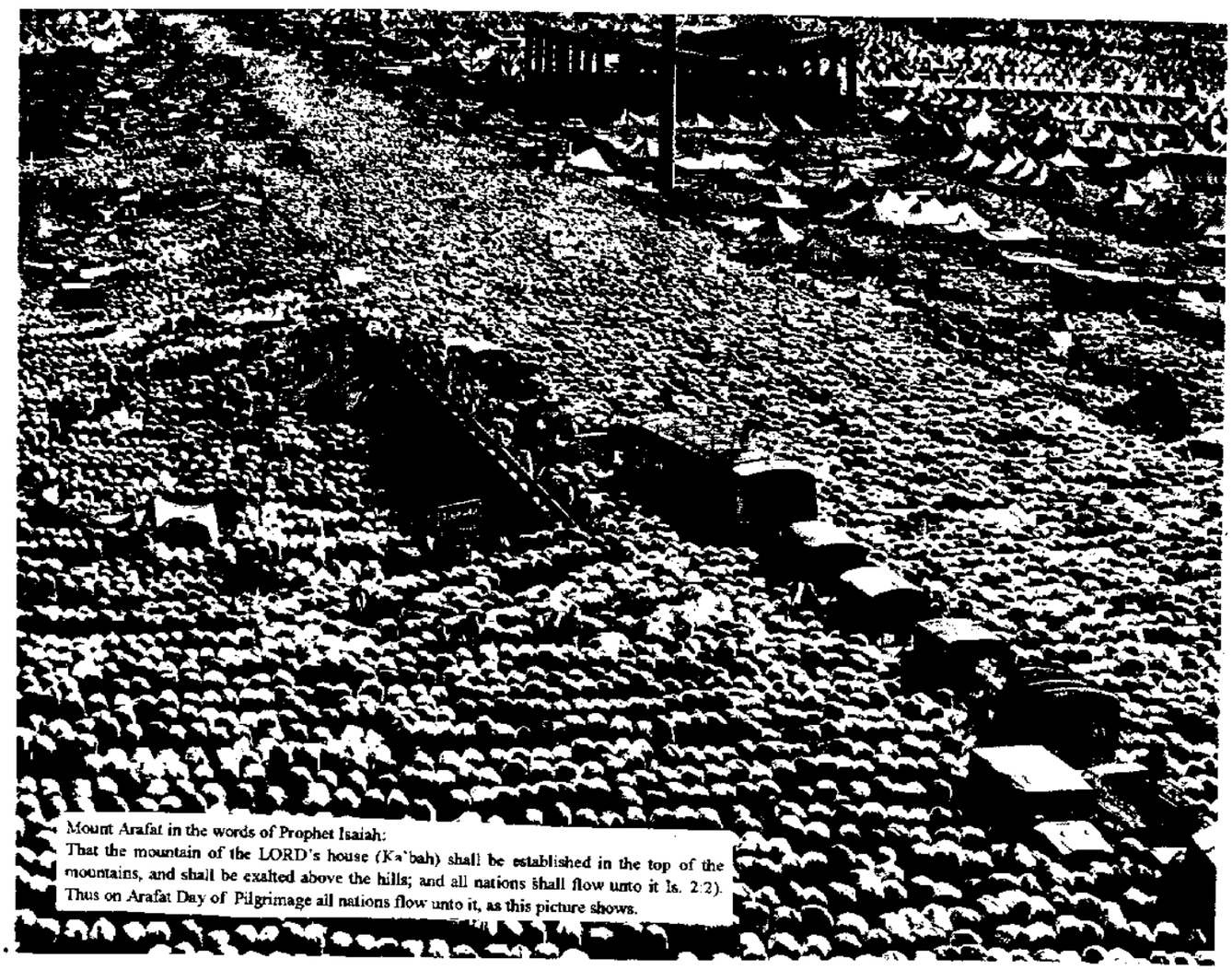
colonial domination. Africa, endowed with abundance of human and natural resources seemed to be the centrepiece of European explorations. The continent had been the central focus of expedition since the time of Egyptian Pharaoh Necho II in 600 BC and Zulqarnain in 500 BC. However, the continent was finally laid bare by the numerous adventurers who traversed the land in their expeditions through the deserts and the thick forest of Africa. But until over two centuries ago Africa was referred as the 'Dark Continent' because so little was known about it. Therefore, many travellers explored it to shed light into its darkest recesses at various times and by different European countries. Expeditions into this vast continent was given a high premium when the foundation of the Association for promoting the Discovery of the Interior parts of Africa was formed in London in 1788. The African Association was afterwards incorporated with the Royal Geographical Society.

It was created by the energy and the foresight of Joseph Banks (later Sir) who was supported by prominent men, most of them titled, whose motives were said to be altruistic. However, the original aims of the Association were primarily inquiry and exploration, which were elaborated in its prospectus:

> The objects of inquiry engaged our attention the most.. there are none, perhaps that so much excited continued curiosity, from childhood to age; none that the learned and unlearned so equally wish to investigate as the nature of history of those parts of the world, which have not, our knowledge, been hitherto explored. To this desire the voyages of the late Captain Cook have so far afforded gratification, that nothing worthy of research by sea, the Poles themselves excepted, remains to be examined; but by Land, the objects of discovery are still so vast, as to include at least a third of the habitable surface of the earth: for much of Asia, is still larger proportion of America and almost the whole of Africa are unvisited and unknown... Notwithstanding the progress of discovery on the coast and borders of that vast continent, the map of its Interior is still but a wide extended blank, on which the Geographer... has traced; with a hesitating hand; a few names of unexplored rivers and of uncertain nations."[89]



"He (Zulqarnain) found it (the sun) setting in a spring of murky water", the Holy Qur'an says. An allusion to the spherical shape of the universe, a fact that is concordance with modern science.



Mount Arafat in the words of Prophet Isaiah:
That the mountain of the LORD's house (Ka'bah) shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it Is. 2:2). Thus on Arafat Day of Pilgrimage all nations flow unto it, as this picture shows.



Source: James Burke, CONNECTIONS, London, 1978

"The great Arab astronomers, who brought a sophisticated mixture of Greek and Indian Science to the medieval West," James Burke wrote, "to them we owe our system of the decimal in calculation." Here the observers were using, among other things, the astrolabe, which was perfected by Arab instrument-makers.



Source: Hamidullah. *Introduction to Islam* 1981.

IBN – AL – HAITHAM

His fame in light of optics and light was well known. In the physiology of vision he was the first to draw the eye, explaining the phenomenon of reflection and expansion. He pointed out the role of cornea, in the principle of collection of light rays, in the enlargement of images and their reflections and accumulation of colours. He died 431AH/1039AD.



Source: Hamidullah, *Introduction to Islam* 1981.

AL- BIRUNI

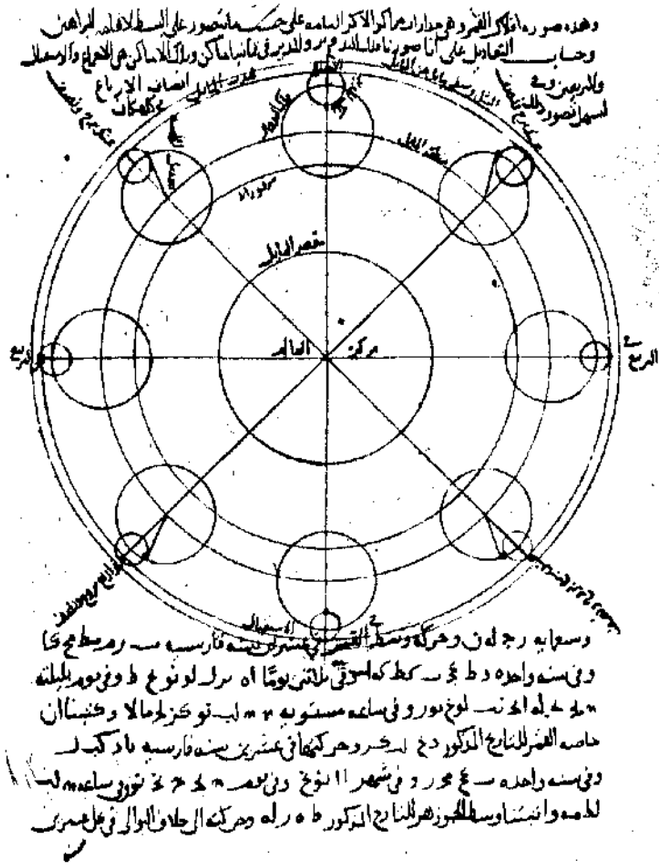
This great empirical Scientist wrote more than 100 works in geography, History, Astronomy mathematics and pharmacy. He was the inventor of the "Biruni method", for measurement of radius. He formulated tables for the sine and tangent and invented a method to measure generic weight for nine metals. He discovered the nature of liquid pressure and a method of extracting salt from the sea.



Source: Hamidullah, *Introduction to Islam* 1981.

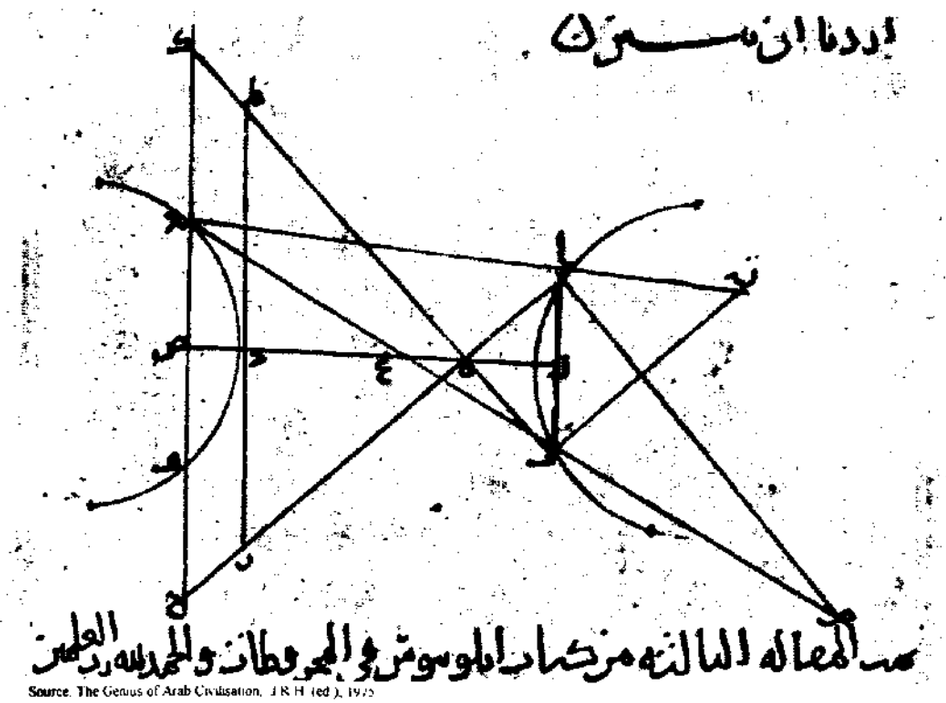
JABIR – IBN - HAYYAN

He wrote about 500 books but only 80 were recovered, in the fields of philosophy, logic, and alchemy. He was one of the first modern chemists to discover acids, and the process of their distillation, and the extraction of metals from their salts. He died about 81.. AD.



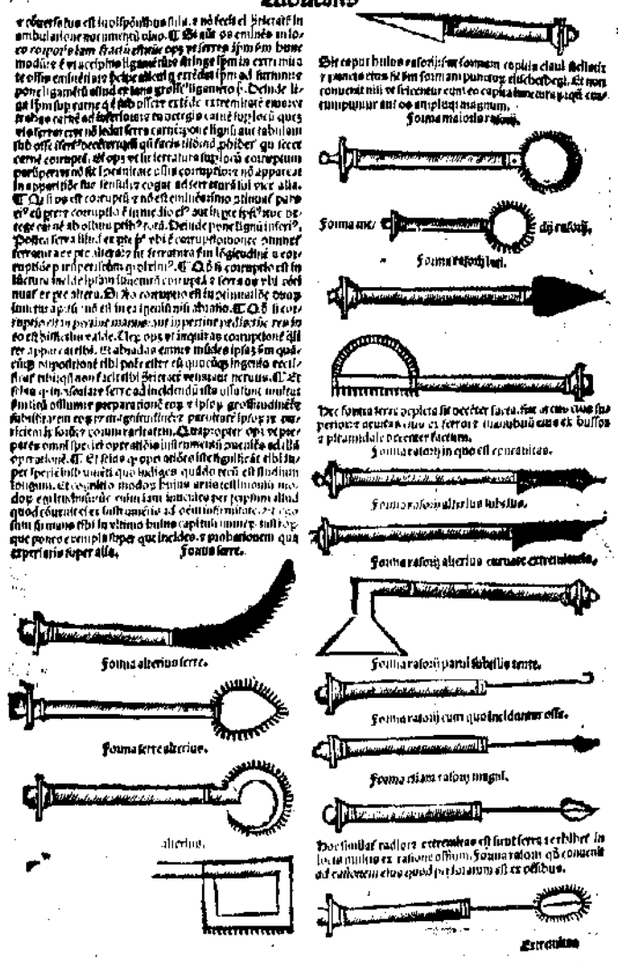
Source: The Genius of Arab Civilisation, J.R.H. (ed.), 1975.

In Astronomy Ibn ash-Shatir's great work gave a detail elaboration on Ptolemy's theory of planetary motion.



Source. The Genius of Arab Civilisation, J R H (ed.), 1975

Al-Haytham's *The Book of Optics* – Kitab al Manzir, revolutionised the theory of vision quite distinct from those of classical Greek or elsewhere. Al-Haytham (965-1040) was known in the West as Alhazen.



Source: The Genius of Arab Civilisation, J.R.H. (ed.), 1975.

A Latin translation of Peter Argellata of az-Zahrawi's treatise on Surgical and Medical instruments. Az-Zahrawi (d.1013), the great Scientist, was known in the West as Abulcasis.

This society became very much interested in expedition of the Niger, perhaps, because of its ancient historical account. The upper Niger seemed to be clearly referred to by Herodotus in 450 BC, when he was recounting a tale he heard in Egypt of five young Nasamones, who setting out from the country the south west of Egypt , had after a thirsty journey over sandy desert reached a land of Pygmies that was watered by lakes and marshes, abounding with fruit trees and through which ran from west to east a great river.[90] This was the first account of Niger to the Europeans. Robinson also mentioned other sources of knowledge about the Niger. He wrote that the Roman historian Pliny 80 AD referred to the Niger and stated that it flowed into the Nile. The Arabian great traveller Al Idrisi (d. 1165) in 1150 AD, also asserted that the Niger flows from and not the sources of the Nile. Lastly, the African traveller and historian Leo Africanus 1520 AD claimed that the Niger arose in a lake south of Bornu and eventually flowed into the Atlantic.

Consequently, the Royal Geographical Association became so fascinated by the River Niger that it sent a man named T. Ledyard in 1788 with instructions to go via Cairo to search for the Niger. The same Association sent out Mungo Park in 1795 with the same assignment. Park traversed the interior of Africa reaching for the Niger and found it flowing from west to east, after covering a distance of over five hundred miles on 20th July, 1796. He wrote: "I hastened to the brink and having drank of the water lifted up my fervent thanks in prayer, to the Great Ruler of all things, having thus far crowned my endeavour with success."[91]

Meanwhile, the trio of Denham, Clapperton and Oudney set out on an expedition to the Empire of Bornu in 1822 and subsequently met the Muhammad Al-Amin Al-Kanemi (d.1837). Because of his relationship with the outside world especially Egypt and Arabia he treated them with caution and sent a letter to Sultan Muhammad

Bello (d.1837) of the Sokoto Caliphate to do same. The El-Kanemi was suspicious because these European travelers could be missionaries and spies, and history had proved him right. Explorations were intimately linked with espionage and missionary activities. Hugh Clapperton, reached the city of Kano on 20th January 1824 and Sokoto in the same year. However, in his second trip to West Africa, he went with Richard Lander his devoted friend and servant. After Clapperton's death at Sokoto in 1824, Lander became an explorer in his own right.

Thus, Sahara desert, which at first seemed impenetrable to European explorers was no longer perceived as insuperable. The ancient trans-Sahara trade routes between the African Interior and the Arabs of the North was trodden by a German explorer named Henry Barth (1821-65). He set out in 1850 with Caravan from Tripoli to travel extensively into Africa, hoping to, thereby, to open up the area for European merchants. The written accounts of his *journey was said to have set a standard of accuracy and observation* that was rarely equalled.[92] But the journeys of Livingstone in Africa were described as the most elaborate and the most tenacious of all European expeditions."[93] This great traveller a Scottish, Dr. David Livingstone (1813-73) in 1849 set out to traverse across seven hundred miles desert land into the African continent. He roughly followed the course of the River Zambezi along its length and into Zaire. Livingstone was described as the greatest explorer of Inland Africa because he spent more than 30 years. While Rene Caillie (1799-1838) was the first European to visit Timbuctu, and returned to tell of it.

Thus, British, French, Portuguese, German and other European countries spent a lot of wealth and resources and using the gallantry of their citizens, who were able to traverse every continent as explorers but in the process mapping out in detail the strength and the resources of every country they explored, in a most sophisticated

form of espionage in history. They swiftly swarmed into every country, in Africa, the result was what historians described as the "Scramble for Africa," which took place in 1884. The scrambling and partitioning of Africa by the European nations were the net result of their explorations into the Dark Continent. Exploiting both the human and natural resources of Africa, the Continent, therefore, became a part of the launching pad of European Civilisation and had remained the 'milking cows' of Europe ever since. This partly explained why so much wealth was spent and men were lost in order to shed light into its darkest recesses. Undoubtedly, the exploration for trade and mercantilism became *sine qua non* to all European expeditions. Mungo Park concurred: "Pecuniary considerations, however, contemptible in themselves serve as a good interest by which to judge the importance of any office or any pursuit."[94]

Thus, exploration was a means to an end. This means was very crucial in the evolution, spread and the perfection of West Civilisation. It helped them to map the world in preparation of its conquest. Because espionage was intimately associated with exploration, a typical example to be cited was the exploration of an Englishwoman named Gertrude Bell (1868-1926) into Hail. The heart of Arabia which was one of the last great region of the world, which had not been fully mapped. Because its people were fiercely independent and suspicious of Christian Europeans. Yajuj and Majuj had penetrated only the periphery of this virgin land, rich in culture and with immense natural resources. Bell was tasked with this operation. In December, 1913 she set out on her famous expedition to Hail. In her journeys she visited many ancient ruined forts to take measurements and to copy out inscriptions. The explorer also mapped out strategic places including wells and vital Oasis in the desert. The traveller also studied Arabian history and the internal politics of the Arab tribes. The dossier she made about Arabia became handy and was of crucial importance to Lawrence of

Arabia in the desert campaigns of the First World War. This war broke out when she returned to Europe in 1914. Hence, Bell was sent back to Arabia to spy on the Arabs, and to collect intelligence reports for England.

But Allah (swt) protected the two holy cities; Mecca and Madinatul *Munawwara* from the menacing inroads of the Gog and Magog at the height of their colonial invasion of all nations, as it was predicted in the Hadith thus: Abubakar (r.a) reported that the Prophet (saw) said, "The terror caused by the Dajjal will not enter Madinah. At that time it will have seven gates; there will be two angels guarding every gate." Dajjal, a synonym for the Gog and Magog was defined by Ahmad Thompson, as the ultimate embodiment of KUFR manifesting as an individual, as a social and cultural phenomenon, and as an unseen force. Sometimes denoted by the term anti-Christ.

Their exploration was followed by colonial conquest for global material acquisition. This assertion had further underscored the sacred statement of the Holy Qur'an of the 'one eye' vision of the Europeans. The Gog and Magog always sought and would continue to seek for only material gains in all their undertakings. Because spiritual gains meant nothing to them, hence, *fisabillilah* became rather a ludicrous term. The Holy Qur'an aptly described this cultivated evil habit of *Yajuj and Majuj* thus: "They know but the outer (things) in the life of this world: but of the End of things they are heedless." (Q 30:7)

Allah (swt) in His sacred Book had pointed out conspicuously these two most important thing about their characteristics: "Knowledge of the physical world and denial of the hereafter." It was the first of their feature that was exposed so exhaustively. Undoubtedly, *Yajuj and Majuj* spent colossal fortune to amass and control the knowledge of this Universe. As soon as they were let loose into every country, they worked both overtly and covertly to exploit the country they have colonised. The dictum of their

relationship with any country was aptly described as: "No permanent friend but permanent interest." The primacy of pecuniary consideration was over and above any form of interests. Consequently, they had been continuously exploring the planet, which they intended to turn into an electronic-paradise, meaning a world where for the sake of comfort and luxury everything could be done with the touch of the buttons or the computer keyboards. As a result, modern European Civilisation discovered the structure of the atom, overcame the force of gravity and had broken the sound barrier. It had discovered the power of nuclear energy and sent radio signals into the boundless universe. A great stride had been made in the field of agriculture, medicine and communication, all in an unprecedented scale in history. "That they know but the outer (things) in the life of this world," could not be controverted. But on the other side of the same coin, Europeans denial of the Day of Judgement, was a fact known to everybody. Most of them were obstinately heedless of afterlife, because perhaps they had invested all their efforts in this world and in complete derogation of the next world, thus a belief in God was not in their character. "But, the end of things they are heedless," was an appropriate description of their views on the Day of Reckoning.

Thus, exploration into the "Dark Continent" gave rise to the "Scramble for Africa' in Berlin in 1884-5. Because in its aftermath the British, the French, the Portuguese and to some extent the Germans, were steadily penetrating the interior of Africa, setting up posts and making treaties in attempts to establish spheres of 'influence', which became spheres of 'authority' and finally gravitated to spheres of 'colonies.' At the end of the day Africa was mauled and partitioned and each country with her colonial master who intended to reshape into her image. Armed with the knowledge of every country its culture, politics, religion and geographical terrain, the Gog and Magog henceforth invaded these countries with force of arms. As people with 'one eye', they believed only in the

physical world with obstinate denial of God and the hereafter.

The Core of the Rebellion

The Gog and Magog are people with excellent imaginative capacity who were endowed with great ability of inventions and discoveries. But it was not in the least, attempting to infer that they were created with exceptional brain peculiar only to themselves. This, however, was not the case because all men were created equal before God as enshrined in the Future World Constitution thus: "O Mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may recognise one another (not that ye may despise each other). Verily, the most honourable of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the best in conduct." (Q 49:13).

Intellectual prowess resulted from the interplay of the environment, culture and time. Because the wheel of progress of a nation moved with time *vis-a-vis* with the changes occurring both in the environment and in the hearts of the people. The European nations could be said at present to constitute the Western Civilisation and a geographical entity, an area which originally was limited to Europe but now with America included. This geographical enclave was endowed with intellectual, cultural, philosophical and ontological elements, all of which were the extension of Graeco-Roman culture. And since the Renaissance it was armed with technological superiority that was unparalleled in human history. This super civilisation was distinct for its separation of Revelation from Philosophy and hence Science from Religion. They were adept at exploiting both the talents and the natural resources of other nations. They used the resources of Developing Nations and the intelligence of all nations alike for their own gain, this was in line with the Arab proverb: "In every head there is some wisdom."

The renowned Islamic scholar, Muhammad M. al Sha'rawi in

another book entitled *How Allah Provides* explained the wisdom behind the disparity in the provision of gifts and talents within the people and amongst the nations. The Holy Qur'an said: "God has bestowed His gifts of sustenance more freely on some of you than others" Q.16:71.

Here, "some" and "others" according to the author were used in general terms, indicating that each person was in some respect shown favours over others. One might possess a quality, which the other might demand his service. A person might be gifted with intellectual knowledge while lacking in wealth, the other needing to acquire some of his knowledge might pay him to teach him, having enough money to do so. This again could both be translated to the national and international levels. One country might be endowed with technological power like Japan but lacking in natural resources, which she was in great need. Any country with abundant natural resources would find it conveniently easy to trade with the highly industrialised Japan.

Hence, the favour shown over others, therefore, depends on the need of the other in respect to provision. As the international Islamic scholar rightly observed, provision was the basis of mutual dependence. Thus, God created mankind into various nations and tribes to basically understand one another and He distributed His gifts and talents unevenly within a society and amongst the nations to enhance inter and extra communal mutual interdependence.

If God had wished He would have created us as one homogenous people – looking alike, with one culture and religion. In this case the Kaleidoscopic beauty of diversity would have been lost. And this mutual interdependency; in the shrinking world, was seen between people, among nations and more conspicuously between Islam and the West. In the words of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, who put it so beautifully in his famous lecture on Islam and the West thus:

> ...that trade principles has too be two-way. Each of us needs to understand the importance of conciliation, of reflection – tadabbur is the word, I believe – to open our minds and unlock our hearts to each other. I am utterly convinced that the Islamic and Western worlds have much to learn from each other. Just as the old engineer in the Gulf may be European, so the heart transplant surgeon in Britain may be Egyptian.[95]

Consequently, the West which was nudged to the Renaissance by Islam now has possessed an ontology, world-view and a way of life that are completely different from Islamic culture and at variance with all the preceding cultures and civilisations, except those of Greece and Rome. A highly secular culture, which with the support of its technological might, was bent on remaking the world in its own image, a reactivation and perfection of Alexander's pan-Hellenism in the highest degree. Its spread of *Mufsiduna fil ardhi* into all nations, and the relegation of Religion to the background.

However, it would suffice to say that such obnoxious notion crept surreptitiously into the minds of the people because of the engendered internecine conflicts between Science and Christianity on one hand; Gog and Magog and Christianity, on the other hand that took place in the late 17th and early 18th century, an era referred to as the 'Age of Enlightenment.' Unfortunately, when science triumphed in this contest, over Christianity an inference was afterward made and propagated that science was superior to religion, and that scientific supremacy was the logical and the necessary result of that disbelief in religion. Thus, religion and science were perceived as incompatible. But in actuality, Science and Revelation or Religion and Philosophy were the two sides of the same coin, and this is what Islam symbolises. Hence it is the prerogative of the office of Islam to bring the compatibility of Religion and Science.

Although *Yajuj and Majuj* were inherently prejudicial to Revelation thus their conflict and rejection of Christianity was consequent upon and not the result of their religious disbelief. This

was evinced by modern Western non-Christian thought which is still irreconcilable and totally in opposition to all religious thoughts and their foundations. They were cultivated with the habit of complete aversion to and an antipathy towards religion. It was a decadent culture that was nurtured by their intelligentsia such as Gobineau, Renan, Laplace and Nietzsche and a host of others. Why was this resolute stand and intransigence of Gog and Magog to religious belief?

Firstly, as they were in rivalry with God so they held His religion (monotheism) in contempt and formulated a perverted concept of religion, which they propagated with a view to supplanting it with their own ideology. Thus, Academic Religions were formulated to replace all Revealed Religions. The former meant an embodiment of doctrine formed from the innate reason of man and characteristically devoid of Revealed knowledge. While the latter was meant a knowledge derived from God that came to man though His Apostles. Obviously, Academic religion was reincarnation of the Grecian gods as formulated by Hesiod and Homer of classical Greece as both were man made theologies. Thus, with Orthodox Religions out of the way, they would freely perpetrate *Mufsiduna fil ardhi*. The second reason for their rebellion and intransigence stemmed also from their keen rivalry with God. This might sound absurd but it was a painful reality.

The reason why scientific progress had always led them to religious dissent could be discerned from this important point of view. Otto E. Frish, a Professor of Natural Philosophy at Cambridge University without any rigmarole pointed out the reason why scientists denied God so resolutely. He said: "But when we ask why something is so then we are on different ground. It would be defeatist for scientists to accept the answer because God made it so."

Frisch, was a famous physicist best known for his being the first

(working in collaboration with Meitner) to identify and explained the phenomenon of Nuclear Fission. He gave an honest reason why most scientists denied the existence of God. This explained why scientists appreciated the works of the Designer without giving due credits to Him. This world, was a universe governed by mathematical laws to many scientists. An Awesome Universe, the existence of its Great Designer shrouded in obscurantism. Obviously, the created could not have been without the creator. Furthermore, had the creator not been One, there could have been disorders in this world. Because each "god" would have taken what he had created. Consequently, confusion would ensue. But this Supreme Creative Power was unique, a Singularity and the Causeless cause of all causes. The Holy Qur'an argues it by design His Divine Unity, thus: "No son did God beget nor is there any god along with him: (If there were many gods) behold, each god would have taken away what he had created, Lorded it over others!" (Q 23:91).

Sir Isaac Newton (1642 - 1727), the great British mathematician and a Unitarian Christian, confirmed Divine Unity from the mechanics of the heavens. This famous scientist who discovered the force of Gravity and the relationship between the laws of motion observed that planetary motions were in consistent with Unity of God, in his natural philosophy, Newton had searched for the signs of God's design in the universe and became convinced that: "The planetary motion could not have arisen from pure natural causes. The movement of the planets in the directions, and roughly the same plane, their particular velocities, all indicated that God had set them in motion in accord with the laws of Mechanics."[96]

Newton had belonged to the few group of honest scientists who told the truth as they saw it. He had a few adherents to this tenet notable among which were William Winston and Colin Maclaurin. Winston, a Cambridge theologian wrote in his book in 1719 titled:

Astronomical Principle of Religion, a work he dedicated to Newton, that: "The Universe appears to be evidently one universe, governed by one law of Gravity through the whole, and observing the same laws of motions every where ... so that this unity of God is now forever established by that more certain knowledge we have of the universe."[97]

Similarly, in his book Maclaurin, a renowned Scottish mathematician entitled *Account of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophical Discoveries*, he attempted to briefly but systematically establish the Divine Unity. Hence both Maclaurin and Winston, inferred the Unity of God from the University of law of gravity and laws of motions. Newtonian Mechanics were, therefore, invoked to demonstrate both the existence of God and His Unity, especially against the Atheists. A true science naturally leads to God and His Unity.

Whereas Georges Leclerc Comte de Buffon (1707-88), a naturalists and Director of Jardin du Roi, the Royal Botanical Collection in Paris, in his *Histoire Naturelle* said: "The Almighty gave a force of impulsion to the Planets when he set the Universe in motion; but we ought, as much as possible, to abstain in Physics from having recourse to supernatural causes; and it appears that a probable reason may be given for this impulsive force, perfectly in accord with the laws of Mechanics."[98]

Buffon, had let out the gaff, scientists had always look for a 'probable reason' to reinforce the elimination of God from Nature. They claimed that the Universe evolved fortuitously from a "Big Bang." Undoubtedly, there was a Supreme power behind the 'Big Bang,' the explosion of the primeval matter that resulted into the creation of the universe about 15 billion years ago, and that Embodiment of power, which governed the Mathematical Laws of the created Universe, consistently proved to be Unique and singular and in absolute control. Polytheism and atheism therefore, were

antithetical to proven scientific knowledge. Furthermore, this planet was too complicated to be accidental; the appreciation of its beautiful designs side by side with the denial of the existence of the Designer was nothing but a scientific fraud. Explorations, from every facet of the universe had consistently pointed sharply to monotheism.

Thus, scientific knowledge always proved the existence of God and His divine Unity. Therefore, atheism and polytheism had no scientific bases. Hence, genuine expeditions must be undertaken with sharp discerning mind and so that all credits of creations must be given to the rightful owner, the Creator with sanctification and praises. The wisdom acquired as a result must not be truncated into harnessing the global resources for the interest of a few but for the majority and to acknowledge the existence of the Creator and life beyond the Physical Reality. It, must not be limited to the knowledge of the perceived senses through experience, experimentation and repeated observation, accompanied by inductive reasoning leading to the formation of general laws. A mode of knowledge which was a product of faith in the undisputed authority of reason as the final judge and arbiter in all matters. The total reliance on a sceptical attitude and on the process of inductive reasoning originated from classical Greece, which denied the existence of any avenues of knowledge to man beyond the perception of these senses.

In addition, a true exploration through this universe, undertaken intelligently, must not give vent to a sweeping generalisation in the denial of the existence of a world beyond the reach of the human sense organs, a positivistic outlook of the modern West. Science could not answer all questions with absolutism because of its whole reliance upon experimentation, which in return heavily relied on the sophistication of equipment. And these equipment would not be sensitive enough at all times to help answer all questions and were

incapable of exploring a world in supra-physical reality. Thus, the realms of knowledge opened up to man were grossly reduced and limited owing to the inadequacy of the power of the experimenting instruments. Consequently, the universe of man was reduced in enormous proportion to a completely materialistic world where man was his own master and his own lord.

But the denial of the existence of a World beyond the reach of the human senses was external to science, it was forced unto it to keep Revelation at bay. The onus of the responsibility of this denial or opposition of Revelation lay upon the shoulders of the materialists and the modern scientists than upon science *per se*. This opposition was necessary for the cultivation, inculcation, indoctrination, the practice and the global spread of *Mufsiduna fil ardhi*. Thus, science as practised by the Gog and Magog was burdened by a particular set of intellectual shortcomings and prejudices that were entirely antithetical both to true science and religion. The two believe in the existence of a spiritual world which Revelation could only furnish a detailed knowledge. Because the existence of a Supernatural Being, obviously, could not be subjected to ordinary scientific investigation and experimentation. It was in this respect that Professor Townes, an American physicist and one of the founders of Quantum Electronics made an honest confession about the gross limitations of science. He said:

> Science cannot provide absolute knowledge - this incidentally it does not claim to do because any kind of knowledge is relative. To prove the validity of this relative knowledge science relies primary on experiment (directed or undirected) and on logic. It stands to reason that logic and instruments with help of which we carry out experiments are still not perfect. [99]

Since science could not provide absolute knowledge, it also stands to reason, that its essential and legitimate limitations must not be ignored or hushed up unless there is an ulterior motive, which of course exists. Hence, science must not be arrogated with

the power to deny the existence of the spiritual world, the Hereafter and God. Because of its inherent limitation, it must not be judged as the sole authority by which the truth or falsehood of any assertion in any fields whatsoever especially, with respect to Supraphysical reality. Science, is only to compliment but not to replace Revelation because Science and Revelation are complimentary to each other. This is epitomised as "Two Roots" of the same tree, thus, both are in concordance in Islam. Consequently, the glorious Qur'an was revealed to explain everything. The modern Science must, therefore, be in concordance with and scientific dimension be in perfect agreement with Revelation. Because the rejecters of faith would be assailed through the demonstration of Allah's signs in every sphere of human existence: "Soon will we show them our Signs in the (Furthest) Regions (of earth) and in their own souls, until it became manifest to them that this is the Truth" (Q 41:53).

Despite their immense knowledge, the Gog and Magog would be reduced to size, until they saw the stark realities of things, so contrite and subdued to accept the Truth. All Signs of Allah (swt) seen through expeditions and experimentation ranging from the atom to the Awesome universe; the study of man and his soul, all combined to give man a true knowledge. The knowledge of both the Seen and the Unseen were the means of attainment to the absolute Truth. Thus, one of the means to help man on his way towards God, was the acquisition of this sound knowledge without which man would be in a great loss, deluded by his scientific achievements that conspired against him by making him feel he was greater than his shadow. But if he was assailed with burden of proofs from all spheres of human endeavour, only then would he confessed that: "this is the Truth and submit to the Will of God or Islam."

Inescapably, therefore, the Gog and Magog having been enjoying respite would finally be vanquished in their obstinate rebellion and intransigence against the Truth. This Truth, which would set them

free, unfortunately they did not want to hear, and that portion of the Truth, is a belief in which the Revelation. Having, laid bare the kernel of their disbelief in religion and in monotheism specifically, it would be pertinent to ask when did the Gog and Magog break their barrier? The answer would help us in knowing a period of time in their history when they officially declared openly their obstinate denial of religious truth and hence declared their independence. So when did it began?

When it began

"Until the Gog and Magog (People)" said the Qur'an "are let through (their barrier) (Q 21:96). The definite time of the beginning of the beginning of this event, like in all the processes of human progress and evolution were continuous not discrete, hence, difficult to ascertain. But a period of time could be speculated depending on the individual understanding of the subject. The Holy Qur'an gave no clue as to when the Gog and Magog would be released. It simply stated, "Until when the Gog and Magog are let through their barrier..." And many Hadiths gave the signs and portents of their appearance. Thus, the question of the precise time remained rather fluid but subjected to various speculations. But it was all agreed by many Islamic Scholars that this people were the Europeans and had been let loose and had sallied forth already. What we would be looking for was, when did this people finally breakthrough their Religious Barrier?

In this regard, it could be surmised that the point in time, in which this event occurred must be the period of time corresponding to the rise of European civilisation, which for the sake of simplicity was divided into: Dark Ages, the Medieval era, Renaissance and the Reformation. Obviously, the period in Europe that was characterised by an upsurge of intellectualism, would be an indicator of that period of time when Gog and Magog were let

through their final barrier. Undoubtedly, this period could not have been the Dark Ages or the Medieval Age, which was refereed to as the Gothic world or Middle Ages because during which period the magestrium of the Church was immensely rich and powerful and was in effect the universal guide and authority. This period lasted between 1000 – 1500 AD. In describing a European man in this era, Arnold Shrier stated that: "the Medieval man looked upon himself as part of a world order that was God-centred. And in the Medieval scheme of things, in which the spiritual 'sword' could claim to direct the temporal, God and His commandments were accepted implicitly as a divine yardstick for measuring human activities." This meant during this period most Europeans were kept within the influences of God's inexorable Laws and thus were kept within the confines of His commandments and did not rebel completely against religious laws. Thus, they were kept within the confines of 'Religious Barrier' bounded by God and His commandments.

In the next phase of the European Civilisation, the Renaissance, this Religious Barrier was, however, broken and they freed themselves from what they perceived as Religious Bondage. Because in this period of the Renaissance, though it was claimed that the primacy of God was not disputed but His Laws were flouted and subsequently discarded as obsolete and retrogressive. Thus, in this era, Europeans became increasingly free to judge events and problems in terms of human yardstick. In other words, the God-centreredness of Medieval Europe was reversed to that of Man-centeredness in Renaissance. In this new world order there was an acceptance of the old Greek maxim first enunciated by Protagoras that: "Man is the measure of all things."[100] The Renaissance, was a distinguished period in the European history, which began with the early fifteenth century and came to an end in the 19th century. Renaissance means rebirth, and what was supposed to have been reborn were the Greek and Roman learning in the world of letters, and architecture. It first developed in Italy, in Tuscany and the city of Florence.[101]

Renaissance, therefore, was the period when Europe returned to *Jahiliyyah* or paganism in atavistic style after dilly-dallying with Christianity for 1500 years. Then it was finally exiled from the hearts of most Europeans, but with vestiges of nominal acceptance, still in existence to meet certain political and economic expediencies. The first step to be taken to relegate God to the background and to move man from the periphery to the centre of the world stage had been taken by Francesco Petrach (1304-1374). He was well acclaimed and lauded as the "Father of Humanism."

It was humanism that stimulated both the study of and the rediscovery of the Greek classics and the natural world itself.[102] This in turn propelled Europe to return to *Jahiliyyah en masse*. Because as a literary movement humanism expressed it self in a rediscovery of the classics of ancient Greece and Rome. They became worldly men and encouraged a worldly philosophy, and humanism. As its name implies, it was a man – centred system of ideas in which theology was gradually detached from philosophy and which thus led to the development of Modern Science.

Humanism boomed and generated a cascade of reactions in Europe and Italy. The ideals of asceticism, mortification of the flesh, and other worldliness reminiscent of medieval culture pattern were vehemently opposed and reflected. Because of the rediscovery of classical learning, there came along with it, the attitudes of the pagan Greeks and their frank embrace of the joys of this world. This agitation then led to the step two to be taken by Europe in its forward match to *Jahiliyyah*. This was the emergence in fifteenth century in Florence of a famous flourishing school of Christian Platonism, out of the understandable desire of various Renaissance philosophers to reconcile the basic dogmas of God-centred Church with Man-oriented outlook of the classical world.[103]

As a corollary, Giovanni Pico della Mirandolo (1463-1494), an

outstanding exponent of Christian Platonism, propounded his Neoplatonic doctrine where Pico assigned man to a central place in the creations made by God, to whom he attributed these words *albeit* an official declaration of man to take the office of his Creator. He wrote:

> The other creatures have a defined nature, which are fixed within limits prescribed by me. You, unhampered, may determine your own will, in whose power I placed you. I have set you in the centre of the world ; from there you can better see whatever is in the world. I have made you neither heavenly nor terrestrial, neither mortal nor immortal, in order that, like a free and sovereign artificer, you can fashion your substance.[104]

Pico, the great Neo-platonicist of his time had not only assigned 'man' to be the 'God' and master of himself but had stripped the Almighty with any supremacy and pushed Him from the centre to the wings in the universal scheme of things. In this ideology man was elevated to the highest summit and was a given bizarre conglomerate of attributes that were neither heard of nor seen even in the pagan Greece and Rome. It was this period of European history when they cut off any relationship in whatever forms with God Almighty. Perhaps, it was this period of Renaissance the Glorious Qur'an aptly described both the people and the event thus: "The Gog and Magog (people) are let through (their barrier). They had now been separated from religion. This unfortunate event took place exactly after 1,500 years of nominal acceptance of Christianity during, which Europe paid only lip service to God Almighty.

It would be pertinent at this junction to posit this question: "Who let the Gog and Magog through their barrier?" The answer was simple – their intelligentsia, most of whom were Philosophers and Scientists. The consequences of the disengagement of Europe from religious obligations in totality were many and severe not only upon the Gog and Magog themselves but the world over. Because as the Holy Scripture put it: "And they swiftly swarm every hill." They

would spread this obnoxious ideology to the world over. This absolute belief in man rather than in God was the worst worldview ever to be formulated by man in his history. It was the most monstrous conviction in existence. This tenet was the beginning and the end of *Mufsiduna fil ardhi.* And it had debased the very essence of creation. Because Allah (swt) had not created this world for sports. Creation, therefore, was a weighty issue especially that of man. God had a serious purpose behind it. The essence of creation was given by Almighty, He said: I have only created Jinns and men, that they may serve Me. (Q 51:56)

There was, therefore, an eternal accord or covenant between man and His creator and Lord, an agreement to submit to His will. This was his service. In the service of God, man must be governed by His divine laws and in complete submission to His divine Will. Hence as a servant, man's attitudes must always be God-centred. Thus, he must be confined within certain 'Religious Barrier.' But, unfortunately, Europe broke this very important barrier that was crucial to the well-being of man in the period of the Renaissance. The Holy Qur'an had predicted this event and perhaps verse 21:96 was a reference to it. Because this was a unique phenomenon in the history of man, who in his hauteur had rebelled against His Lord, usurped His power to become a *de facto* king of the world, with knowledge and power over all things. He was made "neither heavenly nor terrestrial, neither mortal nor immortal" as Pico averred. This was the worst delusion to afflict man in its highest degree.

The other aspect of Renaissance was also mentioned in the same sacred verse: 'And they swiftly swarm from every hill', Freed from the Religious Barrier, the Gog and Magog's quest for greater knowledge of man and his world was, therefore, intensified. This was necessary in a bid to justify his *de facto* position as the 'almighty.' This yearning for knowledge was manifested in the urge for and the surge of expeditions, discoveries and voyages that began

in the 15th century, within the space of a generation, intrepid seafarers had crossed the fearsome Atlantic to find a new world, and had pushed steadily southward until Africa was rounded and a new route to India was opened. This circumnavigation of the globe proved conclusively that the earth was round. In the long run these exploits were to have a revolutionising effect on the course of European development.[105] Furthermore, the general surfeit of prosperity had inflicted the Europeans with arrogance and parallax view of their importance and position which made them feel to be equal in might as to rival the Lord, the Creator of all things. They were indeed the followers of Angra Mainyu.

European expeditions had helped to broaden their horizon and heightened their supercilious world view which stemmed from the fact that Allah (swt) subdued the world for man and raised the Europeans to a lofty position by giving them *albeit* temporarily the means to achieve all their set objectives in this world. But who rebelled against Him as they sallied forth into the conquest of the universe spreading *Mufsiduna fil ardhi.* And in the 16th century, European civilisation, which for so long had been centred on the Mediterranean made its rapid spread to the Atlantic, which emerged as Europe's new highway to fortune, power and empire. This culture made its momentous spread to the West and North. A civilisation, which by itself dehumanised man had become almost universal because the Gog and Magog spread it as ' they swiftly swarm from every hill'. The word, 'swiftly' was an important pointer to the speed and the rapidity with which the culture of *Mufsiduna fil ardhi* spread all over the world. It was a culture aptly described as *Chataah* or habitual sinfulness.

It seemed appropriate to posit that the time when the Gog and Magog were let through their barrier at the beginning of the Renaissance had precisely coincided with the period when this people were let loose into the world. The period of Reformation was already a climax of scientific discoveries and socio-political

changes that were geared to be in line with the new social changes. It was during the Renaissance that Europe 'swiftly' evolved with a unique ethos in social, political, intellectual and aesthetic, which splinters were mostly antithetical to religious norms and values, the aftermath of European rediscovery of Greek classical learning, with it, the attitudes of the pagan Greece. The Gog and Magog were let loose into the world precisely at the time they completely dissociated from all religious Laws. This was when they returned to *Jahiliyyah* and the Renaissance marked this era in European history. It was a return to *Jahiliyyah* because after accepting the light of Christianity they afterwards reneged on their allegiance to their ancient creed to relapse back to heathenism. The Holy Qur'an, though a Book of guidance for mankind, is indeed its future Constitution, a perspicuous scripture which explains everything.

During this Age of Humanism, new ideas of humanism were encouraged particularly in Northern Europe; independent thought in religion and politics blossomed, which bore fruits in the Reformation. The monument of the Renaissance in Eastern Europe was Classical Art, while in the North was the Printing press. Printing spread fast, and ideas spread with it. England, which was most backward of all in art and architecture became foremost in literature and science, her great Renaissance men being Shakespeare, Milton and Newton.[106]

The Renaissance terminated in the 18th Century, which was the period when the evil social change began to bear fruit. The 18th century in Europe showed the beginning of the modern view of life as well as the final expression of Renaissance ideas. Religion ceased to be the focal point of all thought and the guide to all action, and the idea of 'Nature' replaced the idea of 'God'. It was the age of experimental and applied science. The Gog and Magog had already broken the Religious Barrier completely by the mid-18th century which was aptly described as the Age of Reason because the pursuit of truth and knowledge was one of its chief characteristics. Here

man believed that through the analysis of his world, and through the power of his own logical reasoning, he would come to terms with both the secrets and problems of the universe. Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Economics, Philosophy, History, all took on a new maturity and significance.[107] Indeed it was a century of absurdism.

France still dominated European culture, and it was in France that the epoch – making Encyclopaedia was published: it attempted to classify all knowledge as it stood, and those called the radical thinkers to contribute to it, calling into question such time-honoured ideas as the direct intervention of God; the intellectual turmoil this engendered throughout the Western world and now the world over was fraught with many consequences. The Constitution of every country was to sub-serve as its Sacred Scripture, which dealt with its spiritual and temporal matters. Because it was the period when two Constitutions, one in France and the other in America were drafted, which were entirely based on logical expediency without calling for divine Providence.[108]

Thus, by these constitutions of their own formulation, the Gog and Magog had officially dissociated themselves completely from any codified divine laws of God, whether of Talmudic, Biblical or Qur'anic origin. Hence, having been let loose through their barrier had their own independent holy scriptures – the constitution. The Holy Qur'an gave the best descriptive phraseology of the events in the Renaissance "They were let loose through their barrier." This barrier, was the Religious Barrier imposed by God on mankind. But now 'man' is held as the almighty and the constitution of every country its own 'holy scripture.'

The 19th century was the Age of Achievement, the period of industrialisation and mechanisation. It saw the birth of the modern world. The period was characterised by rapid expansions of means of communication which led to the domination of world culture by the Western States. It was the beginning of another epoch, in which the Gog and Magog having freed themselves from Religious

Barrier, now intended to liberate the world. This era was therefore the beginning of a new crusade – the aculturisation of all nations. They intended to reshape the world in their own image.

Consequently, by the end of 19th century America was achieving a new position of political and cultural indoctrination of the world, while England led the rest of Europe in World Colonisation.[109] The 19th century also marked the beginning of the new science of 'aesthetics' where beauty, elegance and glitzy materials or things were more precious and immensely more expensive than religious matters. Arts and music and the emotional response attached to them dominated the mind and thought of every man far more than anything else. Nothing surpasses the love of music, fun, wine and concupiscence because of fashions and styles which all conspired to make sexual profligacy acts very attractive and far too irresistible. The result of it: "increased production of reprobates, gourmets and the escalation of obscene immoralities, spreading like wild fire into all the nations of the world." Thus, a new era of *Mufsiduna fil ardhi* or of habitual sinfulness had begun.

By now the tenor of the European Civilisation had become patent and crystal clear. And all its characteristics were in line with the accounts of many Hadiths. The signs and portents of the appearance of the Gog and Magog were seen and at present they are with us. Conspicuous among these signs was the disappearance of knowledge and the spread of ignorance. This was already explained in the light of atheism and polytheism, which were intended to percolate the warp and wool of everyone in the name of civilisation. In the same vein, the spread of fornication and wine drinking and the use of other forms of intoxicants had gone out of proportion and threatened even to pull down the pillars of this decadent civilisation, as alcoholism and drug addiction had eaten far too deeply into the fabric of Western Society.

As related in some Hadiths, one of the features of appearance of *Yajuj and Majuj* was that the population of women would by far

outnumber those of men. This we have seen and could be attributed to the escalating civil strife, genocide and ethnic cleansing where more men were massacred in cold blood and in gruesome pogroms that were never heard of in history. The cases of the Serbian ethnic cleansing in Bosnia – Herzegovina and in Kosovo were typical of these organised genocides. Consequently, the population of men kept on dwindling everyday.

Other signs of their appearance mentioned in Hadiths included: time passing rapidly, good actions decreasing, widespread avarice, the appearance of civil strife and bloodshed becoming rife are all evident in our own eyes today. And they are sequel to the disappearance of knowledge and the subsequent return of *Jahiliyyah*. Time passes rapidly to everyone because people's mind are imbued with avarice and their attention carried far away, in calculating what to get and where to get money or seeking for some of the unlimited avenues of fun and excitements. The result of this marathon race in the pursuit of fun and material acquisition was stress, which came to add more weight to the balance. Stress came along with its deleterious effects on the health and the productive capacity of people.

The Europeans in their bid to 'drink up the water' of every country embarked upon a large-scale conquest in the name of colonisation. And Islamic countries were the first victims. For instance, in an overwhelming rush, the Muslim world was hit in a crusading onslaught aimed at destroying its most benevolent super-civilisation in history. Like avalanche from the turn of 19th Century, Muslims were hit and subjected to massive attacks by the forces of *Yajuj and Majuj*. Jansen had given a succinct chronology of these events, as "they sailed forth." They conquered, and colonised almost all the peoples of the world, as the following chronological table showed:

1798 The West Indies Islands under Dutch control.

1820	The Trucial Emirates of Oman and Qatar under British Protectorate.
1930	Conquest of Algeria by the French.
1834	Caucasus subjugated by the Tzarist Russia
1839	1st Afghan war against British India.
1839	Britain annexed the Port of Aden.
1842	Islamic Sindh Sultanates annexed to British India.
1849	Britain annexed the Tribal Territory of the Northwest Border Province to British India.
1853	Conquest of Tashkent by the Russians.
1856	Britain annexed the Muslim Oud State to British India.
1857	Britain overthrew the rule of Monguls in India.
1866	Areas around Samarkand and Bukhara invaded by Russia.
1873	Russia occupied Uzbek Territory.
1875	Russia occupied Khokand Territory.
1878	Great Britain occupied Cyprus.
1879	2nd Afghan war.
1881	France invaded Tunisia.
1882	Great Britain occupied Egypt.
1883	Great Britain fought the Mahdist in Sudan.
1885	Italy invaded Eritrea.
1890	France invaded Senegal.
1891	Muscat and Oman under British Protectorate.
1895	Russia annexed the Pamir.
1898	Occupation of Sudan by Great Britain.
1899	Muslim Khanates in Baluchistan annexed to Britain India.
1900	France invaded Chad.
1906	Muslim Sultanates of Northern Nigeria under British Protectorate.

1912	Italy invaded Libya (Tripolitania and Cyrenaica).
1912	France and Spain invaded Marrakech (Morocco).
1914	Kuwait became British Protectorate.
1914	Turkey under attack in World War I.
1919	Turkish territories occupied by Greece and Turkish Antalya occupied by Italy while France invaded the Turkish Cilicia.
1919	3rd Afghan war.
1920	Iraq under British Protectorate.
1920	Syria and Lebanon under French Mandate.
1926	Italy occupied a part of Somalia.
1941	Joint British-Russian occupation of Iran.
1948	Creation of the Zionist State of Israel on the ruins of the Palestinian people.
1956	Tripartite British-French Israeli attacks against Egypt at Suez.
1967	Arab-Israeli war. Israel occupied Sinai, Golan Heights, West Bank and Gaza.
1979	Russia occupied Afghanistan.

Source: Adapted from G. H. Jansen, *Militant Islam* (1980)

The Holy Qur'an in one of it wonders had described the occurrence of these events 14 centuries earlier, thus: "Until the Gog and Magog (people) Are let through (their barrier) And they swiftly swarm From every hill" (Q.21:96). These wild and lawless tribes who were unknown in history during the Egyptian civilisation, but who no sooner they were let out of their barriers than they sallied forth into every conceivable niche of every country, in order to dominate physically and economically through the might of their scientific and technological supremacy.

A feat they achieved because they were let through their political and intellectual barriers. Allah (s.w.t) has indeed spoken

the truth when He said: "And We have sent down The Book explaining all things" (Q.16:89). The colonised nations suffered untold hardship during the era; they were psychologically traumatised, economically exploited and most seriously their religious cultural values were in peril of destruction, in the post-independent era or neo-colonisation. The Muslims must, therefore, immunised and fortified themselves with the first and ten sacred verses of *Suratul Kahf.*

In today's bi-global polarity, the Gog representing the Communist or atheistic Eastern European nations and the Magog representing the nominal Christian Capitalist Western European nations, still oppose each other. Both are characteristically nihilistic to codified laws of God, and are notorious for *Mufsiduna fil ardhi.* In the last decade of the century the Gog, true to its own nature, killed thousands Muslims in Russia, in the Balkans and in the Caucasus. The Serbs, in a characteristic display of brutality harried the Muslims in the Balkans, killing thousands innocent men, women, children and babies, in a gruesome manner akin to the Holocaust. While the United Nations passively watched the pogrom. The Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the only Muslim State in Europe was ordered by the President of Yugoslavia Slovodan Milosevich to be wiped out. Although charged with crime against humanity, the Serbs in Belgrade appeared unperturbed. The Bosnian Muslims had for more than two years been brutally exterminated by the agents of Milosevich who are culturally and ethnically related with the Russians.

Sir Bernard Pares, a Professor of Russian history, language and literature of University of Liverpool, could not hide the peculiar cultural trait of the Russians in his *History of Russia.* He asseverated thus:

> Talking in terms of civilisation, Russia is at the back end, the least European part of Europe. Elsewhere peoples have grown up amid the ruins of an earlier culture, which of itself is an

education. Russian history is in a wide sense more military than that of other countries.[110]

True to themselves and beclouded by their innate instinct of human mass destruction, they spent three quarters of their human and natural resources to the production of nuclear weapons at the expense of other spheres of human development. Owing to this fact they excelled in both space technology and weapons of mass destruction only to suffer economic collapse with severe consequences. This was in line with Pares Scholarly description that "Russian history is in a wide sense more military than that of other countries.' In other words, they were by their nature predisposed to *Mufsiduna fil ardhi.* A leopard could never change its spots.

These beasts brutally killed, maimed and raped women with sadistic zeal and fervour, as they made their deadly inroads into Bosnia-Herzegovina and into Kosovo, in what was described as the most monstrous ethnic cleansing in recent times. They waged a war of genocide against their Muslim neighbours. Their pogrom in Kosovo was so gruesome that NATO forces led by America had to intervene with military forces to save the Albanian Muslims from Serbian extermination. The Serbian atrocities were a typical manifestation of a cultural trait, which was characteristically of *Mufsiduna fil ardhi.* The Serbian monstrosity against the Muslims dated back from 1941. Their villainy in Foca was well known to all. The Canadian Crescent International newspaper reported the fiendish activities of the Serbs:

> In 1941, the Serbs massacred a large number of Muslims in Foca. The survivors fled to Bosnia - Herzegovina. During the Second World War, aroused by the racist ambition of creating an ethnically pure Serbia, went on a rampage against the Muslims mostly peasants, were massacred. Gruesome tales of terror and torture were recounted by the survivors of the pogrom. For instance, in macabre ritual the Chetniks would strip the skin from Muslim women faces and heads, symbolising the tearing off of Hijab; Children's skulls were smashed by

throwing them on rocks. In Foca a watchmaker named Muftik was thrown into boiling water when the flesh had peeled off, his skeleton was hung near the entrance of the mosque to terrorise other Muslims.[111]

And about 40 years later, the Serbs again followed the Muslims to Bosnia - Herzegovina in 1991 where they decimated a large portion of their population. In fact, the Serbian atrocities were second only to the Scythians (their forebears) of the ancient world, what was only missing was cannibalism in their abomination. Otherwise, they were all inherent with *Chattaah* a Hebrew word which means - an offence or habitual sinfulness. Hence, despite the impact of the Western Civilisation, the Gog and Magog could not rid itself from this habitual sinfulness that was so vile and heinous and frequently incited them to a murderous behaviour. A Bosnian Muslim gave an eyewitness account of one of the most heinous crimes inflicted on human beings: "Pregnant women were butchered like animals, removed the in-coming babies in their wombs and sliced the babies mercilessly."[112]

What was appalling about these ferocious onslaughts against the Muslims by the Gog and Magog was that they were unmitigated by the civilising influences of the so-called Western Civilisation; instead, they aided and facilitated them to embark on the pogroms. This deviously, therefore, indicated that the civilisation was that of the *Yajuj and Majuj*. The Western Human Rights activists only folded their arms, watching a renewed Holocaust at the end of the 20th century only recording events and counting the toll of human losses. For instance, in their frenzied attacks, the Serbs again descended on Bosnia - Herzegovina decimating the entire population from April 22, 1992 to December 1995, during which the carnage they inflicted upon innocent civilians was beyond description. The only thing the Human Rights organisation monitors in Sarajero, did was to only declare that: "The Serbs acting as wild beasts, have raped thousands of women. More than 6,000 girls

below the age of 18 have become pregnant; countless others have simply disappeared."[113]

The Serbian activities from the middle of the last century all tally with what the Holy Qur'an had described as *Mufsiduna fil Ardhi*. This was the most befitting description of the cultural behaviour of the Gog and Magog that could not be assuaged by the influences of modernism because their belligerent habits as coarse savages had remained the same, whether in the ancient world or in the contemporary world of science and technology. The Serbs, again made their inroads into Kosovo towards the end of the First Millennium. The Gog and Magog had succeeded in spreading iniquities in the land unopposed because of their might and technical superiority. And there were many Hadiths, which reported that Allah (swt) said: "I have brought forth some slaves of mine whom no one but I will be capable of fighting." These slaves were the Gog and Magog who were identified as the European nations. It was, therefore, known since the Prophet's time that the Europeans would become very powerful and almost invincible nations. But they were only servants of God, He created them and gave them the means to all ends in this world. He knows when and how He would destroy them at the appointed time.

Similarly, the Russians, who are ethnically related to Serbs, using lethal weapons unleashed their anger of social and economic frustrations on their Muslim neighbours, who were fighting for self-determination, decimating thousands in Chechenya and Daghestan. This erstwhile Communist world power had shown to the world its true cultural trait, which was also typical of *Mufsiduna fil ardhi*. In fact, Russia was a cultural heart of this diabolical trait. Its own savagery to the Chechens in December the last month of the last millennium had attracted international hue and cry from world leaders against Russia's indiscriminate bombing and shelling of innocent citizens. In this notorious display of *Mufsiduna fil ardhi*,

Russia resolved to exterminate her Muslim neighbours, killing thousands in cold blood. In this massacre, over 40,000 innocent civilians were trapped in Grozny the Chechen capital, as the city was razed to the ground. Russia's indiscriminate rocket, bomb and artillery shelling had virtually destroyed the country. In this modern world, Russia like Yugoslavia has been revisiting the holocaust unabated. The Gog was so monstrous and powerful that even the United Nations could not even dare to intervene, like what NATO did in Kosovo.

However, the world condemned Russia's vicious action in its totality. President Bill Clinton of United States, appalled at this tragedy condemned Russia and warned that: "Russia will pay a heavy price for those actions with passing day sinking more deeply into a morass that will intensify extremism and diminish its own standing in the world."[114]

It could be remembered that General Dzhokhar Dudayev, a general of the former Soviet Air Force lost his life in the fight for self-determination against Russia. In October, 1991, he won the presidential elections in Chechnya, and unilaterally declared the 1.2 million Muslim country, an independent Islamic state. Immediately, Russia responded with a war of genocide against the inchoate Islamic country, which resulted in the deaths of over 30,000 people mostly women and children. However, the Muslims fought courageously with dogged determination to survive, and they did. A peaceful agreement was finally reached. But commenting on Boris Yeltsin's peace accord with Chechnya, the popular German newspaper, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, on April 1st, 1996 stated that: "the war in Chechnya was by no means over. They, (Chechens) have paid too high a price in blood and their desire for freedom is as unbroken as their allegiance to the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (swt)." The prediction of this paper came true when in the last 3 months of the century of the end of the Millennium, a

more destructive war flared up, still in another show of *Mufsiduna fil ardhi* by the Russians.

This second war of genocide against Chechnya, had provided Russia with the opportunity to not only break their allegiance to the Prophet of Islam, but to obliterate them completely from the surface of the earth. When Russia breached and abandoned her so-called peace to unleash a terrible military onslaught against this innocent people at the end of the last millennium, while the Christmas bell of Russian Orthodox Church was tolling, hundreds bombs and rocket shells were exploding killing innocent Chechen civilians. It was at the height of this onslaught that President Boris Yeltsin abruptly and ignominiously resigned on 31st December, 1999, and handed power to Vladimir Putin, a former KGB Chief and Prime Minister to act as the President of the Republic of Russia pending the next general election in March, 2000. Putin won the election to be the second elected president following Boris Yeltsin. He, however, became a president when the country's standing in the world was diminishing. Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin abdicated on Friday, December 31st, 1999 and in his last speech to the Russian people, he said: "Friends, dear ones, today I am wishing you New Year greetings for the last time. But not only that I am (also) addressing you for the last time as Russian President. I have made a decision... on the last day of the out-going century, I am retiring."[115]

Analysts, described this resignation as an abrupt, ignominious abdication of power to the former KGB Chief and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin. He relinquished power with his hands fully stained with the innocent Chechen blood. And he left when his country was on the verge of economic collapse and political disintegration. Yeltsin, was in fact, horrified with his dismal performance as the President of the erstwhile powerful nation. He left in his wake the death of thousands of innocent civilians, a dispiriting mix of economic despair, malignant rampant corruption and senseless war

of genocide against Chechnya. For that stark reality the out-going President showed his remorse and regrets, therefore, humbled and contrite in his confession, he said: "I want to ask for your forgiveness, because many of your hopes have not come true, because what we thought would be easy turned to be painfully difficult. I ask you to forgive me."[116]

Two distinctive types of *Mufsiduna fil ardhi* could be discerned from the activities of the present Gog and Magog. Impetuous, indiscriminate killing and extermination of people for whatever reason typified the Gog, the erstwhile Eastern communist nation. This could be explained because economic hardship had aggravated their inherent nature of mischief on earth. They were highly volatile in nature and extremely destructive. It could be recalled that Zulqarnain in the Person of Darius the Great had to invade the Balkans and the Southern Russia to quell the excesses of these barbarians in the fifth century BC. The Magog, typified as the Capitalist West was less bellicose, more tolerant but pernicious in moral decadence and sensual immoralities. These could be summed up as having habitual sinfulness.

As the Gog and Magog were finally let through their intellectual barrier, then they waged wars of genocide to exterminate all forms of opposition and any potential threats to Euro-Christian domination. Therefore, the central target was Islam and its super-civilisation. Then crusade military invasion of the Muslim world was started from the 11th century AD under the guise of liberating the Holy Land of Christianity from Muslim control. It was then escalated and spread like wild fire to consume the Muslim countries and reached a crescendo in 1900 AD. The Western Crusades wreaked carnage that was far more gruesome than reprehensible Alexander's conquests several centuries earlier.

The Gog and Magog and to be more precisely, the Magog had fought tooth and nail using the most sophisticated weapon to uproot and totally destroy Islam, a divine power but had woefully failed to

extinguish the light of God. Sir Steven Runciman had pointedly observed this abysmal failure of the Western Crusade when he said: "The crusades were launched to save Eastern Christendom from Moslems. When they ended the whole of Eastern Christendom was under Moslem rule."[117] This military counter-action otherwise known as Reconquista had succeeded in knocking down but not knocking out the Muslims. After all, "greatness is not in never falling but in rising every time we fall", said Confucius.

The conquest of the Muslims was borne purely out of *theologian Odium*, Islamic creed, which civilised Europe and nudged Europeans from Renaissance to Reformation, and finally to Scientific and Technological superiority. It was maligned and the idea was to destroy it. Europe, therefore, had bitten the fingers that fed her. But having lost the crusades they resorted to Polemic wars against the only religion of God. These and other onslaughts from the Gog and Magog had forced the Muslims to militancy to ensure both their survival and self-determination. G.H. Jansen in his book *The Militant Islam* had captured the subtle twist from Reconquista to Polemic war against Islam. He wrote:

> It is curious how the conduct of the Polemic against Islam today - say, against Arab nationalism or militant Islam remains the same. Even in the 12th Century a good deal of the truth about Islam was known but was deliberate by the Polemicists, they did not want to record the truth, they could not afford the truth because the Islamic enemy was still there and would not go away. Hence the Polemical material was largely addressed to the Christians to fortify their spirit against the enemy. It corresponded to need. It made it possible to protect the minds of Christians against apostasy and it gave Christendom self-respect in dealing with a civilisation in many ways its superior. Another element that remains true today is that many prejudices against the Muslims (or Arabs) were planted by some of the indigenous Christian Communities.[118]

It was on record for all to see that Islam bore no grudge or enmity against Christianity and a cordial relationship between the

two sisters had existed since the Prophetic era. But the Magog, in its *modus operandi* viewed that if a harmonious relationship was allowed to wax stronger between them, they would eventually team up to form a formidable defence against the nefarious activities of Gog and Magog in this world. Thus, such an inchoate relationship was obliterated and a seed of discord was successfully planted instead. This subterfuge had given the barbarians the opportunity to use the cloak of Christianity to do great mischief on earth. Since Islam is the only super-civilisation that could check them and if necessary exterminate their mischief on earth, machinery was set in motion to destroy it both from within and from outside.

The Gog and Magog were irreligious and were bent on enthroning global hedonism gilded in the so-called democracy. Thus, any conflict between Muslims and Christians was incited by these evil doers, so that should the two religions destroy each other, they would have unrestricted freedom in the world to do mischief. This antic was slowly losing its poignancy as the victims slowly understood and respected each other's religious beliefs and sensibilities. Since this manoeuvre would not last long, they covertly worked to destroy Islam from within through the elite. The Magog, who professed to believe in God only to take religion as a pastime as they pay lip service to Him. They tended to follow an innocuous path in their perpetration of *Mufsiduna fil ardhi*. They also tended to replace religion with hedonism gilded with democracy in all the nations, as they dangerously spread iniquities, debauchery and other forms of concupiscence. Their civilisation as such is morally decadent and begs for its own destruction. More dangerously still, they tended to replace the worship of God with the worship of 'self'. At the close end of this century, they were extremely rich and lived in absolute comfort and luxury as they had the world's resources at their disposal.

Consequently, at face value, the Magog abhorred anarchy and wars or any social upheavals only when their interests were not at

stake. Because they had embellished the world with various beautiful ornaments through science and technology so that men of all nations were attracted to the false nuggets of the West. Man, so beguiled, therefore, became indulged in absolute luxury and comfort to become quite oblivious of the existence of God and His laws. A world of the poor becoming poorer and the rich becoming richer was devilishly created. While trillion of dollars were spent annually to venture into the Cosmos, thousands of children and women died in the developing world of poverty and diseases. Undoubtedly, the Gog and Magog had continued to 'Do great mischief on earth'. Last century was not easy for Muslims all over the world, may Allah (swt) bring them relief and succour in this new millennium 2000 and beyond. Since the Magog could not openly engage the Muslims for fear of reprisal they worked covertly both within and without the *Ummah* or the Muslim community to erode their power. One such method was to incite and support various schisms within the *Dar-al-Islam* or the house of Islam. The second method was to use Christianity as a weapon of fighting Islam especially in countries were the adherents of the two sister religions lived together like in Nigeria, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, etc. The progress and development of such countries were often punctuated with religious strifes and separatist movements. Therefore, the threats and the challenges posed by the Gog and Magog were indeed serious demanding great attention.

Professor Ali Mazrui, a great historian of our time had recently laid bare some of the challenges facing the Muslims in particular and the world in general, in his response to Professor Samuel Huntington's article, which sparked off international responses. The article was about the cultural consequences of the end of Cold War, which appeared in an American Journal *Foreign Affairs* in 1993. In this article, Huntington argued that conflicts after the Cold War would be less and less between states and ideological blocs, and more and more between Civilisations and Coalitions of Cultures.[119]

But in his analysis of Huntington's argument, what Professor Mazrui saw was the emergence of a world dominated by white race and a cold war of race. This was similar to what I had earlier described as the reactivation and perfection of panhellenism. Professor Mazrui, arrived at this conclusion after a careful analysis of what he described as "R - world paradigm of world affairs" a three contiguous catastrophes. In fact, it was a succinct account of the genesis, aims and objective of the new world order. The First Round of modern racial catastrophes led to the genocide in Americas and the trans-Atlantic slave trade. This was the era of the West on ascendancy. The Second Round of modern racial catastrophes was the period of colonisation and imperialism. This was the era of the West triumphant. The famous historian stated also that both the two rounds were hot wars, rather than cold wars. He then remarked that:

> As for what is now unfolding, it could be the Third Round of modern racial catastrophes. Because, it is the period of racism by marginalisation of the weakest (like Rwandans, people of Gaza, and the Black under-class in USA), racism by military containment of the darker races, nuclear White YES, nuclear non-white NO, racism by the creation of global economic pyramid with the West at the top and Africa at the bottom. This is the era of the West in hegemony.[120]

This scholarly exposition of the new world order and its genesis was characterised by series of 'catastrophes' in all its rounds of evolution. This underscored the fact that when the God and Magog were let loose *mufsiduna fil ardhi* would fill the earth. It had also verified the assertion that this people were habitually sinful in nature. And the word 'catastrophies' vividly described this *chataah.* Hence Mazrui's "R-word paradigm of world affairs" was an exposition of the entire blue print of the Gog and Magog, since Alexander's time, the Father of Racism in history. It was an evil omen that spell doom for the world, because a global white hegemony was a victory of atheism over monotheism and its

consequences were numerous and very serious. But the global White Supremacy would end up in catastrophes since it came to power through countless catastrophes.

Hence, these unfolding of events were in line with W.E.E. DuBois' prediction that the issue of the century was going to be "The problem of colour line." DuBois, an African American crusader against racism, his prophecy came true, because the blue print of *Yajuj* and *Majuj* was to reshape, dominate and lead the world and appeared to be doggedly determined to achieve this aim: A world re-created in the image of the Europeans and with their culture of Mufsiduna fil ardhi percolating into the warp and woof of every nation. Furthermore, it was observed that at a more practical level, DuBois's conception of the colour line was re-captured in the notion of an emerging a global apartheid policy following the end of the cold war that ended the big ideological divide in the white world. Moreover, taking the stock of the present global situation shows a new racial realignment on the world stage. Ali Mazrui, an illustrious son of Islam had captured the images of this metamorphosis taking place in this world. He wrote: "White at the top, the Confucian East Asian and South East Asian next (yellow), the Brown races of South Asia next, Latin America and the Arabs fourth and the Blacks last?"[121]

"Is it a really clash of civilisation we are headed for," Mazrui asked, "or third round of a clash of the races? As a scholar *par excellence* he gave reasons for his misgivings thus: "The true picture is therefore as follows - firstly, the West has been a cultural aggressor against other races and civilisation for hundreds of years. This has been the norm rather than the exception. But the West was often inspired by a racial paradigm."[122] Alexander the Great, typified all that the erudite historian had enunciated. The great king was a paragon of racism and an avid cultural aggressor against any race or civilisation other than his own. Unfortunately, since Renaissance Europeans had been pursuing Alexander's

International Policy. In this dispensation, many nations especially Africa was paying the heaviest price. It resulted in the wanton destruction of its people by war, by bacteriological genocide and by cultural erosion.[123]

Africa was paying this price because Africans have no Indo-European blood in their veins and they have high fertility rate. The propaganda of family planning waged against them did little or nothing to affect their steady of increase in population. Consequently, they ought to be decimated by any means necessary. Because in this present new world order neither "Japan" nor "China" would be allowed to be made in Africa. So both the technological man power and the population of the Africans must be trimmed to size. A growing population everywhere terrifies the Gog and Magog even more than the possession of nuclear weapons. And the Third World is growing fast in the face of diminutive population of the Gog and Magog. This however, must be covertly reversed by any means necessary. In this dispensation, bacteriological genocide is the best method.

What we are witnessing at the present international politics is the coming of the global apartheid with all it roots firmly established. And in order to make this nefarious plan a reality, Professor Mazrui made this keen observation that: "The European Union is opening its door to a wider white solidarity. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation is the most powerful alliance of the white world. Racism is rising in the United States, and Africa is getting more deeply marginalised than ever. This may not be a hot war of race this time around - but is it a cold war of race?"[124]

The future of the Muslim World is at present bleak and all the ominous signs are conspicuously written on the wall, "So be prepared." Lest we forget, the Jews in their history had the Nazis and now the Muslims have the Serbs and other evil forces of *Yajuj* and *Majuj*. These are indeed veritable challenges.

The Veritable Challenge

The culture of habitual sinfulness, had eaten far too deeply into the fabric of Western Societies and percolating fast into the rest of the world. This tendency posed not only a potential threat but a Herculean task to Islam, which would force it to take up the gauntlet in the twenty first century. Because both in United States and in Europe despite the momentous development within; Christendom, it was an empty shell, Christianity was for long banished from the hearts of the people. Islam would then be faced with the admixture of attitude reminiscent of Makkah at the time of our Prophet. This return of *Jahiliyyah* was pointedly observed by Murad Hoffmann who said *inter alia*: "Islam would be faced with such vices like neo-paganism, agnosticism, atheism, neo-polytheism and ethnocentrism." This, therefore, underscored the necessity of having a good insight of the cultural anthropology of these people, where ethnocentrism, the worship of idols like fun, fortune and power and other forms of indulgences; racism or the practice of regarding one's own race or culture as superior to others, and were in vogue. Consequently, the challenges ahead were veritable and crucial and a war will be fought but with a different battle-line, to which Hofmann opined:

> In my view, the battle line is no longer the one drawn between Muslims and Christianity, or Christianity and Jews, but the very deep trench dividing world-wide, a minority of God believing people – Muslims in the original sense of the word – from the majority of people for whom the notion of God has increasingly become irrelevant and meaningless; people for whom reality is limited to what we can see, touch, sniff, taste, or hear; people for whom, any religious belief is mere superstition, "opium for the masses" (Marx), and a sign of self-delusion revealing a lack of logic, courage and intelligence.[125]

Murad Wilfred Hofmann, a German of Catholic background accepted Islam in 1980 and is a fine scholar with penetrating

objective writings. His book, *Islam: The Alternative* caused outrageous hullabaloo in Germany in 1992 as it enraged the conservatives because of its objective exposition of the truth. His prediction of the challenges ahead for Islam in this century was analogous to a "Survey of Islam" carried out in *The Economist* magazine. In this survey, which was a response to an article in the *Foreign Affairs* written by Professor Samuel Huntington at Harvard University provided the intellectual framework for the fear of confrontation between Islam and the West but entirely on a new competing ground aptly described as a "Clash of Civilisations." This corroborated Hofmann's allusion that the conflicts would be based on cultures not simply on the religious ground as was the case of the Crusades (1095-1271).

Therefore, in this respect, the debacle of Communism, which had publicly exposed all societies to an active atheistic policy and the Western countries, which never promoted atheism publicly but with subtlety in the form of unmitigated materialism and consumerism were dissolved into one single unified culture. At the end of the first Millennium, most of the Western countries had united as one European Union (EU); bringing one by one the rest of the Eastern European countries into its fold. The EU countries had a single currency the *Euro* to consolidate their cultural and economic unity with the aim of establishing a global hegemony. This was indeed a potential threat to Islam the only ideology dreaded by the Gog and Magog. Moreover, this European Unity, as was rightly observed by Hofmann was as if Marx, Darwin, Nietzshe and Freud – and with them the entire positivism and scientism of the nineteenth century. – in a banalised form had been absorbed and inhaled by the entire occidental population.[126] The essence of this unity of purpose was to muster all the strength required to make this unique form of banality a universal culture. Because the world was seen to become more and more illuminated and rational, liberal and humanitarian, as typified in the American way of life. These were

seen as the obligatory model for reshaping the rest of the world. Thus, the EU was the covert design, by *Yajuj and Majuj* to laicise the people of every nation.

This notion of 'Americanising' the world became particularly virulent after the collapse of Communism in 1990. This brought to the end the cold war, and as a result, a change from bipolar to the unipolar global power with America in absolute control. This prompted, according to Hofmann, Francis Fukuyama, head of the Policy Planning Staff of the American State Department, 1991 to publish his article, which later became his book, *The End of History*. Hofmann corroborated this view about the creation of laicistic world, when he wrote that:

> The message of this new thinking in terms of Western style World Order, was around and clear: only obscure and backward countries might still fail for some limited time to understand this absolute superiority of the Western approach with its rationalism, liberalism, individualism, tolerance, parliamentalism, and human rights. In other words, the West generally continues to expect that the American way of life will impose itself globally.[127]

Furthermore, this according to the erudite Scholar was in line with what Hans Kung had demanded, a "global ethics" or what Wilfred Cantewell Smith had called for: "the development of a global theology." He then concluded that: "They have in mind, I suppose, an ethics and theology which – like the artificial world language Esperanto – would mainly be based on European feature... There is no doubt: The Third World is facing an occidental righteousness triumphant that smacks of racism."[128]

Having ascertained the formidable challenges facing Islam in this century, the prolific writer then advised that some urgent steps must be taken if Islamic World would not want to live in such a heinous global mono-culture of *Mufsiduna fil Ardhi*. It must make a monumental effort to realise the so many odds against *dar al Islam*

in the present century and beyond. Because it was the only office in the World as *The Economist* also observed that could successfully contest with the Western civilisation. Hence, as a super-culture, Islam, must enthrone theocentric global society in which, God's word is the law and Islamic civilisation could again be brought to a flowering.[129] This therefore, meant that the emerging Euro-centric World must be unsettled and the reins of global hegemony must be removed from the clutches of the Gog and Magog and then to be finally supplanted. Hofmann, then vividly enumerated the salient characteristics of this future theocentric universe with the Holy Qur'an as its Constitution, thus:

> A world in which Muslims feel at home, not as citizens but as believers and members of a single Ummah... A world where technology, practised by genuine Muslims looses its dehumanising aspects... A world in which all praise and subservience are due to God alone – *Subhanahu wa ta'ala*- and not to the contemporary gods of beauty, youth, power, sex, money, popularity, status, and entertainment... A world not determined by requirements of the economy and of high technology, efficiency, productivity, growth, and maximisation of profit – but an overruling concern of man and his physical, emotional and spiritual needs.[130]

This was not an idle assertion, nor was it an insurmountable task because Islam had done a similar feat in the past. So why not now? It is now they must prove their mettle when they are as vulnerable as candle in the wind.

Candle in the Wind

The Muslim Ummah is today in a dilemma; it takes pride in her past, is ashamed of its present and afraid of its future. It had for long failed to live up to the expectation of its divine role as the chosen nation and its history – the Golden Age of Islam. Perhaps, because it was knocked down but not knocked out by the West with its intimidating technical and scientific superiority. Hence they were

cast into despondency. The plights of the Muslims had become a subject of discussions and seminars where many scholars proffered their views on what was the cause of this mighty fall.

M. Marmaduke Pickhall, the renowned translator of the Holy Qur'an in his book *Cultural Side of Islam* attributed the decline of the Muslim Ummah on sharia application because like the Jews, the Muslims prospered when they upheld the Laws and declined when they abandoned them. The era of the Glorious Islamic Civilisation was when the Muslims had observed absolutely the tenets of sharia – the Right way to religion. If the Divine Laws were however, not applied to their lives, their standing continued to diminish until they were reduced to nonentities who would not be listened to, nor could they be assisted but be mauled; harassed and intimidated and killed like in their present state of apathy and melancholy. It is ironical how the Muslims have now become the laughing stock of the world. Professor Muhammad Abdussalam, of blessed memory best described this situation when he said:

> I can still recall a Nobel Prize winner in Physics some years ago from a European country say to me: "Salam, do you really think we have an obligation to succour, aid, feed and keep alive those nations who have never created or added an iota to man's stock of knowledge?"[131]

By picking on Abdus Salam, the Prize Winner was indeed referring to the Muslims as those nations who have never created or added an iota to man's stock of knowledge". Perhaps, he forgot yesterday because it had gone forever. If the Muslim had done remarkable things to the ascent of human civilisation, which of course they did, but why not now? The essence of the past is to invigorate the later generations to do greater deeds than their heroes instead of basking in their glory! Every generation must take pride in her own achievements. Professor Abdus Salam, an illustrious son of Islam, was not embittered by the attempt by one of his colleagues to slight his people, because as far as he was concerned, he had

distinguished himself in any court of law. So let every Muslim do the same in *pari passu* with his God given intellect in his chosen field, to bring the past glory of Islam. How did he feel personally about his colleague's innuendoes? He remarked that:

> And even if he had not said this, my self-respect suffers a shattering hurt whenever I enter a hospital and reflect that almost every potent life-saving medicament of today, from *penicillin upwards, has been created without our share of inputs* from any of us from Islam?[132]

This should be the normal feeling and response of any patriotic Muslim to the prevailing circumstances. Undoubtedly, no nation should be under any obligation to aid, feed and keep alive any nations who out of their own making have become liabilities to others. Because a balanced mutually interdependent world in the spirit of do *ut des* or I give so that you may give, must be the case at the local, national and at the international levels. *Yajuj and Majuj* must not be allowed to arrogate themselves as the god of the less privileged nations *albeit* of the world. The Nobel Prize Winner was not to be blamed because no one could see the present state of apathy and bewilderment of the Muslims and to believe that they had once established a super civilisation that saved the world and human knowledge.

Because they aped and lagged behind the West and appeared not to perceive the dangers involved. All they hanker after were luxury, comfort and easy life, while the people with habitual sinfulness were working tirelessly to make the world their personal estate. To harass, intimidate and eject any tenant at their whims, after all the world is fast receding to a global village. And it completely belongs to them, you might as well pack up and go. After all they are under no moral obligation to feed and keep you alive.

William Eton the British ambassador in Istanbul for long

captured the lackadaisical and unproductive attitude of the Muslims in 1800. He summed it up thus: "They like to trade with those who bring to them useful and valuable articles, without the labour of manufacturing."[133] Even two centuries after, the sordid and lazy condition only steeply deteriorated so they have been sinking in the muck ever since. It is important at this juncture to give this caveat that unless the Muslims wake up from their slumber and become alive to their responsibilities, they would forcibly be awakened with at least a loss of 6 million people. Because the evil wind is blowing and the writing is clear on the wall for all to see. When the Jews abandoned the Laws of God, and became lazy, Adolf Hitler gassed six millions of them to death. It was a scourge of God because they had abandoned sharia. The same scourge of God is hanging over the Muslims like the sword of Damocles. At present most of the Muslim countries are leading a deplorable life leading self-reliance, their health; security and their means of livelihood are all in the hands of Yajuj and Majuj because they lack the basic scientific means to assert their self-determination.

The Decline of Sciences in the Muslims had been a topic of discussion. Many scholars asked why did the creative science suddenly died out in the Islamic civilisation from 1100 AD/495 AH? It just fizzled out suddenly and catalysmically, which many writers attributed the causes to both internal and external factors. And the diminishing standing in the world of science is indeed very appalling. This made Professor Abdus Salam to ask: "Can we turn the pages of history back and once again lead in science?" This we cannot do. But what we can do now is to gather the pieces and start all over again, to pick up the gauntlet. Presumptuously we can again lead the world in Science. This is not an idle assertion.

Although the Muslim Ummah has now become a sleeping giant, it can be re-awakened. Because the feeling and strength of Muslims certainly stemmed from the fact that they were part of a

sacred history, stretching back to the very foundation of this universe. Islam was the primordial religion of man, the *Din al fitrah*. Thus it had and still has perforce an eternal validity, it was with this solid foundation that it would supersede any civilisation that rivalled it.

The Western Civilisation is now already corrupt and morally decadent, therefore, begs for destruction. The giant beautiful edifice is like the proverbial giant with legs of clay, so it would not stand the test of time. Hence it would fizzle out because it lacks solid foundation and had taken the extreme of the spectrum of immorality, which history showed destroys every civilisation. Unlike the Muslim *Ummah* who were designated in the Holy Qur'an as the Middle community." The spirit of Ummatism is forever re-chargeable to strength and vibrancy and so it remains everlasting. Ziauddin Sardar, described this noble community thus:

> The Philosophical outlook of this middle community is based on an absolute reference frame and it is this philosophical outlook, and not such consideration as race, geography and even language, which has defined the parameters of Muslim Civilisation. Muslim Civilisation is unique in its sense of world-view.[134]

The uniqueness of this civilisation, as integrating, stimulating, durable and sustainable Civilisation lies in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. The Holy Qur'an as we all know is a Book, which explains everything so it provides the basic guidelines and principles for human transactions and a theoretical framework for the parameters of Muslim Civilisation. Sardar said that no detail of importance to the worldly or spiritual life has been left out. The guidance of the Holy Qur'an, on the individual level, covers the aesthetics and physical dimensions of the human personality. On the collective level covers, the Holy Qur'an guidance covers the social, the economic, the political and other aspect of societal behaviour.[135]

Ziauddin Sardar's exposition of Islamic Civilisation was *Au fait* and very revealing. It could be discerned that the apathy, despondency and the woeful decline of sciences in the Muslim world could all be attributed to the failure of the application of Absolute .Reference, Frame (ART) because they provide an excellent guidance for a civilisation of all times. In fact there was no nation in history with such a lofty gift that was tested and its efficacy proven beyond any iota of doubt. The early Muslims made diligent use of it so they led the world and even today a trial will convince any nation. Sardar, stated also that the application of the Sunnah to our day-to-day affair is indeed Islam in action. Because the two are inseparable, therefore, cannot be divorced from one another for the Sunnah is essentially an implementation of Divine Will. The need, therefore, is that of active rather than a passive Islam.

Thus, the use of ARF could lead any nation to ascendancy in a telescoped period of time, to excel in all fields of knowledge, science and technology inclusive, in fact, they contained the blueprint for global hegemony that is far superior to that of the Western Civilisation. The failure of the Muslims and their diminishing standing in the world today is not synonymous with the failure of ARF, because the power of any weapon lies in its accurate and effective application.

It was the ARF that made Muslim Ummah unique, strong and unity in diversity that all combined to give rise to a super-civilisation that astounded the world in a feat that was unparalleled in the annals of history. Charles J. Adam had partly explained this unity in diversity not seen anywhere else except in Islam. He wrote:

> ...Whenever Muslims gather together, if one leaves aside some division caused by sectarianism, there is a sense of kinship and warmth. In a mosque, in the performance of his prayers in some other places, or even in social contact with other Muslims, the faithful Muslim feels himself to be among his own as he cannot do with those outside the community.[136]

Although the people with obstinate denial of God boasted of creating an information technology, with which they controlled all the means of collecting and disseminating information through electronic and print media, but at the fundamental level the Muslims possessed a more organised, effective and fast spreading means of dissemination of information using the Mosque. And Salat is an absolute means to success.

Salat is a divine injunction to mankind, an act of mercy from the Most Gracious and Most Merciful to cater for the upliftment of man both in this world and in the hereafter. And as Marmaduke Pickhall pointed out: "No one, who does every studied the Qur'an will deny that it promises success in this world and the hereafter to men who act upon its guidance and obey its laws; that it aims at nothing less than the success of mankind as a whole; and that his success is to be attained by cultivation of man's gifts and faculties."

The call to the pray *Al-Adhan* is the best call man ever had and the call of the *Muezzin* (or the caller) must, therefore, be listened and be responded to. To those who pay no heed to the *Adhan* the Holy Qur'an says: "And when they call for the prayer, they make a mockery and fun thereof. This is because they are people who understand not." (Q. 5:58). If really understood, the clarion call of the *Muezzin* at the time of every prayers in every mosque in the world is replete with meaning. It is a call for success, a success, which Pickhall defined thus: The success in this world promised by Islam is not the success of one human being at the expense of others nor of one nation to the detriment of and despair of others, but the success of mankind as a whole. Five times a day, from every mosque in the world, the call goes forth: "Come to *Falah!* Come to Falah! The Arabic word for 'Falah' means success through cultivation.

Therefore, who will not respond to Hayya Alal Falah, Hayya

Alal Falah. Come to the success; come to the success? Except those who do not want success in this world and in the hereafter and except, the "people who understand not." Salat is not an ordinary prayer but a means to great successes both in this world and in the hereafter. So it must be observed regularly. The call to the morning prayer to the *Hayya Alal Falah*, the following is added: *As-salat khayrun min al-naum, as-salat khayrun min al-naum*," meaning prayer is better than sleep, prayer is better sleep. As a means to all successes, in salat; there is spiritual side of salat, the cultural side of salat and the medical side of salat. Hence, there is no any other mode of religious prayer that will claim these attributes among others.

The mosque since the Prophet's time has always been multi-purpose in function; a place of prayer, a school, a university and a town hall, it has always been a hub of pubic activity of all times. It is the only place that receives a group of people five times a day, they meet to pray and discuss social and political issues. The whole neighbourhood meet regularly at the fixed appointed times. This in itself served as a forum for the exchange of ideas and knowledge; it also fosters unity both spiritually and socially. The Muslims of every hamlet meet at the Juma'at central mosque once a week and four times in a month. Like that, Muslims of all the neighbouring villages and towns meet once a year at *Id-el-Kabir*. And the Muslims of every country meet also annually in Saudi Arabia during the annual Hajj or pilgrimage. Islam therefore, shows brotherhood at the local, national and international levels. There was no such system so far evolved anywhere to equal it or could even surpass this Islamic sense of brotherhood, which crossed the frontiers of race, tribe or social status. Adam had also captured the cohesive force of Islamic fraternity even in the face of the corrosive and powerful force of modern nationalism. Hajj, is the supreme symbol of Islamic Civilisation. He wrote:

> ...Their equality is symbolised by all laying aside their normal clothing and putting on the seamless garment of the pilgrim the outward marks of status and position being left behind as the pious pilgrims enter the sacred territory, circumambulate the Ka'ba, stand in the presence of God at Arafat or perform the other parts of the complex pilgrimage rite..[137]

Islam, is a super-civilisation a fact that was too well known by the West. Now the Muslims are weak, in despair and their morale is it at its lowest ebb, yet, when Islam sneezes, the West catches cold. Because it is the only power in history, which the West knew and tested. The Muslims had clout and the feeling of sense of belonging in their Kinship of faith; the only credo to boast of this wholesome affair. Aware of this important fact, Adam opined that:

> ...This confidence grows out of the conviction that Islam is a divinely ordained path of men, the very will of God for human life, which in His Mercy He sent down for men's guidance through the Prophet. When a man feels certain that his values, ideals and way of living are those which the Creator Himself has decreed, what greater assurance can he have or desire?[138]

What Charles J. Adam saw and described in the unity and strength of the Muslim Ummah was a sense of mission as a chosen people, a Messianic community who were to usher in a new social phenomenon to mankind that would ensure a viable and enduring a social order that reflected the intentions of the creator. It was this sense of social order that brought all nations into the spirit of Islamic brotherhood to converge on Makka during Hajj. With Makka as its central point the tidal waves of Islam will spread to submerge all nations. This preview of Islamic world order was also captured by G. H. Jansen. "The world has never seen this supreme symbol of universal brotherhood," Jansen said. He then gave its vivid description thus:

> The Hajj is the largest multinational gathering of human beings on the face of the earth today. In the last two years around a million and half pilgrims from over seventy countries have

> flooded Mecca and the barren valley beyond. More countries are represented at, say United Nations General Assembly, but then only in their hundreds, larger numbers of Hindus gather for the Kumbh Mela, the immersion at the sacred confluence of the Ganges and the Jumna rivers but they are all Indians."[139]

What was amazing about this international gathering was not only that it heralded a global universal hegemony, it is a unique beauty in demonstration of brotherhood and equality irrespective of race, colour or social status. The author then described this grand beauty thus:

> The skin colours are very shade of black, brown and pinkish, but like a butterfly emerging from its Chrysalis, national costumes of every sort and colour re-emerge into an international kaleidoscope.[140]

No doubt, this supreme annual congregation on the planet was a clear demonstration of the unique symbol of universal brotherhood of Islam; numerical superiority, a collective divine purpose and so a sophisticated means to achieve greatness in all fields of human endeavours. Because in every head as the Arabs said: "there is wisdom". The virtue of numerical superiority is to harness the collective wisdom in achieving its greatness and with the use of Absolute Reference Frame as a guide, even the sky is not the limit

The human race as a whole, was originally one family and the Holy Qur'an refers to all human beings as one single nation (Q.2:213, 10:19, 21:92, 23:52). Therefore, it anticipated the description of mankind as *Homo sapiens* by several centuries, a fact that was corroborated by the concept of the world as a global village. No other Scripture prior to this Last Testament. The hidden corollary is the emergence willy nilly of Islamic world order. Any new world order with the intention of global hegemony must come from within and not from without. The West's white dominated hierarchical new world order is, therefore, a hope against hope. Historically, the foundation of the veritable era of Universal Islamic

Order were launched by Patriarch Abraham and his first-born:

> "And remember Abraham and Isma'il raised the foundations of the House (with this prayer): "Our Lord! Accept this service from us: for thou art the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing. Our Lord! Make of us Muslims, bowing to Thy (Will), and of our progeny to Thy (Will); and show us our places for the celebration of (due) rites; and turn unto us (in mercy); for Thou art the oft-Returning, Most Merciful. Our Lord! Send amongst them and an Apostle of their own, who shall rehearse Thy sings to them and instruct them in Scripture and Wisdom, and sanctify them: for Thou art the Exalted in Might (Q.2:127-129).

God Almighty heard the solemn prayers of His friend Abraham with his son Ishmael. And already nations are bowing down to His will, therefore, Hajj is a harbinger of that global order and so a *fait accompli*. That being so, then what really punctured the wheel of progress of this erstwhile super nation still remains a subject of conjectures, a series of monotonous discussions among the highly talented theoretical Islamicists of our day who believe in theory rather than in action, even though, Islam is a religion of action. The consequences of the rhetoric were many.

Firstly, they were deceptive in nature. They raised the hope of the Muslim masses when they saw their elite as busy as a bee organising seminars at local, national and international levels where everything was exhaustively discussed and nothing tangible was implemented. They paid only lip services to ARF but only to nip the education of their people in the bud in their own countries. Because they perceived that education of the masses was a potential threat to their collective survival as elite and that their perpetual leadership and sumptuous life-styles would be jeopardised. Secondly, by killing the educational system in their countries, these theoretical islamicists have rendered their people inept, impotent hence, easy preys of the Gog and Magog.

The net result was that in almost all Islamic countries poverty

and illiteracy were the rules rather than the exceptions. The over all consequence was that the Muslims who boasted of numerical numbers could neither protect nor even feed themselves without having recourse to the Gog and Magog for aid and other forms of assistance. Thus, the Muslims of today are faced with myriad of problems; ranging from the kleptomania of their leaders, counter productive attitudes of their elite and the devastating war that was waged against them overtly and more often covertly by *Yajuj and Majuj*.

Yet, they appeared to be unperturbed and oblivious of the grave dangers that faced them. So all over the world they were harried and killed for no faults of any but of themselves. It appears that they will continue to pay heavy price proportionately with the passage of time because their patrons, the Gog and Magog, had made it clear that they were not under any moral obligations to keep any nation alive. The hidden corollary, therefore, was that as masters of the world, if any nation found itself on the brink of extinction they were not to be blamed. But could the Muslims ever learn from both their recent and distant history? Unless they changed what is in their heart they will surely be baptised with fire by this people with habitual sinfulness whom they scorned, despised but with whom they compete in *joie de vivre* at national and international levels. But "the worst of all fools is he who takes his open enemy as a protecting friend," remains a lasting aphorism.

Lastly, the theoretical islamicists had succeeded in putting the Muslims in the straitjacket of history as they whipped them with the sentiments of their past glorious so they were not only unwittingly rendered the praise singers of their heroes past but the objects of caricature of their own time. Because the essence of the historical past is to give the present a lesson, motivation, the quest for maintenance of the monumental achievements, and to be enthused

with the dogged determination to excel. In other words to do greater and more lofty deeds than their ancestors, in other words to keep the trend in ascendancy. Because taking ancestral pride had conspired to almost extinguish the flame of our civilisation. It was, therefore, only through concerted action that the flame could be rekindled so that the torch of Islam would shine forever over all nations. Because Islam is a religion of faith and righteous deeds, of action not inaction.

Education, which almost every Muslim country hates and despises, is the only bedrock of our survival as a nation. It will and at the same time put us at par with the industrialised nations. And with the application of AFR in toto in all the facets of our lives, even the "sky is not the limit". It was for this and other reasons that the Prophet of Islam urged the Muslims to: "seek for knowledge from cradle to grave." Al-Biruni (362-430 A.H/930-1048 AD) was an empirical scientist whose life span was radiant, and he spent it in seeking for knowledge and its dissemination. He answered the prophetic call to the core, because the Absolute Reference Frame emphasised both the creating and acquisition of knowledge. It was in this, the great Scientist lived and died. The story of his death was told by his contemporary who said:

> I heard Al-Biruni was dying. I hurried to his house for a last look; one could see that he would not survive long when they told him of my coming, he opened his eyes and said: are you so and so? I said: Yes. He said: I am told you know the resolution of a knotty problem in the laws of inheritance of Islam. And he alluded to a well known puzzle. I said: Abu Rayhan, at this time? And Al-Biruni replied: Don't you think it is better that I should die knowing rather than Ignorant? With sorrow in my heart, I told him what I knew. Taking my leave, I had not yet crossed the portals of his house when the lament arose from inside: Al-Biruni was dead.[141]

Al-Biruni, a great Scientist lived over one thousand years ago,

in Ghaznah a practical Muslim. Another instance, where Islam in action was practically demonstrated could be cited from the person of Professor Muhammad Abdus Salam, a Pakistani Physicist and the first and up till now the only Muslim Laureate. The Prophet of Islam said: "The best among mankind is he who brings benefits to them." And the World had benefited from the intellect of this illustrious son of Islam.

Louis Pasteur, the great French Scientist discovered Chirality in nature, in spinning molecules he observed in 1848. It was later discovered that Chirality operated in nature only at the material level but how it operates was unknown. Until 1957 when it was discovered that four fundamental forces of nature were responsible; the force of gravity, electromagnetism, nuclear force, and weak interaction. These were discovered to be parity conserving. But at fundamental levels it was discovered that emitted beta particles from radioactive nuclear did not exhibit Chiral-Symmetry. The left-handed electrons exceeded the right-handed electrons. Furthermore, sub-atomic particles, the neutrinos and anti-neutrinos; were electrically neutral and were abundant in nature, they spin as they travelled with the speed of light. But unlike electrons they right-hand spin.

Hence, it remained a mystery why chiral-assymetry existed at fundamental levels. Meanwhile, Scientists propounded many theories in the attempt to explain the reason why. So Abdus Salam, Steven Weinberg and Sheldon Glashow in 1960, propounded a theory which unify the weak electromagnetic forces. It was a theory that suggested a new electroweak force, which did not conserve parity and was responsible for the chiral-assymetry at fundamental levels.They succeeded in unifying and establishing the identity of two of the fundamental forces of nature the electric and the weak nuclear.

Professor Abdus Salam, went further to demonstrate that in

Islam Faith and Science could co-exist in "harmonious complementarity." He said in his paper on *Islam and Science inter alia:*

> ...Personally for me, my faith was predicated by the timeless spiritual message of Islam, on matters on which physics is silent, and will remain so. It was given meaning to by the very first verse, of the Holy Qur'an after the Opening:
>
> This is the Book, wherein there is doubt, a guidance to the God-fearing who believe in the unseen (Q2:203).[142]

To again answer the question posed earlier on by the Nobel Laureate, is to answer in the affirmative that "yes," it is still possible to regain the past glory of Islam and to lead in Science. The fault only lies with the Muslims, who with such great potentials and the perspicacity had fallen into stupor in the midst of dangerous enemies. What are now required for the Renaissance of Sciences in the Muslims are a change of heart and the application of AFR in our daily lives. Because Allah (s.w.t) does not change the condition of the people unless they change what is in their heart. Therefore, the need to implement Sharia in all the Commonwealth of the Faithful cannot be overemphasised, otherwise, the evil trend of global *Mufsiduna fil ardhi* could not reversed. To hold in check the spread of this evil culture was what Zulqarnain story teaches.

But the Muslims who were supposed to be the global policemen to ensure justice and the rule of divine laws had become inept and powerless. Thus, with Muslims effectively sidelined the world was overwhelmed with many evils. The people who characteristically were known for *Mufsiduna fil ardhi* usurped their role and became the *de facto* the policemen of the world. The outcome was horrendous, because even the Muslims themselves had become the easy preys of Yajuj and Majuj and their agents.

Having trapped the Muslims in a state of bewilderment and despondency, the people with obstinate denial of God Almighty

maintained the onslaughts with spurious writings to further infect them with inferiority complex. They made it appear that Scientific achievements was the prerogative of the great white race and at the same time made all attempts to bury their past. They succeeded to a considerable extent because they know the mechanics of the conscious and subconscious mind and how to conquer it, using many dubious means.

One of the ways was to de-emphasise the contributions of other races to man's stock of knowledge through falsification or even literary tempt or 'kidnapping' and instances abound with in history. Shahid Athar (ed.), in *Islamic Perspective in Medicine* cited many examples some of which *inter alia* were:

> Ibn al-Haitham known as Alhazen in the West was one of the greatest physicists of all time and an experimentalist of the first order in the science of optics. When he claimed that "a ray of light in passing through a medium takes the path, which is easier and quicker" he anticipated Fermat's Principle of Least Time by many centuries. He described the law of inertia, later to become Newton's 1st Law of Motion. Refraction was described in mechanical terms by considering the movement of "particles of light" as they passed through the surface of separation between two media, in accordance with the rectangle law of force – an approach later rediscovered and elaborated by Newton.
>
> Roger Bacon's Opus Majus Part V is essentially a copy of Ibn-al-Haitham's optics. It is not surprising therefore that we hear of Bacon's admonition to his own contemporaries in the West that he "never wearied of declaring that a knowledge of Arabic and of Arabic Science was the only way to true knowledge". Al-Biruni was an empirical Scientist like Ibn-al-Haitham who worked in Afghanistan. He anticipated Galileo by six centuries in his discovery of the so-called Galilean invariance of the laws of nature – perhaps the most liberating statement in Science "that the same Laws of Physics apply here on earth as they do the stars and planets in the heavens."[143]

Thus, the Golden Age of Science in Islam, which George

Sarton said had dominated the world for almost three centuries was at the same time an era of heightened plagiarism of Muslims' works and literature by the Europeans. And only a few even cared to make acknowledgements like Roger Bacon. The reason was simply to project themselves as the only champions of human civilisation at all times.

But we know well enough that as Philip Mason stated that Rome was civilised when Britain was so barbarous, that Cicero advised his friend not to buy British slaves because they were too stupid and backward to learn anything. To an Egyptian of the sixth century BC. Rome would have seemed a small and barbarous Italian town still forced to capture its women from its enemies, the Sabines.[144] It could be seen clearly that man's stock of knowledge received the contributions of the Egyptians; the Persians, the Indians, the Chinese and the Incas and Muslims many centuries before the coming of the Europeans. The Europeans were only lucky to reap where many nations had sowed.

In corroborating this important point Professor H. Bondi, Professor of Applied Mathematics, Kings College, University of London in *Apollo and the Universe* said *inter* alia that:

> It is very easy to make a mistake of believing that people who didn't know what everybody now knows must have been very stupid. This is entirely and utterly false: there is not the slightest reason to believe that human intelligence has improved; the only things that has improved, in a certain sense, is education. Each new generation receives its "baggage" the cumulative experience of earlier generations, and since the amount of experience has a better start than its predecessors. (p.228)

In this regard, therefore, could the West refute the fact that it did not receive the "baggage" of the cumulative experience of the early Muslims? Consequently, they have no moral or historical rights to claim the cumulative glories won by many nations. They

are at present playing their own role like the previous nations before the Wheel of Progress would turned. After all justice demands favour done by others must be appreciated, acknowledged and reciprocated. It is injustice for a nation to bite the fingers that fed her.

But racists claimed that "blood is thicker than water." In a world that was stratified for racial domination, justice in the real sense of it ceased to have any meaning. It was with a purpose that divinity was forced on Alexander the Great and Roman emperors, contrary to the past traditions of their people. The predetermined end in view was to show that they were the "almighty god" so that the non-white nations would be inflicted with inferiority, a prejudice and stereotype manner of servitude to the "almighty white." A status quo to be by falsification of history and by the use of statistics.

In order to maintain a racial superiority and dominance, they put under their control all the means of dissemination of information through various means, so that the contributions of non-white intellectuals remained hidden or de-emphasised publicly, while an equal contribution of white intellectuals on the other hand were highly publicised. Even those non-white academic contribution that could not be fully suppressed the names of such outstanding intellectuals were fine-tuned to sound like those of the Europeans in such a subtle way that it would make little or no difference to the general public. So that as far as they were concerned they were all whites. The Muslim names were distinct from those of the Europeans, consequently they were altered most with this predetermined end view.

For example, Abu-Bakr Muhammad Ibn-Zakaria Al-Razi (841-926 AD), a great physician whose literary works had advanced the course of Medicine became "Razes" in the Western world. His works were translated into Latin and Al-Razi's works had strong impact in both the field of medicine and pharmacology on the West. Another distinguished scholar was Abu-Al-Qasim Khalaf Ibn Abbas

Al-Zahrawi (931-1013 AD). Europeans after benefiting from his great works changed his name to "Abucasis", Bucasis" and "Alzahravius".

Similarly, Abu-Ali Husayn Ibn-Abdullahi Ibn Sina (980-1037 AD). This great scholar wrote 100 treatises. His *Al-Qanun fi al-Tibb* or Canon of Medicine, his *Magnum Opus*, was well acclaimed as the saviour of Europe. It was an encyclopaedia containing more than one million words composed of 5 volumes. This great work encompassed all the principles and theories of medicine, pharmacognosy and pharmacology. Europe, after plagiarising his works changed his name to "Avicenna". Others, like Ibn Rushed (1126-1198 AD) was changed to "Averroes," Ala El-Deen Ibn El-Nafsi (1208-1288 AD). This great scientist added to the knowledge of physiology of circulation. He was indeed the discoverer of the system of blood circulation before his great literary work was "kidnapped" by William Harvey.

Europe, therefore, was the first to benefit directly from the Muslims' contribution to man's stock of knowledge. So it was also the Muslims who first preserved the Europeans to live and to survive the numerous pestilence, epidemic diseases of bacteria and viruses and their pandemics. The Muslim Scientists with whose knowledge they survived, they Europeanised their names to make them their own with dubious end in view. If it were even possible to efface their history in the Dark Ages and the Medieval period they would have done so. But history cannot be changed. The West wages a total war against the Muslims who once saved her. Because, perhaps, this is a new world order where everything is topsy turvy. Oerhaps, they still feel nervous about the Muslims who may cast shadow on their glory.

Although the West changed the names of the Muslim Scientists that saved them but they could not change history, even though there is a subtle process doing so. Because to many, Avicenna, Averroes and Razes were all Europeans who gave monumental

contributions to human civilisation. They latinised their names to serve two purposes: firstly, to slowly and gradual erase their past history and secondly, to create in the sub-conscious minds of the people that scientific achievements were the birth rights of only the Whites; the non-white, therefore, were only the ungrateful beneficiaries. They at last succeeded in sinking this notion into the conscious and subconscious minds of all peoples using their powerful means of disseminating information.

It is pertinent at this juncture to revisit the sordid state of *Yajuj and Majuj* in their evolution into nation states especially the Dark Ages and the Medieval period, and how they were saved by Islam. At this crucial period of the history they were poor, ignorant, extremely barbaric and lawless. They were to be decimated by various diseases, in a large scale which was aggravated by their most horrendous unhygienic behaviour and squalid environment. To make matters worse, they had no knowledge of disease and its cure, therefore, the sick were left to perish. So they employed the method of ringing bells by the sick people to alert passers-by that a person with a contagious disease was nearby for everybody to run away and take shelter.

Consequently, bacteria and viruses had a field day killing Europeans in thousands. This was their pathetic state in the Dark Ages. And during the Medieval period Europeans came into conflict with Christianity. The Church wanted to rid them of their heinous habits and wanted to enforce the Laws of God unto the lawless people. So that their ways of life must be God-centred. But even healing of diseases must conform with the Bible and the powerful Church. But the teachings of the Christendom especially with respect to disease and treatment did not help matters either. Because it taught that poverty and diseases purified souls, the sick people must not seek for drug treatment but must resort to prayers because Jesus Christ used nothing except the power of prayers, so Prayer

Houses were, therefore, built all over Europe where sick people were taken for prayers by Fathers and Reverend Sisters who usually acted as the nurses by feeding the sick people while praying for them.

But diseases continued to spread like wildfire due to the rampant outbreaks of epidemics and pandemics of various diseases, which often occurred from these Prayer Houses the death toll continued to, rise, Europe was on the verge of extinction, when Black Death stroke, it killed almost half of their population. Hence Europeans as a result were forced to look elsewhere for survival and fortunately, they found it in Islam.

However, in the Muslim world the reverse was the case. In their major cities like Baghdad there were schools, good roads, good drainage system, Aqueducts, irrigation channels, a system of storing grain, an elaborate network of taxation and government. Sick people were treated with drugs. In schools pupils were taught hygiene that cleanliness is next to Godliness, moderation in eating and the importance of learning. In the Mosque scholars were exhaustive busy discussing subjects like mathematics, medicine astronomy, pharmacology. And researchers were undertaken collecting the Scientific works of Chinese, Indians, and the Greeks, which they all preserved and added their own. What made the distinct difference between the Muslim world and Europe was the impact of the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah – the Absolute Reference Frame, which became the reference for all actions by the early Muslims who were destined to keep the torch of human civilisation burning in the annals of history.

The prophet of Islam (s.a.w) taught the Ummah that: "Allah is Merciful He never sends a disease without its cure. And when a right diagnosis is made and correct therapy is applied the disease will be cured by Allah's Will." This opened up a new chapter in the history of modern concept of health, drugs, diseases and treatment,

which Muslims first championed and dominated for almost three centuries. The Apostle of God also advised the Muslims and to: "seek for knowledge be it in China." This meant distance should not be the barrier in search for knowledge and that it could be sought for everywhere and from every creed or civilisation. He then invigorated the Muslims with this imperishable saying: "The ink of a scholar is holier than the blood of martyr." The Prophet of Islam therefore charted a new course of scholarship aptly described as Modern Education.

Fortunately, the Europeans got access to the civilising influences of the Muslims Spain in Cordoba. They received the light of Islam into the darkest recesses of Europe. Interestingly, with the impact of Islam, drug treatment, diagnosis and doctors were introduced into the Prayer Houses thus they became Hospitals. Thus, hospitals evolved from Christianity and Islam, the former introduced the building as Prayer-House and provided the nurses, while from the latter provided the doctors with the art of examination of the sick and the drugs for treatment. The two sister religions, therefore, combined to save the world. Sir Bernard Shaw, studied the Prophet of Islam very closely it was with reasons that he described him the saviour of mankind.

In the evolution the European nations navigated through difficult waters. The Black Death speeded up the decline of the feudal system, dissociation from Religious obligations and the Renaissance ushered in their expansion into free scientific states. They finally emerged with the modern pattern of Dominance. But from their past experiences they came to terms with two distinctive characteristics; racism and acquisition of knowledge. They never played with both. Since they were saved from annihilation by the Muslim world of education, it always remained a top priority without, which racial global domination that they wanted to enthrone could not be feasible. Knowledge in the words of Steine: "Nothing in life after health and virtue is more inestimable than

knowledge, nor is there anything so easily attained, or so cheaply purchased – the labour, only sitting still, and the expense but time, which if we do not spend we cannot save."

The Muslims were the first teachers of the Europeans but because of racial and religious reasons, they abandoned their primary teachers for classical Greece. So in reality, they were tutored by both.

Alexander the Great first introduced the racial global dominance in a new world order aptly described as pan-Hellenism in which he created "Island of Greeks in the sea of barbarians", the same policy is being followed up till now. While Alexander in his new world order destroyed every other forms of civilisation to promote that of Greeks, in this dispensation, however, physical means of destruction was not followed but surreptitious manipulations to reshape and tint it with European colouring to make it look what it actually was not. So they latinised the names of the past Muslim thinkers, philosophers and Scientists who were among the first to contribute immensely to man's stock of knowledge. They went further than that as they falsified the accounts of their noble contributions through spurious writings in order to shift the credits to others in a broad daylight robbery.

They used statistics to create an image in the subconscious minds of people through the clever use of statistical data. So that by going through the series of names of inventors, discovers and famous scientists only their own names would appear to be seen very conspicuously. To the undiscerning reader, consciously or unconsciously he would get the impression that the history of the modern world had begun at the Renaissance era and the supremacy of the white race remains incontestable. But statistics are like bikinis. What they reveal is interesting. But what they conceal is often very interesting indeed." Hence only few historians dare to reveal the travails of the Europeans in the Dark Ages and the Middle Ages or Medieval period because modern history did not

start from there but from the Renaissance, and all historic events prior to it must be thrown into the dustbin of history.

Since Alexander's time the hormones of racism had been rising in their veins it now reached a crescendo. Such that in this present world order, everything is viewed with racial spectacles and is weighed it on the scale of ambition in global hegemony. They love, respect, celebrate and honour any of their member who had accomplished a great deed that would promote the racial system by making him a national or inter-national idol or hero of all times. This was to maintain the tempo of nationalism to remain constantly high. Thus, the path to stardom was made smooth, easy and extremely rewarding. Calvin Coolidge once said: "No person was ever honoured for what he received. Honour has been awarded for what he gave." National and international stars of every field were displayed in pomp and pageantry. This was to serve as good a motivation to others that nationalism was indeed beneficial in this world and the press fanned the flame of this "Religion". Thus, a celebrity of national or international standing attracted friends from all corners. Because without the flame of nationalism burning in their bellies, racism could not survive to achieve international dominance.

Europeans succeeded in this regard to a considerable extent because no nation could stand them in their frenzied effort to make the world their personal estate. The Muslims, whose civilisation could match and even supersede the Western Culture were, unfortunately, in disarray because they have failed to make the effective use of the Absolute Reference Frame as a result they are now like the Biblical Samson with shaved hair. Consequently, the nation who had the moral obligations to aid, feed and keep other nations alive was itself reduced to a beggar nation and even more serious was being pushed to the brink of total annihilation. Ironically the Muslim elite, compromised, contemptible, connived

with the God and Magog and their agents to ensure that their own people were pauperised through brutal looting of their public treasuries. Ironically it was their own people they did not want to see live a modest life, or to see very enterprising and independent. They did not want to see them grow great to contribute to man's stock of knowledge like the early Muslims. Instead, they wanted to see their own people reduced to begging, idleness and jobless, thuggery and dying in hundreds of disease and poverty. It was a lamentable story because the Muslims who were supposed to keep other nations alive could not even allow their own people to live but to perish ignominiously in the hands of Yajuj and Majuj or their agents.

Consequently, the road to stardom in most Muslim countries was dangerous, difficult and unrewarding. Because as anti-hero, a talented person attracts more enemies rather than friends. And leaders have aversion for the education of their populace. The net effect is that they are now one of the most backward people in the world. While the Prophet of Islam said: "Seek for knowledge from cradle to grave". But the people of our time reversed the prophetic call to: "Seek for easy wealth from cradle to grave". So that both the rulers and the ruled in a marathon race all hankered after easy money and they take pride in the possession of expensive materials, the intellectual products of others not their own. As a result their standing in the world has been diminishing ever since with grave consequences. What power respects is power. Does the Muslim world has the power to be respected in this fast receding world?

The entire world is now reduced to a village almost a complete domain of the Europeans, and they are in the last lap of making it their personal estate and re-shaping it in their own image; stratified into a ladder of racial hierarchy in which they are on top. The well carefully planned new world order in which not "islands" were be created but the whole "sea of barbarians" was to be Europeanised.

Philip Mason, quoted H.A.L. Fisher, a former Cabinet Minister and the Warden of New College, Oxford, in the introduction to his History of Europe who made a clean breast of it thus:

> If a comprehensive survey of the globe were to be made, it would be found that in almost every quarter of it there were settlements of European men or traces of the operation of the European mind. The surviving aboriginal peoples in the Western Hemisphere are a small, unimportant and dwindling element in the population. The African Negroes have been introduced by white men as an economic convenience. Northern and Southern America are largely populated by colonists from Europe. Australasia is British. The political direction of Africa has fallen, with the ambiguous exception of the lower reaches of the Nile, into European hands. In Asia the case is not dissimilar. The political influences of Europe are apparent even where they are not, as in India or Palestine, embodied in direct European control... [145]

Mason, also added that the author subsequently listed examples of the "incomparable gifts of modern Science", which were due to the "astounding Supremacy" of the Europeans. The Muslim elite suppressed the growth of their own people at their own peril. Because Muslims would be the first to be ejected as tenants when the world finally become the personal estate of the Europeans. They might as well begin to pack their bags and baggage now. Because the impending landlord, warned repeatedly that he was not under any obligation to keep anybody alive in his white dominated world. The Serbian ethnic cleansing of the Bosnian and Albanian Muslims were only previews, the real film has not begun. So weak and vulnerable the Muslim world is a candle in the wind.

The *Ummah* at present is at the crossroad, it will either be blown-out or be nudged into Renaissance. A very tight and perilous situation the West found itself in the mediaeval period. Analysts argued that there were a lot in common between the Christian of the 15th century, the period Europe went through shortly before the Reformation with Islam in its 15th century AH. According to a

popular saying history repeats itself, the present state of despondency among Muslims might end up to be a good omen – The Islamic Renaissance is, therefore, at hand. While *The Economist* of Britain in its Survey of Islam did spell out this crude imitation of history and it also drew up what it referred to as the Reformation checklist, which in itself underscores the fact that Islamic Renaissance is inevitable.

The Reformation check-lists

Item one: a simultaneous dillusionment with both the religious and the political apparatus of the old order. The great pre-Reformation wave of discontent in Europe was chiefly directed at the corrupt worldliness of the Catholic Church, but it also had a political target. Economic misery and the growing high-handedness of government had lately produced Wat Tyler's rebellion in England and the Jacquerie in France. The resentment would not fade; disorder continued. The present wave of Islamic discontent is chiefly aimed at corrupt politicians who have run out of new ideas, but it also has a religious target. The official structure of the Muslim religion has grown dusty and quibbly, and too much of it backs those corrupt politicians.

Some Muslims will tell you there is no comparison between the two periods, because Christianity and Islam are different in the way they are organised; Muslims have no priests, and nothing like the multi-layered hierarchy of the medieval church. They are right about the different but wrong in the conclusion they draw from it: Islam's organisation is indeed much looser than that of most Christian churches, except perhaps among its 15% Shia minority. But in its imams and muftis and ulema it does have an official structure. To radicals longing to revive the old vigour of Islam, much of this structure seems weary, compromised and contemptible.

Item two: an almost cosmic sense of despair. In Europe's early 15th century this was a result partly of the Black Death, which had recently killed a third of the population without warning or explanation, and partly of the disintegration of the Catholic Church, which had two rival popes in Rome and Avignon. In Islam's early 15th century the causes are different.

The reasons for despair come mainly from abroad – a long history of international defeat and humiliation, the current harrying of Muslims by so many of their neighbours, a growing sense of isolation. But the result is the same. Something, it seems has gone appallingly wrong. The world has come to pieces. When people feel like that, they can do foolish and dangerous things.

Item three: a powerful desire to put things right by going back to the roots of the faith. For the enthusiasts of Islamic revivalism, as for men like John Wycliffe and Jan Hus in the years before the start of the Reformation, going back to the roots means a return to the presumed simplicities of the early days of the religion, a new embrace of the religion's first writings. But it also means something else.

The pre-Reformation period in Europe brought into being a multitude of sects, many of which saw it as their duty to preach and work among the poor. Now too, the Islamic revival has produced a large number of more or less autonomous groups, many of which make it their job to provide health clinics, canteens and basic schooling in the slum-suburbs of the big Muslim cities. A return to the roots includes a return to the idea of good works, of caring for the unfortunate: charity, Zakat.

Item four: an enriching stimulus from outside. The likeness here is remarkable. It deserves more attention that it usually gets.

Jorgen Nielsen, the director of the Islam and Christian – Muslim Relations Centre at Selly Oak Colleges in Birmingham, England, points out that the Reformation was helped to its birth by two things which came to Europe from the outside world. One-nice irony – was Europe's cultural intercourse with the Arab empire, which brought Europe back into contact with its intellectual roots in classical Greece (and also brought the bonus of an introduction to the Arab's own achievements in science and Arts). That helped to produce the Renaissance, which itself helped to bring about the Reformation. The second stimulus from outside was the discovery of America in 1492, and the import soon thereafter of American gold and silver, which destabilised the existing European economy, but also offered the possibility of a much richer one.

Both sort of stimulus have their equivalent in today's Islam. For the gold and silver of the early 1500s, read oil. Massive purchases of Arab oil

by the industrial world, especially after the oil shocks of 1973 and 1979, have both destabilised much of Islam's existing economy and provided it with the possibility of greater riches. And for the medieval cultural inflow into Europe from the Arab empire – admirable counter-irony – read the inflow into Islam now of modern western culture and technology. In this combination are the possible makings of a great change.

But good grief, say the sceptics, even if four similarities to make an Islamic Reformation, which is by no means certain, it will take for too long. From Renaissance to Reformation in Europe took roughly 150 years, from Reformation to the serious growth of democracy another 300. We cannot wait for so many years.

The answer is that we shall not have to. Things happen hugely faster these days. Ideas that in the Christian 15th century had to travel by sailing ship and horse, often getting twisted on the journey, now go zip from screen to screen. Even better, the people of today's Muslim countries are on the whole much readier to absorb new ideas than were 15th century Europeans. A lot more of them have had an education; most have access to television; all of them know there is another world out here.[146]

This British international magazine made a carefully drawn up parallel motifs with respect to the crucial periods in their history – Islam and the West, which no doubt brought some consolation, the inevitable great change in *Daral-Islam*, a change of the *Ummah* for the better. A new rebirth in the right direction, a social system where the life and action of every Muslim would be guided by the Absolute Reference Frame. The inherent greatness of the Islam civilisation was again attested for; in its state of apparent weakness and of despondency, it still radiates the aura of inevitable great change. The magazine in this respect also called upon the West to give its positive contribution in making it a reality thus:

But there is, as ever, the other side of the coin. The previous four articles were about the ways in which Muslims may have to change if Islam and the West are to be reasonably congenial 21st century companions. The West, however, also has a contribution to make. One part of that contribution is a matter of being clearer-eyed about what Europe and America wish to achieve in their relationships with Islam. The other is a possible

> change in the West's own way of life, a change that would broaden the shared platform of ideas on which the two civilisations stand.[147]

It is, therefore, hoped that the West would abide by to these laudable advises, a change of attitude and a way of life may prove to be difficult for the West. But the West is guaranteed that it has nothing to fear in this Islamic Reformation, indeed, the two civilisations though apparently in opposition of to each but in reality they are complementary of one another, provided creed, acrimony and mutual envy are kept aside. But should the West panicked and perceived the inevitable Islamic Reformation as a deterrent to or would collide with her new world order, and then attempt to derail it, it will undoubtedly, trigger off a cascade of global crises, which might even consumed the world. "But the West should be clear in its mind", the Economist wrote, "that properly handled, these quarrels are merely the usual difficulties of a time of transition; and should be an easier relationship with a modernised Islam."[148]

Islam has always been a modern creed because of its adaptability to every phase of social changes. As a religion of peace, Islam bears culture in the world. Its greatness lies in compatibility with science as Professor Abdus Salam highlighted.

A paper he delivered at the International Symposium of Abrahamic Unity, Corodoba, 12-15 February, 1987. Professor Muhammad Abdus Salam, Nobel Laureate was also the president of the Third World Academy of Sciences and Director of the International Centre for Theoretical Physics, Trieste.

> He also described another monumental work in which they postulated: The possibility that space-time may have ten (or in some versions of the theory, eleven) dimensions. Attempting to unify the electroweak force with the remaining of the two basic forces; the force of gravity and the strong nuclear force. Of the ten, four are the familiar dimensions of space and time. The curvature of these familiar space and time dimensions

determines the size and life-span of our present universe, according to Einstein's ideas.

The curvature of these familiar space and time dimensions determines the size and life-span of our present universe, according to Einstein's ideas. The curvature of the extra six dimensions, one has newly postulated gives the electric and the nuclear charges we are familiar with. But why don't we apprehend these extra dimensions directly? Why only indirectly through the existence of the electric and the nuclear charges? Why the difference between the four familiar space-time dimensions and the extra internal dimensions which , according to our present thinking, have sizes no larger than 10-33 cms?

At present, we make this plausible by postulating a self-consistency principle; we invent a field of force designed to guarantee such a configuration as the only stable self-consistent dynamical system which can exist. The theory works, for example, if and only if the number of extra dimensions is six – or in another version of the theory, at most seven. However, there will be subtle physical consequences in the form of remnants, like the recently discovered 3 degree black-body radiation which fills the universe and which we know was a remnant of an early era in the evolution of the universe. We shall search for these remnants. If we do not find them we shall abandon the idea.

Creation from nothing, extra dimensions – strange topics, for late twentieth century physics – appear no different from the metaphysical preoccupations of earlier times. But so far as science is concerned, mark the provisional nature of the conceptual edifice, the insistence on empirical verification at each stage and the concept of driving self consistency...[149]

The dismal performance of the Islamic world in the field of sciences was of grave concern to every patriotic Muslim who will be seriously at pain in knowing that according to Abdus Salam, the first meeting of the Science Commission of the Organisation of Islamic Conference, held in Islamabad on 10-13 May 1983, a figure of around 45,000 research and development Scientists and engineers was given for the entire Islamic world, compared to one and a half

million in the USSR and four hundred thousand in Japan.

In this respect he said that A.B. Zahlan, a lecturer at the American University of Beirut when he analysed this and other dismal figures, he revealed that the Islamic Community, which is around one tenth in size, was only one-hundredth in scientific creativity in research publication as compared to the international norms. It was indeed a gory tale, which rendered the heart to torpid and the body to shudder to find that now knowledge is only found in the lands of *Yajuj and Majuj*. Every Muslim and sympathetic non-Muslim, among whom Professor Abdus Salam mentioned was Francis Giles, who in *Nature*, a Scientific Journal of 24 March, 1983, raised this pertinent question; "What is wrong with Muslim Science?" He opined that:

> At its peak about one thousand years ago, the Muslim world, made a remarkable contribution to Science, notably mathematics and medicine. Baghdad in its heyday and southern Spain built universities to which thousands flocked: rulers surrounded themselves with scientists and artists. A spirit of freedom allowed Jews, Christians and Muslims to work side by side. Today all this is but a memory.
>
> Expenditure on Science and technology may have increased in recent years though that increase has been, perforce, limited to oil-rich countries... Some of these countries are busy fighting wars, which cost billions of dollars – no doubt they have little time for Science. Trade structures are dominated by dictatorships, benevolent or otherwise... further complicating *any attempt to allow science to take root indigenously*. Not surprising the brain drain to industrialised countries continues to debilitate intellectual life throughout the Middle East.[150]

Giles' observation and remarks were objective, sincere and appropriate. Brain Drain Syndrome had ravaged the intellectual life of not only the Middle East but almost the entire Islamic world not only because they developed an aversion for scholarship but because of their antipathy towards scholars, added weight to the problem who as a result made exodus to the West in search of a greener

pasture. It was ironical how the Muslims have become obstinately anti-hero. A pernicious culture that is in contradiction to the Absolute Reference Frame (ARF) because a large number of Hadith encouraged scholarshiup and respect for scholars. And about one-eight of the Holy Qur'an exhorts the acquisition of knowledge For example, the Prophet (s.a.w) said:.

> The seeking of knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim man and woman.
>
> Verily, the men of knowledge are the inheritors of the Prophets.
>
> The learned (men) are the successors of the Prophets. They leave behind knowledge as inheritance. One who inherits it *obtains a great fortune.*
>
> Acquire knowledge, he who acquires it is the way of Allah, Performs an act of Piety, he who speaks it praises the Lord, he who seeks it adores God, he who dispenses instruction in it bestows arms, he who imparts it to the deserving persons performs and act of devotion.
>
> The superiority of the learned (men) over a mere worshipper is *like my superiority over the least of you.*

The unfortunate fact was that the noble teachings of the Holy Qur'an and Hadith were reversed in the Muslim countries, not by their words but by their deeds and conscious behaviour. For instance, where the Holy Prophet said: "Seeking of knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim man and woman", what we are now seeing among the generality of the Muslims is seeking of money has become obligatory instead.

The result are greed and avarice of occidental fashion, almost everything is done and can be done for money, because everything has a price tag. This avarice that soaked deep and quickly into the *Ummah* could be attributed to the socio-cultural impact of *Yajuj and Majuj* upon the global community. Unfortunately, this is happening in the face of active religious activities in the Muslim countries. Even though the Holy Qur'an insists on: "Believe and do righteous

deeds." And as Apostle James, the brother of Jesus Christ put it: "Faith without work is dead". Because the consequences of paying lip service to God are both serious and numerous in this world and in the Hereafter. The impact of belief without righteous deeds or life without the guiding principles of sharia on the *Ummah* has appallingly reduced her power and influence so making her as insecure as candle in the wind.

Consequently, the plight of the Muslims of today can be compared to that of the Russians; both were erstwhile world power, both had fallen grace, the former for believing in God without righteous deeds and the latter for denial of God completely. As a Chinese sage said: "To know and not to do is not to know." So what makes the difference?

It is not our wont of liking valuable articles without the labour of manufacturing" as William Eton put it, it had never been in our character. Because the saviour of mankind and Human Civilisation told us to: "Look for this world as if you will live in it forever and look for the next world as if you will die tomorrow." This implies we must be industrious and excel over others in all fields. What Islam needs is excellence so that we might not live a disgraceful life in both the worlds.

In the One World System

Hajj symbolises the dissolution of all cultures into a homogenous, single entity united willy nilly by the spirit of global *ummatism;* with the subsequent emergence of an indissoluble Islamic universal world. But with the appallingly dismal failure of the present league of United Nations that has become an instrument of the powerful nations against the weaker nations and had successfully enthroned America as the policeman of the world, the *de facto* position it assumed, consequently, ushered in waves of terror unto the world.

A critic might reasonably posit that will cultures, societies and civilisations that constituted the peoples of this world be

successfully united as one entity in the face of humanity in its diversity? Martyr, Murtada Mutahhari discussed this issue and provided insights into this seeming impossible attainment. He said:

> The problem is also associated with the problem of nature and essence of society, and the type of relationship between the collective and the individual spirits. Evidently, on the basis of the theory of man's primordial nature – according to which his social existence, his social life and as a result, the spirits are the means chosen by human nature to attain its own perfection.[151]

Islam captured the essence of the primordial nature of man at its fundamental level as a result it is the only civilisation in the face of this world that can unify all men to a single character bound together as one bloc. The success of which is symbolised in the annual pilgrimage, where the unifying power of Islamic universal brotherhood is forever demonstrated. This Islamic belief in the unity of mankind is the corollary of the doctrine of the unity of God. The same God is the Creator and the Nourisher of man and women of all nations, irrespective of their races, colours, creed and cultures.

Islam has succeeded in fostering a global unity at its fundamental levels where the Western formulation of the United Nations cannot even attempt, because it is a conglomeration of nations bounded by coercion, intimidation and pecuniary interests. It is indeed a grand deception at the global level, where the collective interests of all are teleguided to serve that of United States and its values – in a power play where "united in Nations" serves and dances to the tune of "United in States." Of course, there is no unity in this treachery and betrayal of the nations.

With respect to the unity of purpose and the universal fraternity of Islam, Allah (swt) commanded that: "And hold fast all of you together, to the cable of God, and be not disunited. And remember God's favour unto you." (Q. 2:103). In the formation and evolution of a genuine United Nations, there must be an anchor and Islam has the strongest one – the cable of God which never breaks. The Holy

Qur'an also mentioned the integrating principle to be applied as we all hold unto this all-powerful cable: "Surely the believers are but brothers. So set things right between your brothers, and beware of God – perhaps you will obtain mercy." (Q. 49:10).

Muhtar Holland made an excellent exposition of this universal Islamic fraternity as enshrined in the constitution of the world in his The Duties of Brotherhood in Islam where he quoted Al-Ghazali's analogy of this brotherhood thus:

> Know that the contract of brotherhood is a bond between two persons, like the contract of marriage between two spouses. For just as marriage gives rise to certain duties which must be fulfilled when it is entered into, so does the contract of brotherhood confer upon your brother a certain right touching your property, your person, and your tongue – by way of forgiveness, prayer, sincerity, loyalty, relief and considerateness.[152]

In fact Imam Al-Ghazali aptly described eight duties of brotherhood. The Prophet of Islam (SAW) said: "Two brothers are likened to a pair of hands, one of which washes the other." Thus the Universal Brotherhood in Islam is a strong uniting and cohesive force that can dissolve all men of all nations irrespective of their social block into the real United Nations. Islam de-emphasises all the disintegrating factors that are found in the present fake United Nations. It is fake because it spearheaded all the dividing forces of race, colour and culture and reshaped them to meet the politico-economic expediencies of the white race as it unites men only at the material level. It has now, consequently, become a mere an instrument and had since outlived its usefulness.

But our United Nations (the Global Ummah) is the direct opposite of the present League of Nations, which divided mankind into feuding sects so as to maintain a global hierarchy along colour-line. In the United Nations, racism, tribal and nationalism pose a great deal of danger to this conglomeration of nations who are forced, intimidated and blackmailed to remain as bona fide

members, thus they perpetually remain the ready meals of the industrilised who served as cankerworms.

Ethnicity and racial bigotry were removed completely from our United Nations. It rejected all false criteria of superiority to provide an excellent yardstick for honour – righteousness and good conduct the only marks of superiority in the sight of God. These are virtues that can be cultivated by all and not just the accident of birth – ethnicity and racism. It was in this respect that Allah (swt) said:

> "O mankind! Lo, We have created you male and female and made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! The noblest of you in the sight of God is the best in conduct. Lo! God is All-Knowing, All-Aware. (Q. 49:13)

In his description of Hajj, the Global Ummah in "session" Geoffrey Jansen said: "The skin colours are every black, brown, pinkish white but the simple uniform enjoined on the pilgrim makes a 'sea of white' until main rites are performed." This sea of white depicted the synthesis of individual spirit irrespective of tribe or race into indissoluble entity. It gives the beauty and the kaleidoscopic view of the future society – the evolution of the global ummah. In this race of global unification Martyr Mutahhari said:

> ...It may be said that societies, cultures and civilisations are moving towards homogeneity and unification, and ultimate would merge into one another. The future of human societies lies in a highly developed, single and universal society, in which all positive human values shall be released. Man shall attain true perfection and shall realise his own authentic humanity.[153]

Man will only realise his own authentic humanity in a congenial environment not where he is de-humanised or his autochthonous values denigrated like in the League of Nations or the United Nations. Which late Allama Sir Muhammad Iqbal, the greatest Muslim thinker of modern times aptly described as a "League of Thieves." He was vindicated by history. The best league

on the Arafat Day you will awed with love, respect and reverence because you can never get it somewhere else. Mount Zion is rather an obscure mountain in Israel and falls into insignificance in terms of "all-nations flow into it" as compared to Arafat. So it was not the mountain referred to in the prophecy.

Prophet Isaiah then vividly described some of the activities of the pilgrims during Hajj especially with respect to the Arafat Day. Because it is mandatory to every pilgrim to stand on this mountain on this special day, where he must perform salats: Zuhr and Asr prayers together in advance with Qasr (shortening) by one Azan and two Iqamats following the tradition of the Prophet (SAW). Standing on this special mountain is s crucial to Hajj without which the pilgrimage is not complete. So it is a day of intense activities by the pilgrims as it was foretold by Isaiah thus:

> And many shall go and say, come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of God of Jacob; and He will teach of His ways, and we will walk in His paths. (*Is.* 2:3)

Here the prophet predicted the crucial centrality of Arafat Day to the successful completion of Hajj. Hence the excitement and eagerness on the part of the pilgrims were expected. All these were captured by the great prophet thus: "And many shall go, and say, come ye, and let us go up to the mountain (Arafat) of the Lord." Any pilgrim will confirm this exhortation amongst the pilgrims to you. Because when a pilgrim misses Arafat Day his Hajj is incomplete. So they remind each other thus: "Let us go up to Mountain Arafat." This mountain is indeed the mountain of the Lord, therefore, the most exalted over and above any other mountain in the world. It is reiterated that mountain Zion is not an international or multinational hub of activities, hence it is out of this prophecy.

Prophet Isaiah then described the next stage of Hajj after the Arafat: "(Let us) go to the House of God of Jacob." They then

proceed to the house of God of Jacob which is the Ka'bah. It is indeed the House of God of Jacob, "and He will teach us of His paths." Here Isaiah mentioned Jacob to reflect the quest of father for the salvation of his sons, and his prayer to God to show His paths to them. This prayer is contained in the Last Testament where Jacob or Hadrat Yakub (A.S.) made the solemn request to His Lord thus:

> And this was the legacy that Abraham left to his sons, so did Jacob; Oh my sons! God hath chosen the faith for you, then die not except in the faith of Islam. Were ye witnesses when Death appeared before Jacob? Behold, he said to this sons: "What will ye worship after me?" They said: "We shall worship thy God and the God of thy fathers, of Abraham, Isma'il and Isaac – The One (True) God. To Him we bow (in Islam.)" (Q. 2:132-133)

Prophet Isaiah did not miss a bit in his prophecy of Hajj and the later unfolding events at the last Days of Prophet of Islam. His prophecy, therefore, should not be seen within the ethnic confines of Israel and the Jews, it crossed multinational borders. If, however, the prophecy is forced unto Israel as it refers to the "nations" of the Jews alone, then it means Christianity has no soul in this ethnic enclave. The more you examine the prophecy, then more it fits the interpretation of the events given. And "He will teach of His paths", His paths are those of Islam. Because Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob were neither Jews nor Christians but were those who followed the paths of Islam – submission to the Will of God. Another important prophecy of Isaiah with respect of the important event in the last day of the Prophet of Islam was about the future society and its world constitution. He said:

> And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. (Is. 2:4)

The Holy Qur'an, the codified laws of God and the constitution of the world, transcends national barriers. It has

assumed a supra national dimension. Because God's injunctions are not arbitrary, whimsical, despotic or impossible to act upon. On the contrary, Saddiqui stated that God in His wisdom and mercy has outlined certain moral values in order to meet the needs of man, physical as well as spiritual. These spiritual and mundane laws are constant and immutable, just as the "natural or physical laws" of God which govern the rest of His creation. Because the total nature of man is known only to his Creator, these laws are timeless and universal taking into consideration all aspects of man's condition, avoiding extremes and outlining a middle path.[154]

This highlight is necessary because it is the understanding of the Holy Qur'an as a constitution that will make the last quotation from the Book of Isaiah comprehensible. Because it introduced a concept of international laws and global peace that were relevant to and specific for the Last Testament of God. But like in other areas, what belonged to the Holy Qur'an and the Muslims was always claimed by the Europeans in a desperate bid to ascend to global hegemony. In the context of Isaiah's prophecy, he used (or it was interpolated) Zion and Jerusalem to symbolise the sanctity of an international ritual – mountain and a city. It is incontrovertible that based on scriptural and historical reference, Arafat and Makkah were the ones referred to by the prophet in his prediction.

It was from Makkah with its sacred Mountain Arafat that yet another sacred laws arose of international dimension. Isaiah 2:4 accurately predicted a constitution of the world and a rule of law that would usher in a permanent peace in the universe to the extent that the art of war would almost be forgotten. This was in line with what Sir Bernard Shaw had stated that if a man like Muhammad was to assume the dictatorship of this world he would succeed in ridding its problems. Thus the question of United Nations did not even arise. But unfortunate, this important prophecy became a famous inscription at the United Nations headquarters – referred to as the Isaiah Wall.

The West and United Nations both had taken too difficult task keeping world peace and order. To everybody witnessing the rising tides of global conflicts and crises in various countries attendant with ethnic cleansings often aid and abetted by either the West or the United Nations, all proved beyond doubt that they have no claim to Isaiah's prophecy. Islam is the fulfilment of such a prophecy. Isaiah saw how it happened in the last days of the Prophet of Islam. The most conspicuous event in this period was his famous sermon *Hijjat Alwada* or Farewell Sermon. The significance of this sermon were in two folds. A fulfilment of Isaiah 2:2-4 prophecy and it was a declaration of the charter of Islamic Global Ummah.

Just like his brother Jesus Christ who delivered his sermon on the Mount in which he gave the gist of his mission to the Jews, the Prophet of Islam, similarly, delivered his sermon on Mount Arafat, in a big gathering during the Hajj, where he declared the charter of a new world order that would bring peace and progress to this world and in the hereafter. In this charter the Holy Qur'an and his *Sunnah* were declared as the constitution of the world. The world will be governed by this constitution willy-nilly, in a new world order declared by Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in his last days as it was foretold by Prophet Isaiah about three centuries ago and it came to pass about one and half centuries ago. The declaration of a new world order that is steadily moving willy nilly to create a new society in spite of all oppositions and threats. The Apostle of God declared thus:

> O people, lend me an attentive ear, for I know not whether, after this year, I shall ever be amongst you again. Therefore listen to what I am saying to you ver carefully and take these words to those who could not be present here today.
>
> O people, just as you regard this month, this day, this city as sacred, so regard the life and property of every Muslim as a sacred trust. Return the goods entrusted to you to their rightful owners. Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you. Remember that He will indeed reckon your deeds. Allah has forbidden you

to take usury, therefore, all interest obligations shall henceforth be waived.

Beware of Satan, for the safety of your religion. He has lost all hopes that he will be able to lead you astray in big, so beware of following him in small things.

O people, it is true that you have certain rights with regard to your women, but they also have rights over you. If they abide your right then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in mildness. Do treat your women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers. And it is your right that they do not make friends with anyone of whom you do not approve, as well as never to commit adultery.

O people, listen to me in earnest, worship Allah, say your five day prayers, fast during the month of Ramadan, and give your wealth in Zakat. Perform Hajj if you can afford to. You are all equal. Nobody has superiority over the other except by piety and good action.

Remember, one day you will appear before Allah and answer your deeds. So beware, do not stray from path of righteousness and after my death.

O people, no prophet or apostle will come after me and no new faith will be born. Reason well, therefore, O people, and understand my words which I convey to you. I leave behind me two things, the Qur'an and my example and if you follow these you will never go astray.

All those who listen to me shall pass on to others and those to others again; and may the last ones understand my words better than those who listen to me directly. Be my witness Oh Allah, that I have conveyed your message to your people.

It was an emotional sermon, which sent tears flowing down the cheeks of the faithful because as Prophet Isaiah predicted: "And it shall come to pass in the last days." It signified the end of one event and the beginning of another. It was the last days the Prophet, he had fulfilled his sacred duty as the Messenger of God and had called upon God as a witness. At the same time it was the day he officially declared the beginning of a Global Ummah, guided by the Qur'an

and Sunnah as the constitution of this inaugurated new world order. The prophet also mentioned some of the guiding principles or articles of the new world order.

The mutual respect for individual life and property as sacred trust. He also emphasised the application of the golden rule; do unto others, as you want others to do unto you. Hold with utmost tenacity the precepts of the religion and be conscious of the day of reckoning. For the first time in the history of civilisation the rights of women were recognised and henceforth protected: "the right to be fed and clothed in mildness." And without any equivocation, the Qur'an and Sunnah were declared as the constitution of the new world order. With these and many other principles governing this one world order, which the Prophet of Islam declared in his last days, that Prophet Isaiah said the Prophet of Islam: shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many nations: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither they learn war any more."

The Prophet of Islam summarised it thus: "If you follow these (Qur'an and Sunnah) you will never go astray." When the constitution of this new world order is followed, therefore, nations will forget the art of war because peace will reign in all nations - Islam means peace.

The Euro-Christian West spearheaded by U.S. use democracy as a ploy to deceive, blackmail, intimidate and exploit other nations in order to achieve its own selfish interest and those of the White race. It is in this bid to maximise the collective interests of the white it sacrifices *albeit* ruthlessly democracy for military adventurism – whenever it suites its purpose. Instances were abound with where the United Nations was used to fashion democracy along the dictate of whims and caprices of the United States of America and her allies. How can this international organisation claim to shield any weak nation against the exploitation of the strong. It is beyond the

scope of this multinational organisation who has become the "wagging dog" of America. It is the office of Islam, the religion of peace and the solid fortress against evils.

Thomas Jefferson, the American President (1801-1809) was the author of America's Declaration of Independence which among other things stipulated: that all men are created equal, that they have "inalienable rights: that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." But the great American President (d.1826) showed the usual internal contradiction of the much orchestrated equality of all men, he died, without giving freedom to his own slaves. Thus, the rhetoric of equality and liberty in their new world order is nothing but a ruse. How could this nation ever lead the world in peace and equality?

Yet, the United States had usurped the power and had taken both the spirit and the flesh of the United Nations could in its own natural domain maintain peace and order, therefore lacked the moral and physical rights to assume the role of the global policeman as the Houston Police Chief B.K. Johnson testified in contradiction to President Bush's claim that America has the moral standing to lead the world and the means to back up:

> We have allowed ourselves to degenerate to the point where we are living like animals. We live behind burglar bars and through a collection of door locks at night and set an alarm lock and lay down with a loaded gun beside the bed and try to get some rest.[155]

Getting some rest had not been achieved ever since because the world was forced to put a square peg in a round hole. Islam, which actually and practicality could give this much desired rest, peace and order was perceived as a threat to a pernicious world order – global White hegemony; a war of annihilation was waged against her. Because among other reasons of what Professor Arnold Toynbee

descried in *Civilisation on Trial* that it was the Islam that would inevitably save the world because of:

> The extinction of race consciousness as between Muslims is one of the outstanding achievements of Islam, and in the contemporary world. There is, as it happens, a crying need for the propagation of this Islamic virtue.[156]

The West, despite its sophistication had grossly failed to get out of the shell of racism, and it knows of it and the grave dangers associated with it. Therefore, the coming of a successful One World System as exemplified by Zulqarnain lies with Islam. But arrogance, contumacy and contrary-mindness would not allow the West to accept willy-nilly the Islamic formation of a single global system as it was launched about 15 centuries ago, and sanctioned by Divine Decree. America and its allies continued to resist and vehemently opposed a global system, predicted by Prophet Isaiah where "nations forget the art of war." But that one system will come inevitably even if it leads to the apocalyptic end of its opposers and enemies. Because America and its allies are bent on creating a super state in a One World System, which Malachi Martin explained thus:

> Willingly or not, ready or not, we are all involved. The competition is about who will establish the first one-world system of government hat has never existed in the society of nations. It is about who will hold and wield the dual power of authority and control over each of us as individuals and over all of us as a community....
>
> Our way of life as individuals and as citizens of the nations; our families and our jobs, our trade and commerce and money, our educational system and our religious and our cultures, even the badges of our national identity, which most of us have taken for

> granted – all will have been powerfully and radically altered forever. No one can be exempted from its effects. No sector of our lives will remain untouched.[157]

It is pertinent at this junction to reflect on the importance of the official declaration of a one-world system by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in his last days in the context of the emerging opposite one world system that has now been declared by the Europeans, which Malachi Martin described that "willing or not ready or not we are all involved." The hidden corollary, therefore, was that a new world would be forced on to all nations in which as the author boasted; "No sector of our lives will remain untouched." Because the new order will be all-encompassing as it was pernicious.

The West was so confident in the success of this new world that it was even oblivious of the influences of unforeseen variables, which of course would come into play to change the tides of this evil plan. What we are today witnessing is a repeat scenario of Zulqarnain and *Yajuj and Majuj* in a heated competition of global hegemony. It is expected that at the nick of time a modern Zulqarnain, a true follower of Muhammad (saw) will emerge to lead the conquest for global dominance and to declare once and for all who is the master of the world in a inevitable contest translated in modern term as - Islam and the West.

It is in Allah's schemes to raise one people to check the excesses of the other, and to create everything in fair. In this context, therefore, the civilisation of the *Yajuj and Majuj* had never changed a bit in its *Mufsiduna fil ardhi*. In fact it had grown even worse. The Islamic civilisation on the other hand is its direct opposite of and in aversion for this decadent cultures. These two opposing civilisation are heading for an inevitable clash – the clash

of the titans. The forces of *Yajuj and Majuj* are now well equipped and are combat ready. What we are yet to see are the Zulqarnain and his forces who will liberate the world from the clutches of people with habitual sinfulness. In this final and decisive battle we are optimistic of victory but we have to put our noses on the grindstones. Oh! Allah send us a Zulqarnain of our time and assure us victory against the people Thy had created and who only Thou can destroy!

Thus the first ten and last ten verses of Suratul Kahf (Q.18:1-10, 101-110) give insights into the Europe Christian Civilisation. In this regard, it is to be meticulously studied, assailed and to be countered, as enunciated in the Zulqarnain story. It is in this context, therefore, that the relationship of Islam and the West should be viewed and the reason why the two are in diametrical opposition. But this does not mean they will not co-exist in harmonious-complementarity in this world like electron and proton in an atom.

POST SCRIPT

The gentle discerning reader by now had realised irrespective of his creed and world view this refutable fact that: "The Holy Qur'an is a Book that explains everything." And this had incontrovertibly underscored the ineffaceable fact that: "Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah may be upon him, was truly an Apostle of God and he had the inimitable Qur'an revealed to him: The Zulqarnain story laden with diverse knowledge and wisdom was far beyond the human ken to produce, yet, it was only the tip of the proverbial iceberg a lot lied beneath the sea. The pith of the Holy Qur'an remains ever the Book of *al-Hidayah*; a guidance for every person, his teacher and mentor.

In the Zulqarnain story, the Holy Qur'an taught us all we

needed to know about the European Civilisation, in addition to the moral ethical lessons to be learned from the historic account of the great personage. His story was, therefore, more than a parable but a historic account that filled in a wide gap in ancient history. Its concept of history and the impact it had on human civilisation was unique and unparalleled among the Holy Scriptures in history. The validity of the Zulqarnain story in the context of history, had demonstrated that from the Holy Qur'an's quarries of unlimited knowledge some historic facts could be obtained from it, especially where human methodology was incapacitated, like in the evolution of man and this universe, where no records were available instead of delving into the abyss of speculations and conjectures.

Because the Holy Qur'an is all-compassing, leaving nothing unexplained to man for his overall good. Viewed from different perspectives, the uniqueness of Zulqarnain story, was a conclusive evidence of a Revelation. The lessons derived from it were myriad. The leadership qualities of Zulqarnain, the breaking of many barriers by the Gog and Magog in their evolution into European nations were sublime narrative account that was unparalleled in history. Thus, we were enriched with knowledge. So now we know more than ever before, what the situation calls for now more than ever before is concerted action. Because as Wang Shoujen, a Chinese philosopher of the Ming Dynasty once remarked that: "To know and yet not to do is in fact not to know."

Education must be our central focus of action and our priority. It must aim to achieve two things. Firstly, it must enable man to understand his Lord so that he worships Him in full conviction of Oneness, observes the rituals and abides by the tenets of Sharia – the Right way to religion. Because as Syed Ali Ashraf said: "Religion places man in a very large perspective, the perspective of eternity and infinity. Man partakes of that eternity and infinity through his spirit which alone is regarded as the custodian of eternal

truth." Secondly, education must enable man to understand Allah's 'ways and means' or knowledge of Allah (s.w.t.) through science and technology, in the universe, by exploring the earth, and use all that Allah (s.w.t.) had created to protect faith and reinforce His religion as was done by Darius the Great, the Qur'anic Zulqarnain. The sources of true education as we have seen during the course of discussion are: Science and Revelation.

Thus, the Holy Qur'an's manifesto is there for all to see. This future World Constitution had willy-nilly been accepted in principle by the whole world. This most astonishing fact about this Last Testament, an everlasting Miracle unlike any other miracle in history is a veritable one. The Holy Qur'an is there for you to see, to touch, to read, to feel and to hear the symphony of its cadence, its assimilating inward joy that is difficult to describe and with expanding meaning as its understanding increases. It is like a traveller climbing a mountain: "the higher he goes, the farther he sees."

Therefore, I asked, could there be any act of Mercy better than this? It is for this and other reasons that as Muslims, we ought to go back to the grindstone in order to face the veritable challenge before us all. Islam had past, present and holds the future and its monumental achievements were ineffable and etched in the stone of history that could not be effaced or supplanted.

For instance, the contribution of Muslim Spain to the preservation of classical learning and the contribution of Muslim Scientists, Philosophers and Mathematicians during the Dark Ages, which all combined to nudge the West into Renaissance were for ever been recognised. Not only did the Muslim preserved and nurtured knowledge of the civilised world but it expanded upon that civilisation and thereby made a vital contribution of its own towards the ascent of man in all the fields of human endeavour. If Islam had done it before why not now?

Obviously, the revival of Muslim *Ummah* is now gathering momentum than ever before. This was highlighted by the Patron of Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, H.R.H. the Prince of Wales who in his lecture on Islam and the West said *inter alia.*

> ...There are one billion Muslims World-wide. Many millions of them live in countries of the commonwealth. Ten million or more live in the West, and around one million in Britain. Our own Islamic community has been growing fast. Many of you will recall – and I think some of you took part in the wonderful Festival of Islam which Her Majesty the "Queen opened in 1976. Islam is around us. And yet distrust, even fear, persist. In the post-Cold War of the 1990s the prospects for peace should be greater than at any time in this century. In the Middle East the remarkable and encouraging events of recent weeks have created new hope for an end to an issue which has divided the World and been so dramatic a source of violence and hatred.[158]

The Patron of this important Centre, his salutary efforts in cementing a cordial relationship between Islam and the West had for long been recognised. At the beginning of the Second Millennium another important event added weight to his scale. When Pope John II of the Vatican on behalf of the Catholic Church publicly apologised for the Crusade, the Inquisition and anti-Semitism on the 8th of March 2000. This was in line with the spirit of mutual co-existence between Islam and the West particularly and the World in general. It is at this juncture that the Muslims must exhibit the spirit of Zulqarnain by living above board and by showing justice to everyone irrespective of creed, colour and nationality so that peace and progress shall reign in this world. Because that is what the Qur'anic Zulqarnain story is all about: Islamic Social justice at international level.

As discussed earlier, Giovanni Pico Mella Mirandolo had assigned man to a central place in the creation: "like a free and sovereign artificer, you can fashion your own form out of your own substance." Mirandolo said in his Neoplatonic doctrine. Similarly,

Leon Battista Alberti addressed man in these words: "To you is given a body more graceful than other animals, to you power of apt and various movements, to you most sharp and delicate senses, to you wit, reason, memory like an immortal god."[159]

Ever since the beginning of the Renaissance Yajuj and Majuj had endeavoured to become that "immortal god." Hence from Salutati onward: the Florentine chancellors and scholars became believers in the *Studia humanitatis*, in which learning could be used to achieve a happy life, believers in the application of free intelligence to public affairs, and believers above all in man the "King of Kings." This *de facto* king of the world, dragged his lofty position; crowned it with a glory at the beginning of the new millennium.

When a measure scientific breakthrough in Genetic Engineering was made; scientists had successfully produced a rough draft of the human genome – the complete set of biochemical instructions that describe how the human body is made and maintained. This achievement in Human Genome Project (HGP), was hailed as one of the most significant scientific landmarks of all times comparable with the conquest of space and the splitting of the atom.

With this extraordinary 21st Century Scientific discovery, it was claimed that it would help man to understand life itself, possibly with a view to making it. Furthermore, it would help to understand human character and treat untreatable diseases. In this astonishing *tour de force*, scientists had read the three billion, chemical 'letters' strung along the DNA spirals at the heart of nearly all cells. Thus, it was orchestrated that: "man now is able to decode the Book of Life and is indeed his own creator," This, was the well acclaimed fact about the triumph of Human Genome Project.

Hence it was launched in June 2000, both at Downing Street and the White House. Because as Dr. John Sulston, Director of the

Sanger Centre, the main sequencing centre in the United Kingdom said the announcement was a phenomenal step. "We've now got the point in history where for the first time we are going to hold in our hands the set of instructions to make a human being," he told CNN. Similarly, Dr. Francis Collins, director of human genome project at the National Institute of Health also told CNN that: the mapping of the human genome will open new doors in treating and researching an endless list of diseases that are currently incurable." Thus, in this genomics - the study of the structure and function of genes, Scientists would be able to look at the biology of genes and how they relate to each other "to cause us to be alive," he added. Furthermore, elucidation of molecular understanding of the cause of diseases and the ultimate pharmaceutics would be available within the next decade

The essence of this digression is in two fold. The current euphoria about this scientific breakthrough at the time of writing this book was a release of the pent up desire of *Yajuj and Majuj* to achieve immortality. Moreover, this scientific watershed was only an actualisation of Mirandolo's prediction and the elevation of man to a numinous status: "You can fashion your own form out of your own substance! This in fact is untenable – man becoming a "sovereign artificer." Not only this phenomenal breakthrough in deciphering the genomes acclaimed by all as outstanding but in all similar achievements to come. Man, will forever remain the created and not the creator, he is only endowed with knowledge of the outer reality of life. Because Allah teaches the new knowledge: "Taught man which he knew not." (Qur'an 96:5).

Undoubtedly, genome information would revolutionalise investigation and treatment of diseases but it would be too early to say that the microbial world is finally conquered. Moreover, using such sophisticated information the potential of developing diseases like cancer, diabetes, and heart diseases can be detected earlier but the crucial thing is, could the subjects die of some mishap like

terrorist attacks, aeroplane disaster or poison earthquakes, torpedoes, etc. before reaching the age of onset of the disease? These and many more relevant question could never be answered by science. The success of Human Genome Project; therefore, is grossly limited to the outer reality of life, it is not identical with decoding the Book of Human Destiny. The two Books are parallel, one dealing with outer dimension and the other the inner dimension of human existence. Man could never possess the knowledge of both, in as much as scientific method can not verify the existence of the hereafter, soul and other forms of supraphysical realms whose realities could not be denied.

As a corollary the invention of Cloning Technique to replicate animals by means of Clones – identical copies of living organisms, and the success of this method was tested in the production of cloned sheep. And the crucial centrality now is to clone human being – the replication of identical copies of human beings. But even identical twins, are not whole hog identical, they react differently to disease – causing agents. And of course many of the characteristics, especially cognitive aspect that make us into human beings, such as intelligence, temperament, altruism, compassion and musicality, which people would probably like conserved, are both genetically and socio-culturally conditioned. Thus, if simultaneous twins are not really identical, in the real sense of the word, then that will be considerably less the case for human clones or "copies" made at different times and under different conditions. Thus, even if cloning were successful that would by no means necessary lead to another Stephen Hawking, the famous British Astronomer now rated as the most intelligent man in the world. Because the clone would certainly look like the original, but there would be no certainty that the "copy" could be interested in Astronomy and not Comedy. If he was predetermined to be a comedian in the Book of Destiny, and "destiny can never be changed," remains an everlasting aphorism.

Undoubtedly, the break through in the Human Genome or the Book of Life would revolutionise the therapy of many incurable diseases, which was in line with the characteristic feature of the Gog and Magog, otherwise, referred to as the Dajjal. It was related in the Kanzal Ummal, Vol. 7. p. 2080 that: "And he (Dajjal) will cure the blind and the lepers and will revive the dead." However, this curative power was unlike the miracles of Jesus Christ, it was by the use of sophisticated medical, surgical and pharmaceutics means to treat almost all diseases including organ transplantation. And the recent phenomenal scientific achievement would improve both the diagnosis and treatment of almost all diseases, enormously. But an understanding of Book of Life, however, was not synonymous with an understanding of the Book of Destiny. The two combined to make man. These two important Books dealing with the Human Life had been mentioned in the Perspicuous Scripture that explained everything- they were also mentioned in the Hadith as related by Mas'ud (r.a). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

> In every one of you all components of your creation are collected together in your mothers womb by 40 days and in that is an *alaqah* like that, then in that it is a *mudghah* like that. Then God sends an angel ordered with four instructions. He is told to record his (the human being now developing) deeds, his provision/future benefits). Whether he will be miserable or happy, and then the Spirit is breathed into him (the soul is acquired).

Here both the Book of life and the Book of Destiny were mentioned. Thus, everything about man was recorded and computerised. It had been known to science that a living organism was built up from cells which have the ability to reproduce because at conception, each human being consists of a single cell which divides and subdivides into 2,000,000,000,000 cells - and a baby is born. And within each cell, the blue print data is carried by the master molecules of Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) the single male sperm cell may contain 1,000,000 DNA molecule, carrying all the

blueprints of the human to be specialised into nerves and muscles and bones. Thus, an understanding of this coded message of hereditary and human development is only a glimpse of or an insight into the Book of life. Human development passes through stages dome of which revealed in the 7th century Arabia were in concordance with the latest scientific data using Electron Microscope. For instance, the Holy Qur'an described the 25th Day of embryogenesis as stage of *Alagah* an Arabic word for "a leech." And it exactly looks like a leech, elongated in shape, like a clot of blood for its vascularity and stickiness (it attaches to the womb with chorionic villi like a leech). Hence it was a perfect description. Similarly, the Holy Scripture described the next stage 26-27 days of human development as stage of *Mudghah* an Arabic word for chewed-like substance: "Then out of a chewed-like substance partly differentiated and partly undifferentiated" (Q 22:5).

The appropriateness and the exactitude of the descriptions of stages of Human Development by the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah had stunned the world, and led Dr. Keith Moore, a world famous Professor of Anatomy and Embryology of University of Toronto, Canada to affirm that: The fact that a fully harmonious correlation is found to exist between the findings of modern Embryology and the Islamic writings is explained as being a proof that the Qur'an is indeed a Revelation from God and that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is His Messenger." Without Divine Intervention he would not be able to expound correctly the stages of Embryology.

Thus, like the *Zulqarnain* story, it was a knowledge through Revelation. Professor Keith Moore was the author of many textbooks and a world leading authority in human development. Some of his books: the *Developing Human*, *Before We Are Born*, and *Clinically Oriented Anatomy*, were sold in thousands. Moore, after being intellectually stimulated by the Qur'anic account of human embryology, co-authored the book *Qur'an and Modern*

Science with Abdul-Majced A. *Zindani* and *Mustafa* A. Ahmed. It was a correlation studies which emphasised and proved, like the story of *Zulqarnain,* that the Prophet of Islam (pbuh) was indeed an Apostle of God.

Allah (swt) had given man an abundant knowledge of the Book of life. However, He gave only a little knowledge to man about the Book of Destiny, which also deals with 'Soul. What is a Soul? The *Vitus spiritus,* soul or life force which still remains a mystery to the almighty science. When the Prophet was asked this question the Holy Qur'an replied: "They ask thee concerning Spirit, Say: The Spirit (Comes) by Command of My Lord; of Knowledge it is only a little that is communicated to you (o men!)" Q. 17:85.

So, no matter how man tried he could not go beyond his theter, for he would forever remain the created, honoured creature and as the vicegerent of God on earth. And for him to get close to the secrets of the "Old One" he would have to possess the absolute knowledge of both the Book of Life and its corresponding Book of Destiny an impossible position for man to attain, a mere servant of the Most High.

As a world phenomenal event the break-through in the Genetic Engineering was already predicted fourteen hundred ago by the Book, which explained everything. It was the handwork of *Angra Mainyu,* who having fallen from grace vowed to lead a portion of mankind to perdition, while he was enjoying his own respite. *Angra Mainyu,* is an open enemy of man, so he capitalised on his free will to seduce and corrupt him so that he is led astray. Satan obtained God's permission to ensnare man to his evil ways.

So he boasted that the portion of mankind cajoled by him will be so corrupted in their nature that they will bear a so sort of brand that will mark them off as his own; or that they will be like a portion assigned to him. This brand no doubt is habitual sinfulness. And this typified the Gog and Magog; it marked them off as strictly for

the *Angra Mainyu,* for this reason: "God did curse him, but he said: I will take of Thy servants a portion marked off." (Q. 4:118).

In his antic, *Angra Mainyu*, increased his people with knowledge, *Iblis,* had completely corrupted them so that they followed him as *dregvants* to perpetually do great mischief on earth. So instead of using their knowledge of Genetic Engineering to do good, they used it to do evil, which was in line with satanic plan. He said:

> "I will mislead them and I will create in them false desires; I will order them to the slit the ear's of cattle, and to deface the (fair) nature created by God" (Q.4:119).

There were many false desires, which *Angra Mainyu* induced in the minds of the Gog and Magog, and they had been restive ever since. The most serious among these desires were their fanatical quest for creation of life and to rival God Almighty in all respects, in fact, to usurp His powers and push Him into oblivion. In this effort they slit the ears of cattle and many other organs, in the attempts at tissue and organ transplantation in animals and man. Using different animals to obtain allograft – a graft derived from a genetically dissimilar individual within the same species, or autograft the transplantation of tissue from one site to another in an individual. The former proved to be successful. But it was experimentation that started using various animals. This was one way to "deface the (fair) nature created by God". This use of corrective surgery in practice however, constitutes no harm. It is even encouraged. Alas, even this apparently beneficial surgery was turned by people with habitual sinfulness to do evil. Now, plastic surgery is in vogue for gender transformation; man is changed to look like a woman and conversely. The craze for this type of operation "to deface the (fair) creation by God" is rising and soon will become global.

But the most ominous was the indiscriminate experimentation

in genetic engineering leading to cloning with the successful production of some animal clones or "copies". And now the celebrated of the sequencing of genes in the successful Human Genome project is taking a new revolutionary step. Craig Venter, head of Celera Genomics, which recently completed the map of human genome, has outlined the next goal. The new task was to map the proteins, which drive all chemical reactions in the body. This new area of research called proteomics. Proteomics involves identifying the function of inter-relationship between proteins and their role in disease.

Undoubtedly, the "defacing the (fair) nature created by God" would constitute serious harm to mankind in future. Although in this scientific watershed it is difficult to predict the ultimate effects the new synthetic copies of the altered species will have on mankind until the behaviours of the defaced creatures are carefully monitored for many successive generations. But it could be argued that because without a corresponding insight into the Book of Destiny the knowledge of the Book of Life is defective and so fraught with dangers.

Genetic Engineering a very useful field of knowledge that will be of great importance to man would be of great importance to man will be used by *Yajuj* and *Majuj* to cause great harm because they would let loose some dangerous Frankenstein monsters that might defy human control. All these would add more woes and tribulations to man, in the Western Civilisation that was structured and guided by *Angra Mainyu,* which had already dehumanised man.

It is at this juncture to toll the ominous bell and to cry out that the movie fiction films we daily – the "alien invasions" from extraterritorial space might be a diversionary tactics. While we look up into the heavens expecting the coming of the aliens we would be overwhelmed on earth by 'alien monsters' in our homes – human clones or the defaced synthetic creatures of scientists, like zombies

on rampage and threatening to take over our cities. Indeed when the Gog and Magog were let loose, the world continue to see many evils. Thus, the evil of alien invasion is near not far. So be awake! *Angra Mainyu* had marked them as his own; they worship, follow and obey him. They are his instruments of terror. It was for this and other reasons that the Last Testament of God warned: "Whoever, forsaking God, takes Satan for a friend, hath of surely suffered a loss that is manifest" (Q.4:119).

Since they had taken *Iblis* and had forsaken Allah (s.w.t), we must on the other hand take Allah (s.w.t) as Lord an Helper, and hold unto Him as our protecting friend. Then of surety we would have a gain that is manifest. Furthermore, Gog and Magog and *Angra Mainyu* their patron and master would have no power over us. This is the only way and no other way.

The fruits of the Renaissance must be reaped with caution, otherwise, scientific progress, which was supposed to lead man to God would lead him to a monstrous pretension, which would pave way to his waterloo. Kenneth Clark had made a keen sensitive observation in recent years when he said that: "intellectual failure of Marxism has left us with no alternative to heroic materialism, and that isn't enough. One may be optimistic, but one can't exactly be joyful at the prospect before us."[160]

The reason is not far to discern we could not be "exactly be joyful," when science was let loose without the chains of Spirituality. This is the pith of the danger of this Modern Civilisation a super-culture of the *Yajuj and Majuj*, and it was indeed an important caveat. The Protagoras' axiomatic popularisation of: "man is the measure of all things," is a message of doom, and from the poem of W. B. Yeats lied a hidden corollary:

> Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold
> Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,

The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.[161]

The miracles of the Revealed but not created are veritable and the receptacle of the Noble Qur'an was Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) the greatest man in history and the Saviour of Human Civilisation. To him we would give our salutation and praise:

> Oh Lord, shower benediction on Muhammad and on the household of Muhammad, as You have showered Your benediction on Ibrahim, and on the household of Ibrahim, indeed, You are Benign the Exalted. Oh Lord, Bless Muhammad, and the household of Muhammad, as You have blessed Ibrahim, and the household of Ibrahim, indeed You are the Benign, the Exalted.

Alhamdu Lillah. Nothing from me but by Allah's help.

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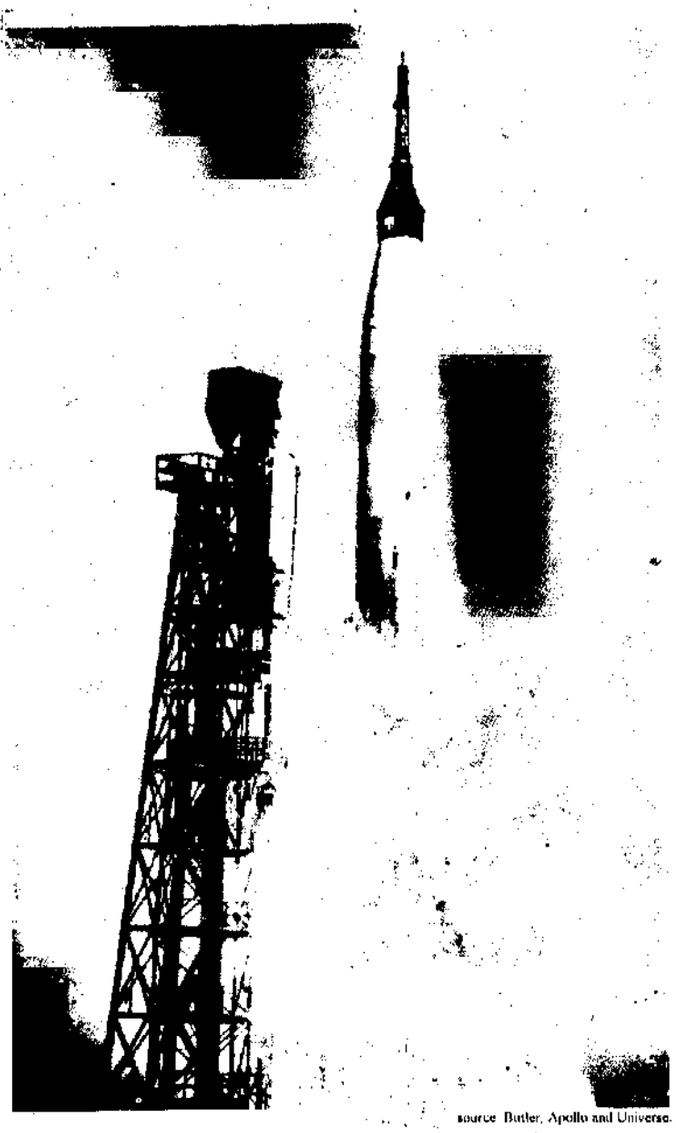
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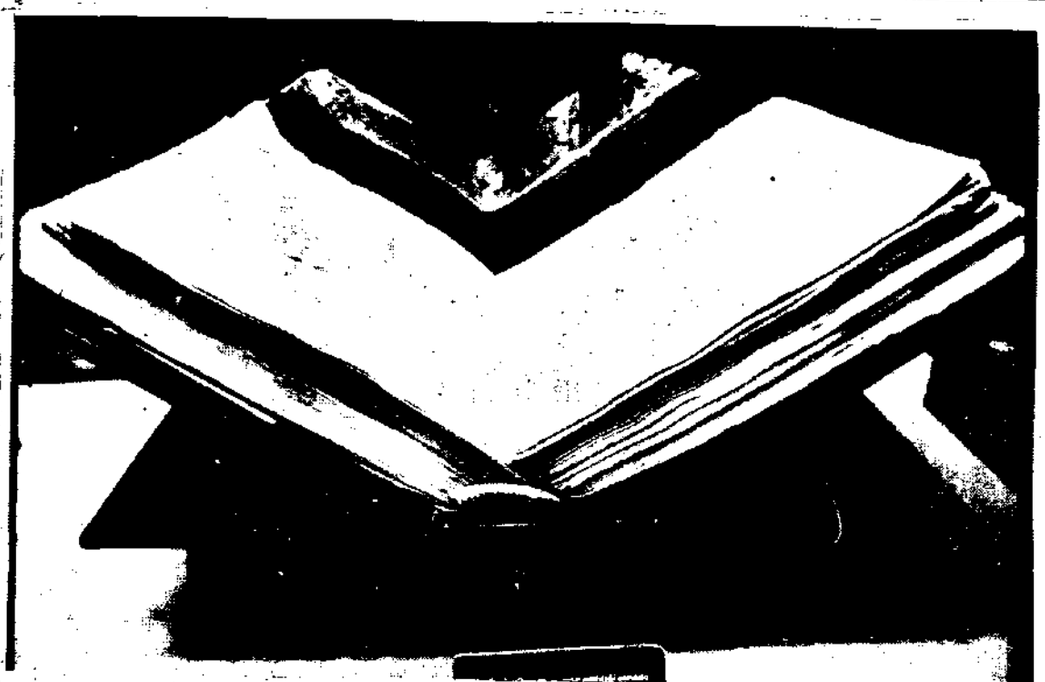
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source Butler, Apollo and Universe.

The Prophet of Islam predicted the age of Rocketry and space travel thus: "They will shoot arrow up into the Sky." Here is shown a spacecraft successfully launched into space..



Source: Von Denffer, An Introduction to the Sciences of the Qur'an, 1983.

The inimitable Qur'an, the Book which explains everything and the Future Constitution of the World. The Scripture remains forever unchangeable. Here is shown the copy of Holy Qur'an from the time of Caliph Uthman, Museum Istanbul.

Zulqarnain is not name of person but a title. It means a man who absolutely controlled the Eastern and Western Kingdoms, hence a ruler of the whole world. The Holy Qur'an has mentioned one of such historic personages with the qualities of a religious leader who was just, righteous and ruled according to the laws of God. Who was he?

The identification with Alexander the Great did not take Qur'anic descriptions into consideration because he was a polytheist and a ruthless king. Alternatively, Darius the Great, the greatest king of the Persian World Empire, who lived about two centuries before Alexander, qualified for both the epithet of Zulqarnain and more importantly, the Qur'anic descriptions.

This book written with the general as well as the specialised reader in mind has re-examined the issues in their various nuances and offers a compelling shift of identification from Alexander to Darius, as the right historic personage mentioned in the Glorious Qur'an. It also discusses the issues of the Gog and Magog (Yajuj and Majuj) in the light of current knowledge.



The Author, Dr. Yusuf Nadabo Abdulahi MBBS (ABU) is a Medical Practitioner and author of Tarihin Garin Kaduna (Kaduna, NNN, 1988) and the following forthcoming titles: The Force of Reason and Tubalin Ginin Al'umma. He is the Sarkin Tudun Nupawa, Kaduna, Nigeria.

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