

الغرائيق العلى فى القرآن: وهم أم حقيقة

Gharaniq al-'ula in the Qur'an:  
myth or reality

# HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- Ibn Sa`ad in Tabaqat
- Tabari in Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk,
- Suyuti in Jalalayn and others.
- “In the early age of Islam, the Prophet (pbuh) desired to have revelations that would bring his people closer to him, not distanced further from him.
- One day, he started reading Surah al-Najm in the vicinity of Ka`bah that he reached ayah
- أفرايتم اللات والعزى، ومناة الثالثة الأخرى (النجم 19-20)، فقرأ بعدها (حسب الرواية) تلك الغرانيق العُلا، وإن شفاعتهن لترتجى.

- He completed the surah and offered Sajdah at the end.
- All Mushriks present therein also fell in Sujud together with the Prophet (pbuh).
- It is reported that the Quraysh expressed their utter satisfaction to the move of the Prophet that he uttered praiseworthy phrase for their gods and goddesses.
- Makkan immigrants heard the story in the form that the Quraysh and the Prophet made reconciliation. They immediately returned saying 'our lands are much beloved to us than a foreign land (Abyssinia).

- On the way, they inquired from a man of Kananah tribe, who informed that initially Muhammad (pbuh) praised their goddesses, so they were happy and later he changed his stand and mentioned the goddesses in bad terms. They also became hostile towards Muslims.

- **Jibril's reproach of the Prophet**
- The (false) report also adds, The Prophet (pbuh) rejected Quraysh's conditions as they proposed to him that if he recalls their idols in good terms, they would support him. أما إذ جعلت لآلهتنا نصيباً فنحن معك
- Jibril (A.S.) visited the Prophet in the same evening and rebuked him by saying:
  - أوجئتك بهاتين الكلمتين؟ مشيراً إلى " تلك الغرائق العلاء و إن شفاعتهن لترتجى "
- The Prophet said:
- قلت على الله ما لم يقل



- According to report, then Allah (swt) revealed:

• وَإِنْ كَادُوا لَيَفْتِنُونَكَ عَنِ الَّذِي أُوحِينَا إِلَيْكَ لَتَفْتَرِي عَلَيْنَا غَيْرَهُ وَإِذَا لَا تَأْتِيكَ خَلِيلًا  
{73} وَلَوْلَا أَنْ ثَبَّتْنَاكَ لَقَدْ كِدْتَ تَرْكَنُ إِلَيْهِمْ شَيْئًا قَلِيلًا {74} إِذَا لَأَذَقْنَاكَ  
ضِعْفَ الْحَيَاةِ وَضِعْفَ الْمَمَاتِ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُ لَكَ عَلَيْنَا نَصِيرًا {75} – سورة الإسراء

- Then Prophet (SAAS) returned to his previous state and started criticizing their idols. The Mushriks also became hostile towards the Prophet and the Muslims.

- The proponents of this story tried to establish further by the ayah of Surah al-Hajj 52-53. Allah says:

• وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ وَلَا نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا إِذَا تَمَنَّى أَلْقَى الشَّيْطَانُ فِي أُمْنِيَّتِهِ فَيَنْسَخُ اللَّهُ مَا يُلْقِي الشَّيْطَانُ ثُمَّ يُحْكِمُ اللَّهُ آيَاتِهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ {52} لِيَجْعَلَ مَا يُلْقِي الشَّيْطَانُ فِتْنَةً لِلَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ وَالْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَفِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ - سورة الحج

- **Sir William Muir** and other Orientalists took it as firm proof for the authenticity of the report as the immigrants to Abyssinia decided to return simply because of this ‘treaty’ between Muhammad (pbuh) and the Quraysh that Muhammad (pbuh) would mention their gods in good terms.

# Sahihayn's report

- Imam Bukhari and Muslim (R.A.) simply report from Ibn Mas'ud that the first Surah in which there is a Sajdah is Surah al-Najm. The Prophet (pbuh) recited this surah to the open gathering of the Quraysh and offered Sajdah at the end; upon which all present therein fell in prostration, Muslims and Mushriks altogether. One old Quraysh man did not. And later I saw him died as a Kafir. (Bukhari: 1067, Muslim: 576)
- The report says it was Umayyah bin Khalaf, who due to his old age, could not bend, and took some dust and rubbed it against his face, and said, it is enough for me.



- It is reported that the First migration to Abyssinia occurred in Rajab 5 AN (years after Nubuwwah), and in Ramadan of the same year, this occurred. Due to which some immigrants returned in Shawwal. But witnessing the facts in Makkah, the 2<sup>nd</sup> migration to Abyssinia occurred.

- Based on the authentic report, it could be noticed that the Prophet (pbuh) stood to deliver a lecture in the gathering of the Quraysh in Haram Sharif. Then he started reciting the Surah al-Najm. The Mushrikin of Makkah were so amazed and captivated by the noble Qur'an and its amazing recitation of the Prophet (pbuh) that they lost their senses. When Prophet fell in Sujud at the end, they also made sajdah together.
- Later when they were criticized by others, they created the story saying that they heard Muhammad (pbuh) reciting the ayah as follows:

■ أفرأ يتم اللات والعزى، ومناة الثالثة الأخرى (النجم 19-20)، فقرأ بعدها (حسب الرواية) تلك الغرائق العُلا، وإن شفاعتهن لترتجى.

- It is a sheer false statement which can't stand after serious scrutiny.

# THE REPORT: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

- Ibn Ishaq simply rejects it by saying:
  - إنه من وضع الزنادقة
- The report of this recitation of false statements by the Prophet (pbuh) does not stand firm.
- General scholars reject it outright as it is against Tawhid and fundamental teachings of Islam.

# Muslims' return from Abyssinia

- It was not because that the Prophet made a treaty with the Mushrikin. There were other reasons behind it:
- A. Conversion of 'Umar to Islam: He decided to make it public and brought out historic procession in the history of Islam.
- This encouraged Muslims to return, as Islam was not in hiding anymore.
- B. Abyssinian revolution: There was a revolution against Najjashi (Negus) due to his belief and support for Muslims. Muslims were not supposed to join that. So, they decided to return to their homeland.



- Besides, the story might be that the Prophet recited the Surah and its amazing beauty attracted the hearts and captivated the minds of the people, that they fell in Sujud together with the Prophet.
- This story might have been related to them that the Quraysh had accepted Islam, which is why they decided to return.
- But sooner, they returned, it became clear that the Quraysh increased in their enmity and hatred against the Prophet and Muslims.

# Qur'anic *ayat* do not prove their assertions

- Ayat of Surah al-Isra' 73-74 and Hajj 52-53 do not prove what the Orientalists tried to prove.
- Its clear assertion, “Had we did not keep you firm, you might align with the Mushrikin” **وَلَوْلَا أَنْ ثَبَّتْنَاكَ لَقَدْ كِدْتَ تَرْكَنُ إِلَيْهِمْ شَيْئًا قَلِيلًا**
- Proves that the Prophet did not support them and say what they wanted him to say, as he was protected by Allah (swt).

# An interpretation of the Ayat

• وَإِنْ كَادُوا لَيَفْتِنُونَكَ عَنِ الَّذِي أُوحِيَنا إِلَيْكَ لِتَفْتَرِي عَلَيْنَا غَيْرَهُ وَإِذَا لَا تَأْخُذُوكَ خَلِيلًا (73)  
وَلَوْلَا أَنْ ثَبَّتْنَاكَ لَقَدْ كِدَّتْ تَرَكُنُ إِلَيْهِمْ شَيْئًا قَلِيلًا (74) إِذَا لَأَذَقْنَاكَ ضِعْفَ الْحَيَاةِ  
وَضِعْفَ الْمَمَاتِ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُ لَكَ عَلَيْنَا نَصِيرًا (75) الإسراء.

- The ayah has no relation whatsoever with the Gharaniq, as it simply refers to Mushrikin's tactics and plots to keep the Prophet away from the truth. Some proposals might be lenient, and Prophet might have inclined to accept some of it had not Allah (swt) granted him strength and fortitude.
- A narration is reported by the commentators that in his Tawaf of Ka`bah, the Prophet used to touch the Black Stone, upon which the Mushrik objected, and said, if you do not respect our gods, you can't touch the stone.

• وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ وَلَا نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا إِذَا تَمَنَّى أَلْقَى الشَّيْطَانُ فِي أُمْنِيَّتِهِ فَيَنْسَخُ اللَّهُ مَا يُلْقِي الشَّيْطَانُ ثُمَّ يُحْكِمُ اللَّهُ آيَاتِهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ (52) لِيَجْعَلَ مَا يُلْقِي الشَّيْطَانُ فِتْنَةً لِلَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ وَالْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَفِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ (53) الْحَجِّ.

- This ayah may have two meanings:
- A. Desires of guiding people towards Islam, and saving them from the Hell-fire.
- B. ‘Tamanna’ may mean recites. So, when he does that, Shaytan puts different meanings and doubts in the minds of people. Allah (swt) removes it from their hearts, and get corrupted ones engaged in it.

- Historical background shows that this story is false.
- As in the report, it says that it occurred after the migration of Abyssinia, which took place in Rajab 5 year of Nubuwwah.
- This incident took place in Ramadan, and the immigrants returned in Shawwal.
- But the ayah of al-Isra' revealed after Isra' and Mi'raj which took place in 11 years. And the ayah of Hajj revealed in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of Hijrah, as it has ayah of Jihad.
- Could any rational mind accept that today the mixture took place, and the rebuke was made 6 years later, and consolation comes another 3 years later. It is sheer stupidity.



# Contradicting reports

- Hadith of Gharaniq appeared in different forms which is a proof of its falsehood. For example,

• تلك الغرائق العلا و ان شفاعتهن لترتجى

و رواها بعضهم : الغرائقة العلا إن شفاعتهم ترتجى

و روى آخرون : إن شفاعتهم ترتجى دون ذكر الغرائقة أو الغرائق

و في رواية رابعة : و انها هي الغرائق العلا

و في رواية خامسة : و انهن هن الغرائق العلا و ان شفاعتهم هي التي ترتجى

- This is a clear proof that the report is a false one, created by anti-Islamic forces to instil doubts in the minds of the people.

# Context of the Surah Al-Najm rejects it

• لَقَدْ رَأَى مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَى (18) أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ اللَّاتَ وَالْعُزَّى (19) وَمَنَاةَ الثَّالِثَةَ الْأُخْرَى (20) أَلَكُمُ الذَّكَرُ وَلَهُ الْأُنثَى (21) تَلْكَ إِذَا قَسَمَةً ضَيْدِي (22) إِنْ هِيَ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءُ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَمَا تَهْوَى الْأَنْفُسُ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ مِنْ رَبِّهِمُ الْهُدَى (23) النجم.

- Look at the context of the ayat. Is there least praise for the deities/idols/goddesses? Allah (swt) condemned them here and many other places.
- How could they be praised by saying:
  - تلك الغرائق العلاء ان شفاعتهن لترتجى.
- Could it go along with the ayat before and after? It would confuse the readers, and no sound mind could say such a baseless issue.

# Literal flaw in Gharaniq

- Imam Muhammad ‘Abduh writes that ‘Gharaniq’ has never been used in the meaning of ‘god’ or ‘goddess’. It is sheer corruption of the fact.
- Gharaniq is the plural of ‘Gharnooq’, means, white or black birds, that live in the water. Or, it may mean, a white handsome man. It has no relation of ‘goddess’ or whatsoever in their usage.

# Truthfulness of the Prophet

- It does not go along with the nature of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). He was a living example of truth, justice, kindness and mercy; never he experimented lies with others; how could he then lie about Allah (swt)? It is sheer false assumption and claim by enemies of Islam.