

The Geography of Quranic Accounts: Eight Questions from Six Scholars of the Quran

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Questions and answers by six scholars of the Qur'an on the subject of archeological sites mentioned in the Qur'an such as Dhul Qarnayn Dam and Ashab-e Kahf Cave, and the purpose of studying these sites.

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The Geography of Qur'anic Accounts: Eight Questions from Six Scholars of the Qur'an

The present article is the English version of *Geografiyaye Qisas al-Qur'an* which was published in *Bayyinah-3* (A Quarterly Magazine on the Holy Qur'an)

While reading the holy Qur'an we come across the names of certain nations, places and persons such as *Dhul Qarnayn Dam*, *Ashab al-Kahf Cave*, *Dhat al-`Imad*, etc. The question is that is it possible to locate these places in the present natural geography or they have gone under any changes? Can we take recourse to science and rely upon the scientific method in dealing with these Qur'anic names?

All the matters in this context were prepared in the form of questionnaire and were sent to some of researchers and connoisseurs. Among them Dr. Ahmad Ahmadi, Ayatullah Muhammad Hadi M`arifat, Baha al-Din Khorramshahi, Dr. Muhammad Husayn Ruhani, Dr. Abul Qasim Imami and Dr. `Abbas Zaryab Khoi have replied which is hereby presented to our readers. Hope the answers would be beneficial to the seekers of the Qur'anic learning.

Q. 1- Are the historic places mentioned in the Qur'an in connection with the nations and events, available in the present natural geography in the same form or have they gone under any changes?

A- Ahmad Ahmadi: Some of the places might have been destroyed. The historical changes do not keep anything constant. Sometimes a riverbed changes or the sea advances or regresses. *Abeskun* island in the Caspian Sea, was a residential place once upon a time, where Khwarazm Shah had come from.

It has now gone under the sea and there is no sign of it. Its name only has come in the history. We see some places which have earlier been at the coasts. Through, in the course of historical changes, a hill might have disappeared. Therefore, it cannot be said that the places mentioned in the Qur'an have remained in the same original forms.

A- Abul Qasim Imami : There are certain places related to the ancient tribes which has naturally been changed or disappeared. Except in some cases like the holy house of God (*Bayt Allah al-Haram*) and the related places or some other places which have relatively retained their previous states.

Of course, before referring to the references which have computed these places, a prompt comment is not possible in this regard. In this connection a consultation with archeology organizations will be a good beginning in recognizing the relevant countries.

A- Baha al-Din Khorramshahi: Whereas the Qur'an points to the ancient lands or geographical places

such as *Wadi Ayman*, *Madyan*, *Qura* or *Madain Lut*, *M'arib Dam* which had probably been built against *Al-Iram* flood and so on, belonging to more than 15–20 centuries ago, their present locations are probably unknown and require archaeological researches.

On the other hand, whatever is located or recognized will be quite different from what have been in the past. 15–20 centuries are enough for not only a city, but also a civilization to bloom or decline.

A- Muhammad Husayn Ruhani: A geographical site on this globe may not remain in the same place due to the following incidents:

- a) An earthquake which is an underground product known as Plate-tectonic bringing about deep changes in the superficial layer of the earth, demolishing surface of the earth easily in a short time.
- b) Tides have great effects on the seas.
- c) Human factor causes the increasing destruction of the crust of the earth.
- d) Falls of such as snow, rain and hail, bring about destructive floods.
- e) Soil erosion is a slow, constant and gradual process that ever changes the structure of the earth. This terminology has many applications throughout the present scientific geography.

I, as the editor-in-chief of the *Great Islamic Encyclopedia* (from 7–10–85 to 16–12–87) asked for a research grant from the management on the “*Abeskun*” article following researches of British Orientalist “Minorski” and Dr. Manoocher Setudeh. The fund was granted and days and days the geographers and researchers investigated on a boat in the Caspian Sea, but they did not find its exact location.

A- Muhammad Hadi M`arifat: The regions pointed by the Qur'an may have some trace today, such as *M'arib* dam, ruins of which are available today, even the valves and shutter used to close or open the dam are available. To study those cases, some scientific delegations (from Iran and abroad) visited the site and brought good information. They even could understand how the flood destroyed this dam. Another example is “*Ahqaf*” which are very soft sands is situated around *'Adan*, even today.

Some other regions have been referred to in the holy Qur'an and they were existing during the revelation of the Qur'an, such as the remnants of Lut's tribe.¹

1– It is obvious that there has been something in front of them on the journey routes of Quraysh. I did not find anybody in the present era to follow this matter, which is worth following. One of the essential issues is follow up, the geographical regions of the history of Islam such as sites of the wars of *Ahzab* and *Khandaq*, or *Uhud* war. We have seen these places but are not reliable. A serious research is required to locate their real sites.

Q. 2- What is the objective of studying archaeological subjects of the Qur'an?

A- Ahmad Ahmadi: Many ancient historical and geographical regions have been mentioned in the stories of the holy Qur'an such the river or sea through which the Bani Israel passed, the land of *Ashab al-Hijr*, *Dhul Qarnayn* Dam, *Ashab al-Kahf's* Cave, earthy paradise of *Dhat al-'Imad* etc. Research on these and finding their traces is very effective in understanding the Qur'an. In addition, being involved in exploring the past would provide a good background to take lessons from the past on which the holy Qur'an in the following verses to persuade us to do so:

"Have they not travelled in the earth and seen how was the end of those before them? They were stronger than these in powers..." (30:9)

"Indeed there have been examples before you; Therefore travel in the earth..." (3:136)

"...Therefore travel in the land, then see what was the end of the rejecters." (16:36)

"Say: Travel in the earth, then see how was the end of the guilty." (27:69)

"But we will this day deliver you with your body that you may be a sign to those after you, and most surely the majority of the people are heedless of our communications." (10:92)

In this verse, the God's intention of bringing the body of Pharaoh out of water rather than leaving it decaying or being eaten by the sea animals is to give a lesson to future generations. As far as I remember Tantawi says: *"The body of Pharaoh contemporaneous to Moses is now in a museum in Egypt."*

Many of the existing problems in our national culture and literature need extensive archaeological research. In case of finding new information, our views will be changed about our culture and literature. For example, Alexander dam with its present condition has its effects on our literature stories and proverbs, and we can feel its position in our culture.

Supposing that Alexander is the same *Dhul Qarnayn* of the Qur'an, he has been given a great status (like a prophet) and a poet like Nizami has written one of his complete poetical works in his name. When the archeology or the history proves it wrong that Alexander is not *Dhul Qarnayn*, our cultural views will change.

With respect to the importance of this subject, we suggested the Cultural Revolution Council in 1982 to include Qur'anic archeological studies in the educational curricula of the universities.

A- Abul Qasim Imami: The objective of archaeological endeavor is to work out the best method and necessary preparations for recognition of geographical places mentioned in the Qur'an and study condition of those people whose names in the Qur'an are associated with those places. Concluding that such studies are necessary for better understanding the Qur'an.

A- Baha al-Din Khorramshahi: The objective of taking up archaeological subjects of the Qur'an is to

understand the lessons pointed out by the Qur'an. As we intend to recognize Prophet Ibrahim (s), the father of prophets Sho`ayb, al-yas`a and Khidr in the stories of the Qur'an, likewise, for the same reasons and motives, we should try to understand geographical places of the Qur'an.

A- Muhammad Husayn Ruhani: In my opinion, "archaeological discussions" with its present meaning has not been dealt with in the Qur'an. There are many historical accounts in the Qur'an which are considered to be historical facts. Even the opponents in the Qur'an reproach themselves for the phrase "stories of the predecessors" is attributed to them .2

All those are historical facts which signify the continuity, constancy and everlasting feature of the "divine order" on permeate in the individual, family, and social life of the people. These facts always give alarming to those who deviate from the right path. It seems that at the time of the revelation of the Qur'an, the word "history" did not exist in Arabic language and according to Dr. Muhammad Muhammadi this word was derived from the Persian word *Mahrooz*.

There is a delicate probability of "story" or "stories" (Arabic from the branches of semitic mother tongue) to be taken from the words "histor, historia, histoire, history". This seems impossible. I was a member of a group working on "*Ibdal*" in Arabic, at the Academy of Iranian Languages, to trace the words and then to compare them with Indo-European mother tongue in order to extract the common root words. There were signs of common root.

It is not surprising to know that the main root of "history" is the Greek word "weid". Perhaps the Qur'an has used the word "stories" for history or report or a historical report.

A- Muhammad Hadi M`arifat: Historical problems have two important restrictions, *i.e.*, they are bound by two things: one is "time", the other is "place". That means, a historian needs the exact time of a historical event to be able to study it. It has sometimes been noted that the historians study scientific and religious books to trace a geographical location.

For instance, the palace of "Ibn Hubayrah" has been around Kufa. Finding location of an incident has vital importance for a historian, that means as the time is important for a historian, the place is more important.

Perhaps the ancient historians were not giving much importance to the element of place, but the present historians give much importance to the place than time, and I am also of the same opinion.

Many unclear historical problems and authenticity or untruth of a historical event can be proved by finding the place.

Q.3) What are the advantages or outcome of determining the sites and ancient positions of the stories of the Qur'an?

A- Abul Qasim Imami: Reaching at an accurate image of ancient places mentioned in the Qur'an, or

specifying the geography of the Qur'anic accounts is naturally effective in understanding the verses of the Qur'an. It can clarify the lessons given in the Qur'anic accounts and makes their experimental values more evident. The advantages of every research is known after its completion. Whatever stated in advance cannot be the final conclusion.

On the other hand, this depends on the nature of archaeological science as well as accuracy of their methods. It is to be pointed out that all, archeology itself is an important part of historical science, hence, with its potentialities it should be evaluated, taking into account its methods and data as well.

A- Baha al-Din Khorramshahi: The advantages and outcomes of determining the geographical sites as referred to, directly or indirectly, in the Qur'an, is related to its objective which I clarified in the answer given to the earlier question. Moreover, these studies and the scientific outcomes would provide a better understanding of the holy Qur'an and the philosophy of particular history of the Qur'an. Ultimately, such studies will be at the service of the exegesis of the Qur'an.

A- Muhammad Husayn Ruhani: The advantages and outcomes of finding geographical sites and archaeological positions would help to develop a new understanding of the Qur'an, the necessity of which is felt.

A- `Abbas Zaryab Khoi: Recognition of the places mentioned in the Qur'an about the ancient nations and stories of the prophets is important from scientific, historical and geographical point of view, but it has a pure scientific aspect and is useful to satisfy ones curiosity. But the holy Qur'an is not for explanation of the history of nations. Its stories are lessons and examples. It will not harm the understanding of the Qur'an if the geographical sites are not traced except in cases like *Hajj* (pilgrimage) and understanding its rites.

The Europeans made various efforts in the 19th century to find unknown regions in Saudi Arabia and Palestine. They traversed throughout the Saudi territory by camel and horse and found many stones and inscriptions. They took away most of them and started finding their scripts and languages.

It can be stated that they have discovered the history and geography of pre-Islamic areas. It is obvious that this work was performed for the sake of knowledge and information. For example, the purpose of reading *Himayri* or *Thamudi* scripts was not for unscientific or colonial aims, because colonization is possible without knowledge of *Ma'rib* dam or old cities of Yemen and Roab, and the colonizers are other than those who spend their days and nights in reading inscriptions and discovering their secrets.

A number of books have been written in finding locations and ancient places of Saudi Arabia by Europeans. The list of these books and many other articles are in many volumes. In order to gain a very brief knowledge of this immense ocean, the multi-volume history book *Arabs before Islam* written by Dr. Jawad `Ali will be useful.

Q. 4) Is it possible to clear certain geographical sites in the Qur'an such as Adna al-`Ard,

M'utafikat, al-'Udwah al-Duniya and al-'Udwah al-Quswa and Ashab al-Hijr, etc. ?

A- Abul Qasim Imami: Although it is a very difficult task, losing hope is not fair.

A- Baha al-Din Khorramshahi: In this regard, I should say that the work of science and research is to clear up the things which have been obscure prior to the investigation. The Muslim commentators and geographers acquainted with the Qur'anic culture and interested in its development and expansion have spared no effort in clearing up the geographical sites of the Qur'an such as *Adnal 'Ard* (Shamat), *Mutafikat* (the village of *Lut* which according to some researches is under *Bahr al-Mayyit*), *al-'Udwah al-Duniya* and *'Udwah Quswa* (two hills or strategic points near Medina), or Babylon. Such attempts have reduced superstitions and increased the certainty.

A- Muhammad Husayn Ruhani: Yes, it is possible to clear up such uncertainty from geographical sites of the Qur'an.

A- Muhammad Hadi M'arifat: It is definitely possible. The present historians have cleared up these places. Today "*Adna al-'Ard* and *al-'Udwah al-Duniya* and *Quswa* in *Badr* war are known. The *Ashab al-Hijr* is *Ahqaf*. I have seen in some history books that the geographical route through which Imam Husayn travelled from Mecca to Karbala has been shown accurately, and this is valuable for us. The migration of Imam 'Ali from Medina to Kufa, or the route that took the captives from Karbala to Damascus are clear and hence many questions have been answered.

Q. 5) What is the difference between archeology of the Qur'anic accounts and scientific interpretation of the verses? Does it have the same problem of scientific interpretation?

A- Ahmad Ahmadi: Scientific interpretations are always unstable due to the instability of the hypotheses and the theories adopted by the theoreticians. Since no hypothesis is the last one, every new invention requires a new theory for its interpretation or explanation.

Therefore, scientific theories are subject to change. Like the Einstein's theory of relativity that changed the Newton's physics, the results of archaeological studies cannot be taken for granted to be the definite meaning. Of course, this possibility also helps us to solve some of the obscurities to some extent.

A- Abul Qasim Imami: The scientific interpretation, if accepted in the same term, is the adaptation of the meanings of some verses to the relative and variant data, and this is nothing but a superficial understanding of the Qur'an, because the knowledge has a new word or theory every time. But in archeology of the Qur'anic, accounts have a constant meaning and possess incomplete or sometimes complete existence outside.

The work of archeology is to unveil the fact which once upon a time existed with its special position and has now changed or disappeared but has exactly been the subject matter of the Qur'anic verses. Perhaps, from this point of view, it can briefly be stated that archeology of the Qur'an is more tangible

than some other subjects of revelation.

A- Baha al-Din Khorramshahi: About the difference between archeology of the geography of the Qur'anic accounts and scientific interpretation, it should be stated that it is very close to the methods and attitudes of scientific interpretation. Naturally, it may bear the shortcomings of the scientific interpretation.

A question may arise here as: if for example, all the Qur'anic geography researchers come to the conclusion that there has been no city or a region known as “*Madyan*” in ancient world and that this region is not compatible with the natural geography of the world in the past or present, then, what stand should be adopted and what comment should be made? It is against the *shari`ah* (religious law) to consider them as myth.

For example, such an approach would affect the real historical fate and identity of the prophets like Moses and Sho`ayb (peace be upon them) and ultimately it reaches a point where the historic ruins and geography of the Qur'an are looked at in a mythical sense or as literary creation. This is obviously against the official creed of Islam.

Thus, if scientific researchers are determined that cities like *Madyan* was not a historic or geographical fact, then scholars of the Qur'an cannot admit it for science deals with senses and natural objects, while religion is based on revelation, i.e. permanent realities which are beyond observation, experiment and natural facts. Certainty of faith and realities of the Qur'an should not be dealt with conjectures of the science.

A- `Abbas Zaryab Khoi = As we believe that the Qur'an is from God, the places and locations mentioned therein are relied to be real and if sometimes the geographical or archaeological discoveries fail to comply with them. Then, this will be regarded as drawback of the discoveries, because the archaeological researches and discoveries are not certain, but it is a science based on guess, but not a baseless guesses. It is a guess concluded from reasons such as guess concluded from rational principles and its usage in principle discussions.

But the words of God are certain, so the guess and certainty are not equal. As a long time has passed from the revelation of the holy Book, therefore, many of the verses are of reasonable guess. Here the guess of the archaeological discoveries and the reasonable guess of the holy verses do not allow contradiction of those unconvincing discoveries with Qur'anic verses. In case discoveries help the certainty then we have to interpret and paraphrase the verses. This is specially true in cases like universe, skies and earth layers.

The science is attaining progress and perfection, but one in hundred thousands of the mankind's obscurities has not been unveiled, so the divine verses cannot be interpreted in conformity with the science for the apparent controversy with scientific data, because with new discoveries and invalidity of the previous scientific theories a new interpretation should be made for the Qur'an which is not advisable.

A- Muhammad Hadi Ma`rifat = Yes, it has drawbacks of scientific interpretations, because for example to find *Dhul Qarnayn Dam* it is possible to use the presently available scientific theories while they might have totally gone wrong.

Therefore, making use of archaeological science or geography to determine some locations cited in the Qur'an should be like the use of other sciences in understanding some of the verses. They may be used as the probabilities. Of course, some places like the *M'arib Dam* are definite and in these cases it cannot be said that the Qur'an was based on conjectures.

Thus the Qur'an should not be based on sciences for the Qur'an and religious laws are fixed. It does not change by lapse of time unlike the science which is based on uncertain laws. It is not advisable to deal uncertain matters with certain ones. Except the fixed findings of the science such as the rotation of the earth around sun. Similarly the geographical regions are no exception, some discoveries are certain.

Q-6 Which sciences can be used to locate the geographical sites of the Qur'an?

A- Ahmad Ahmadi: A number of sciences can be used in finding geographical sites of the holy Qur'an, such as: History, archeology, including identification of scripts, stamps, coins, inscriptions, statues, tools instruments, and tombs, geography, sociology, and studying of the nations' characteristics.

A- Abul Qasim Imami = This question is related to the archeology experts who know the tools of their science better. Naturally, they would take help from the Qur'an and the science of history.

A- Baha al-Din Khorramshahi = The sciences which can be used are: Historical geography, history, and archeology and their branches such as linguistics and etymology and so on.

A- Muhammad Husayn Ruhani = A book comprises 2,000 pages with about 1,000 satellite figures and cosmic maps and computerized tables is published under the title of *Elements of Natural Geography* written by Arthur N. Strahler (the greatest and most famous contemporary geographer). I have translated this book into Persian. It is a very good book . This book could be used to understand the geographical places of the Qur'an.

Q-7 How much the knowledge of incidents and stories of the Qur'an can help the commentators of the Qur'an ? What are the demerits of ignoring such issues?

A- Ahmad Ahmadi = a commentator of the holy Qur'an should explain and interpret the historical and geographical events, otherwise his writings cannot be called an interpretation. It only be the collection of others' writings and sayings which does not have research value. Therefore, a commentator of the Qur'an should provide his research on historical narrations and try to clarify the dark and obscure angles of his work with reference to geographical and archaeological sciences and carry out his researches with methodological analysis. For example, in some narrations the palace of *Dhat al-`Imad* was contrasted with fabulous and fanciful heaven of Shaddad. Whereas a commentator of the Qur'an should not confine

to the narrations only, but he should deal with it accurately and comprehensively as the late scholar `Allamah Tabatabai did so.

A- Abul Qasim Imami = If a commentator of the Qur'an cut off from the real sources in dealing with the Qur'anic ancient places he would relapse into illusion.

A- Baha al-Din Khorramshahi = Some points have been made on necessity and advantages of discovering the geographical sites mentioned in the Qur'an which is a part of the science of commentary. It is very obvious that every Muslim is eager to know as who were *Jalut* and *Talut*, likewise, it is very obvious that he likes to know where are the places mentioned in the Qur'an such as *Madina*, *Qaryah* or *Bahr*. Such need may lead to writing and compiling books on issues such as *Dhul Qarnayn* .

A- Muhammad Husayn Ruhani = For interpretation of the Qur'an it is necessary to identify the sites of the events as mentioned in the historical reports of the Qur'an. Not paying attention to this fact will grow into an undesirable result .

A- Muhammad Hadi Ma`rifat = The Qur'an has paid attention to the historical aspects as well . The battles of Islam against the infidels have been mentioned in the Qur'an – definitely have some obscure points for the commentators.

If the historical places and figures could be cleared up with reference to time and place, it could enlighten even a *faqih* in certain issues, such as, the case of *qasr prayer*(prayer in shortened form). Or take the case of a figure like *Dhul Qarnayn* which has not been identified as to who is he? Where is the real site of the dam constructed by *Dhul Qarnayn*?

Fakhr Razi was the first person who said that *Dhul Qarnayn* is the same Macedonian Alexander of Greece. His justification is: the *Dhul Qarnayn* mentioned in the Qur'an travelled to the east and the west achieving victories. Then Fakhr Razi says: “While a survey in the history we do not find anybody other than Macedonian Alexander, therefore, the *Dhul Qarnayn* is the same Macedonian Alexander.

This is the logic of Imam Fakhr Razi: Since you did not find it therefore it is he. It means to infer a positive proposition from a non-existent proposition. We could not find anybody in the history with the specifications of *Dhul Qarnayn* as mentioned in the Qur'an. Since we could not find him, therefore *Dhul Qarnayn* should be Macedonian Alexander.

Although it seems that *Dhul Qarnayn* belongs to ante historic periods, like some of the prophets. “*The first people appeared on the earth were Dhul Qarnayn and Abraham*, while according to the Old Testament, the Macedonian Alexander existed 800 years after the Prophet Abraham.

This does not concur with the idea of Fakhr Razi. Recently Maulana Abulkalam Azad has compared *Dhul Qarnayn* with Cyrus and on the basis of the reasons and evidences cited in Old Testament, he claims that this personality has remained unknown to Muslims for being away from the Old Testament

thus, while by referring to Old Testament it becomes obvious that *Dhul Qarnayn* is the same great Cyrus.

This is a controversial statement, because it is said that when Cyrus conquered Babylon, he shook hand with a great idol called as “*Mordoukh*” to conciliate the nation of Babylon. While the *Dhul Qarnayn* as described by the Qur'an was a pure servants of God. Thus this idea contradict Abul Kalam's viewpoint.

One of the subjects is *Dhul Qarnayn* dam which has not been located and late Sayyid Hebat Allah Shahrestani compared it with China wall, while it is not in agreement with the Qur'an because Qur'an says: “*That dam was made from molten iron and copper.*” Some others have thought that *Dhul Qarnayn* dam is the same dam of *Bab al-Abwab* of Russia (i.e., present Turkmenian).

One of the other subjects is Nile Sea. Many of our commentators have cited it Nile Sea, while it is not a sea but the River Nile and Prophet Moses (s) did not cross the River Nile because he moved towards Palestine with his people. When he departed from Egypt and reached the land of Sina; The water that obstructed their way was the Red Ocean which is mentioned in both Old Testament and Samaat prayers as *Sauf Sea* which means Red Sea.

If our respected commentators had paid attention to the route travelled by Prophet Moses (s), they would not have committed mistake by diverting their mind to River Nile, because Nile is between Egypt and Africa, and Prophet Moses (s) did not want to go to Africa or Algeria. However, inattention to these places is misguiding in interpretation.

Q- 8 Does Qur'an use symbolic language in connection with the places or does it refer exactly to the natural historical sites as existed in the world?

A- Ahmad Ahhmadi = some Islamic sects have gone to extremes in paraphrasing the outer beings of certain verses. For instance, even they paraphrase *zakat*, prayers and Hajj (pilgrimage). By doing so the Qur'an which is the referral of all Muslims will lose its authenticity. Of course, in some cases it is allowed to touch the inner meanings of the verses by virtue of its own specific criteria, instance of which can be seen in *Al-Mizan*. Sometimes we come across certain *hadith* as see in a saying: “This is the inward meaning of Qur'an.”

A- Abul Qasim Imami = It's too early to answer this question. This question should be postponed to a time that final stage of researches in the field of archeology have been carried out.

A- Baha al-Din Khorramshahi = Regarding the places cited by the Qur'an either in the stories or in symbolic way, my definite opinion as a Qur'an researcher and the translator of the Qur'an into Persian is that all the places pointed by the Qur'an are historical and real. Of course, it is possible to find some differences in the opinions of the commentators of the Qur'an for instance about *Tur* as to whether it is a proper mountain or is a mountain in general equal to *Jabal* or for example where was *Wadi Iman* or *Aljanib al-Gharbi* (i.e., west side), west as per which direction?

Here it should be stated that differences of opinion among the scholars is a mercy and bring in its wake scientific progress. Moreover, it is a trimmed of the truth and uncompromising with dogmatic approach but this should not lead into the denial of historical fact or doubt in reality of geographical places of the Qur'an.

At the end, I should add that I regard the Qur'an as linguistic – literary miracle, therefore, I regard usages of figurative, metaphoric, allusion, symbol and other linguistic and literary points, as definite inevitable, positive, desirable and even natural and obvious.

It is very wise and acceptable when God, the Owner and main Speaker of the Qur'an uses figurative, speaking about a wall He says: *“They found a wall about to collapse”* (Kahf, Verse 77). It is not acceptable if one doubts the existence of a wall or city with a treasure under the wall .

A- Muhammad Husayn Ruhani = Name of not even a single place has come throughout the Qur'an symbolically.

A- Muhammad Hadi Ma`rifat = Regarding the Qur'anic accounts it is a question as to whether the stories are symbolic, or real. Some people have gone to extremes and dealt with them as unreal things. Some others have said: *“The Qur'an is not other than the reality.”* In this context a middle way can be selected. Because the Qur'an itself says:

“Surely Allah is not ashamed to set forth any parable-(that of) a gnat or any thing above that...”(2:26) .

Now let us cite one example from the Qur'an:

“Surely we offered the trust to the heavens and the earth...”(33:72)

Now can we say that God offered the trust which is wisdom to the heaven it and the heaven said: *“I do not want.”* In fact this holy verse of the Qur'an reveals something on behalf. It means when we evaluate all the creatures, it is found that they do not deserve to enjoy wisdom. By evaluating human, it is found that he deserves wisdom.

Therefore, accepting or rejection of wisdom depends on the nature of the creatures. Many such subjects exist in the Qur'an. Therefore, we can neither deny absolutely nor become absolutely positive. They must be evaluated case by case. Some cases are definitely symbolic and are the scenarios and at places they are absolutely real and many other things are still obscure. For example, the story of *Adam and Eve*, heaven and Satan.

The scholars definitely work on these subjects to find whether they are scenario or reality. Most of the scholars believe them to be realities. But it is also being spoken that this is also a scene. This means it is a secret and so is the mankind's nature. We do not want to believe it, but there is a croon.

1. See Qur'an, 37: 137–138.

2. See Qur'an 6:25; 16:24; 8:31; 23:83; 25:5; 27:68; 46: 17; 68: 15; 83: 13.

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