

# SŪRAH 105

## Al-Fīl

(The Elephant)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the Name of God, the Lord of Grace, the Ever Merciful.*

*Are you not aware how your Lord dealt with the people of the Elephant? (1)*

*Did He not utterly confound their treacherous plan, (2)*

*and send against them flocks of birds, (3)*

*which pelted them with stones of sand and clay? (4)*

*Thus He made them like stalks of devoured leaves. (5)*

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ



أَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ كَيْدَهُمْ فِي تَضَلِيلٍ

وَأَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ

تَرْمِيهِمْ بِحِجَارَةٍ مِّن سِجِّيلٍ

فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَّأْكُولٍ

### Historical Background

This *sūrah* refers to a widely famous incident in the Arabian Peninsula which took place before the commencement of the Islamic message. The incident shows very clearly how God protected the sacred area, which He willed to be the focal point of the last enlightenment, the cradle of the new faith, from where it was to begin its blessed march to exterminate *jāhiliyyah* from all corners of the world and to establish in its place God's infallible guidance.

The various reports about this incident relate that after the Abyssinians had expelled the Persians from Yemen and established their rule there, the Abyssinian governor of Yemen, Abrahah, built a superbly luxurious church giving it the name of the then Abyssinian Emperor. He did this after he had observed the love and enthusiasm of Yemeni Arabs – the same as those felt all over the Arab land – for the Ka`bah, the Sacred Mosque at Makkah. His purpose behind building the church was to make the Arabs forsake their attachment to the Mosque at Makkah and turn instead to his new luxurious church.

But the Arabs did not turn away from their historical shrine. They believed themselves to be the descendants of Abraham and Ishmael who built the House, which is the name they often used for the Ka`bah. For them, this fact was a source of pride in line with their tradition of honouring their forefathers. Vain and hollow as they were, their beliefs were, in their eyes, better and more profound than those of the people of earlier revelations [i.e. the Jews and Christians]. They viewed these religions as contradictory and futile.

As a result, Abrahah decided to pull the Ka`bah down in order to achieve his objective of turning the Arabs away from it. He therefore marched at the head of a great army equipped with elephants. At the front was a huge elephant which enjoyed special fame among Abrahah's men. News of Abrahah's march and his objective travelled throughout Arab lands giving rise to very strong feelings amongst the Arabs about the destruction of their sacred House. A nobleman of the royal family of Yemen, called Dhū Nafar, tried to stop the Abyssinian governor, calling on his people and other Arabs to fight Abrahah and defend the House. Some Arab tribes joined him in a battle against Abrahah which Dhū Nafar lost before he was taken prisoner. Later, while Abrahah was on his way, he was intercepted by Nat'l ibn Ḥabīb al-Khath`amī, who had mobilized two Arab tribes as well as other Bedouin volunteers, but Abrahah again won the battle and captured Nat'l. Nat'l then agreed to act as a guide for Abrahah showing him the way. When the Abyssinian governor approached Ṭā'if, a number of its leaders went to him to say that the House he wanted to pull down was in Makkah and not at Ṭā'if. They did this in order to prevent him from destroying the house they had built for their idol, al-Lāt. They also provided him with a guide to show him the way to the Ka`bah.

Then, on his arrival at al-Mughammas, a valley *en route* from Ṭā'if to Makkah, Abrahah despatched one of his commanders to Makkah where he looted some belongings of the Quraysh and other Arabs, including 200 camels which belonged to `Abd al-Muṭṭalib ibn Hāshim, the chief of Makkah and the Prophet's grandfather. Quraysh, Kinānah, Hudhayl and neighbouring Arab tribes then gathered together to fight Abrahah, but realized that they stood no chance of winning, so did not proceed any further. Then Abrahah sent a messenger to Makkah to meet its chief and convey

to him that the governor of Yemen did not come to fight the people of Makkah, but just to pull the House down. If they left him to accomplish his objective, he would be pleased not to cause any further bloodshed. Abrahah also ordered his messenger to bring with him the Makkan chief, if the latter did not propose to fight. When the messenger communicated his master's message to `Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the latter said: "By God, we do not want to fight him and we have no power to resist him. This is God's sacred House, built by His chosen friend, Abraham. If He protects it against Abrahah, it is because the House is His, and if He leaves it to him to destroy, we cannot defend it." `Abd al-Muṭṭalib then went with the messenger to meet Abrahah.

Ibn Ishāq said that `Abd al-Muṭṭalib was a most handsome, charming and venerable-looking person. When Abrahah saw him he felt much respect for him. He felt that `Abd al-Muṭṭalib was too noble to sit beneath his royal bed, but at the same time he did not wish his officers and troops to see him elevate his guest and sit him on his own couch, so instead he sat with `Abd al-Muṭṭalib on the carpet. Then Abrahah ordered his interpreter to ask his guest what he wanted. `Abd al-Muṭṭalib said he wanted to request the king to give him back his 200 camels which had been looted by his commander. Abrahah ordered his interpreter to tell `Abd al-Muṭṭalib on his behalf: "I admired you when I first saw you but when I spoke to you I was disappointed. Do you come to talk to me about 200 looted camels and forget about the House which is an embodiment of your and your forefathers' religion and which I have come to destroy? You did not even say a word to persuade me to spare it."

`Abd al-Muṭṭalib said: "I am only the master of my camels, but the House has its own Lord who is sure to protect it." Abrahah snapped: "It cannot be defended against me." The Makkan chief said: "You take your chance!" Abrahah returned his camels to him.

`Abd al-Muṭṭalib went back to the Quraysh and told them of his encounter with the Abyssinian commander. He ordered them to leave Makkah and seek shelter in the surrounding mountains. Then he accompanied a few Quraysh dignitaries to the Ka`bah where he held the ring on its door in his hand. They all prayed hard to God for His help and protection of the House. `Abd al-Muṭṭalib is reported to have recited the following lines of poetry in his prayer:

Our Lord, a creature protects his property, so protect Yours. Let not their cross and their might ever overcome Your might. If You are leaving them to destroy our House of worship, then You surely have something in mind.

Abrahah, on the other hand, ordered his army to march with the elephants to complete their mission, but at a short distance from Makkah, their famous, huge elephant sat down and refused to go any further. The soldiers exerted all efforts to persuade the elephant to enter the city, but their attempts were in vain. This incident

is a fact acknowledged by the Prophet. When his she-camel, al-Qaṣwā', sat down some distance from Makkah, on the day the Ḥudaybiyah peace agreement was concluded, the Prophet said to those of his Companions who claimed she had become mulish, that she had not and that mulishness was not part of her nature. "But," the Prophet added, "she has been prevented by the same will which debarred the elephant from entering Makkah." On the day of the conquest of Makkah, the Prophet said: "God protected Makkah against the elephant but He allowed His Messenger and the believers to take it under their control. Its sanctity today is the same as yesterday. Let those who hear this convey it to those who are absent."

Then God's will to destroy the Abyssinian army and its commander was fulfilled. He sent groups of birds to stone the attackers with pebbles of sand and clay, leaving them like dry and torn leaves, as the Qur'ān describes. Abrahah suffered physical injuries. The remainder of his army carried him back to Yemen, but his limbs began to separate from the rest of his body and he started losing one finger after another, until they arrived at Sana`ā'. According to various reports, Abrahah died after his chest was cleaved apart.

### **A Rationalist View**

Versions of this event vary with regard to the description of the bird flocks, their size, the nature of the stones and the manner of their effect. Some accounts add that smallpox and measles broke out in Makkah that year. Those who are inclined to limit the scale of miracles and unfamiliar phenomena, seeking to explain all events as resulting from the operation of natural phenomena that are familiar to us, prefer to explain this event as an actual outbreak of smallpox and measles that afflicted the army. They further explain that the 'birds' could have been flies or mosquitoes carrying germs. The word 'bird' in Arabic refers to all that flies. Explaining this *sūrah* in his own commentary on this part of the Qur'ān, Imām Muḥammad `Abduh says:

On the second day, a smallpox and measles epidemic broke out among Abrahah's soldiers. `Ikrimah says: "It was the first time smallpox had appeared in the Arabia." Ya`qūb ibn `Utbah says: "That was the year when measles and smallpox appeared in Arabia. The diseases had an almost unparalleled effect on their bodies: their flesh began to fall apart. The soldiers and their commander were horror-stricken and ran away. Abrahah was also hit. His flesh continued falling off his body, finger by finger, until eventually his chest broke up and he died at Sana`ā'.

This is what different reports have mentioned and what is logically acceptable. This *sūrah* shows us that the smallpox and measles were produced by solid stones carried and thrown on the soldiers by colossal

flocks of birds that are helped on their way by winds.

It is in line with these reports to believe that those birds mentioned in the *sūrah* refer to a kind of fly or mosquito which carries the germs of some diseases, and that the stones were of dried and poisonous clay which the wind carried and which might have stuck to the birds' legs. When this clay touched any organism, it penetrated deep into it and then caused complications in wounds and injuries which upset the whole body, leading to the dropping off of flesh. Many kinds of these powerless birds are, as a matter of fact, among the most efficient of God's troops, which He uses for the destruction of whomsoever He wills. That little organism, called nowadays 'germ', is within this classification. It gathers in large groups, the number of which is unknown except to the Creator. It is not essential for the manifestation of God's might that the birds should be as large as mountain tops, or of a certain shape or colour, and it is not essential for this manifestation that we should know the size of those stones and the way they work. For God has troops of all kinds: "In everything He has a sign attesting to His oneness," as the saying goes.

There is no force in the universe but is subject to God's power. To that tyrant, Abrahah, who wanted to destroy the Ka`bah, God sent birds carrying smallpox and measles. Both he and his people were destroyed before entering Makkah. That was an act of grace and a blessing from God bestowed on the neighbours of His sanctuary in spite of the fact that they were idolaters. God wished to protect His House until He sent His Messenger, Muḥammad, to protect it with the force of faith and ideology. At the same time, it was a punishment from God inflicted on His enemies, the people of the Elephant, who wanted to destroy the House without reasonable justification.

This can be taken as a basis for understanding this *sūrah*. Nothing else can be accepted without logical explanation, even if it is authentically reported. Divine power is exhibited more strikingly when those who manifested their might by recruiting elephants, the largest quadruped animals, were destroyed and crushed by a tiny animal, invisible to human eyes. A wise person finds this certainly greater, more fascinating and miraculous.

### **Natural Phenomena and God's Power**

This assumption [of smallpox or measles resulting from clay infected with the germs of those diseases] advanced by the well-versed Imam is contrasted with one included in some narratives, describing the stones thrown by the birds as causing the heads and bodies of the Abyssinians to split. They speak of the stones boring through

their bodies, leaving them like remnants of dry leaves. To us, neither of the two explanations outweighs the other in manifesting God's might, or provides a better explanation of the event. Both are the same with regard to their possibility and the demonstration of God's power. Whether the natural phenomena known and familiar to man operated to destroy the people God willed to be destroyed, or His purpose was accomplished through some divine rule and phenomena of which man has no knowledge, are in our view exactly the same.

The divine rules of nature are not circumscribed by the boundaries of man's knowledge or what is familiar to him. For man knows only the fraction which God puts before him, and only that which suits his understanding and thought. Hence, so-called miracles are part of the rules of nature laid down by God, but they are miracles only when measured by human knowledge and experience.

Hence, there is no need for unease or doubt when faced with a supernatural event. Nor is there any need to seek an explanation for it, if the reports mentioning it are authentic, or there are enough reasons, based on what is in the texts, to suggest that it was supernatural, going beyond known natural laws. That a certain event should run according to familiar natural laws is no less significant or less effective than its following supernatural laws. Natural rules familiar to men are in fact miraculous when measured against human power and ability. Sunrise is a miracle, though it occurs every day, and the birth of every child is superhuman in spite of its happening every minute. If anyone wants to challenge this, let him try to devise a birth! The employment of birds of any kind to carry crushed stones infected with germs, and cast them at the raiding army the moment it was about to overwhelm the city and destroy the House, is indeed a great miracle. That God's will should have been realized in that way would comprise several miracles, with each regarded as a clear and spectacular manifestation of His might and will. Had this course been followed, it would not have been less significant or less striking than sending a certain kind of bird, carrying unfamiliar kinds of stones, to afflict human bodies with a peculiar sort of affliction at that particular time. The two courses are the same; both are miraculous and superhuman.

As for the event in question, the opinion advocating an unfamiliar, preternatural course carries more weight. This opinion visualizes that God sent groups of unfamiliar birds, carrying strange stones which caused extraordinary affliction to human bodies. To accept this opinion does not necessitate the acceptance of those narratives which describe the birds in most fascinating terms, similar to descriptions of legendary incidents that betray exaggeration.

God had a scheme for the House: He wanted to preserve it as a refuge for mankind where everyone finds peace, and to make it a gathering point for the followers of the new faith to march out in security in a free land, not subject to any

external force or to any tyrannical government which might try to smother the new message in its cradle. God also wanted to make this event a permanent lesson, clear to everyone in all ages, so much so that in this *sūrah* He reminds the Quraysh, even after Muḥammad (peace be upon him) is given his message, of this grace He bestowed on them, making it an example of how He protects His sanctuaries and preserves them. There is no need for any attempt to impart a familiar image to this event, exceptional as it is in essence and circumstances. This is all the more so when we take into consideration the fact that what we know of smallpox and measles and their effects on man does not fit with what was reported of the effects of the incident on the soldiers' and their commander's bodies. Neither of the two diseases causes man's limbs to fall off, finger by finger and organ by organ. Nor does either disease cause the cleaving of one's chest. The Qur'ānic narrative suggests very clearly that this is what happened: "*Thus He made them like stalks of devoured leaves.*" (Verse 5)

Moreover, the reports of 'Ikrimah and Ya`qūb ibn 'Utbah do not state that smallpox hit the army. Neither report says anything more than that smallpox broke out that year for the first time in the Arabian Peninsula. Neither of the two men suggests that Abrahah and his army in particular fell victim to this epidemic. Besides, if only the army was affected by the diseases while the Arabs around remained safe – that is, if the birds were meant to strike only the army – then this is again preternatural. Since the event is in any case supernatural, why trouble ourselves in limiting it to a certain explanation only because this explanation is based on what is familiar to us?

The motives of the Rationalist School, of which Imām Muḥammad `Abduh was the leading figure, to limit the field of the supernatural and the imperceptible to our senses when explaining the Qur'ān, are both understandable and commendable. This school tried to explain such events within the bounds of the known and familiar natural laws. It was confronted with a superstitious trend which tightened its grip on the minds of the masses at that time. Moreover, it faced a flood of legends and Talmudic narratives which books explaining the Qur'ān were overburdened with, while fascination with modern technology and science on the one hand, and doubt in the principles of religion on the other, were reaching their zenith. The Rationalist School tried, therefore, to preserve the place of religion taking the standpoint that whatever it says is compatible with reason. Hence, this school strived to keep religion pure from any association with any kind of legend and superstition. It also tried to establish a religious mentality which understood natural laws and recognized that they were constant and infallible, and which attributed all human and universal functions and operations to these natural laws. This mentality is, in essence, the Qur'ānic mentality. For the Qur'ān refers people to natural laws as they constitute the permanent and infallible rule which organizes individual operations

and diverse phenomena.

Yet resisting the pressures of superstition on the one hand and fascination with technology on the other left their stamps on the school. It became extra cautious, tending to make familiar natural laws the only basis for the divine laws of nature. Hence the Qur'ānic explanations of Shaikh Muḥammad `Abduh and his two disciples Shaikh Rashīd Ridā and Shaikh `Abd al-Qādir al-Maghribī clearly show a strong desire to reduce the greater number of miracles to only the more familiar of God's natural laws rather than the preternatural. They explain some of these miracles in a way that would be in line with what is called 'rational', and they are excessively cautious in accepting what is imperceptible to human senses.

With this understanding of the environmental factors behind the Rationalist School's trend, it should be noted that it has gone too far in overlooking the other side of the comprehensive concept which the Qur'ān aims to implant in Muslim minds. This is that God's will and power are absolute, limitless and go far beyond the universal rules and laws He ordained, whether familiar to man or not. This absoluteness does not accept the human mind as a final arbiter. Neither does it accept the limits of the human mind as binding in such a way as to classify as probable only that which may be acceptable to human reason, and to demand 'rational' explanations for all that is unacceptable to it. This demand is frequently stated by advocates of this school.

Moreover, the divine laws of the universe are not only those familiar to man. Indeed, what is familiar to man is only a fraction of these laws. Both these and the unfamiliar laws are the same in manifesting the greatness of divine power and the exactness and precision of God's designs.

Nevertheless, we must be well guarded against superstition and at the same time reject any unfounded legend with conscious moderation, so that we neither succumb to the influence of particular environments nor feel urged by a need to resist a common tradition of a certain age.

There is a safe rule for approaching Qur'ānic texts, which may be appropriately stated here. We cannot approach what the Qur'ān states with prejudiced minds and preconceived ideas, whether generally or in relation to the subject matter of the statements under study. The opposite is the correct way: we must approach Qur'ānic statements in such a way that helps us to derive our concepts from them and formulate our ideas on their basis. What the Qur'ān states is final as it is. For what we call 'reason' and its adjudication on what the Qur'ān relates of events in the universe or of history, in our own world or in the realm of the imperceptible, is no more than the net result of our finite human existence and experience.

Although human reason is, in essence an absolute force, not subject to, or limited

by, individual experiences or events, it is, after all, confined to human existence. This existence does not reflect the absolute, as this belongs to God. The Qur'ān comes from God, the Absolute. Hence, it is binding on us in the sense that whatever it states is the basis of our very 'rational' concepts. Then, no one can say of a certain Qur'ānic statement: 'It is unacceptable to reason, so a logical explanation must be sought for it,' as advocates of the Rationalist School frequently say. This does not mean that we should accept superstitions, it only stresses that human reason is not the arbiter of what the Qur'ān states. When the expressions of a Qur'ānic text are clear and straightforward, they determine how our reason should approach that text in order to formulate our views concerning its subject matter as well as regarding other universal facts.

### **A Momentous Event**

Let us now examine the text of the *sūrah* itself and try to understand the significance of the story.

*"Are you not aware how your Lord dealt with the people of the Elephant?"* (Verse 1) It is a question that draws attention to the wonders involved in the incident itself and stresses its great significance. The incident was so well known to the Arabs that they used to consider it a sort of beginning of history. They would say, 'This incident happened in the year of the Elephant', and, 'That event took place two years before the year of the Elephant', or, 'This dates to ten years after the year of the Elephant'. It is well known that the Prophet was born in the year of the Elephant itself. This is perhaps one of the fascinatingly perfect arrangements of divine will.

The *sūrah* then is not relating to the Arabs something they did not know. It is a reminder of an event well known to them, aiming at achieving something beyond actual remembrance of it.

After this opening note, the *sūrah* tells the rest of the story in the form of a rhetorical question: *"Did He not utterly confound their treacherous plan?"* (Verse 2) This means that the designs of the people of the Elephant were useless, incapable of achieving anything at all. They were like someone who had lost his way and thus could not arrive at his destination. Perhaps this is a reminder to the Quraysh of the grace God bestowed on them when He protected and preserved the House at a time when they felt too weak to face the mighty aggressors, the people of the Elephant. Such remembrance was perhaps intentionally meant to make them feel their disgrace when they persistently denied God after He had helped them out of their weakness. It may also curb their conceit and heavy-handedness in their treatment of Muḥammad and the few believers who supported him. God destroyed the powerful aggressors who wanted to pull down His House, which serves as a sanctuary for all

people. God, then, may destroy the new aggressors who try to persecute His Messenger and suppress His message.

The Qur'ān portrays superbly how the aggressors' defeat was brought about: "*Did He not... send against them flocks of birds, which pelted them with stones of sand and clay? Thus He made them like stalks of devoured leaves.*" (Verses 3-5) The birds flew in flocks. The Qur'ān uses a Persian term, *sijjil*, which denotes 'stone and clay' to describe the substance with which the birds struck the aggressors. The dry leaves are described as "devoured" to denote that insects or other animals had eaten them. It is a vivid image of the physical shattering of the Abyssinian army as they were stricken with these muddy stones. There is no need to go into such explanations as that it was an allegorical description of their destruction by smallpox or measles.

### **The Arabs and Islam**

The significance of this event is far reaching and the lessons deduced from its mention in the Qur'ān are numerous. It first suggests that God did not want the idolaters to take responsibility for protecting His House, in spite of the fact that they held it in deep respect and sought its security. When He willed to preserve the House and made it clear that He Himself was its protector, He left the idolaters to their defeat by the Abyssinians. Divine will then directly intervened to repel the aggression and preserve His sacred House. Thus the idolaters did not have a chance to hold the protection of the House as a 'favour they did to God' or as 'an act of honour'. If they had done so, they would have been prompted by fanatic *jāhiliyyah* impulses. This point gives considerable weight to the argument that the divine will of destroying the aggressors was accomplished through preternatural rules.

This direct intervention by God to protect the House should have prompted the Quraysh and the rest of the Arabian tribes to embrace Islam, the divine religion, when it was conveyed to them by the Prophet. Surely, their respect and guardianship of the House, and the paganism they spread around it, should not have been their reason for rejecting Islam! God's reminder to them of this event is a part of the Qur'ānic criticism of their stand, drawing attention to their amazing stubbornness.

The event also suggests that God did not allow the people of earlier revelations, represented in this case by Abrahah and his army, to destroy the sacred House or to impose their authority over the holy land, even when it was surrounded by the impurity of idolatry and idolaters were its custodians. Thus the House remained free from any human authority, safe against all wicked designs. God preserved the freedom of the land in order that the new faith would develop there completely free, not subjected to the authority of any despot. God revealed this religion as the force which supersedes all other religions. He wanted it to take over the leadership of

humanity. God's will concerning His House and religion was accomplished long before any human being knew that the Prophet, who was to convey the new message, was born in the same year. We are reassured when we realize this aspect of the significance of the event. We know the wicked ambitions of international imperialist forces and world Zionism concerning the holy lands. We realize that these forces spare no effort to achieve their wicked ambitions. But we are not worried. For God who protected His House against the aggression of the people of earlier revelations when its custodians were idolaters will protect it again, if He wills, just as He will protect Madinah, His Messenger's city, against the wicked designs of evildoers.

Moreover, the event refers to the reality of the Arabian situation at that time. The Arabs did not have any role to play on the face of the earth. They did not even have an identity of their own before Islam. In the Yemen they were subjugated by either Persians or Abyssinians. If they had any government of their own, it was under the protection of the Persians. In the north, Syria was subject to Byzantine rule which was either direct or in the shape of an Arab government under Byzantine protection. Only the heartland of the Arabian Peninsula escaped foreign rule. But this was in a state of tribalism and division which deprived it of any weight in world politics. Tribal warfare could drag on for 40 years or longer, but neither individually nor as a group did these tribes count as a power in the eyes of the mighty empires neighbouring them. What happened with regard to the Abyssinian aggression was a correct assessment of these tribes' real strength when faced with a foreign aggressor.

Under Islam the Arabs had, for the first time in history, an international role to play. They also had a powerful state to be taken into consideration by world powers. They possessed a sweeping force that destroyed thrones, conquered empires, and brought down false, deviating and ignorant leaderships in order to take over the leadership of mankind. But what facilitated these achievements for the Arabs for the first time in their history was that they forgot their Arabism. They forgot racial urges and fanaticism. They remembered that they were Muslims, and Muslims only. They carried the message of a forceful and all-comprehensive faith, which they delivered to humanity with mercy and compassion. They did not uphold any sort of nationalism or factionalism. They were the exponents of a divine idea which gave mankind a divine, not earthly, doctrine to be applied as a way of life. They left their homes to struggle for the cause of God alone. They were not after the establishment of an Arab empire under which they might live in luxury and conceit. Their aim was not to subjugate other nations to their own rule after freeing them from the rule of the Byzantines or Persians. It was an aim clearly defined by Rib`iy ibn `Āmir, the Muslims' messenger to the Persian commander, when he said in the latter's headquarters: "God ordered us to set out in order to save humanity from the

worship of creatures and to bring it to the worship of God alone, to save it from the narrowness of this life so that it may look forward to the broadness of the life hereafter, and from the oppression of other religions so that it may enjoy the justice of Islam.”

Then, and only then, did the Arabs have an identity, a power and a leadership. But all of these were devoted to God alone. They possessed their power and leadership as long as they followed the right path. But when they deviated and followed their narrow nationalistic ideas, and when they substituted for the banner of Islam that of factional bonds, they came under subjugation by other nations. For God deserted them whenever they deserted Him; He neglected them as they neglected Him.

What are the Arabs without Islam? What is the ideology that they hold, or they can give to humanity if they abandon Islam? What value can a nation have without an ideology which it presents to the world? Every nation which assumed the leadership of humanity in any period of history advanced an ideology. Nations which did not, such as the Tartars who swept over the east, or the Berbers who crushed the Roman Empire in the west, could not survive for long. They were assimilated by the nations they conquered. The only ideology the Arabs advanced for mankind was the Islamic faith which raised them to the position of human leadership. If they forsake it they will no longer have any function or role to play in human history. The Arabs should remember this well if they want to live and be powerful and assume the leadership of mankind. It is God who provides guidance for us lest we go astray.