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***Muhammad* (sws) foretold in the Old Testament
(The Prophet Unto Like Moses)**

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It is stated by the Lord in the book of Deuteronomy of the Old Testament of the Bible: *'I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words into his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.'* The passage from which these words have been noted is given below:

The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy Brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; According to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the Lord said unto me, They have well *spoken that* which they have spoken. I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words into his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require *it* of him.¹

We shall undertake the study of its main themes point by point.

'From the midst of thee'

'From the midst of thee' would (if it be a genuine phrase

1. The Bible, KJV, Deuteronomy, XVIII:15-19.

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having not been interpolated by some later redactor of the Bible, which it looks to be), in this context, obviously mean that the promised prophet shall be a descendant of your main and joint ancestor, Abraham (sws). It is, however, noticeable that this prophecy has been noted at some other places of the New and Old Testaments of the Bible as well², but this phrase does not appear there. It makes the genuineness of this phrase doubtful. Some versions etc. of the Bible take it in the sense of some place. A Jewish Commentary explains:

from the midst of thee. This implies that the endowment of prophecy can only be exercised in the holy land (N).³

There are some versions etc. of the Bible that have dropped this phrase from verse 15 of the passage. The New Oxford Annotated B, in addition to dropping the phrase, has changed the word 'brethren' into 'people', and has translated it as:

...will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet.⁴

The New International V, dropping the phrase from v. 15, translates it as:

...will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him.⁵

Good News B and Today's English V, both, have also dropped the phrase, but have changed the word 'brethren' into 'people'.

2. (i) Deu. XVIII: 18;

(ii) Acts III: 22 which asserts: 'For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you'; and

(iii) Acts VII: 37 which asserts: 'A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear'.

3. The Rev. Dr. A. Cohen, The Soncino Chumash, Hindhead, Surrey, 1947, p. 1085.

4. The New Oxford Annotated B, Oxf Univ Press, NY, 1989, p. 242: OT.

5. The New International V of the Holy B, International B Society, New Jersey, 1984, pp. 202 f.

They write:

(...), he will send you a prophet like me from among your own people, and you are to obey him.⁶

The Revised Berkeley V has also dropped the phrase from its translation of v. 15. It writes:

He will raise up for you a prophet like me, one of your own brothers, and you shall listen to him.⁷

The same is the case with so many other Versions (e.g. Contemporary English V, 1995, p. 219, The Reader's Digest B, 1983, p. 97, The New American B, p. 176, etc.). It looks to be sufficient to establish that most of the Bible authorities themselves do not feel comfortable with keeping the phrase as a genuine part of the passage in their works and take it to be an interpolation by some later redactor of the book.

All the above discussion makes it quite probable that the phrase 'from the midst of thee' is a later addition by someone and is not a genuine part of the passage. Even if it be a genuine phrase of the gospel, it signifies that the prophet shall not be a stranger to you. He would be a kinsman of yours, from the progeny of your own forefather Abraham.

'of thy brethren'

To ascertain the meaning of the phrase 'of thy brethren', there is a clue in the beginning of this very chapter 18 of the book of Deuteronomy. Verse 2 reads:

Therefore shall they [ie. 'The priests, the Levites', as recorded in v. 1 of this ch.] have no inheritance among

6. Good News B, BFBS, London, 1982, p.189; Today's English V, American B Society, NY, 1978, p. 192.

The writer of the present article has now obtained its revised 1994 edition. It was published by the Bible Society in Australia, Minto 2566. It has retained this translation, without any change, at its page 211.

7. The Revised Berkeley V, (and it claims on its title page: 'A Completely New Translation from the Original Languages'), The Gideons International, 1974 ed., p. 157.

their brethren; the Lord is their inheritance.⁸

Obviously the word 'brethren' here means 'the other tribes from the line of their main ancestor, Jacob (sws), and not the brothers related to their own tribe, the Levites, because they have been denied any inheritance'. Because the addressees here are the Levites, their 'brethren' would mean none other than their brethren (cousins) from the other tribes of the line of Jacob (sws) and not the members of their own tribe. There are other examples in the Bible for this theme as well, e.g. Judges 20: 13; Numbers 8: 26; 2Kings 24:12; etc. It is, however, to be noted that the word brethren is a general term and implies the real brothers, first cousins, the remotest cousins, or anyone else. It is a form of the original Hebrew word *awkh* or *akh*, that is the same (*akh*) in the Arabic language. Strong's Heb B Dictionary explains it as:

A brother (used in the widest sense of literal relationship and metaphorical affinity or resemblance):— another, brother (-ly), kindred, like, other.⁹

The Bible has also used this word in the same broad sense. In the context of the lengthy instructions being delivered to the Israelites, God orders regarding the Edomites, who are the descendants of Jacob's elder brother Esau:

Thou shalt not abhor an edomite; for he is thy brother;¹⁰

The word 'brethren' has also been used in the Bible for even the Ishmaelites as the brethren of the Israelites. It is recorded in the book of Genesis of the Bible as follows:

And the angel of the Lord said unto her [—Hagar—]: I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. And the angel of the Lord said

8. KJV, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1989, Deu. XVIII: 2, p. 179.

9. James Strong, A Concise Dictionary of the Words in The Hebrew B, The Methodist Book Concern, NY, 1984, p. 10, under entry No. 251.

10. KJV, Deu. XXIII; 7, p. 183.

unto her, Behold, thou *art* with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the Lord hath heard thy affliction. And he will be a wild man; his hand *will be* against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren [stress added].¹¹

The word 'brethren' has once again been used in the Bible in the same sense. In the context, none other than Ishmael's step-brothers, Abraham's sons from Sarah and Keturah, can be implied:

These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their towns, and by their castles; twelve princes according to their nations. And these are the years of the life of Ishmael, an hundred and thirty and seven years; and he gave up the ghost and died; and was gathered unto his people. And they dwelt from Havilah unto Shur that is before Egypt, as thou goest toward Assyria; and he died in the presence of all his brethren [stress added].¹²

From the above presentations, it can be safely concluded that the phrase 'of thy brethren' here stands for the Ishmaelites as the brothers (cousins) of Israelites etc. In clause 'Therefore shall they [i.e. the Levites'] have no inheritance among their brethren.' of this very chapter 18 of Deut. (v. 2), the word 'brethren' means the Jewish tribes other than the Levites, and the Levites stand plainly excluded from this 'brethren'. In the same way, the Israelites stand excluded from this phrase. So the phrase 'of thy brethren' can only mean 'of the Ishmaelites', and 'a prophet' would obviously mean the only prophet from the line of Ishmael, ie. 'Muhammad' (sws).

Here is an interesting observation. It is said that alterations, additions, deletions, and interpolations have been freely exercised in the Bible. No reasonable scholar of the Bible denies this fact. An example to illustrate that this practice has not only been exercised in the past, but that it is being exercised till today without any hesitation, is afforded here. 'The Living Bible'

11. KJV, Gen. XVI: 10-12, p. 20.

12. KJV Gen. XXV;16-18, pp. 28 f

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looks to be a modern translation of the Bible. It is 'Copyright © 1971 by Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, Illinois 60187. All rights reserved.' It was first printed in July 1972 under the name of 'The Way', whereafter its sixteenth printing was published in March, 1976, claiming, '3,760,000 copies in print'. The writer of the present article has got this sixteenth printing. It translates the v. 15 as:

Instead, he will raise up for you a Prophet like me, **an Israeli** [stress added], a man to whom you must listen and whom you must obey.¹³

Its reversion was accomplished in 1996 by 'ninety evangelical scholars from various theological backgrounds and denomination... commissioned in 1989 to begin revising *The Living Bible*'. It has revised this translation as:

The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your fellow Israelites, and you must listen, to that prophet.¹⁴

How can one explain where the words '**an Israeli**' or the 'fellow Israelites' have jumped in from?

The New English B (and it was prepared and approved by the Joint Committee of almost all the important churches of the Christian world) has dropped the most important phrase 'from among your brothers' from its translation of v. 15, which is a further example of such alterations. It writes:

...will raise up a prophet from among you like myself, and you shall listen to him.¹⁵

Some other translators have also dropped this phrase of 'your brothers' from the translation of v.15. I wonder through what

13. *The Way*, An illustrated edition of *The Living Bible*, Tyndale House Publishers, Illinois, 1976, p. 174.

14. Holy Bible, New Living Translation, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois, USA, 1999, p. 116.

15. The New English B, The B Societies in association with Oxford University Press, Cambridge Univ Press, 1985, p. 136.

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literary sorcery such worthy translators have got the phrase ‘from among your brothers’ disappeared from the scene of the passage before the open eyes of the world of letters. Of course, this dexterity of the translators must be ‘appreciated’.

It is also to be noted that if the promised prophet was to come from among the Israelites, the wording of the prophecy should have been:

I will raise them up a prophet **from among themselves** [stress added], like unto thee, and will put my words into his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

It was essential to rule out all sorts of ambiguity, misunderstandings, and confusions. The word ‘brethren’ as already explained with reference to the Hebrew Dictionary of the Bible, is a multi-meaning word and is certainly liable to create ambiguity and confusions and the Lord is not supposed to create confusion Himself. He should have been clear-cut, pertinent, precise, scrupulous, fastidious, to the point, and exact. Whereas, instead of it, the actual words of the Bible stand as follows, which are not compatible with the claim of the Jews and the Christians that ‘the promised prophet shall be from among the Israelites themselves’:

I will raise them up a prophet **from among their brethren** [stress added], like unto thee, and will put my words into his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.¹⁶

In fact the Lord has not used these words carelessly. He has used these words intentionally and decisively. These words rule out every possibility of the claim of the Jews and the Christians that ‘the promised prophet shall be from among the Israelites themselves’.

There is another point with regard to the expression ‘**from among their brethren**’. Like the earlier prophets, Jesus (sws) has also warned the Israelites:

16. KJV, Deu. XVIII: 18, p.179.
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Therefore I say unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to **a nation** [stress added. Please note the ‘singular form **a nation** and not the plural **the nations**’. It reflects the theme of ‘singularity’.] bringing forth the fruits thereof.¹⁷

It clearly shows that the kingdom of God or the prophethood is now to be taken away from the progeny of Israel and is to be transferred to their brethren. The context of this verse makes it quite clear that it relates to none other than the ‘brethren of the Israelites’. Jesus (sws) says:

Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard¹⁸, and hedged it round about, (...), and let it out to husbandmen¹⁹, and went into a far country: And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants²⁰ to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another²¹. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son²², saying, They will reverence my son. But when the

17. KJV, Matt, XXI: 43, p. 23.

18. ie. a religious culture.

19. ie. the Israelites.

20. ie. messengers, prophets, etc.

21. This is the statement of facts. The Jews had practically been treating the prophets in the same way.

22. ‘His son’, here, implies Jesus (sws); but not in the sense that it was of some spermatic seed of the Lord from some wife of His, which can by no means be claimed for Him. No ‘man’ (or any creature) in heaven or on earth has ever been begotten of Him through His going to some woman (or some female spouse, which he never had had). He is the only One and Unique of His kind. He is not a member of some species or some family of gods, any of which does not, and cannot, exist. Man is mortal, and the father of a man, a mortal being, is also bound to be a mortal, which nobody can even imagine regarding the Lord. The *Qur’ān* rightly asserts: ‘All that lives on earth or in the heavens is bound to pass away; but for ever will abide thy Sustainer’s Self, full of majesty and glory’. (The Message of the *Qur’ān*, Tr Muḥammad Asad, Dar al-Andalus, Gibraltar, Distributors, E. J. Brill,

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husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?²³

The answer to this question is so simple and natural, that 'they' (the audience), like anybody else who happens to hear it, spontaneously 'Say unto him,':

He will miserably destroy those wicked men²⁴, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen²⁵, which shall render him the fruits in their season. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED²⁶, THE SAME IS BECOME THE HEAD OF THE CORNER: THIS IS THE LORD'S DOING, AND IT IS MARVELLOUS IN OUR EYES? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to **a nation** [stress added] bringing forth the fruits thereof.²⁷

London, 1980, p. 825). The use of the words or the theme 'son of God' for the human beings is so common in the Bible that it has come in it in this sense for hundreds of times. The word 'son' has been used here, if it be not a later interpolation, in the sense that God had raised him up in a conspicuously extra-ordinary manner, with wonderful miracles, so that there may not remain any excuse with the Israelites to reject and refuse him. It may, however, be clearly borne in mind that the whole of the passage is merely a parable. It is not a statement of actual facts in all its details.

23. KJV, Matt, XXI: 33-40, p. 23.

24. It physically came true with the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 at the hands of Roman Emperor, Titus. Jesus (sws) had foreseen the ruin of the temple and Jerusalem, as he said, 'Seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.' (KJV, Mark XIII: 2, p. 839)

25. ie. the Ishmaelites, the brethren of the Israelites.

26. It obviously refers to the settling of Hagar and her son Ishmael in *Makkah*. This reference also makes it clear that this parable of Jesus relates to the transfer of the prophethood from the Israelites to the Ishmaelites. It is again a figurative statement.

27. KJV, Matt, XXI: 41-43, p. 23.

The words of Jesus (sws) are so clear and unequivocal that they need no comments at all. But if someone has already decided to favor some pre-assumed interpretation, what can anybody do!

‘“a” prophet’

‘a prophet’ is another important feature to be cautiously noted to ascertain the exact application of the prophecy. Moses (sws) does not say that God will raise up **‘prophets’**, he rather says, **‘a prophet’**²⁸. The forthcoming person will be **‘a prophet’** after Moses (sws). Now there have been so many prophets after Moses (sws) in the line of Israel. The important point is that the promised prophet should be only **‘a prophet’** which means a **‘single’** and **‘singular’** prophet (who is, moreover, required to be **‘from among their brethren’** and **‘like unto Moses’**). ‘Singleness’ and ‘singularity’ from among the brethren of the Jews (which are no other than the Ishmaelites,) can only be claimed for the Prophet Muhammad (sws). As regards the Israelites, ‘singleness’ and ‘singularity’ cannot be claimed for any of them, because there had been almost scores of them in the line of Israel. ‘Singleness’ and ‘singularity’ demand that he should be distinguished from all the other prophets after Moses (sws), all of whom belonged to the lineage of Israel amongst the descendants of Abraham (sws). And it is **only** the Prophet Muhammad (sws) amongst the descendants of Abraham (sws), from the progeny of Ishmael [the brethren of Israelites], who came after Moses (sws) and who came from outside the clan of Israel.

‘like unto Moses’

It means that the promised prophet should have such a unique and specific prophetic peculiarity or characteristic in common with Moses (sws) which no other forthcoming prophet can claim.

28. It may also be noted here that some of the worthy translators of the Bible have not hesitated from practically changing this word **‘a prophet’** into **‘prophets’** to get rid of the dilemma, which is another example of corruptions in the Bible. But it is a futile attempt, as they cannot remove the majority of the translations from the world, which have rightly translated the word as **‘a prophet’**.

There is a most conspicuous singular peculiarity of Moses (sws), which no other prophet can claim to possess and in which no other prophet after Moses (sws) can be 'like unto him'. What is that? It is only Moses (sws) who brought the 'LAW' of the Lord for the people. After him, there had been no other prophet from among the descendants of Abraham (sws) in the whole of the history of the humankind who can claim to bring a complete divine 'LAW' for the people, revealed to him by the Lord, except the Prophet Muḥammad (sws). Neither anyone ever claimed it, nor it is true about anyone. There did not even exist any claimant or candidate of having been 'a prophet from among the brethren of the Israelites with a 'Fiery Law for them',²⁹ 'like unto Moses', that could have been presented as a rival to the single and sole Prophet from among the Ishmaelites, who are the genuine 'brethren of the Israelites'.

29. KJV, Deu. xxxiii: 2 writes, 'The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints; from his right hand went a **fiery law** for them.' This prophecy was uttered by Moses (sws) soon before his death. The first clause, 'The Lord came from Sinai', refers to the assignment of the 'call' to Moses (sws) at Sinai. The 2nd clause, 'rose up from Seir unto them', refers to the assignment of the 'call' to Jesus (sws) in the region of Seir. The 3rd clause, 'he shined forth from mount Paran', refers to the assignment of the 'call' to the Prophet of Islam, Muḥammad (sws) at mount Paran (Oxford Cyclopaedic Concordance of the Bible noted the meaning of Paran as 'a cavernous region'), which is the name of the mountainous and cavernous region where Abraham (sws) had settled his wife Hagar and his 'first born' and his 'only son' Ishmael, as ordered to him by the Lord (Gen xxi:21). The 4th clause, 'he came with ten thousands of saints', refers to the conquest of *Makkah* by the Prophet of Islam, Muḥammad (sws) at the head of an army of ten thousand holy ones, which is a unique event in the whole of the history of the humankind in which exactly ten thousand holy ones took part. The original Hebrew word 'atā', for the word 'came' means 'to come upon' (Strong's Hebrew Dictionary of the Bible, entry No.857, p. 18), and 'to come upon' means 'to attack by surprise' (The Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus, 1997, p.281), as the Prophet of Islam actually did to avoid bloodshed in the holy city. The 5th clause, 'from his right hand went a 'fiery law' for them', refers to the revelation of the *Qur'ān* to the Prophet of Islam, which is a complete code of divine 'Law'.

Jesus (sws) is by no means 'a Prophet like unto Moses'

From the very birth to his death Jesus is 'unlike Moses' rather than being 'like unto Moses' in most of the conspicuous features. On the other hand the Prophet of Islam is 'like unto Moses' in most of the conspicuous features. Some of them are common in most of the prophets including Moses (sws) and the Prophet of Islam, but Jesus (sws) is an exception to them. The first of them is that Moses (sws) and the Prophet of Islam were born in ordinary way whereas Jesus (sws) had an unusual and extraordinary birth of a virgin mother having no father. The second point is that Moses (sws) and the Prophet of Islam had an ordinary death whereas the death of Jesus (sws) was of a quite different type. The third point is that Moses (sws) was appointed to the 'call' at Mount Sinai and the Prophet of Islam received the revelation for the purpose in the cave of Mount Hira which is now called Mount Nür. Both of them received revelation outside the city life at some mountains. The case of Jesus (sws), whatsoever, is different from it.

The other category is of a most specific peculiarity of Moses (sws) and the Prophet of Islam, which is not to be found in any other prophet including Jesus (sws); and that is the revelation of the divine 'Law' only to Moses (sws) and the Prophet of Islam, as noted above.

A probe into the theme reveals that 'likeness unto Moses' can exclusively be claimed about the Prophet of Islam, whereas it can by no means be claimed about Jesus (sws). I have addressed only some specific and distinguishing features otherwise a lot of it can be presented, which is, according to me, mere waste of time keeping in view the limited scope of the present write up.

The Claim of the Jews: 'Joshua is that Promised Prophet'

There is another point which is being briefly discussed here. Some Jews assert that the prophecy relates to and is fulfilled in the person of Joshua. But the wording of the prophecy and the context do not permit it. Joshua was the contemporary of and junior to Moses (sws). Moses (sws) himself had nominated him as his successor under the instruction of the Lord. He was a disciple, attendant, and successor of Moses (sws) and not an independent prophet himself. No 'Law' was revealed unto him.

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So he was in no way 'like unto Moses'. The words of the prophecy, 'The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy Brethren, like unto me' clearly denote that they relate to some future event, whereas Joshua physically existed there when this prophecy was uttered. The book of Malachi is the last of the Minor Prophets and of the OT. It records the prophecy uttered by the Lord in the following words [which shows that the messenger of the covenant was yet to come by his time, and, as such, Joshua could not have been this '**a prophet**']:

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come³⁰ to his temple³¹, **even the messenger of the covenant** [stress added] whom ye delight in; behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.³²

As to the date of Malachi, 'McKenzie' observes:

The book is dated by the critics after the rebuilding of the temple in 516 BC, during the Persian period and before

30. The actual Hebrew word used for this '**come**' is א←-v←-ב, which can be pronounced as **bow**'. According to Strong's 'A Concise Dictionary of the words in the Hebrew Bible', p. 19, entry No. 935 it means: 'to go or come (in a wide variety of applications):-abide, befall, beseige, go (down, in, to war), [in-]vade, lead'. It shows that '**the messenger of the covenant** (it may be noted here that Jesus (sws) never claimed for himself to be the messenger of the covenant)' '**shall suddenly go down to war, besiege, and invade his temple**'. It is a true and exact picture of the Prophet of Islam's conquest of *Makkah*'. No other prophet ever 'came so triumphantly and suddenly to his temple' as did the prophet of Islam, Muḥammad (sws) come.

31. How clearly and unequivocally this prophecy came true in the person of the Prophet of Islam, Muḥammad (sws)! He secretly came upon his Temple, *Ka'bah*, in the city of *Makkah*, at the time of its conquest, so that it be conquered without any battle and bloodshed. The Makkans came to know about the arrival of Muḥammad at the head of an army of ten thousand holy ones only when he had reached the gate of the city and the city was taken without any bloodshed. This is what Malachi had said, 'shall suddenly come to his temple.'

32. KJV, Malachi III: 1, p. 745.

the reforms of Nehemiah and Ezra, i.e., before 432 BC.³³

The recording of the prophecy regarding ‘the messenger of the covenant’ in it shows that till 432 BC the Israelites were still waiting for him and he was yet to come.

Then there is the epilogue of the book of Deuteronomy which reads:

And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face.³⁴

It is probable that this epilogue might have been written by Ezra eight to nine hundred years after Moses (sws). So the prophecy remained unfulfilled till 8-9 centuries after Moses (sws). It is also probable that it might have been written by some other redactor of the book when the Torah and some other books of the Bible were first compiled in written form about five hundred years after Moses (sws). It means that the prophecy remained unfulfilled for not less than 500 years after Moses (sws). It does not mean that it was fulfilled after it. Nobody ever claimed to be ‘the messenger of the covenant’ or fulfilled its pre-requisites at any time after Moses (sws). Almost every scholar of the Bible understands that it stood unfulfilled even after the time of Jesus (sws). The Bible Knowledge Commentary observes:

During the first century A.D. the official leaders of Judaism were still looking for the fulfillment of Moses’ prediction (cf. John I: 21).³⁵

That it remained unfulfilled during the time of Jesus (sws) and the Jews were still waiting for the coming of this prophet, can be ascertained from the following passage of the Gospel According to John:

And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the

33. J.L. McKenzie, DB, Geoffrey Chapman, London, 1984, p. 537.

34. KJV, Deu. XXXIV: 10 p. 195.

35. The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Ed John F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, SP Publications, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois, 3rd ed., 1986, p. 297.

Christ. And they asked him, what then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet [stress added]? And he answered, no. Then said they unto him, who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. (...). And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?³⁶

It has become clear from the study undertaken above that this 'Prophet like unto Moses' had not been raised up till the time of Jesus (sws).

The Claim of the Christians: 'Jesus is that Promised Prophet'

Now there remains the claim of the Christian scholars that this prophecy was fulfilled in the person of Jesus (sws). Setting aside the question of safe preservation and transfer of the NT, it is a fact that throughout the NT Jesus (sws) has nowhere claimed to be or presented himself as this promised 'Prophet like unto Moses'. As can be observed from the dialogue between John the Baptist and the Jewish representatives noted above, the Jews had been waiting for three personalities at that time: (1) Elias or Elijah, (2) Christ, and (3) 'that Prophet'. Elias was John the Baptist as clarified by Jesus.³⁷ The Christ, according to every Christian, was Jesus (sws) himself. There remains, now, only the third one, i.e. 'That Promised Prophet like unto Moses'. Jesus (sws) should naturally have not claimed to be this third personality as he has already occupied the status of the 'Christ'. The three personalities waited for by the Jews were three separate entities, two of which have already been settled in the persons of John the Baptist and Jesus (sws). There, obviously,

36. KJV, John, I: 19-25, p. 82.

37. Jesus (sws) is reported to have said: 'For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.' (KJV, Matt. XI: 13-15). Again, in the same Gospel of Matthew (XVII: 12), Jesus (sws) asserts: 'But I say unto you that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, and have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them'.

remains the third one to be ascertained. If somebody asserts that Jesus (sws) occupied both the entities in his person, i.e., of the 'Christ' and of 'That Prophet', he should offer, in unequivocal terms, some clear-cut assertion of Jesus (sws) in favor of his claim. And no man on earth can ever do it. Rather, quite contrary to it, Jesus (sws) did not assert to be 'That Promised and Waited for Prophet Like Unto Moses (sws)' even when he was asked to clarify his position. The Bible reports:

Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? [Stress added. 'or do we look for another?' shows that someone was yet to come by that time.] Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And the blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.³⁸

It is not quite clear what does John the Baptist mean by the question: 'Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?' 'He that should come' may signify both (1) the 'Christ' or (2) 'a Prophet like unto Moses', because both had been waited for. Whom John had alluded to, is not clear. Jesus (sws) should have answered this ambiguous question in unequivocal terms and should have clarified his position once and for all. Instead of it Jesus (sws) is reported to have chosen a strange and non-specific style. He gives an ambiguous answer. He had nowhere claimed to be 'That Prophet like unto Moses' previously. But 'Christ' he was, of course, called by his disciples as has been mentioned in the NT for so many times. He, obviously, could have meant to say: 'Neither have I ever claimed to be 'That Prophet like unto Moses' nor the works I have been performing are like unto Moses (sws). So how can you take me as 'That Prophet like unto Moses'? As to my being 'Christ', everybody knows it and my works also verify this status of mine.'

There is another clear-cut passage in Acts III, in which Peter

38. KJV, Matt. XI: 2-6, p. 11.

clarifies that Jesus is not 'That Prophet like unto Moses'; he is yet to come. He says:

Now you must repent and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, and so that the Lord may send the time of comfort. Then he will send you the Christ he has predestined, that is Jesus, whom heaven must keep till the universal restoration come which God proclaimed, speaking through his holy prophets. Moses, for example, said: '*From among your brothers the Lord God will raise up a prophet like me; you will listen to whatever he tells you. Anyone who refuses to listen to that prophet shall be cut off from the people*', In fact, all the prophets that have ever spoken, from Samuel onwards, have predicted these days.³⁹

The main features of this passage can be described as below:

1. Peter advises the people that they must repent and turn to God, so that their sins may be wiped out, and so that the Lord may send the time of comfort.
2. From 'the time of comfort' Peter means 'when the Lord will send the Christ he has predestined, that is Jesus'.
3. Heaven must keep the Christ till the universal restoration comes which God proclaimed, speaking through his holy prophets.
4. One phenomenon of this 'universal restoration', for example, is '*From among your brothers the Lord God will raise up a prophet like Moses*'.
5. The people must '*listen to whatever he tells them*'. Because '*Anyone who refuses to listen to that prophet shall be cut off from the people*'; just like the people who did not listen to the Prophet of Islam, were *cut off from the people*.
6. In fact, all the prophets that have ever spoken, from Samuel onwards, have predicted the advent of 'That Prophet like unto Moses' between the First and Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

39. The New Jerusalem Bible, The Bombay Saint Paul Society, 1993, Acts III: 19-23, pp. 1803 f.
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Whatever the case may be, Jesus (sws) has never claimed to be 'That Prophet like unto Moses'. It means that 'The Promised Prophet' was yet to come during the lifetime of Jesus (sws). Now it is only the Prophet of Islam, Muḥammad (sws), who fulfills all the requisite conditions of 'That Prophet like unto Moses'. It is he who is the only prophet from among the brethren of Israel that has come after Jesus (sws), and whom the Almighty Allah Himself has pronounced to be 'like unto Moses' as has been recorded in the *Qur'ān*:

Surely We have sent unto you a Messenger as a witness over you, even as We sent To Pharaoh a Messenger [stress added. 'Which Messenger had been sent to Pharaoh?' Who doesn't know that it was none other than Moses?], but Pharaoh rebelled against the Messenger, so We seized him remorselessly. If therefore you disbelieve, how will you guard yourselves against a day that shall make the children grey-headed? Whereby heaven shall be split [What an impressive and beautiful imagery! Had someone had an opportunity to listen to the sonorous wordings of this verse (while, at the same time, understanding its meaning), he should have appreciated and enjoyed its force and beauty more deeply, which can by no means be transmitted into its mere translation.], and its promise shall be performed. Surely this is a reminder; so let him who will [,] take unto his Lord a way.⁴⁰

The above dissertation affirms that 'The Prophet like unto Moses' had not come unto the time of John the Baptist. Jewish scholars were waiting for him. Their inquiry from John the Baptist whether he was ... 'that prophet' testifies their wait for him. John the Baptist plainly explained that he was not 'that prophet'. Jesus (sws) was the Christ and he never claimed or proclaimed to have been 'That Prophet like unto Moses'. It means that there has not risen up 'That Prophet like unto Moses' among all the Jewish and Christian world unto present. It is required that 'The Prophet like unto Moses' should have risen up

40. A. J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*, Oxford University Press, 1983, pp. 614 f (The *Qur'ān* LXXIII: 15-19).

in some reasonable span of time after Jesus (sws). The ground reality is that:

- (1) Nobody has claimed to be 'That Prophet like unto Moses' so far except the Prophet of Islam.
- (2) Nobody fulfills the prerequisite conditions and characteristics of 'That Prophet like unto Moses' except the Prophet of Islam.
- (3) The Prophet of Islam, Muḥammad (sws) rose up as that prophet and he has practically claimed to be 'A Prophet like unto Moses' as stated above.
- (4) He fulfills the entire prerequisite conditions and characteristics of 'That Prophet like unto Moses'.

If the claim of the Prophet of Islam, Muḥammad (sws), is not acknowledged and conceded to then we shall have to affirm that the Bible is not true. It is now unto the reader to decide justly and carefully, because it has been warned by the Lord just after this prophecy:

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he [the Prophet Like unto Moses] shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.⁴¹

41. KJV, Deu. XVIII: 19, p.179.