

SATANIC VERSES' NARRATIVE: SOME ELUCIDATIONS

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Abstract:

This paper strove to explore only the basic, literal and initial elaborations regarding the narrative of Satanic Verses *i.e.* *Qiṣṣat al-Gharānīq* (قصة الغرائيق) which is also called “story of the cranes”. For this purpose, the comparative method of research is used here. In this controversial episode, it is narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ (SAAS) uttered some words in praise of the Arab deities mistakenly during the recitation of *Sūrah al-Najm*. Which were casted upon his tongue allegedly by Satan. As a result, the Holy Prophet (SAAS) is accused to be deceived by Satan. Now, what do *Qiṣṣat al-Gharānīq* and its English version ‘Satanic Verses’ literally and historically mean? The lexical explanation and background of the alleged satanic words, idols, and the story’s link with the verses of the Holy Qur’ān and Arabic literature all are impeached. The Goddesses of the non-believers al-Lāt, al-‘Uzza and Manāt were personified as “*Gharānīq*” which is the plural form of *ghirnīq* or *ghurnūq*, mean a “high flying bird” or “crane”. In 1858AD, famous orientalist William Muir (d. 1905 AD) coined the term “Satanic Verses” for this story first time. It was initiated in some of early Arabic *Sīrah-Maghāzī* and *Tafsīr* literature. Mostly, this story had been related to *Sūrah al-Hajj* 22: 52 and *Sūrah al-Najm* 53:19-20. So, by experiencing the literal and etymological backgrounds and the historical fluctuation, this article resulted in a mere comprehensive introduction of this story.

Keywords: Satanic Verses, *Qiṣṣat al-Gharānīq*, Pagan Deities, Arabic Literature

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1. Introduction:

In fact, this article is an endeavor to introduce “Satanic Verses” story initially. The term ‘Satanic Verses’ denotes a story which is called *Qiṣṣat al-Gharānīq*. It has been quoted especially by the missionary Orientalists and the Islamophobes quite grandiloquently. *Qiṣṣat al-Gharānīq* means the “Story of the Cranes” and refers to the occasion on which the Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him) is reported to have mistaken in deliverance of the Divine Revelation. He is alleged to dealiver Satanic suggested words, instead of divinely descended words.

The alleged incident has been reported in a number of different ways, but the gist of the narrative can be adduced so that, in the pre-*Hijrah* period – under the persecution and affliction of Quraysh – the Holy Prophet (SAAS) was reportedly very eager to have a reconciliation with Quraysh and hoped an order to be revealed that would lessen the gap between him and his tribesmen. At that time, *Sūrah al-Najm* was revealed to the Holy Prophet (SAAS), who recited it before an assembly of Quraysh in the Ka‘bah.¹ When the Holy Prophet (SAAS) reached the verses having reference to the famous pagan deities of Quraysh as:

أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ اللَّاتَ وَالْعُزَّىٰ وَمَنْوَةَ الثَّالِثَةَ الْآخَرَئِىٰ²

“Have ye thought upon al-Lāt and al-‘Uzza? And al-Manāt, the third, the other?”³

At the end of these verses, it is reported that the Satan cast some words, praising the pagan deities, into the mind of the Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him) like تلك الغرائيق العلىٰ وان شفاعتهن “Indeed, they are high flying cranes, and their intercession is to be⁴ لترتجى hoped for”. He mistook these satanic words and uttered or – according to differing reports – was heard to utter these words, which pleased the Quraysh

¹ al-Ṭabarī, Muḥammad b. Jarīr, *Jāmi‘ al-Bayān ‘an tā’wīl āy al-Qur’ān*, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1988 AD, PP. 17: 187 – 188

² Al-Najm 53: 19 – 20

³ In this paper, the translation of the Qur’ānic verses has been adduced from “THE MEANING OF THE GLORIOUS QUR’ĀN” by Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall (1875 – 1936 AD).

⁴ See al-Ṭabarī, Muḥammad Ibn Jarīr, *Jāmi‘ al-Bayān ‘an tā’wīl āy al-Qur’ān*, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1988 AD, PP. 17: 187 – 188 for the Arabic wording of Satanic Verses. “*Tilk al-gharānīq al-‘ulā, wa inna shafā‘atahunna la-turtajā*”

and other idolaters a lot. After continuous recitation of the rest of the *Sūrah al-Najm*, when the Holy Prophet (SAAS) reached the final verse – which was a prostration verse – they all followed – Intentionally or unintentionally – him in prostration. This was a rejoicing situation for all the non-believers who earlier used to persecute Muslims. They claimed that the Holy Prophet (SAAS) has spoken well of their goddesses (God forbids). This news of reconciliation of the Holy Prophet (SAAS) with Quraysh reached Muslims migrated to Abyssinia.⁵ Consequently, some of them returned to Makkah but found nothing reconciled there. Because the archangel Gabriel had reportedly visited the Holy Prophet (SAAS) and got him informed that the words – of praising deities – he had taken as a part of the Holy Qur’ān were, in fact, not from God, but interpolated by Satan. He, furthermore, clarified his position that he had never spoken these words to him. To reject this satanic interpolation, Gabriel revealed the following verses of *Sūrah al-Hajj*:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ وَلَا نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا إِذَا تَمَنَّى أَلْقَى الشَّيْطَانُ فِي
 أُمْنِيَّتِهِ فَيَنسَخُ اللَّهُ مَا يُلْقِي الشَّيْطَانُ ثُمَّ يُحْكِمُ اللَّهُ آيَاتِهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ لِيَجْعَلَ مَا
 يُلْقِي الشَّيْطَانُ فِتْنَةً لِلَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ وَالْقَاسِيَةَ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَفِي
 شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَيُؤْمِنُوا بِهِ فَتُخْبِتَ لَهُ
 قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهَادِ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ.⁶

“Never sent We a messenger or a Prophet before thee but when he recited (the message) Satan proposed (opposition) in respect of that which he recited thereof. But Allāh abolisheth that which Satan proposeth. Then Allāh establisheth His revelations, Allāh is Knower, Wise. That He may make that which devil proposeth a temptation for those in whose hearts is a disease, and those whose hearts are hardened- Lo! the evil-doers are in open schism. And that those who have been given knowledge may know that it is the truth from thy Lord, so that they may believe therein and their hearts may submit humbly unto Him. Lo! Allāh verily is guiding those who believe unto a right path.”

⁵ “Abyssinia” is derived from the Arabic *al-Habasha*. A territory was known as Ethiopian Empire, presently called Eritrea.

⁶ Al-Hajj 22: 52 – 54

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This revelation had lead the Holy Prophet (SAAS) to recant the Satanic suggested verses and to oppose the Qurayshites again for their polytheism. That was resulted in the persecution of Muslims again. So, the aforementioned narrative is all the claim of the alleged story of *Gharānīq*. This story is later called as “Satanic Verses” by the orientalist in 19th century. In this study, the narrative of *Gharānīq* would be appraised initially and its literal components would be elucidated as well.

As a research question, it is considered here that what are the literal implications and historical perspective of *Qiṣṣat al-Gharānīq* and its English version ‘Satanic Verses’?

So, in this treatise, the etymology of alleged satanic words, the background of narrated idols, and the story’s created link with the Holy Qur’ān all points are discussed. The historical relation of Satanic Verses with the Arabic literature is also unveiled here.

2. The Novelty of The Study:

By reviewing the literature concerned with this topic, it is apprehended that historically, a number of scholars exercised their intellectual powers on the authentication of *Qiṣṣat al-Gharānīq* like Alī b. Ḥassan al-Ḥalabī al-Atharī in his compilation “*Dalā’l al-taḥqīq li-ibṭāl Qiṣṣat al-Gharānīq: Riwāyatan Darāyatan*” (1992 AD) Maktabah al-Ṣaḥābah Jaddah, Nāsir al-Dīn al-Albānī in his “*Nasb al-Majānīq li nasf Qiṣṣat al-Gharānīq*” (1996 AD) al-Maktab al-Islāmī Beirut *etc.* but they had a lack of concentration to make this story generally intelligible. They, often, opted only to investigate the status of the quoted traditions but no attention had been paid to the comprehensive introduction of this story. In this study, a general reader can easily understand the literal and etymological implications and elaborations regarding the narrative of Satanic Verses and as a result, it provokes the reader to research more and more in this regard.

3. Literal Dissection of The Narrative:

Prior to discuss the historical perspective of this narrative and before reaching the bottom line of the narrated story, the literal and elaborative meanings of the story must be discerned. In this context, the narrative can be divided into the following elucidations.

3.1 *Gharānīq al-‘ulā* :

The Arabic word “*Gharānīq*” is a plural form of the word *ghirnāq*, *ghirnowq*, *ghurnūq* or *ghurnayq*, which generally

means a “crane” or a “high flying bird”. As a renowned lexicographer – of the Arabic language and the author of a famous Arabic lexicon called *Lisān al-‘Arab* – Ibn Manzūr (1233 – 1312 AD) explicates this word in his masterpiece that it means a water bird with a tall neck, or a water bird having tall legs. He adds that *ghirnāq*, *ghurāniq*, *ghurnūq*, *ghirnawq*, *ghirnayk*, *ghirnīq* and the word *gharawnaq* all refer to a white, beautiful and sophisticated young man.⁷ Just like as he instances some words from ‘Alī ibn abī-Ṭālib (R.A) انظر الى غرنوق من قريش يشتحط في دمه “*unzur ilā ghurnūq min quraysh yashtahaṭṭu fī damehī*”. Here ‘*ghurnūq min quraysh*’ conveys the beauty and strength of a Qurayshite young man. The word غرانقه ‘*ghurāniqah*’ and غرانق ‘*ghurāniq*’ shows its feminine form as well. In case of attribution of this word to a young man, it is called as *ghirnayk* and *ghurnūq* in singular form and *gharāniq*, *gharānīq* and *gharāniqatu* in plural form.⁸ Actually these words have been extracted from the roots of غ، ر، ن، ق *gh, r, n, q* and is considered often as “quadrilateral word” but a difference of opinion on this point also exists regarding its root ‘n’. While elaborating this, Edward William Lane (1801 – 1876 AD) – a British orientalist and a translator as well – states in his famous lexicon that *ghirnawq* and *ghurnūq* is a white or black certain aquatic bird having long neck and legs, or a certain bird resembling this.⁹ Similarly, *gharāniq* and *ghurāniq* signify some sort of trees or plants, and some nascent or tender sprouted roots¹⁰, or the lower parts of those roots.¹¹ On the other hand, it also implies a white, comely fair and beautiful youth having beautiful hair especially applied to a female gender.¹² Imām ‘Ilm al-Dīn Abū al-Hassan ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī (558 – 643 AH) also adduced these words as “*al-Shabbāb al-abyaḍ al-jamīl*”¹³ i.e. a white beautiful and fair youth. At several other occasions, the word *ghurnūq* has been translated as “*al-Shābb al-Nā‘im*”¹⁴ but most of the

⁷ Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, Bierūt: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, ND, Vol 5, PP. 3248

⁸ Ibid, PP. 3249

⁹ Lane, Edward William, *Arabic – English Lexicon*, Lahore: Islamic Book Centre, ND, Book 1, Part 6, PP. 2253

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, Bierūt: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, ND, Vol 5, PP. 3248

¹² Lane, Edward William, *Arabic – English Lexicon*, Lahore: Islamic Book Centre, ND, Book 1, Part 6, PP. 2253

¹³ al-Sakhāwī, ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad, *Sifr al-sa‘ādah wa safīr al-Ifādah*, Research: Aḥmad al-Ddālī, Damascus, 1403 AH, PP. 400

¹⁴ See Ismā‘īl b. Ḥammād al-Jawharī, *al-Ṣiḥḥāh Tāj al-Lughah wa Ṣiḥḥāh al-‘Arabiyyah*, 2nd Edition, Beirut: Dār el-‘Ilm li al-Malāyen, 1979 AD, Vol 4, PP. 1537, and *Lisān al-‘Arab*

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times it conveys the sense of a bird like some sort of a raven, crow and eagle.¹⁵ In the famous “*Tāj al-‘Urūs Min Jawāhir al-Qāmūs*” it is also narrated as a water bird with black or white neck, may be of male gender or female.¹⁶ In this very context, Imām Abī ‘Amr al-Shaybānī (d.206 AH) adds that it means a bird having a long nose.¹⁷ Some of the other lexicographers considered as white¹⁸ which may be of black color.¹⁹ This is a water bird resembling with a certain kind of crane, having long legs and crests upon her head.²⁰ In order to add a huge support to the elaborating style of the aforementioned works, a plenty of English – Arabic translators played a significant role. So as the English word ‘crane’ has been often translated by them as ‘*Kurkī, Ghurnūq*’²¹ in Arabic language. At some other places, the word ‘crane’ has also been translated in Arabic as “*al- Ghurnūq al-Ṭayr*”²² and طائر الغرنوق “*Ṭāir al-ghurnūq*”.²³

After reflecting upon the aforementioned meanings and implications, one can easily erect an acceptable thought about *gharānīq*, which seems encircling a bird with high flying powers, may be of white or black color having long nose, neck and legs as well. It resembles with some kind of a ‘crane’, as a famous orientalist Karen Armstrong (b.1944 AD) says, “The *gharānīq* were probably Numidian cranes which are thought to fly higher than any other bird”.²⁴ This was all related to the literal elucidation of “*Gharānīq al-‘Ulā*”.

¹⁵ Militarev, Alexander, *Semitic Etymological Dictionary 2: Animal Names*, Alter Orient and Atlas Testament, ND, 278/2, PP. 131

¹⁶ Muḥammad Murtaḍā al-Ḥussaynī al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-‘Urūs Min Jawāhir al-Qāmūs*, Vol 13, Kuwait: Maktabah Hukūmat al-Kuwait, 1974 AD, PP. 227

¹⁷ al-Shaybānī, Abī ‘Amr Ishāq b. Mirar, *Kitāb al-Jinn*, Vol 3, Cairo: Majma al-Lughat al-‘Arabiyyah, 1970 AD, PP. 9

¹⁸ ‘Alī b. Ismā‘īl b. Sayda, *al-Mohkam wa al-Muḥīṭ al-‘Aṭam fi al-Lughah*, Vol 6, Makkah: Al Maktabah al-Tijariyyah, ND, PP. 48

¹⁹ al-Zāwī, Tāhir Aḥmad, *Tartīb al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ*, Vol 3, Beirut: Dār el-Kutb al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1979 AD, PP. 388

²⁰ Ibrāhīm Anīs, ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm and Others, *al-Mo‘jam al-Wasīṭ*, 2nd Edition, Beirut: Dār el-Fikr, 1972 AD, PP. 651

²¹ Munīr Ba‘albākī, al-Mawrid: A Modern English – Arabic Dictionary, Beirut: Dār el-‘Ilm li al-Malāyen, 1979 AD, PP. 228

²² Ismā‘īl Mazhar, al-Nahda Dictionary, 1st Edition, Cairo: Renaissance Book Shop, ND, PP. 277

²³ Elias A. Elias, *Elias Modern Dictionary English – Arabic*, Beirut: Dār el-Jail, 1981 AD, PP. 177

²⁴ Armstrong, Karen, *Muhammad; A Biography of the Prophet*, San Francisco: Harper, 1993 AD

3.2 Description of Pagan Deities:

Before the advent of Islam, the ancient Arabs used to worship and venerate idols and stars. In that nomad society, they made a number of shrines and Holy places to worship their so-called gods and goddesses. ‘Amr Ibn Luhay b. Qam’ah was the first person who installed some idols and started some pagan rituals like making offerings to them and others.²⁵ A number of Arab deities like *al-‘Uzzā*, *al-Lāt*, *Manāt*, *Hubal*, *Isāf* and *Nā’ilā*, *Suwā’*, *Nasr*, *Ri’ām*, *Dhū al-Khalāṣa* etc had been enlisted in this context by the historians. But here in this treatise, only three of those idols will be discussed because, only these three had been mentioned in the story of *gharānīq*. In order to dig out the facts about the story, the social status, geographical locations and tribal associations of these three idols must be enlightened which is as follows.

3.2.1 al-Lāt :

Al-Lāt is one of the famous Arabian idols which is said to be a female goddess of power, peace, combat and prosperity. The sources associated it with Ṭā’if and Nakhla.²⁶ It was venerated and visited by a number of pagans. She was in a cubic granite form located in a building. The courtyard of her shrine was also declared sacred. According to Hishām Ibn Kalbī, her shrine’s custodian was Banū Attāb Ibn Mālik of the tribe Banū Thaḳīf.²⁷ This goddess had been worshiped by them until they converted to Islam. al-Lāt was destroyed and burnt by al-Mughīra Ibn Shu‘bah²⁸ and her shrine was demolished by the orders of the Holy Prophet (SAAS) in the year of Tabūk expedition.

3.2.2 al-‘Uzzā :

This idol was the most respected one of Arab deities as the rank of al-Lāt and Manāt comes after her.²⁹ al-‘Uzzā was

²⁵ al-Jibouri, Yasin, Idols of Pre-Islamic Arabia, www.academia.edu, Retrieved 05-05-2019

²⁶ Hawting G.R., The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam, London: Cambridge University Press, 1999 AD, PP. 138

²⁷ Ibn Kalbī, Hishām, *Kitāb al-Aṣnām*, ND, PP. 14 – 15

²⁸ Najmah Sayūfī, The Concept of Allāh as the Highest God in Pre-Islamic Arabia, Thesis, Montreal: McGill University, 1999 AD, PP. 56

²⁹ Ibn Kalbī, Hishām, *Kitāb al-Aṣnām*, ND, PP. 16

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offered exclusive honor by the Quraysh as al-Lāt by Banū Thaqīf. It was a goddess of love, protection and power. Zālim b. As'ad b. Rabi'ah b. Mālik was the first man, who introduced al-'Uzzā to the Arabs.³⁰ Among the Quraysh, this was a greatest idol to which they offered unique gifts and sacrifices and often they used to invoke her during their circumambulation of the *Ka'bah*. The Quraysh had made a special place called *Ghabghab*³¹ to offer some special sacrifices to her. It was often associated with the tribe of Banū Ghaṭfān. It is said that its destruction is associated with Khālid b. Walīd, as he expedited Nakhlah – where it was being worshiped by the Quraysh and Kinānah – and destroyed it.

3.2.3 Manāt :

The sure information about Manāt is quite difficult to deduce. This idol was considered commonly the goddess of fame and fortune, and reported to be the oldest of the Arab deities. To adopt the names of this goddess with their names – like '*Abd Manāt*, *Zayd Manāt* etc – was the custom of the '*Arabs*. A general agreement about her fixture is that it is located on the seashore of the district of *al-Mushallal* at *Qudayd*, a region about 150 kilometers into north of Makkah towards Madīnah.³² The tribes of '*Arabs*, like *Banū Aws* and *Banū Khazraj* especially and some others generally used to sacrifice and pay offerings to her in a very respectful manner.³³ It is also reported that they did not use to shave their heads after completing the rites of *Hajj* in '*Arafāt* and *Minā* until they go to *Manāt*. They did not considered their *Hajj* completed without visiting *Manāt*.³⁴

In some accounts, the destruction of this deity is associated with 'Alī ibn abī-Ṭālib (R.A), and in some others, it is attributed to Sa'īd bin Zayd al-Ashhalī (R.A), who was sent to destroy it in al-Mushallal with twenty horsemen.³⁵

³⁰ al-Zubaydī, Muḥammad Murtaḍā al-Ḥussaynī, *Tāj al-'Urūs Min Jawāhir al-Qāmūs*, Kuwait: Maktabah Hukūmat al-Kuwait, 1965 AD, Entries 223

³¹ Najmah Sayūfī, *The Concept of Allāh as the Highest God in Pre-Islamic Arabia*, Thesis, Montreal: McGill University, 1999 AD, PP. 59

³² Hawting G.R., *The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1999 AD, PP. 140

³³ Najmah Sayūfī, *The Concept of Allāh as the Highest God in Pre-Islamic Arabia*, Thesis, Montreal: McGill University, 1999 AD, PP. 53

³⁴ Ibn Kalbī, Hishām, *Kitāb al-Aṣnām*, ND, PP. 13

³⁵ Shawqī, Abū Khalīl, *Atlas of the Prophets' Biography, Places, Nations, Landmarks*, Dār us salām, 2004 AD, PP. 226

4. Etymology of “Satanic Verses”:

Now, the English version of *Gharānīq* narrative is going to be elucidated here etymologically. Etymology of a certain word not only enhances the understanding of a regional language, but it also helps to give insights of its roots from other languages. It is very significant to note that the etymological study of the words “Satanic Verses” will lead the reader to the world of its understanding and the history of these words. The word ‘satanic’ is formed from the word ‘Satan’, which indicates an adversary, to oppose or plot against another. The Hebrew word “*šāṭān*” commonly denotes a human adversary in the old testament, but in some of the later portions, it occurs as the designation of an angelic being or a *Jinn*, hostile to mankind, who tempts men to evil.³⁶ It is often ascribed to origin of much of the evil of the world. In some ideologies, Satan is considered as the ruler of the kingdom of darkness. Countless stories, names and nicknames are told of him as Dragon, Evil One, Prince of Devils, Prince of power of the air, tempter, and wicked One.³⁷ The Satan has also been treated in literary usage mostly as Mephistopheles, Abaddon, Apollyon, and Belial.³⁸ But most famously, he has been celebrated as Lucifer, which is a proper name of Satan. Similarly, John Milton called him ‘Beelzebub’ and ‘Infernal Serpent’ too in his “Paradise Lost”.³⁹

In the folklores of Islam, Judaism and Christianity, Satan has an important role. He had been identified with the following mythological themes in Jewish circles: darkness, the air, the underworld, the great, and the lion etc. According to Tālmūd, he was created on the sixth day of creation and his great rival was Michael, the leader of the angels.⁴⁰ He was deemed capable to assume any form. In Christianity, it has been believed that the

³⁶ Weiner, J.A. Simpson, The Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd Edition, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989, Vol XIV, PP. 494

³⁷ William Bridgewater, Elizabeth J. Sherwood, The Columbia Encyclopedia, 2nd Edition, New York: Columbia University Press, 1950 AD, PP. 1760

³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ Milton, John, Paradise Lost, An Epic.

⁴⁰ Mircea Eliade, ‘Satan’, The Encyclopedia of Religion, Vol 13, New York: Macmillan Publishing, ND, PP. 83

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death of Jesus Christ saved the mankind from the Satan and his consequent attacks.⁴¹

In Islam, Satan is called as *Shayṭān*, which is declared as an open enemy to the human being.

إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ⁴²

“Lo! Satan is an open enemy to you”

He is the chief of the evil spirits and made of fire. He does certain functions like the Judeo – Christian Satan, such as leading the masses astray:

وَيُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُمْ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا⁴³

“Satan would mislead them far astray”

However, *Shayṭān* appeared firstly as *Iblīs* in the shape of refusal to God's command to prostrate before Adam. As Allah (the Exalted) said:

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ أَبَىٰ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ⁴⁴

“And when We said unto the angels; prostrate yourselves before Adam, they fell prostrate, all except *Iblīs*, he demurred through pride and became a disbeliever”.

This refusal made him accursed forever but he was also given the life until the day of judgement and allowed to tempt the mankind.

So, etymologically the word *Shayṭān* is related to the Hebrew *ṣāṭān*. The route of its passage into Arabic is not quite evident, although it is generally thought to have passed into Arabic through the Christian languages (especially Ethiopic).⁴⁵

Thus, the word “Satanic” of the phrase “Satanic verses” refers to ‘Satan’ or ‘*Shayṭān*’. The deeds, things, names and temptations pertaining to Satan are called “Satanic”.

⁴¹ Mircea Eliade, ‘Satan’, The Encyclopedia of Religion, Vol 13, New York: Macmillan Publishing, ND, PP. 83

⁴² Al-A‘rāf 7: 22

⁴³ Al-Nisā’ 4: 60

⁴⁴ Al-Baqarah 2: 34

⁴⁵ D. Gimaret, *Shayṭān*, The Encyclopedia of Islam, Vol IX, New Edition, Boston: Leiden Brill, 1997 AD, PP. 408

The word “Verses” is a plural form of “Verse”, which has been translated from the Arabic word “*āyah*”. Lexically, an *āyah* does mean a sign, miracle, token, and verse of the Holy Qur’ān. The verses of the Holy Qur’ān are called “Signs” because they are taken to indicate the truth of the Divine message. Referring to the meaning of an ‘*āyah*’, the Holy Qur’ān often represented it as a “Miracle” or “Wonder”.⁴⁶ As “much of the Qur’ān that constantly calls on its readers and hearers to react, ponder, and consider what they are hearing or reading”.⁴⁷ So, therefore, throughout the history, the title “Verses” has been associated solely with the Divine message of the Holy Qur’ān.

5. Presence Of *Qiṣṣat Al-Gharānīq* In Arabic Literature:

Having discussed the literal and etymological meanings of the Arabic term “*Qiṣṣat al-Gharānīq*” and the English term “Satanic Verses”, the presence of this story in the Arabic literature can be traced. In fact, *Qiṣṣat al-Gharānīq* has remained there in different forms of Arabic literature throughout the post-Islamic Arabic history either in its narrative form, or in its rebuttal form. This story has been reported in some of early *Sīrah-Maghāzī* and *Tafsīr* corpuses. Since, in the early period of Islam, the commentators of the Qur’ān collectively took the anecdotes and *Qaṣaṣ* i.e. stories without any verification and investigation of their authenticity. Instead of using the refined material, they often utilized the raw information to narrate. As an early exegete al-Ṭabarī (d. 310 AH) stated in his introduction of his *Tārīkh* that he had collected every account that had come across without considering any verification. If any information would seem implausible or distresses any one, he should know that it was copied as such as it was conveyed to him.⁴⁸ The considered earliest biography of the Holy Prophet (SAAS) was known to be of Ibn Ishāq (d.151 AH), which is not in intact form now. Ibn Ishāq’s narrated traditions can be found only in al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Hishām’s works. This is often reported that, firstly, Ibn Ishāq quoted this incident in his *Sīrah* work as al-Ṭabarī included him in the chain of transmission of this story. But contrary to this, in ‘*Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ*’, Ibn Ḥayyān (654 – 745 AH) says: “At the time, when Ibn Ishāq was inquired about this tradition, he replied that it is concocted by *Zanādiqah*. He

⁴⁶ Gordon D. Newby, *A Concise Encyclopedia of Islam*, Oxford: One World Publications, 2002 AD, PP. 36

⁴⁷ Oliver Leaman, *The Qur’ān; An Encyclopedia*, London: Routledge, ND, PP. 55

⁴⁸ al-Ṭabarī, Muḥammad Ibn Jarīr, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, Tārīkh al-Umam wa al-Mulūk*, Beirut: Dār el-Kutb al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1997 AD, PP. 17

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compiled a complete booklet in its refutation".⁴⁹ In the tussle of the presence or absence of this tradition in the *Sīrah* work of Ibn Ishāq, some orientalist like Alfred T. Welch (1904 – 1976 AD) and others had also took part very interestingly, as they hold – contrary to Uri Rubin (b.1944 AD) and Guillaume (1888 – 1965 AD) – that the narrating tradition of the incident was not present in Ibn Ishāq.⁵⁰ Ibn Hishām (d.218 AH) – the 2nd renowned main source of Ibn Ishāq – had not transmitted this story too in his *Sīrah Rasūl Allāh*.

As far as the earlier *Ḥadīth* collections are concerned, this story of satanic verses has no presence in them. It is quite interesting to note that the presence and absence of this story seems playing hide and seek in the Arabic literature. As it can be viewed that some other *Sīrah-Maghāzī* and *Tafsīr* writers – like Muḥammad Ibn 'Umar al-Wāqidī (d.207 AH) in his *Kitāb al-Maghāzī*, Ibn Sa'd (d.230 AH) in his '*al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*', Muḥammad Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d.310 AH) both in his *Jāmi' al-Bayān* and *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa al-Mulūk*, and Baḥr al-'Ulūm Abū al-Layth al-Samarqandī (d.375 AH) in his *Tafsīr al-Samarqandī* – had related this story with some of the Qur'ānic verses and Islamic history.

Furthermore, most of the Arabic compilers had inducted the story of the cranes refutingly in their respective works. Arguing to prove the erroneousness of the story became a fashion after the abovementioned compilations. As a preeminent scholar of *Ḥadīth*, Muḥammad b. Ishāq Ibn Khuzaymah (d.311 AH) declared this story an invention of the Heretics *i.e.* *Zanādiqah*. The people came to know the matters and procedures to scrutinize the earlier narrated historical accounts and traditions. Just like as the famous *Ḥadīth* collectors and compilers Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad Ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī (d.256 AH), Muslim b. al-Ḥujjāj al-Nayshābūrī (d.261 AH), Abū 'Isā Muḥammad b. 'Isā al-Tirmidhī (d.279 AH), and other compilers of the canonical *Ḥadīth* collections had appraised this incident and did not find it able to include in their compilations.

After the initial period of Islam, the Arabic scholars strived to verify this incident and quoted it in negation, just like as Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh Ibn 'Arabī (d.542 AH) in his exegesis *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, Qādī Iyād b. Mūsā (d.544 AH) in his masterpiece *al-Shifā fī ta'rīf ḥuqūq al-*

⁴⁹ Abū Ḥayyān, Andalusī, Muḥammad b. Yousaf, *Tafsīr al-Baḥr al-Muḥīt*, Vol 6, Beirut: Dār el-Kutb al-'Ilmiyyah, 1993 AD, PP. 352

⁵⁰ Uri Rubin, *The Eye of the Beholder; The Life of Muhammad as viewed by the early Muslims; A Textual Analysis*, Princeton: Darwin Press, 1997 AD, PP. 161

Muṣṭafā, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d.606 AH) in his exegesis *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Ansārī al-Qurṭubī in his *Aḥkām al-Qur’ān* and many others.

But on the other hand, the Arabic scholars like Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Taymiyyah (d.728 AH), ‘Imād al-Dīn Ibn Kathīr (d.774 AH), ‘Alī Ibn Aḥmad al-Wāhidī (d.468 AH) and even the late-medieval scholar Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d.911 AH) have made an intended attempt to narrate this story in their respective works regarding exegesis of the Holy Qur’ān, legal rulings and judgements, and description of the occasions of the revelation.

Thus, it can be assessed easily that the story of *Gharānīq* has remained in Ups and Downs of support and opposition in the entire history of Arabic literature. But the thick clouds of the negation of this story seem covering almost the whole horizon of Arabic literature.

6. “Satanic Verses” As A Term:

Since the rise of Islam, the western non-Muslim scholars of Islam – who are called Orientalists – had been in a deep contact with it. Especially, after passing four or five early centuries of Islam, the non-Muslim scholars fashioned to get more and more about the core reality of Islam. They researched and studied Islam for the sake of their own interests and hostility. Therefore, those orientalist used to make embarrassing terms about Muslims and Islam, an example is “Satanic Verses”. John E. Campo states about this term, “Euro-American Islamic studies scholars in the 20th century coined the term ‘Satanic Verses’ for certain verses (of which) Muslim sources say Satan attempted to have Muhammad [Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him] include in the Qur’ān”.⁵¹

By this, the term ‘Satanic Verses’ can be elaborated as it refers to the story of the alleged interpolation of Satan into the Divine revelation, which is narrated by some early historians and biographers of the Holy Prophet (SAAS) like al-Ṭabarī and al-Wāqidī. In their accounts, it is reported that during the Makkan period, the Holy Prophet (SAAS) recited the following verses in a meeting of believers and disbelievers both.

أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ اللَّتَّ وَالْعُزَّىٰ وَمَنْوَةَ الثَّالِثَةَ الْآخَرَیٰ 52

⁵¹ John E. Campo, Encyclopedia of Islam, New York: Fact on File Inc., 2009 AD, PP. 605

⁵² Al-Najm 53: 19 – 20

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“Have you thought al-Lāt and al-‘Uzzā?
And Manāt the third, the other?”

After reciting these verses, the Holy Prophet (SAAS) reportedly uttered the false revelation of Satan as ⁵³ تلك الغرائيق العلى وان شفاعتهن لترتجى “these are the exalted birds/cranes/maidens (*Gharānīq*), and their intercession is to be hoped for.” This infamous story is called ‘*Qiṣṣat al-Gharānīq*’ in Arabic language, and ‘story of the cranes or maidens’ in English language.

The orientalist, as usual, took this story to the heights of the skies, and named these alleged satanic words as the term ‘Satanic Verses’. In this argument, another excerpt can be adduced as this is the “name given by western scholarship to an incident known in the Muslim tradition as ‘the story of the cranes’ (*qiṣṣat al-gharānīq*) or ‘the story of the maidens’”.⁵⁴ The term ‘Satanic Verses’ has neither been used in Arabic, nor in any other related phenomenon. But the west used to pick the opportunities of distorting the view of Islam. As firstly, the term ‘Satanic Verses’ is attributed to William Muir (1819 – 1905 AD), a famous Scottish non-Muslim scholar of Islam who coined it in 1858.⁵⁵ Later, due to its mischievous tone, this term was widely adopted by the orientalist like Montgomery Watt (1909 – 2006 AD) in his book ‘Muhammad at Mecca’ and Annmarie Schimmel (1922 – 2003 AD), and Maxime Rodinson (1915 – 2004 AD) and others. Therefore, this term of so-called satanic suggested verses, actually, does not occur anywhere else in the works of the orientalist.

7. Allegedly Linked Qur’ānic Verses:

Although, the story of *gharānīq* is neither located in the Holy Qur’ān, nor in any one of the main and authentic *Hadīth* collections – which is generally considered canonical or *Ṣaḥīḥ* – but some scholars like al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāqidi, al-Wāhidī and some others still narrated it and included it in their works. They have related some verses of the Holy Qur’ān with this story. By commenting and elaborating the meanings of some of the Qur’ānic verses, these scholars ventured to create link between *Qiṣṣat al-Gharānīq* and the verses mentioned above like *Sūrah al-Najm* 53:19 – 20. Most of

⁵³ al-Ṭabarī, Muḥammad Ibn Jarīr, *Jāmi‘ al-Bayān ‘an tā’wīl āy al-Qur’ān*, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1988 AD, 17: 187 – 188

⁵⁴ Jane Dammen McAuliffe, *Encyclopedia of the Qur’ān*, Vol 4, Boston: Leiden Brill, 2004 AD, PP. 531

⁵⁵ John L. Esposito, *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003 AD, PP. 563

those scholars built a relation of this story to the following verse of *Sūrah al-Ḥajj* as well:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ وَلَا نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا إِذَا
تَمَنَّىَ الْفَى الشَّيْطَانُ فِى أَمْنِيَّةٍ فَيَنْسُخُ اللَّهُ مَا يَلْفَى الشَّيْطَانُ ثُمَّ
يُحَكِّمُ اللَّهُ ءَايَتَهُ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ⁵⁶

“Never sent We a messenger or a Prophet before thee, but when he recited (the message) Satan proposed (opposition) in respect of that which he recited thereof. But Allah abolisheth that which Satan proposeth. Then Allah establisheth His revelations. Allah is Knower, Wise.”

Muḥammad Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī is on the top of the list of the writers who related the story of cranes with abovementioned verse. By narrating this story, he also got some fame by introducing it. He penned a report taken from Salamah b. al-Faḍl’s (d.191 AH) revised edition of Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq, who was a famous biographer of the Holy Prophet (SAAS). al-Ṭabarī quoted this report twice in his works, firstly in the commentary of the verse no. 52 of *Sūrah al-Ḥajj* in his exegesis⁵⁷ and secondly, in his universal *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*.⁵⁸ He adduced this report with different chains of transmission in his works just like as taken from al-Qāsim b. al-Ḥassan (d.272 AH). For instance, he presented two different chains in the commentary of *Sūrah al-Ḥajj* 22: 52, one of them from Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-A‘lā Baṣrī (d.245 AH) and the other one from al-Ḥassan b. Yaḥyā Ibn Ja‘d al-Jurjānī (d.263 AH). Both of them are ending on Qatādah b. Diamah al-Baṣrī.

Some other compilers like Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d.911 AH) has also tried to relate *Qiṣṣat al-Gharānīq* with al-Ḥajj 22:52⁵⁹, as al-Ṭabarī did. He narrated that this verse had been revealed in connection with the occasion, when the Holy Prophet (SAAS) was interpolated by Satan during the recitation of *Sūrah al-Najm* at Makkah, and that Satanic interpolation was abrogated by this verse. He brought some reports from al-Ṭabarī and Ibn

⁵⁶ Al-Ḥajj 22: 52

⁵⁷ al-Ṭabarī, Muḥammad Ibn Jarīr, *Jāmi‘ al-Bayān ‘an tā’wīl āy al-Qur‘ān*, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1988 AD, 17: 187 – 188

⁵⁸ al-Ṭabarī, Muḥammad Ibn Jarīr, *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa al-Mulūk*, 6th Edition, Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1990 AD, 2: 337 – 340

⁵⁹ al-Suyūṭī, Jalāl al-Dīn, *al-Durr al-Manthūr fī al-Taḥsīn al-Māthūr*, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1983 AD, 6: 65 – 69

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Mundhir (d.318 AH), and from the exegesis of Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, but this is without any chain of transmission between Ibn Abī Ḥātim and al-Suddī (d.128 AH). Some other reports attributed Yaḥyā Ibn Sallām al-Baṣrī (d.200 AH) and Muqātil b. Sulaymān al-Baṣrī (d.150 AH) had also been narrated by him in some compilations, which relate this verse to the abrogation of the so-called Satanic suggested words.

Secondly, two verses of *Sūrah al-Najm* (The Star) are mainly narrated as cause of this story of the cranes, which are as under:

أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ اللَّاتَ وَالْعُزَّىٰ وَمَنْوَةَ الثَّالِثَةَ الْآخَرَیٰ⁶⁰

“Have you thought al-Lāt and al-‘Uzzā? And Manāt the third, the other?”

In this context, it is reported that when these verses were recited by the Holy Prophet (SAAS) in a gathering of both the believers and disbelievers, he was interpolated by Satan, who suggested some words in praise of these deities. It can be said quite conveniently that; the story of the cranes is almost entirely underpinned on these verses. Therefore, most of the compilers – who narrated this story – connected these verses with the alleged incident. As, in relation to the *Sūrah al-Najm* 53: 19 – 20, a long-lived and much-travelled Ḥadīth scholar Abū Qāsim Sulaymān b. Aḥmad al-Ṭabarānī (d.360 AH) has also linked *Qiṣṣat al-Gharānīq* in his famous *al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr*.⁶¹ al-Ṭabarī and al-Suyūṭī also created links of the story with the abovementioned verses of *Sūrah al-Najm*. Muqātil b. Sulaymān is said to have described this incident while interpreting the verses 19 – 26 of *Sūrah al-Najm*.

Another Qurʾānic verse – which has been linked with story of the cranes – is verse no. 73 of *Sūrah al-Isrā*. In this linkage, it is narrated that at the time when the Holy Prophet (SAAS) has allegedly spoken satanic words and the rest of the *Sūrah al-Najm*, God sent down the verse:

وَإِنْ كَادُوا لَيَفْتِنُوكَ عَنِ الَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ لِنَقْتَرِي عَلَيْنَا غَيْرَهُ وَإِذَا لَا تَأْخُذُوكَ خَلِيلٌ⁶²

“And they indeed strove hard to beguile thee (Muhammad) away from that wherewith. We have inspired thee, that thou shouldst invent other than it against Us: and then would they have accepted thee as a friend.”

⁶⁰ Al-Najm 53: 19 – 20

⁶¹ al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr*, ed, Hāmidī ‘Abd al-Mājid, Baghdād: Wazārat Auqāf, 1971 AD, 9: 34 – 36

⁶² Al-Isra’ 17: 73

This verse was reportedly revealed before the revelation of the verse of *Sūrah al-Hajj* 22: 52, as in some accounts, al-Suyūṭī stated its linkage with the story. He construed this verse been linked with that incident in his exegesis *al-Durr al-Manthūr*. Another summary reference – to the satanic verses incident – may also be found in *al-Kashf wa al-Bayān*⁶³ where this verse had been linked with the Holy Prophet’s (SAAS) alleged praise of idols.

Moreover, this story has also been linked with three verses of *Sūrah al-Zumar*. As it is said that these verses had been sent down to condemn the narrated intercessionary powers of the deities along with God. The verses are as under:

أَمْ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ شُفَعَاءَ قُلْ أَوْلَوْ كَانُوا لَا يَمْلِكُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا
يَعْقِلُونَ قُلْ لِلَّهِ الشَّفَعَةُ جَمِيعًا لَهُ مَلِكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ نَمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ
وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ اشْمَأَزَّتْ قُلُوبُ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ
الَّذِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ⁶⁴

“Or choose they intercessors other than Allāh?
Say: what even though they have power over nothing and have no intelligence. Say: unto Allāh belongeth all intercession. His is the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. And afterward unto Him ye will be brought back. And when Allāh alone is mentioned, the hearts of those who believe not in the Hereafter are repelled, and when those (whom they worship) beside Him are mentioned, behold! They are glad.”

The linkage of these verses with *Qiṣṣat al-Gharānīq* is introduced by al-Wāhidī (d.468 AH) in his commentary *al-Wāsiṭ*⁶⁵ while commenting on *al-Zumar* 39:45.

In regard to interlink the *Sūrah al-Kāfirūn*:109 with the story of satanic verses incident, Shahab Ahmad (1966 – 2015) – in his monograph ‘Before Orthodoxy’⁶⁶ – adduced a report of Muqātil’s rare and anonymous exegesis, in which Muqātil stated that, in the evening of the alleged incident

⁶³ al-Tha‘labī, *al-Kashf wa al-Bayān*, ed, Ibn ‘Ashūr, Dār al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, Beirut, ND, 6: 117

⁶⁴ Al-Zumar 39: 43 – 45

⁶⁵ al-Wāhidī, ‘Alī Ibn Aḥmad, *al-Wāsiṭ fi tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, Beirut: Dār el-Kutb al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1994 AD, 3:585

⁶⁶ Ahmed, Shahab, *Before Orthodoxy; The Satanic Verses in Early Islam*, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2017 AD, PP. 188

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of satanic verses, some chiefs of Quraysh like Abu Jahl, Shaybah and others offered the Holy Prophet (SAAS) to be a partly believer of each other's religion, and God has revealed the following *Sūrah*:

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عِبُدُونَ مَا
أَعْبُدُ وَلَا أَنَا عَابِدٌ مَّا عَبَدْتُمْ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عِبُدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ لَكُمْ
دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينٌ⁶⁷

“Say! O disbelievers! I worship not that which ye worship. Nor worship ye that which I worship. And I shall not worship that which ye worship. Nor will ye worship that which I worship. Unto you your religion, and unto me my religion.”

Another Qur'ānic linkage to the satanic verses incident has been presented by al-Ṭabarī in his commentary.⁶⁸ He narrated a report from al-Ḍaḥḥāk in the commentary of a verse of *Sūrah al-Jinn*, which is following:

إِلَّا مَنْ أَرْتَضَىٰ مِنْ رَسُولٍ فَأَنَّهُ يَسَلُّكَ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ رَصَدًا⁶⁹
“Save unto every messenger whom He hath chosen, and He maketh a guard to go before him and a guard behind him.”

In this report, it is alleged that Satan assumed the form of arch-angel Gabriel (A.S) while interpolating the Holy Prophet's (SAAS) recitation of *Sūrah al-Najm* and difficult to be recognized by him. Therefore, the arch-angel is attended from front and back by the guardian angels.

8. Conclusion:

Thus, after having the above introductory elucidations, one may easily deem that the term 'Satanic Verses' is neither found in any early Islamic or non-Islamic sources, nor in the medieval and modern historical corpuses. Actually, it had been adopted by some Islamophobes later in the 19th century for a rare episode of Islamic history “*Qiṣṣat al-Gharānīq*” which literally exhibits the alleged story of satanic intervention in the Divine revelation. They did so because the alleged words or verses are attributed to

⁶⁷ Al-Kāfirūn 109: 1 – 6

⁶⁸ al-Ṭabarī, Muḥammad Ibn Jarīr, *Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an tā'wīl āy al-Qur'ān*, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1988 AD, 29: 122

⁶⁹ Al-Jinn 72: 27

Satan. The allegation – of uttering the satanic suggested words during the recitation of *Sūrah al-Najm*: 53 – on the infallible personality of the Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him) is the core issue of this story. By observing the different parts of this narrative lexically, the words الغرانيق العلى “*Gharānīq al-‘ulā*” meant “high flying birds”. Ibn Manzūr (1233 – 1312 AD) define it as a water bird having a tall neck and legs. The words *ghirnāq*, *ghurāniq* etc. also refer to a white, beautiful and young man. Here in this narrative, the Arab deities like *al-Lāt*, *al-‘Uzzā* and *Manāt* are praised and personified with some high-flying birds having some extraordinary powers of intercession with God. In this story of some reports, the narrators tried to relate a few number of Qur’ānic verses. Particularly, the verses of *Sūrah al-Najm* 53:19 – 20 أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ اللَّاتَ وَالْعُزَّىٰ وَمَنْوَةَ الثَّالِثَةَ الْآخَرَیٰ , after which the “satanic suggested words” has been adjusted allegedly and the verse of *Sūrah al-Hajj* 22:52 وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ وَلَا نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا إِذَا تَمَنَّى أَلْقَى الشَّيْطَانُ فِيهِ أَمِّيَّةً فَيَتَّبِعُ اللَّهُ مَا يُفِي الشَّيْطَانُ ثُمَّ يُحَكِّمُ اللَّهُ عَائِشَةً وَاللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ حَكِيمٌ , which is narrated as the abrogating verse of “satanic verses”. The verses like *Sūrah al-‘Isrā* 17:73, *al-Zumar* 39:43 – 45, *al-Kāfirūn* 109:1 – 6, and *al-Jinn* 72:27 are also connected to this story somewhere.

While having a brief introduction of *Qiṣṣat al-Gharānīq*’s presence and absence in early Arabic literature, it is proved that the story has been annexed with Islamic history also by some early Muslim exegetes and biographers like al-Ṭabarī and al-Wāqidī. It also became lucid that they used some raw information instead of refined and authenticated material to narrate this story. As one of them confessed in the introduction of one of his book that he collected every account – which he found – without any verification or appraisal. The dependence of al-Ṭabarī’s and al-Wāqidī’s accounts on Ibn Ishāq’s (d. 151 AH) work is ousted by his own statement that it is concocted by *Zanādiqah*. Alfred T. Welch (1904 – 1976 AD) had also witnessed the absence of this story in Ibn Ishāq’s and Ibn Hishām’s (d.218 AH) *Sīrah* work.

So, it is a universal truth too that the ‘authoritative’ and ‘apocryphal’ accounts always walk side by side in the field of historiography, which must be distinguished from each other. The ability of an impartial discrimination, among them, results in an ‘authentic’ version. In this case, when this narrative of *Gharānīq* was appraised by the intellectuals like *Hadīth* scholars, they had nothing authentic to narrate an event like this. As this story had always been nullified right from its commencement – e.g. by Ibn Khuzaymah (d.311 AH) and others – until the time now. The horizon of this alleged story is seeming covered with thick refuting clouds in most of the Arabic literature.

Consequently, this study explicated the literal and initial elaborations of ‘Satanic Verses’ narrative and its components, etymological meanings and a brief introduction of the history of *Qiṣṣat al-Gharānīq*. In other words, it

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can be mentioned as a comprehensive introduction of the alleged story of Satanic Verses.

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