Conference Notes

Praise God for the wonderful Tenth Annual Conference of the United Submitters, August 28th - 29th, 1995, held in Tucson, Arizona. Mazahilah, this year's conference had the largest attendance ever - about 250 submitters. People came from different parts of the world to be with fellow Submitters. The conference started on Friday with registration, which was a time of joy and celebration as we greeted old friends and welcomed new ones. After the noon prayer and introductions, then we went to Reid Park for a wonderful picnic. God blessed the picnic with the most beautiful weather. It was cloudy and cool, with an occasional shower and a rainbow. Hearing that on the 20th, 1995, held in Tucson, Arizona. Mashallah, this conference had the largest attendance ever - about 250 submitters. Young people. Of course, there were also excellent presentations by the not so new ones.

The conference was on Friday with registration, which was a time of joy and celebration as we greeted old friends and welcomed new ones. After the noon banquet, we all joined together for an inspirational kheethah, followed by the Friday prayer and introductions. Then we went to Reid Park for a wonderful picnic. God blessed the picnic with the most beautiful weather. It was cloudy and cool, with an occasional shower and a rainbow. Hearing that on the previous Friday at the same time as the picnic, Tucson had one of the worst storms in its history, this was indeed a real blessing.

This year, the focus was on young Submitters, who took the lead with brilliant presentations. What has this to do with the subject of hajj? First of all, there are many words or phrases in the Bible for which even Biblical scholars are unsure of the meaning. For example, the footnotes of The Holy Bible, New International Version (NIV), published by the International Bible Society and probably the most widely used version of the Bible, are replete with statements such as "the meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain." Then there is the problem of translation itself, from Hebrew or Aramaic to Greek to Latin and finally into modern languages such as English. It has been widely acknowledged that these translation and re-translation processes are fraught with loss or change in the meanings of words and phrases. This is especially true if the translators are not familiar with the Semitic customs and manner of the time in which the scriptures were recorded originally. There are many other sources of error in translations of this kind (discussed for example in Kenyon, 1958, Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts; Laman, 1968, The Holy Bible from the Ancient Eastern Text; Spray, 1992, Jesus: Myths and Message, and others).

Hajj And Haja A Parallel

What does the Bible have to say about the hajj? First of all, there are many words or phrases in the Bible for which even Biblical scholars are unsure of the meaning. For example, the footnotes of The Holy Bible, New International Version (NIV), published by the International Bible Society and probably the most widely used version of the Bible, are replete with statements such as "the meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain." Then there is the problem of translation itself, from Hebrew or Aramaic to Greek to Latin and finally into modern languages such as English. It has been widely acknowledged that these translation and re-translation processes are fraught with loss or change in the meanings of words and phrases. This is especially true if the translators are not familiar with the Semitic customs and manner of the time in which the scriptures were recorded originally. There are many other sources of error in translations of this kind (discussed for example in Kenyon, 1958, Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts; Laman, 1968, The Holy Bible from the Ancient Eastern Text; Spray, 1992, Jesus: Myths and Message, and others).

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Salat and Hajj continued

In both cases, the word ‘pilgrimage’ alludes to the same meaning, i.e., year, indicating a well-known fact that pilgrimage is an annual event. Other translations of the Bible are the word ‘journeying’ and ‘wayfaring’ in place of ‘pilgrimage’ (The Holy Scriptures, Jewish Publication Society, 1916 and The New American Bible, Catholic Book Publishing, 1977 respectively). They may have kept the same underlined meaning, the ‘year’, but in so doing, they have inadvertently obscured the fact that pilgrimage already was a well-known annual event during the time of Jacob and the Pharaoh.

An Old Semitic Custom

According to E. J. Bats’ First Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1923-1936 (Vol.III, pp.99, 200), pilgrimage to a sanctuary is an old Semitic custom, which is prescribed even in the older parts of the Pentateuch in an indispensable duty. The answer to the question: what shall you celebrate for Me a hajj is written in Exodus 23:14. The Semitic autumn festival (the Festival of Booths) in the Jewish calendar is written in Exodus 23:14. The North Semitic alphabet is again used, but translated the proper name “Baca” in the New American Bible (The Holy Scriptures, Jewish Publication Society, 1916 and The New American Bible, Catholic Book Publishing, 1977 respectively). They have inadvertently obscured the fact that pilgrimage already was a well-known annual event during the time of Jacob and the Pharaoh.

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