

MORAL DECADENCE AND DESTRUCTION OF SOCIETIES

By : tahir139

THE BOOK TALKS ABOUT MORAL DECADENCE ESPECIALLY FOCUSING ON USA AND IT ALSO PROVIDES STATISTICS PERTAINING TO CRIME IN USA...THERE IS ALSO A PART THAT DESCRIBES NATIONS DESTROYED BY GOD FOR IMMORALITY AND DISOBEDIENCE...IT ALSO DESCRIBES WHAT THE HELL IS AND WHAT IT IS LIKE....

Published on
Booksie

booksie.com/tahir139

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MORAL DECADENCE AND DESTRUCTION OF SOCIETIES

MORAL DECADENCE IN USA: A PATH TO DESTRUCTION

BY Tahir Hamid

The cardinal tragedy today that afflicts humans is being ingloriously dissatisfied with their lives. We have all been gifted by the supreme gift of life. Those who are healthy are truly gifted and yet we feel this constant need for being looked upon by others to be something special. Or we need to identify with those things that we perceive make people a touch more popular than us.

And there are so many things that young adolescents associate with looking fashionable or being trendy that are really detrimental to the psychology and health of young adults. Whether it is the need to get laid, to smoke hash, cannabis, weed or designer drugs or having your first taste of alcoholic beverages, young men and women often indulge in these forbidden acts. So many times pedophiles use social media sites and friendship websites to get in touch with immature children looking for a chance to have sex. It is a dangerous world out there. It is shocking to find so many serial killers, pedophiles, rapists and molesters out there; more so in USA than in the entire world.

With porn readily available on the website and Hollywood or Bollywood movies readily churning out movies which glamorize adultery, homicide, theft, revenge and drugs, it is not surprising to learn about so many young kids and adults displaying such traits. There seems to be a dastardly plan to make the world a place where all the traits that have been condemned by God will be introduced into our lives like sweet poison. As a kid, I remember seeing the movie named "The Last American Virgin" which was about a teenage boy not being able to lose his virginity and his friends making fun of it. There was another movie starring Kate Winslet in which she has sex with a young male student many times younger than her. Such glorious filth can damage the morals of young impressionable audiences.

MORAL DECADENCE AND DESTRUCTION OF SOCIETIES

The glorious sexual freedom which is glamorized in the West today is the cardinal cause for infidelity, premarital sex and extramarital sex, for sexual pervers, for the demand for child pornography and pornography and for rapid moral decay.

With HIV and Aids plaguing Africa, USA, Asia, and other parts of the world, there is a need for educating children about the dangers of partaking in sex with many partners and people you don't know. It is better being safe than sorry.

If we study the lives of the rich and famous amongst the movie stars, television stars, and musicians, so many of them perished on high cocktails of drugs. Take the case of Whitney Houston, Michael Jackson and Elvis Presley for instance. There are so many of them whose lives were destroyed because of depression and drug abuse. So are these the individuals that we would like our children to idolize and have as role models.

Nothing evil in our lives can have a positive impact on individuals or societies and nations. There is a need to provide our children with solid morals. Faith is a strong foundation to rest upon when in trouble. There is a need to realize that the human soul and mind does not find solace in indulging in those acts that have been forbidden by God. The inner spirit within you clamors for the remembrance of God. Doing good deeds attracts a better fate. Indulging in those deeds that have been declared forbidden by God will only open up a passage way for you to commit more evil. It will distance you from the Creator. And as you distance away from Him, you experience several trials and tribulations in your path. Those trials and tribulations and bad fate will be a way of shaking you up and making you realize your folly. However so many of us don't.

Peer pressure has an important way of getting to people especially children. It is important for mothers to ensure that the types of children their kids hang around with are morally proper. Too many young children learn those forbidden words and things from their friends at school. Children love to imitate and are prone to being influenced and impressed by bad habits. It would not be bad if parents sat with their children and discussed with them the repercussions of smoking, of consuming alcohol, of having unprotected sex, of having anything to do with strangers, etc.

Under the name of modernism, modern countries have sanctified brothels, adultery, pornography, gambling and many other evils. So many societies and nations have been destroyed by God for being immoral. The destruction of the people of Sodom for indulging in homosexuality is one example. The people of POMPEII too had been indulging in immorality and sexual perversion. Read about their destruction. It will open up your eyes.

MORAL DECADENCE AND DESTRUCTION OF SOCIETIES

STATISTICS

The United States Dept of Justice says one in twenty men have molested a child.

Seven out of ten sexual assault victims are under eighteen years old. This means that mostly children and teens are being raped and assaulted.

Ninety percent of child sexual abuse is committed by someone known, loved, and trusted by the victim.

Ninety-five percent of teenage prostitutes have been sexually abused.

Sixty percent of all convicted sex offenders are on parole or probation.

The Los Angeles County Interagency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect says that a parent, or other parental caretaker, kills their child almost once a week in L.A. County alone. The children are usually three to six years-old and suffer a repeated abuse at the hands of their eventual killers.

Forty to sixty percent of men who abuse women, abuse children as well.

Fewer than five percent of children ever tell anyone that an adult is sexually assaulting them.

In California, 250 to 300 sex offenders are released from prison each month. There were over 94,000 registered sex offenders living in the state of California in 2002. Two thirds of them were convicted of sexually molesting a child.

Abusive fathers are more likely to fight for custody.

MORAL DECADENCE AND DESTRUCTION OF SOCIETIES

Abusive fathers win custody in seventy percent of contested custody cases.

Fathers accused of incest win custody in eighty-four percent of cases nationally.

Ninety-one percent of fathers accused of incest by their children obtain full or partial unsupervised custody in California.

Eight percent of all custody cases involve sexual abuse allegations. Of those, two percent are false.

Fifty-four percent of mothers who attempt to protect their children from incest receive only visitation or no contact at all.

Sexual Assault Numbers

Every 2 minutes, someone in the U.S. is sexually assaulted

There is an average of 207,754 victims (age 12 or older) of sexual assault each year

Approximately 2/3 of rapes were committed by someone known to the victim.

73% of sexual assaults were perpetrated by a non-stranger.

38% of rapists are a friend or acquaintance.

28% are an intimate.

7% are a relative

More than 50% of all rape/sexual assault incidents were reported by victims to have occurred within 1 mile of their home or at their home.

MORAL DECADENCE AND DESTRUCTION OF SOCIETIES

4 in 10 take place at the victim's home.

2 in 10 take place at the home of a friend, neighbor, or relative.

1 in 12 take place in a parking garage.

43% of rapes occur between 6:00pm and midnight.

24% occur between midnight and 6:00am.

The other 33% take place between 6:00am and 6:00pm.

The Criminal

- The average age of a rapist is 31 years old.
- 52% are white.
- 22% of imprisoned rapists report that they are married.
- Juveniles accounted for 16% of forcible rape arrestees in 1995 and 17% of those arrested for other sex offenses.
- In 1 in 3 sexual assaults, the perpetrator was intoxicated â 30% with alcohol, 4% with drugs.
- In 2001, 11% of rapes involved the use of a weapon â 3% used a gun, 6% used a knife, and 2 % used another form of weapon.
- 84% of victims reported the use of physical force only.

The article given below has been printed as is.

Americaâ s Moral Meltdown

By Richard F. Ames

MORAL DECADENCE AND DESTRUCTION OF SOCIETIES

The United States is often considered one of the world's leading nations. Sadly, America is more and more leading the world in immorality. How will the decline of this once-great nation affect our world and you?

Great nations often reflect great character and purpose. But when their standards and values decline and decay, their days are numbered. When families are strong and parents instill true values and godly character in their children, the nation is strong. But when a society abandons traditional "family values," history shows that its day of judgment looms.

A May 2000 Gallup Poll revealed that 77 percent of Americans believe America's moral values are growing worse ("Morality Ratings the Worst in Five Years," The Gallup Organization, May 25, 2006). Yet more than 80 percent of Americans consider themselves personally religious. Last year, Gallup reported: "Fifty-five percent [of Americans] say religion is a very important to them, and another 28 percent say a fairly important" ("Faith Accompanies Most Americans Through Life," May 31, 2005).

With a majority of its citizens professing religious faith, is America morally strong? Or is the nation heading for a moral meltdown?

From its beginning, the United States has found its core values in the pages of the Bible. British historian Paul Johnson explained: "Hence, though the Constitution and the Bill of Rights made no provision for a state church quite the contrary there was an implied and unchallenged understanding that America was a religious country, that the republic was religious not necessarily in its forms but in its bones, that it was inconceivable that it could have come into existence, or could continue and flourish, without an overriding religious sentiment pervading every nook and cranny of its society. This religious sentiment was based on the Scriptures and the Decalogue, was embodied in the moral consensus of the Judeo-Christian tradition, and manifested itself in countless forms of mainly Christian worship" ("God and the Americans," Commentary, January 1995, p. 31).

At its foundation, the U.S. based its values "on the Scriptures and the Decalogue" the Bible and the Ten Commandments. More than 200 years later, is the nation still living by biblical values?

Historically, marriage and the family have been the building blocks of society. When men and women transgress the Ten Commandments when they practice adultery and unfaithfulness in their marriages the family unit suffers. Ancient Rome at first emphasized strong families, but historians have documented Rome's declining emphasis on morality, and how that decline affected Roman society. In his book, *Ancient Education and Today*, E. B. Castle wrote, "Added to this initial cause of family disruption [the increasing absence of traveling businessmen from their families] was the consequent easy attitude to the marriage tie, the increasing frequency of divorce, and the growing freedom and laxity in women's morals,

MORAL DECADENCE AND DESTRUCTION OF SOCIETIES

all of which ended in a loosening of the old family unity in which the best in Roman character had its roots" (p. 119).

Will modern Western civilization follow the pattern of Rome's decay? Writing in the first century ad, the Roman philosopher Seneca observed that "some noble ladies reckon the years of their lives, not by the number of the consuls, but by that of their husbands, now that they leave their homes in order to marry others, and marry only in order to be divorced—no woman keeps a husband at all unless it be to pique her lover" (On Benefits, Book III, xvi).

Men, too, are seduced by the false allure of adultery. With increased access to birth control, and the easy availability of abortion on demand, sexual activity has increased in the last few decades as people think they can avoid its consequences. Millions fail to take seriously the simple biblical admonition, "You shall not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14). Yet, if everyone kept this precept—the seventh of the Ten Commandments—lives would be far happier and society would be far more stable.

Divorce statistics in Western nations remain sobering. In the last 30 years, the percentage of married adults in the U.S. has dropped by 17 percent, and more than 40 percent of first marriages end in divorce (Time, September 26, 2000, p. 77). In Great Britain, 53 percent of all marriages end in divorce, and in Canada 45 percent of all marriages end in divorce (ibid., p. 76). The Australian Bureau of Statistics reported in June 2001 that Australia's divorced population had increased by 172 percent between 1981 and 2001.

What a sad commentary on the family stability of those nations! Media and immoral culture influence many to divorce, weakening national character. Why? One reason is that societies increasingly reject biblical teachings, particularly the Ten Commandments! The fifth commandment states: "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you" (Exodus 20:12). If everyone kept the fifth and the seventh commandments, nations would experience stable and happy families.

Decaying Morality?

Our modern Western world increasingly rejects the Ten Commandments and continues its slide into immorality. Just how bad is it? The Barna Research Group surveyed American's attitudes toward ten moral behaviors, and found that 60 percent consider it acceptable for unmarried people to cohabit. Fifty-nine percent believe sexual fantasizing is appropriate. Nearly half (45 percent) consider abortion acceptable, and 42 percent approve of extramarital sex. Thirty-eight percent approve of pornography, and 30 percent find homosexuality acceptable ("Morality Continues to Decay," November 3, 2003).

MORAL DECADENCE AND DESTRUCTION OF SOCIETIES

Regardless of Americans' opinions, do you realize that, according to biblical principles, those behaviors are morally wrong? Just as God is the Creator of the natural laws of physics and chemistry, He is also the Lawgiver of spiritual law. And those spiritual laws are just as real as the physical ones! From beginning to end, the Bible reveals that obedience to God's revealed laws brings blessings, while disobedience brings curses and penalties. Scripture reminds us: "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life" (Galatians 6:7-8).

We all need to keep the Ten Commandments. Even if our nation is turning away from the Ten Commandments—refusing even to let them be posted in public buildings—each of us individually can learn the true ways of love toward God and love toward neighbor. As we apply the Ten Commandments in our own lives, we will be following Jesus' advice, "If you will enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matthew 19:17).

A nation that practices sexual licentiousness will pay the price. But we must ask ourselves individually: What is my attitude toward sexual activity? God created sex for intimacy, romance, and love in marriage, and to build a family. God's way is the way of joy, peace, giving, serving, caring, and loving. Husbands and wives who love one another, and who are committed to one another, know the joys of intimacy that God intended. But there are consequences for disobedience. "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4). Marriage is a blessing, and sex is God's great gift within marriage. Yet how many millions will receive God's judgment for their fornication and adultery?

If you are engaging in sexual immorality, you need to repent. You need to confess your sin before God, then change your behavior and quit sinning! God will forgive you, if you truly repent and accept Jesus Christ's sacrifice for your sins!

When ancient King David committed adultery with Bathsheba, the prophet Nathan convicted David of his sin. David did not try to justify his sin; he confessed it, and prayed: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin" (Psalm 51:1-2).

Too many men and women today are not seeking God to help free them from the temptations of sexual immorality. Remember, Jesus taught us to pray, "And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen" (Matthew 6:13).

Are we becoming a nation of adulterers? Newsweek magazine asked: "Just how many married women have had sex with people who are not their husbands? It's hard to say for sure—! Couples therapists estimate that among their clientele, the number is close to 30 to 40 percent, compared with 50 percent of men,

MORAL DECADENCE AND DESTRUCTION OF SOCIETIES

and the gap is almost certainly closing. The best interpretation of the data: the cheating rate for women is approaching that of men." ("The New Infidelity," July 12, 2003).

What does your Bible reveal about adultery? The Apostle James reveals the reason for wars, and he indicts those who are lustful. "Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (James 4:1-4).

Are you an "enemy" of God? In the Barna report mentioned above, even a majority of those who call themselves Christians were supportive of cohabitation. Sixty-six percent of self-described Roman Catholics, and 50 percent of Protestants, said they believe it is okay for men and women to live together outside of marriage. Today, even many who call themselves "religious" just follow along with the immoral crowd and commit fornication and adultery.

This problem, however, is not new. In the first century ad, the Greek city of Corinth was a center of worldwide commerce, and it was also a center of paganism, idolatry and sexual immorality. Many Corinthians repented of their sinful lifestyle, and became Christians. The Apostle Paul warned them against the temptations of their day. "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

Are you practicing any of those behaviors? God says that none of those individuals will inherit the Kingdom of God! Some of the Corinthians had repented of those lifestyles and sins when they became Christians and God forgave them! The Apostle Paul continues, "And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (v. 11).

Marriage Meltdown?

Some cities, states and countries act as if they know better than God. God defines marriage as a union between a man and a woman. The two shall become one flesh, He says. Yet more and more governments

MORAL DECADENCE AND DESTRUCTION OF SOCIETIES

around the world are supporting same-sex unions. On November 18, 2003, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled that according to the state Constitution, same-sex couples cannot be denied the right of civil marriage. The state of Vermont recognizes "civil unions" for same-sex couples. The Washington Post reported that in the Netherlands "As many as 8 percent of all marriages here, are now between people of the same sex" (Washington Post, p. A20, September 23, 2003). A national poll by Environics Research in the summer of 2003 reported that "Currently just over half of Canadians (53 percent) strongly (28 percent) or somewhat (25 percent) support" same-sex marriage.

These ungodly trends will bring God's judgment on us, unless we repent individually and nationally. The enormity of these trends—including a nationwide push in the U.S. for the recognition of same-sex "marriage"—has led to a conservative move to amend the U.S. Constitution. In January 2005, 25 U.S. senators co-sponsored the "Marriage Protection Amendment," to define marriage as a union between a man and a woman, for purposes of federal law. The amendment stated: "Marriage in the United States shall consist only of the union of a man and a woman. Neither this Constitution, nor the constitution of any State, shall be construed to require that marriage or the legal incidents thereof be conferred upon any union other than the union of a man and a woman."

Here we are in the prophesied end-times. Not that long ago, no one could have imagined that it might be necessary to amend the U.S. Constitution to define marriage. How far we have come from the days of which historian Paul Johnson wrote above! Worse, who would have imagined that 100 senators would not agree that marriage is the union between a man and a woman? Although same-sex marriage is not yet legal at the national level in the U.S., state governments are continuing to debate whether to do as Massachusetts has done, and establish same-sex "marriage." Other states, like Vermont and Connecticut, now allow what they call same-sex "civil unions." These offer most of the civil benefits of marriage, without using the word marriage. Several other states, including California, New Jersey and Maine, allow some form of same-sex domestic partnership.

Sadly, a majority of Americans approve of several other immoral behaviors. The above-mentioned Barna survey reported that 59 percent of Americans approve of sexual fantasizing. Are you misusing your mind in that way? Jesus Christ explained that we can sin in our minds, even without illicit sexual contact. Some religious people think that they can indulge in sexual fantasies without sinning. Yet carnal thoughts, including lustful thoughts that obsess about sex, are sinful. Jesus said, "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. **For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies**" (Matthew 15:18-19).

Those of you who indulge in pornography, or any sexual vice, need to repent! You need to quit sinning! You need to take steps to prevent your easy access to sexual temptations! The Apostle Paul gave this urgent instruction: "Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body" (1 Corinthians 6:18). Some think there are no penalties for easy sex, but God says that you sin against your own body!

MORAL DECADENCE AND DESTRUCTION OF SOCIETIES

The Apostle Paul continues, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body" (1 Corinthians 6:19â20, RSV).

If you have not already done so, I hope you will make that commitment to glorify God in your body and in your spirit. God's way of life through Christ is the abundant life (John 10:10). God intended that we live according to His awesome and wonderful spiritual laws of love that produce genuine happiness.

The Great Commandments

God has given us the principles, laws, and precepts that produce lasting peace and happiness. God, not mankind, defines marriage. Jesus Christ himself taught what are called the two "great commandments"â to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves (Mark 12:28â31). The first four of the Ten Commandments show us how to fulfill the first great commandmentâ to love God. The last six commandments show us how to fulfill the second great commandmentâ to love our neighbors. Yes, in order to fulfill Jesus's command, we need to study and obey the Ten Commandments!

Sadly, our Western world is heading down a toboggan slide into immorality! What is the solution? We need to repentâ nationally and individuallyâ of our lustful, sinful lifestyles and attitudes. We need to get back to Scripture and the Ten Commandments!

Many years ago, in 1975, a television reporter asked me my appraisal of American morality. I answered, even then, that morality and godly character among Americans had declinedâ because biblical values were declining. When a nation reads the Bible and practices its precepts, it will prosper. But great neglect of the Bible and its teaching will continue to produce moral declineâ and eventual national destruction.

Daniel Webster, the great American statesman, gave this warning about our national future: **"If there is anything in my thoughts or style to commend, the credit is due to my parents for instilling in me an early love of the Scriptures. If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and to prosper; but if we and our posterity neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury all our glory in profound obscurity"** (Halley's Bible Handbook, p. 18).

MORAL DECADENCE AND DESTRUCTION OF SOCIETIES

Our Western nations are neglecting and increasingly rejecting the instruction and authority of the Bible. We need to study the Bible and practice the way of life taught by the apostles, the prophets and our Savior, Jesus Christ. They taught the Ten Commandments God's law of love and its spiritual application. As Jesus said, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God" (Luke 4:4). May we each put God's word into action, in our hearts and in our lives!

The time is coming soon when God will punish America and the other Western nations for their immoral ways. But even if your nation does not change its ways, you can repent personally, turn to your Savior, Jesus Christ, and escape that time of judgment. Will you accept the challenge to live the abundant way of life taught in your Bible? If you do, you can rejoice in God's divine blessings, receiving in this life a foretaste of what the whole earth will experience in Tomorrow's World.

DESTRUCTION OF PEOPLE OF SODOM

The people of Lut rejected (his) warning. We sent against them a violent Tornado with showers of stones, (which destroyed them), except Lut's household: them We delivered by early Dawn,- As a Grace from Us: thus do We reward those who give thanks. And (Lut) did warn them of Our Punishment, but they disputed about the Warning. (Surat al-Qamar: 33-36)

Both Lut (as) and Ibrahim (as) lived at the same time. Lut (as) was sent as a messenger to one of Ibrahim's (as) neighbouring communities. These people, as the Qur'an tells us, practiced a perversion unknown to the world up till then, namely sodomy. When Lut (as) told them to give up this perversion and brought them Allah's warning, they denied him, refused his prophethood, and carried on with their perversion. In the end, these people were destroyed by a dreadful disaster.

The city where Lut (as) resided is referred to as Sodom in the Old Testament. Being situated to the north of the Red Sea, this community is understood to have been destroyed just as it is written in the Qur'an. Archaeological studies reveal that the city is located in the area of the Dead Sea which stretches along the Palestine-Jordan border.

We also (sent) Lut: He said to his people: "Do ye commit lewdness such as no people in creation (ever) committed before you? For ye practise your lusts on men in preference to women: ye are indeed a people transgressing beyond bounds."

And his people gave no answer but this: they said, "Drive them out of your city: these are indeed men who want to be clean and pure!" (Surat al-Araf: 80-82)

MORAL DECADENCE AND DESTRUCTION OF SOCIETIES

Allah never destroys a nation unless it brings it upon itself through its own wrongdoing. The messengers of Allah came to them and were ridiculed and refuted. Refusal to change their ways resulted for those nations in creating social ills and imbalance and they were ultimately destroyed.â (30/9-10).

The statement of "turning (the cities) upside down" implies that the region was totally destroyed by a violent earthquake. Accordingly, The Lake of Lut, where the destruction took place, bears "obvious" evidence of such a disaster.

We quote German archaeologist Werner Keller:

Together with the base of this mighty fissure, which runs precisely through this area, the Vale of Siddim, including Sodom and Gomorrah, plunged one day into the abyss. Their destruction came about through a great earthquake which was probably accompanied by explosions, lightning, issue of natural gas and general conflagration.¹³

As a matter of fact, the Lake of Lut, or the Dead Sea as it is otherwise known, is located right on the top of an active seismic region, that is, an earthquake zone:

The base of the dead sea is located with a tectonic rooted downfall. This valley is located in a tension stretching between the Taberiye Lake in the north, and mid of Arabah Valley in the south.¹⁴

The event was expressed as "we rained down on them brimstones hard as baked clay, spread, layer on layer" in the last part of the verse. This is in all probability meant to be the volcanic explosion that took place on the banks of the Lake of Lut, and because of which the rocks and stones that erupted were in a "baked form". (The same event is related in the verse 173 of Surat ash-Shuâ ara as "We rained down on them a shower (of brimstone): and evil was the shower on those who were admonished (but heeded not)!")

In relation to this subject, Werner Keller writes:

The subsidence released volcanic forces that had been lying dormant deep down along the whole length of the fracture. In the upper valley of the Jordan near Bashan there are still towering craters of extinct volcanoes; great stretches of lava and deep layers of basalt have been deposited on the limestone surface.¹⁵

These lava and basalt layers constitute the greatest evidence that a volcanic explosion and earthquake had once taken place here. The catastrophe depicted in the following expression as "we rained down on them brimstones hard as baked clay, spread, layer on layer" in the Qurân most probably points to this volcanic explosion, and Allah knows best. The expression "When Our Decree issued, We turned (the cities) upside down" which occurs in the same verse, must be referring to the earthquake which caused volcanoes to erupt over the surface of the earth with devastating impact, and to the fissures and debris brought by it, and only Allah knows the truth of it.

The "obvious signs" conveyed by the Lake of Lut are indeed very interesting. In general, the events which are related in the Qurân take place in the Middle East, the Arabian Peninsula and Egypt. Right in the middle of these lands, is the Lake of Lut. The Lake of Lut, as well as the incidents that have taken place around it, deserves attention geologically. The Lake is approximately 400 metres below the surface of the Mediterranean. Since the deepest point in

MORAL DECADENCE AND DESTRUCTION OF SOCIETIES

the Lake is 400 metres, the bottom of the Lake is 800 metres below the surface of the Mediterranean. This is the lowest point on the earth. In other areas which are lower than sea level, the depth is at most 100 metres. Another property of the Lake of Lut is that the salt content of its water is very high, the density being nearly 30%. Because of this, no living organism, such as fish or moss, can survive in this lake. This is why the Lake of Lut is called the "Dead Sea" in Western literature.

The incident of Lutâs (as)people, which is recounted in the Qurân, occurred around 1800 BC according to estimates. Based on his archaeological and geological researches, the German researcher Werner Keller noted that the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were in fact located in the Siddim Valley which was the region at the furthest and lowest end of the Lake of Lut, and that there were once big and widely inhabited sites in those regions.

The most interesting structural characteristic of the Lake of Lut is evidence showing how the disaster incidence recounted in the Qurân took place:

On the eastern shore of the Dead Sea the peninsula of El-Lisan protrudes like a tongue far into the water. El-Lisan means "the tongue" in Arabic. Unseen from the land the ground falls away here under the surface of the water at a prodigious angle, dividing the sea into two parts. To the right of the peninsula the ground slopes sharply down to a depth of 1200 feet. On the left of the peninsula the water remains remarkably shallow. Soundings taken in the last few years established depths of only fifty to sixty feet. That extraordinary shallow part of the Dead Sea, from the peninsula El-Lisan to the southernmost tip, was the Vale of Siddim.¹⁶

Werner Keller noted that this shallow part, which was discovered to have formed subsequently, was the outcome of the aforementioned earthquake and the massive collapse this earthquake had caused. This was the place where Sodom and Gomorrah were situated, that is, where Lutâs (as)people lived.

Once, it was possible to cross this region by walking. However, now, the Vale of Siddim, where Sodom and Gomorrah were once situated, is covered by the flat surface of the lower part of the Dead Sea. The collapse of the base as a result of the dreadful catastrophe that came to pass in the beginning of the second millennium BC, caused salt water from the north to flow into this recently formed cavity and filled the basin with salty water.

The traces of Lutâs (as) people are visible! When one takes a rowing boat across the Lake of Lut to the southernmost point, if the sun is shining in the right direction, one sees something quite fantastic. Some distance from the shore and clearly visible under the surface of the water, there are the outlines of the forests

MORAL DECADENCE AND DESTRUCTION OF SOCIETIES

which the extraordinarily high salt content of the Dead Sea preserved. The trunks and roots in the shimmering green water are very ancient. The Siddim valley, where these trees were once in blossom green foliage covered their twigs and branches, was one of the most beautiful locations in the region.

The mechanical aspect of the disaster that befell the people of Lut (as) is revealed by the researches of the geologists. These reveal that the earthquake which destroyed the people of Lut (as) came about as a consequence of a fault line in the earth, along the 190-kilometre distance making up the bed of the River Sheriâ at. River Sheriâ at makes a fall of 180 metres in total. Both this and the fact that the Lake of Lut is 400 metres below sea level are two important pieces of evidence showing that an enormous geological event once took place here.

The interesting structure of the River of Sheriâ at and the Lake of Lut make up only a small part of the crack or split passing from this region of the earth. The condition and length of this crack have only recently been discovered.

The fault starts from the outskirts of Mount Taurus, stretches to the southern shores of the Lake of Lut and proceeds over the Arabian desert to the Gulf of Aqaba and continues across the Red Sea, ending up in Africa. Along the length of it, strong volcanic activities are observed. Black basalt and lava exist in the Galilee Mountains in Israel, high plain regions of Jordan, the Gulf of Aqaba and other areas nearby.

All these remains and geographical evidences show that a catastrophic geological event took place in the Lake of Lut. Werner Keller writes:

Together with the base of this mighty fissure, which runs precisely through this area, the Vale of Siddim, including Sodom and Gomorrah, plunged one day into the abyss. Their destruction came about through a great earthquake which was probably accompanied by explosions, lightning, issue of natural gas and general conflagration. The subsidence released volcanic forces that had been lying dormant deep down along the whole length of the fracture. In the upper valley of the Jordan near Bashan there are still towering craters of extinct volcanoes; great stretches of lava and deep layers of basalt have been deposited on the limestone surface.¹⁷

National Geographic makes the following comment:

The mount of Sodom, a barren wasteland, rises sharply above the dead sea. No one has ever found the destroyed cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, but scholars believe that they stood in the Vale of Siddim across from these cliffs. Possibly flood waters of the Dead Sea engulfed them following an earthquake.¹⁸

MORAL DECADENCE AND DESTRUCTION OF SOCIETIES

Pompeii Had a Similar End

The Qur'ân tells us in the following verses that there is no change in Allah's laws:

They swore their strongest oaths by Allah that if a warner came to them, they would follow his guidance better than any (other) of the Peoples: But when a warner came to them, it has only increased their flight (from righteousness) - On account of their arrogance in the land and their

plotting of Evil, but the plotting of Evil will hem in only the authors thereof. Now are they but looking for the way the ancients were dealt with? But no change wilt thou find in Allah's way (of dealing): no turning off wilt thou find in Allah's way (of dealing). (Surat al-Fatir: 42-43)

Yes, "no change will be found in Allah's way (rules)". Everybody, who stands against His laws and rebels against Him, is subject to the same divine law. Pompeii, the symbol of the degeneration of the Roman Empire, was also involved in sexual perversity. Its end was similar to that of the people of Lut (as).

The destruction of Pompeii came by means of the eruption of the volcano Vesuvius.

The volcano Vesuvius is the symbol of Italy, primarily the city of Naples. Remaining silent for the last two millennia, Vesuvius is named the "Mountain of Warning". It is noteworthy that Vesuvius is known as such. The disaster that befell Sodom and Gomorrah is very similar to the disaster that destroyed Pompeii.

To the right of Vesuvius lies Naples and to the east lies Pompeii. The lava and ash of a huge volcanic eruption, that happened thousands of years ago, caught the inhabitants of that city. The disaster happened so suddenly that everything in the town was caught in the middle of its everyday life and remains today exactly as it was two millennia ago. It is as if the time had been frozen.

The removal of Pompeii from the face of the earth by such a disaster was not purposeless. The historical record shows that the city was exactly the centre of dissipation and perversity. The city was marked by a rise in prostitution to such an extent that even the number of brothels was not known.

But the lava of Vesuvius wiped the whole city off the map in a single moment. The most interesting aspect of the event is that nobody escaped despite the terrible violence of the eruption of Vesuvius. It is almost like they did not even notice the catastrophe, as if they were charmed. A family eating their meal were petrified right at that moment. Numerous petrified couples were found in the act of intercourse. The most interesting thing is that there were couples of the same sex and couples of young boys and girls. The faces of some of the petrified human corpses unearthed from Pompeii were unharmed. The general expression on those faces was

MORAL DECADENCE AND DESTRUCTION OF SOCIETIES

bewilderment.

Here lies the most incomprehensible aspect of the calamity. How did thousands of people wait to be caught by death without seeing and hearing anything?

This aspect of the event shows that the disappearance of Pompeii was similar to the destructive events mentioned in the Qur'ân, because the Qur'ân particularly points to "sudden annihilation" while relating these events. For example, the "inhabitants of the city" described in Surah Ya-Sin died all at once in a single moment. The situation is told as follows:

It was no more than a single mighty Blast, and behold! they were (like ashes) quenched and silent. (Surah Ya-Sin: 29)

In Surat al-Qamar, again the "instantaneous annihilation" is emphasised when the destruction of Thamud is recounted:

For We sent against them a single Mighty Blast, and they became like the dry stubble used by one who pens cattle. (Surat al-Qamar: 31)

The death of the people of Pompeii took place instantaneously as just as the events recounted in the above verses.

Despite all of this, things have not changed much where Pompeii once stood. The districts of Naples where debauchery prevails do not fall short of those licentious districts of Pompeii. The Island of Capri is a base where homosexuals and nudists reside and is represented as a "Homosexual paradise" in tourist commercials. Not only on Capri and in Italy, but in nearly all the world, a similar moral degeneration is at work and people insist on not learning from the awful experiences of past peoples.

People of 'Ad And Ubar, The Atlantis of the Sands

MORAL DECADENCE AND DESTRUCTION OF SOCIETIES

And the 'Ad, they were destroyed by a furious Wind, exceedingly violent; He made it rage against them seven nights and eight days in succession: so that thou couldst see the (whole) people lying prostrate in its (path), as they had been roots of hollow palm-trees tumbled down! Then seest thou any of them left surviving? (Surat al-Haqqa: 6-8)

Another nation who were destroyed and who are mentioned in various Surahs of the Qur'ân is the Ad, who are mentioned after the people of Nuh (as). Being sent to the Ad, Hud (as) summoned his people, just like all the other prophets had done, to believe in Allah without ascribing partners to Him and to obey him, the prophet of that time. The people reacted to Hud (as) with animosity. They accused him of imprudence, untruthfulness, and attempting to change the system their ancestors had established.

In Surah Hud, all that passed between Hud (as) and his people is told in detail:

To the Ad People (We sent) Hud, one of their own brethren. He said: "O my people! worship Allah! ye have no other god but Him. (Your other gods) ye do nothing but invent!

O my people! I ask of you no reward for this (Message). My reward is from none but Him Who created me: Will ye not then understand?

And O my people! Ask forgiveness of your Lord, and turn to Him (in repentance): He will send you the skies pouring abundant rain, and add strength to your strength: so turn ye not back in sin!"

They said: "O Hud! No Clear (Sign) that hast thou brought us, and we are not the ones to desert our gods on thy word! Nor shall we believe in thee!

We say nothing but that (perhaps) some of our gods may have seized thee with imbecility."

He said: "I call Allah to witness, and do ye bear witness, that I am free from the sin of ascribing, to Him, Other gods as partners! so scheme (your worst) against me, all of you, and give me no respite. I put my trust in Allah, My Lord and your Lord! There is not a moving creature, but He hath grasp of its fore-lock. Verily, it is my Lord that is on a straight Path.

If ye turn away,- I (at least) have conveyed the Message with which I was sent to you. My Lord will make another people to succeed you, and you will not harm Him in the least. For my Lord hath care and watch over all things."

So when Our decree issued, We saved Hud and those who believed with him, by (special) Grace from Ourselves: We saved them from a severe penalty.

Such were the Ad People: they rejected the Signs of their Lord and Cherisher; disobeyed His messengers; And followed the command of every powerful, obstinate transgressor.

MORAL DECADENCE AND DESTRUCTION OF SOCIETIES

And they were pursued by a Curse in this life - and on the Day of Judgment. Ah! Behold! for the 'Ad rejected their Lord and Cherisher! Ah! Behold! removed (from sight) were 'Ad the people of Hud! (Surah Hud: 50-60)

Another Surah that mentions the nation of 'Ad is Surat ash-Shu'ara. In this Surah, some characteristics of 'Ad are emphasised. According to this, 'Ad were a people who "build a landmark on every high place", and its members "get for themselves fine buildings in the hope of living therein (for ever)". Besides, they did mischief and behaved brutally. When Hud (as) warned his people, they commented that his words were "a customary device of the ancients". They were very confident that nothing would happen to them:

The 'Ad (people) rejected the messengers.

Behold, their brother Hud said to them: "Will ye not fear (Allah)?

I am to you a messenger worthy of all trust:

So fear Allah and obey me. No reward do I ask of you for it: my reward is only from the Lord of the Worlds.

Do ye build a landmark on every high place to amuse yourselves? And do ye get for yourselves fine buildings in the hope of living therein (for ever)? And when ye exert your strong hand, do ye do it like men of absolute power?

Now fear Allah, and obey me.

Yea, fear Him Who has bestowed on you freely all that ye know.

Freely has He bestowed on you cattle and sons,

And Gardens and Springs.

Truly I fear for you the Penalty of a Great Day."

They said: "It is the same to us whether thou admonish us or be not among (our) admonishers!

This is no other than a customary device of the ancients, And we are not the ones to receive Pains and Penalties!"

So they rejected him, and We destroyed them. Verily in this is a Sign: but most of them do not believe.

And verily thy Lord is He, the Exalted in Might, Most Merciful. (Surat ash-Shu'ara: 123-140)

The people who showed animosity to Hud (as) and rebelled against Allah, were indeed destroyed. A horrible sandstorm annihilated 'Ad as if they had "never existed".

MORAL DECADENCE AND DESTRUCTION OF SOCIETIES

The question lies in whether we are prepared to heed to these warnings or not. How long will people deny the commandments of God?

A DESCRIPTION OF HELL AS GIVEN IN THE QURAN

Islam teaches that Hell is a real place prepared by God for those who do not believe in Him, rebel against His laws, and reject His messengers. Hell is an actual place, not a mere state of mind or a spiritual entity. The horrors, pain, anguish, and punishment are all real, but different in nature than their earthly counterparts. Hell is the ultimate humiliation and loss, and nothing is worse than it:

â Our Lord! Surely, whom You admit to the Fire, indeed You have disgraced him, and never will the wrongdoers find any helpers.â (Quran 3:192)

â Know they not that whoever opposes God and His Messenger (Muhammad), certainly for him will be the Fire of Hell to abide therein? That is the extreme disgrace.â (Quran 9:63)

The Names of Hell

Hell Fire has different names in Islamic texts. Each name gives a separate description. Some of its names are:

Jaheem â fire - because of its blazing fire.

Jahannam - Hell - because of the depth of its pit.

Ladthaa - blazing fire - because of its flames.

MORAL DECADENCE AND DESTRUCTION OF SOCIETIES

Saâ'eer - blazing flame - because it is kindled and ignited.

Saqar - because of the intensity of its heat.

Hatamah - broken pieces or debris - because it breaks and crushes everything that is thrown into it.

Haawiyah - chasm or abyss - because the one who is thrown into it is thrown from top to bottom

Paradise and Hell Presently Exist and are Eternal

Hell exists at the present time and will continue to exist forever. It will never die down, and its inhabitants will remain in it forever. No one will come out of Hell except sinful believers who believed in the Oneness of God in this life and believed in the specific prophet sent to them (before the coming of Muhammad). The polytheists and unbelievers will reside in it forever. This belief has been held from classical times and is based on clear verses of the Quran and confirmed reports from the Prophet of Islam. The Quran speaks of Hell in the past tense and states that it has already been created:

â And fear the Fire which is prepared for the disbelievers.â (Quran 3:131)

The Prophet of Islam said:

â When any of you dies, he is shown his position (in the Hereafter) morning and evening. If he is one of the people of Paradise, he is shown the place of the people of Paradise. If he is one of the people of Hell, he is shown the place of people of Hell. He is told, â this is your position, until God resurrects you on the Day of Resurrection.â (Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim)

In another report, the Prophet said:

MORAL DECADENCE AND DESTRUCTION OF SOCIETIES

â Surely, the soul of a believer is a bird hanging on the trees of Paradise, until God returns it to his body on the Day of Resurrection.â (Muwatta of Malik)

These texts make it clear that Hell and Paradise exist, and that souls may enter them before the Day of Resurrection. Speaking of Hellâ s eternity, God says:

â They will long to leave the Fire, but never will they leave there from; and theirs will be a lasting torment.â (Quran 5:37)

â â !And they will never leave of the Fire.â (Quran 2:167)

â Surely, those who disbelieve and did wrong; God will not forgive them, nor will He guide them to any way except the way of Hell, to dwell therein forever.â (Quran 4:168-169)

â Surely, God has cursed the disbelievers, and has prepared for them a flaming Fire wherein they will abide for ever.â (Quran 33:64)

â And whosoever disobeys God and His Messenger, then surely, for him is the fire of Hell, he shall dwell therein forever.â (Quran 72:23)

The Keepers of Hell

Mighty and stern angels stand over Hell who never disobey God. They do precisely as ordered. God says:

â O you who believe, save yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is men and stones over which are (appointed) angels, stern and severe, who flinch not (from executing) the commands they receive from God, but do (precisely what) they are commanded.â (Quran 66:6)

They are nineteen keepers of Hell as God says:

MORAL DECADENCE AND DESTRUCTION OF SOCIETIES

â Soon I will cast him into Hell Fire. And what will explain to you what is Hellfire? Nothing does it allow to endure, and nothing does it leave alone! Darkening and changing the color of man! Over it are nineteen (angels as keepers of Hell).â (Quran 74:26-30)

One should not think that the inhabitants of Hell will be able to overcome the keepers of Hell because there are just nineteen of them. Everyone of them has the strength to subdue all humanity by himself. These angels are called the Guards of Hell by God in the Quran:

â And those in the Fire will say to the Guards of Hell, â Call upon your Lord to lighten for us the torment for a day!â â (Quran 40:49)

The name of the chief angel guarding over Hell is Malik, as mentioned in the Quran:

â Surely, the disbelievers will be in the torment of Hell to abide therein forever. (The torment) will not be lightened for them, and they will be plunged into destruction with deep regrets, sorrows and in despair therein. We wronged them not, but they were the wrongdoers. And they will cry: â O Malik! Let your Lord make an end of usâ He will say: â Surely, you shall abide forever.â Indeed We have brought the truth to you, but most of you have a hatred for the truthâ (Quran 43:74-78)

Its Heat

God says:

â And the companions of the left â what are the companions of the left? (They will be) in scorching fire and scalding water and a shade of black smoke, neither cool nor beneficial.â (Quran 56:41-44)

Everything people use to cool down in this world â air, water, shade â will be useless in Hell. The air of Hell will be hot wind and the water will be boiling. The shade will not be comforting or cooling, the shade in Hell will be the shadow of black smoke as mentioned in the verse:

MORAL DECADENCE AND DESTRUCTION OF SOCIETIES

â And shadow of black smoke.â (Quran 56:43)

In another passage, God says:

â But he whose balance (of good deeds) will be light, will have his home in a (bottomless) pit. And what will explain to you what this is? (It is) a Fire blazing fiercely.â (Quran 101:8-11)

God describes how the shade of Hellâ s smoke will rise above the Fire. The smoke that rises from Hell will be divided into three columns. Its shade will neither cool nor offer any protection from the raging Fire. The flying sparks will be like huge castles similar to string of marching yellow camels:

â Proceed to a shadow (of smoke) having three columns (but having) no cool shade and availing not against the flame. Indeed, it throws sparks (as huge) as a fortress, as if they were yellow camels (marching swiftly).â (Quran 77:30-33)

The Fire consumes everything, leaving nothing untouched. It burns skin reaching all the way to the bones, melting the contents of the stomach, leaping up to the hearts, and exposing the vital organs. God speaks of the intensity and affect of the Fire:

â I will drive him into Hellfire. And what can make you know what is Hellfire? It lets nothing remain and leaves nothing (unburned), altering the skins.â (Quran 74:26-29)

The Prophet of Islam said:

â Fire as we know it is one seventieth part of the Fire of Hell. Someone said, â O Messenger of God, it is enough as it is!â He said, â It is as if sixty-nine equal portions were added to fire as we know it.â â (Saheeh Al-Bukhari)

The Fire never extinguishes:

MORAL DECADENCE AND DESTRUCTION OF SOCIETIES

â So taste you (the results of your evil deeds). No increase shall We give you except in torment.â (Quran 78:30)

â â !Whenever it abates, We shall increase for them the fierceness of the Fire.â (Quran 17:97)

The torment will never be reduced and the unbelievers will not have any break:

â â !Their torment shall not be lightened nor shall they be helped.â (Quran 2:86)

The Food of its Inhabitants

The food of the people of Hell is described in the Quran. God says:

â No food will there be for them except from a bitter, thorny plant which neither nourishes nor avails against hunger.â (Quran 88:6-7)

The food will neither nourish nor taste good. It will only serve as a punishment to the people of Hell. In other passages, God describes the tree of zaqqum, a special food of Hell. Zaqqum is a repulsive tree, its roots go deep into the bottom of Hell, its branches stretching all over. Its ugly fruit is like the heads of the devils. He says:

â Indeed, the tree of zaqqum is food for the sinful, like murky oil, it boils within bellies, like the boiling of scalding water.â (Quran 44:43-46)

â Is that (Paradise) better as hospitality or the tree of zaqqum? Indeed, We have made it a torment for the wrongdoers. Indeed, it is a tree issuing from the bottom of the Hellfire, its emerging fruit as if it was heads of the devils. And, indeed, they will eat from it and fill with it their bellies. Then, indeed, they will have after it a mixture of scalding water. Then, indeed, their return will be to the Hellfire.â (Quran 37:62-68)

MORAL DECADENCE AND DESTRUCTION OF SOCIETIES

â Then indeed you, O those astray (who are) deniers, will be eating from trees of zaqqum and filling with it your bellies, and drinking on top of it from scalding water, and will drink as the drinking of thirsty camels. That is their hospitality on the Day of Recompense.â (Quran 56:51-56)

People of Hell will get so hung

MORAL DECADENCE AND DESTRUCTION OF SOCIETIES

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