

Section 1: Moses Commissioned with Apostleship

Surah An-Naml – Verses 1-3

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

طَسْ تِلْكَ ءَايَاتُ الْقُرْآنِ وَكِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ

هُدًى وَبُشْرَى لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

- 1. “Ta, Seen. These are the verses of the Qur'an and the Book (that makes things) manifest,”***
- 2. “A guidance and glad tidings for the believers,”***
- 3. “Those who establish prayer and give Zakat (the poor-rate), and of the Hereafter, they are sure.”***

The Arabic word */mubin/* is derived from */ibanah/* which is both intransitive and transitive and means

‘clear’ and ‘to make clear’ both.

One of Allah’s way of treatment is that He lets revelation, with its superiority and high rank, available for human beings.

The Qur’anic word **/zakat/** contains two main meanings; one of them is the proper meaning which is known ‘as poor-rate’, and the other is the general meaning which is ‘helping the needy’ in any form and manner it may be.

In this holy verse, the latter one is meant, because this Surah had been sent down in Medina, where the formal order of Zakat (alms) was issued.

However, at the beginning of the Surah we encounter the abbreviated letters of the Qur’an, and regarding to the fact that immediately next to that the magnificence of the Qur’an is referred to, it seems that one of its secrets is that this great Book and its clear verses are formed by the simple alphabetic letters.

It requires that such a Creator, Who has brought such a beautiful sacred relic into being out of such simple items, be praised. We have, of course, discussed in detail in this field at the beginning of Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, Surah ‘Al-i-‘Imran, No. 3, and Surah Al-‘Araf, No. 7.

Next to the abbreviated letters: (Ta, Seen.), the verse continues, saying:

“... These are the verses of the Qur’an and the Book (that makes things) manifest,”

The application of the word **/tilkal/** in this verse is for stating the greatness of these heavenly verses; and the Qur’anic word **/mubin/** used for the Qur’an, is an emphasis indicating that the Qur’an is both clear and makes the facts clear.

Some of the commentators have said that probably the words ‘***Qur’an***’ and ‘***Kitabin Mubin***’ (***The Book Manifest***) refer to two separate things and the latter indicates to /lauh-i-mahfuz/ (***Protected Tablet***), but the apparent of the verse shows that both of them speak of one thing: one of them in the form of utterances and recitation, and the other in the form of a ‘written Book’.

In the second noble verse, there have been stated two other qualities for the Qur’an. It is the Holy Qur’an which causes ‘guidance’, and the means of good tidings for the believers.

It says:

“A guidance and glad tidings for the believers,”

“Those who establish prayer and give Zakat (the poor-rate), and of the Hereafter, they are sure.”

Thus, their belief in both origin and resurrection is firm, and their link with Allah and His servants is strong. Therefore, the above qualities point to both their complete faith and their practical inclusive

program.

There may arise a question here that if these believers have chosen a straight path from the point of basic doctrines and practice both, why is it necessary that the Qur'an comes for their guidance? Regarding to the fact that guidance consists of different stages, each of which is a preparation for the higher stage and higher stages, the answer of this question is made clear.

Moreover, the continuation of this guidance is itself an important matter.

It is the same thing that, by saying:

“Guide us (O’ Lord) on the Straight Path”

in our all daily prayers, we ask Allah that He makes us fix in this way and He continues it, because without His grace this continuation is impossible.

Besides that, taking the advantages of the verses of ‘the Qur’an’ and ‘the Book manifest’ is possible only for those who carry the soul of ‘seeking the truth’ in them, though they have not obtained the complete guidance yet.

If we see that, in one occurrence, the Qur’an has been introduced as the origin of the piety of the pious ones,¹ and in another one as the source of guidance for the Muslims², and here it is as the cause of guidance for the ‘believers’, one of its reasons is that a person will not go after the reality unless, at least, a stage of piety, submission, and belief in realities exists in his heart, and a disbeliever does not enjoy the light of this ‘manifest Book’ because the eligibility of place is also conditioned.

Besides all of these, the combination of ‘**guidance**’ and ‘**glad tidings**’ is possible only for ‘the believers’ and such a ‘glad tidings’ is not available for others.

This makes it clear that if in some verses of the Qur’an guidance has vastly and expansively been defined for all people, like Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 185 which says:

“...a guidance for mankind in”,

its purpose is all those who have an appropriate ground in them for accepting the Truth, else, the arrogant, obstinate, and fanatic persons are some blind hearted ones that if, instead of one sun, thousand suns shine on them, they get the least advantage of them.

Surah An-Naml – Verses 4-5

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ زَيَّنَّا لَهُمْ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَهُمْ يَعْمَهُونَ

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَهُمْ سُوءُ الْعَذَابِ وَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ هُمُ الْآخِسُونَ

4. “Verily those who do not believe in the Hereafter, We have made their (ugly) deeds fair-seeming unto them, so they wander bewildered.”

5. “These are those for whom shall be a grievous chastisement, and in the Hereafter they shall be the greatest losers.”

These holy verses refer to the states of those who are not believers.

One of their most dangerous states is mentioned as follows:

“Verily those who do not believe in the Hereafter, We have made their (ugly) deeds fair-seeming unto them, so they wander bewildered.”

In the view of such people, pollution is purity, indecency is beautiful, meanness is honour, and wretchedness and misery are considered happiness and victory by them.

Yes, such is the condition of those who go astray and persist on it. It is evident that when a person commits an ugly and wrong action, gradually its ugliness decreases in his view and he will fall into the habit of it. When he is accustomed to it, he brings forth some justifications for it.

Later that evil thing may appear as a beautiful thing, or even as a duty, in his view. There are many felonious and polluted persons who are really proud of their deeds and consider them as a positive fact.

This change in values, and the confusion of the criterions in one’s view, the result of which is being bewildered and misguided in life, is the worst state that a person may receive.

It is interesting that this ornamentation of deeds has been attributed to Allah, and this is because He is the cause of all causes in the world of existence, and the effect of any thing relates to Allah.

Yes, Allah has put this peculiarity in the repetition of action, that one gradually falls into habit of it and his sense of discrimination varies, while his responsibility does not disappear, nor can it be counted as a rejection and deficiency for the Lord. (Be careful)

Then the Qur’an refers to the consequence of those evil deeds that are made fair-seeming to them, and states the fate of such persons as follows:

“These are those for whom shall be a grievous chastisement...”

In this world, they will be hopeless and bewildered, and in the Hereafter they will encounter a terrible chastisement.

The verse continues saying:

“...and in the Hereafter they shall be the greatest losers.”

The reason of that they are ‘the greatest losers’ is the same thing that is mentioned in Surah Al-Kahf, No. 18, verses 103 and 104 which announce:

“Say: ‘Shall We inform you of the greatest losers in (their) deeds?’”

“Those whose effort is lost in this world’s life, while they think that they are working good deeds.”

What a loss is greater than this that one considers his ugly deeds beautiful and does his best to commit them thinking that he is doing a positive task, but at the end he sees he has provided naught for him but misery and wretchedness.

By the way, the losers are of different groups:

1– ‘Khasir’.

The one whose whole life and capitals are ruined:

“...Say: ‘The losers surely are those who shall have lost themselves and their families on the Day of Resurrection...’”³

2– ‘In Loss’.

The one who is not a true believer and does not do righteous deeds:

“By Time.”

“Surely man is in loss,”

“Save those who believe and do good deeds...”⁴

3– ‘Clear Loss’.

The one who worships Allah not earnestly:

“...so that if such a one who worships Allah only by tongue, so that if good befalls him he is satisfied therewith, and if a trial afflicts him he turns back his face; he loses this world and (also) the Hereafter; that is indeed the manifest loss.”⁵

4– ‘The Utmost Losers’.

Those who are deviated and think that they are on the right path:

“Those whose effort is lost in this world’s life, while they think that they are working good deeds.”⁶

Some Islamic traditions indicate that the losers are those who: do not pay alms (Zakat), persist on

committing sins, and have the power of saying the right but they do not say it. These are the most unjust ones, because they want to improve their worldly life by spoiling the religion.

Some Traditions Upon Losers

1. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

*“The loser is one whose yearning is for other than Allah.”*⁷

2. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

*“A loser is he who neglects improving the affairs of (his) Resurrection.”*⁸

3. Imam Amir-ul-Mu'minin Ali (as) said:

*“He who has reckoned his own self has gained, and he who has neglected it has lost.”*⁹

4. The same Imam (as) said:

*“How much a loser is he who has no (good) share in Hereafter!”*¹⁰

5. Amir-ul-Mu'minin Ali (as) said:

*“The utmost loser among people is he who has ability of saying the Truth, but he does not say.”*¹¹

6. Amir-ul-Mu'minin Ali (as) wrote a letter to Masqalat-ibn-Hubarat-ish-Shaybani, who was the Governor of Ardeshir Khurrah (Iran) from his side (as), as follows:

“I have come to know concerning you a matter which if you have done it you have displeased your Allah and disobeyed your Imam.

*You are distributing among the Arabs (Bedouins) of your kin who tend towards you the property of the Muslims which they collected by dint of their spears and horses and on which their blood was shed. ... and do not reform your world by ruining your religion, since then you will be among losers by the way of (your) deeds...”*¹²

Surah An-Naml – Verse 6

وَإِنَّكَ لَتُلْقِي الْقُرْآنَ مِنْ لَدُنْ حَكِيمٍ عَلِيمٍ

6. *“And most surely you receive the Qur'an from One All-Wise, All-Knowing.”*

The knowledge of the holy Prophet (S) is a divine and intuitive knowledge.

The receiver of the Divine revelation is the Messenger of Allah (S) and Qur'an is the sign of the knowledge and wisdom of Allah.

In the verse under discussion, as a complementary to the former explanations about the greatness of the content of the Qur'an, and a preparation for the stories of the prophets, which immediately begins after it, the Qur'an says:

“And most surely you receive the Qur'an from One All-Wise, All-Knowing.”

The Qur'anic words */hakim/* and */alim/* both refer to the awareness of Allah, but the word */hikmat/* (**wisdom**) usually states the practical aspects, while */ilm/* (**knowledge**) points to the theoretical aspects.

In other words, the Qur'anic word */alim/* refers to the infinite knowledge of Allah, and the application of the word */hakim/* informs of the view, order, and aim of creation of this world, as well as sending down the Qur'an.

Such Qur'an, which has been sent down from the side of such Lord, should be a manifest Book, makes things clear, works as a guidance and glad tidings for the believers, and its stories should be free from any superstition and distortion.

Note

The important true problem in man's life is that he must comprehend the facts as they really are and have an explicit proper position before them.

Imagination, predictions, wrong desires, and false likes and dislikes must not hinder man to see and understand the realities in their true form. So the most important definition which has been introduced for philosophy is: 'perceiving the facts of things as they are'.

That was why that one of the most important things that the immaculate ones used to ask for from Allah was that they said:

“O Allah! Show me (the facts of) the things as they are, (so that I can recognize the values of different things and treat them rightly.”

This circumstance is not possible without having Faith, because restive low desires and egocentric wishes are the greatest barriers of this way, and removing the hinders is not possible save with piety and controlling the sensual desires.

It is for this reason that in these noble verses we recite:

“Verily those who do not believe in the Hereafter, We have made their (ugly) deeds fair-seeming

***unto them, so they wander bewildered.*"¹³**

We can see the actual and manifest example of this meaning clearly in the life of a group of mammonists of our time. They are proud of some things, and consider them as a part of civilization that, indeed, are nothing but shame, pollution, and disgrace.

- They think of libertinism as a sign of freedom.
- They know the nakedness and indecency of women as a reason for civilization.
- They take part in the competition of luxury as a sign of 'personality'.
- Being polluted in kinds of corruptions is the epiphany of liberty for them.
- They consider murder, crime, and destruction as the evidence of power.
- They count destruction and usurpation of others' capitals, as they call, reestablishing those properties.
- They use the common communication means along side of the worst anti-ethical programs and call it as a reason for 'respecting the people's demand'.
- They tread on the rights of the deprived as a sign of 'honouring the human's rights'.
- They call captivity in the grips of addictions, lusts, disgraces, and indecencies 'a kind of liberty'.
- In their view, treachery, dishonesty, and gaining wealth, in any way that it can be, are considered as a reason for their talent and competency.
- In their culture, observing the principles of justice and respecting others' rights is the sign of inefficiency and lack of competency, while falsehood, perjury, hypocrisy, and deceit are the sign of policy.

Shortly speaking, their evil and shameful deeds seem so fair to them that not only they do not feel shame of them but also they boast for them. It is evident, then, that how the feature of such a society will be and what direction is the path which will end to it!

Surah An-Naml – Verses 7-9

إِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لَأَهْلِهِ إِنِّي أَنَسْتُ نَارًا سَآتِيكُمْ مِنْهَا بِخَبَرٍ أَوْ بَشِيرٍ قَبْسٍ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَصْطَلُونَ

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهَا نُودِيَ أَنْ بُورِكَ مَنْ فِي النَّارِ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

يَا مُوسَى إِنَّهُ أَنَا اللَّهُ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

7. “(Remember) When Moses said unto his family: ‘Verily I perceive a fire; soon will I bring you news of it, or I will bring you a flaming brand, that you warm yourselves.’”

8. “So when he came to it, a voice was heard: ‘Blessed is whoever is in the fire and whoever is about it, and Glory be to Allah, the Lord of the World.’”

9. “O’ Moses! Verily, I am Allah, The Mighty, The Wise;”

The word ‘Moses’ has been mentioned in the Qur’an for 136 times and his story has been told in 24 suras. Thus, the explanation concerning the children of Israel is studied in about 900 verses of the Qur’an.

Moses accompanied with his wife who was pregnant, and they were going from Madyan towards Egypt. On one side, the darkness of the night in the cold stormy weather of the desert, and, on the other side, the childbirth of his wife, forced Moses to search. The verses under discussion are about this event.

Here it points to the most sensitive moments of Moses’ life, that is when the first light of revelation enlightened his heart and he was acquainted with the message and the speech of Allah.

The verse says:

“(Remember) When Moses said unto his family: ‘Verily I perceive a fire...”

“...soon will I bring you news of it, or I will bring you a flaming brand, that you warm yourselves.”

This event happened by the same night when Moses was in a dark desert on the way toward Egypt, accompanied with his wife, Shu‘ayb’s daughter, and he lost the way. Then a terrible storm began to blow and at the same time his wife felt the pains of childbirth. Moses thought he severely needed to make a fire in order to use its warmth, but there was nothing in that desert for it.

As soon as he saw the light of a flame from distance, he became happy and took it as a sign of the existence of someone or some ones there. He told them that he would go and bring them either some news from it, or a burning firebrand so that they might warm themselves by it.

It is noteworthy that Moses says he brings ‘them’ news or a flaming band, (the pronoun of which plural). This may show that there had been a child or children with him too, because his marriage had happened in Madyan ten years before that. Or it may be for the sake that, in that horrible desert, that idea could give some further calmness to his addressees.

In the next verse, the Qur'an indicates that Moses left his family there, and moved toward the place where he had seen a fire.

When he reached the fire he heard a voice, as the verse says:

“So when he came to it, a voice was heard: ‘Blessed is whoever is in the fire and whoever is about it, and Glory be to Allah, the Lord of the World.’”

The commentators of the Qur'an have delivered different ideas concerning who might be the person mentioned in the phrases:

“Whoever is in the fire”

and

“whoever is about it”.

What seems more probable is that, the objective of ‘the one in the fire’ is Moses who was so close to the fire found inside the green tree that as if he were inside the tree; and the objective of ‘the one about it’ is the near-stationed angels of Allah who, at that particular moment, had surrounded that sacred land.

Or, on the contrary, the objective of those in the fire, is the Divine angels, and the objective of ‘the one about it’ is Moses (as).

However, some Islamic narrations indicate that when Moses (as) approached the fire, he stopped and watched it carefully. He saw that from the inside of a green branch of the tree a flaming brand was shining. Every moment the flame was becoming brighter and brighter and the tree was growing more green and more beautiful.

Neither the heat of the fire was to burn the tree, nor the moist of the tree caused the fire to die. He wondered. He bowed to take some fire with the small piece of wood he had in his hand, but the fire came toward him.

He terrified and went back. Sometimes he tried to go toward the fire and sometimes the fire itself came toward him. Suddenly a voice was heard, giving him the glad tidings of revelation.

The purpose is that Moses approached the fire so nigh that he was proportionate to the phrase

‘whoever is in the fire’.

The third commentary which has been stated upon this phrase is that the purpose of

“whoever is in the fire”

is the Light of Allah which was shown by the burning firebrand; and the purpose of the phrase

“whoever is about it”

is Moses who was nigh to it.

However, in order that there would not appear here any misconception concerning materiality of Allah, at the end of the verse, the sentence:

“Glory be to Allah, the Lord of the World”

makes it clear that He is free from any defect, deficiency, materiality and material accidents.

Again a voice was heard which addressed Moses, saying:

“O’ Moses! Verily, I am Allah, The Mighty, The Wise;”

This sentence was for the sake that no doubt might remain in Moses’ mind and he would know that it was the Lord of the Worlds Who was speaking with him, not the flaming brand, nor the tree, the Lord Who does not fail, Who is ‘Mighty’ and Who is the Possessor of Wisdom and Device.

This meaning, in fact, is a premise for the statement of the miracle which will be referred to in the next holy verse, since miracle originates from two attributes of Allah: ‘Power’ and ‘Wisdom’. However, before discussing about the next verse, this question arises here that how did Moses understand and was assured that this voice was Allah’s, not other than that?

In answer to this question, it can be said that this voice, being accompanied with a clear miracle, viz., glittering a fire from inside the branch of a green tree, was a manifest reason that it was a Divine matter.

Moreover, as we will find out by the next verse, after this voice Moses was ordered a command which contained the miracles of ‘Rod and white hand’, and these two miracles were two other evidences for the reality of this voice.

Besides all of these things, principally, the Divine voice must have a particular quality which makes it separate from any other voice, and when one hears it, it affects on his heart so deeply that he never doubts that it is the voice of Allah.

Surah An-Naml – Verses 10-11

وَأَلْقِ عَصَاكَ فَلَمَّا رَءَاهَا تَهْتَزُّ كَأَنَّهَا جَانٌّ وَلَّى مُدْبِرًا وَلَمْ يُعَقِّبْ يَا مُوسَى لَا تَخَفْ
إِنِّي لَا يَخَافُ لَدَيَّ الْمُرْسَلُونَ

إِلَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ ثُمَّ بَدَّلَ حُسْنًا بَعْدَ سُوءٍ فَإِنِّي غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

10. “And cast down your staff!’ So when he saw it moving as if it were a serpent, he turned back retreating and did not return. (It was told him:) ‘O’ Moses! Fear not; surely the messengers shall not fear in My presence;”

11. “Save he who has been unjust, then he does good instead after evil, for verily I am the Forgiving, the Merciful;”

In view of the fact that the mission of prophethood, especially before a cruel and unjust one like Pharaoh, needed the outward and inward power and might as well as a firm proof of legitimacy, here Moses was commanded to throw down his Rod to show it.

The verse says:

“And cast down your staff!’...”

Moses (as) Threw down his Rod and suddenly it changed into a serpent.

The verse continues saying:

“...So when he saw it moving as if it were a serpent, he turned back retreating and did not return...”

This is also probable that, at the beginning, the staff changed into a small snake and, in later stages, it became a great serpent. Here, Moses was again addressed and he was told not to be afraid.

It says:

“...(It was told him:) ‘O’ Moses! Fear not; surely the messengers shall not fear in My presence;”

Moses should be aware that here is the position of nearness and Allah’s secure sanctuary, the Mighty, the High; this rank is a place where there is not any fear or terror. That is, O’ Moses! You are at the presence of Allah, the Most High, and His presence is with absolute security.

A similar meaning to this one is recited in Surah Qasas, No. 28, verse 31 which says:

“...O’ Moses! Come you forward and fear you not; for surely you are in security.”

Through next verse the Qur’an has stated an exception for the holy phrase:

“...surely the messengers shall fear not in My presence”

when it says:

“Save he who has been unjust, then he does good instead after evil, for verily I am the Forgiving, the Merciful;”

Allah accepts the penitence of those who repent and He gives them security, too.

Concerning the circumstance of this exception the Late Tabarsy, the writer of Majma‘-ul-Bayan, says:

“But those people, except the prophets, who have done wrong and then repent remorsefully and decide not to return again, should know that He is the Forgiving, the Acceptor of repentance.”

The reason why the prophets have been mentioned as an exception is that they never commit any wrong and, because of the rank of infallibility, they are far from any sins and evils.

Therefore, there they are not inside the exception, and prophets are like others only in the principle of doing duties. This kind of exception has also been referred to by Qurtabi in his commentary, Vol. 4, P. 8.

The author of Jawami‘-ul-Jami‘, the commentary, Vol. 4, P. 450 concerning the meaning of this sentence says as follows:

“Whoever, except the prophets, does injustice, then he is remorseful of his ugly deeds and repents and decides not to repeat them any more, surely Allah will forgive his injustice and He is merciful to him.”

Some other great commentators have said that there is not any retrenched matter in this verse and the fact is that those, other than the prophets, are not secured. Then there is an exception where it implicitly says: save those who, after their fault and sins, repent and improve, and such ones will be in the Divine security, too.

Surah An-Naml – Verses 12-13

وَأَدْخِلْ يَدَكَ فِي جَيْبِكَ تَخْرُجَ بَيْضَاءَ مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوءٍ فِي تِسْعِ آيَاتٍ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ
وَقَوْمِهِ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَاسِقِينَ

فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْهُمْ آيَاتُنَا مُبْصِرَةً قَالُوا هَذَا سِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ

12. “And put your hand in your bosom, and it will come forth white (shining) without harm, (this miracle is) among the nine signs to Pharaoh and his people; verily they are a transgressing people.”

13. “So when Our clear signs came to them, they said: ‘This is a manifest sorcery’.”

These nine signs or miracles are the miracles that Moses (as) brought before Pharaoh, else he (as) had some other miracles, too.

By the way his every miracle can be counted two miracles, because when his Rod became a serpent, it was one miracle, and when the serpent changed back into Rod, it was another miracle, but the Qur'an has considered one side of it a miracle.

Moses' nine miracles are as follows:

- 1- The white hand (or the shining of the hand of Moses).
- 2- Conversion of the Rod into a giant serpent.
- 3- The violent storm for the enemy.
- 4- Locust (which dominated their farms and their trees)
- 5- One plant-pest agent which exterminated cereals, called in Arabic /qummal/.
6. The forges which emerged from the Nile River and made people's lives miserable and full of difficulties.
7. Nose-bleeding or 'blood' which signifies the universal counteraction of nose bleeding or the turning of the Nile into the colour blood¹⁴
8. Famine and draught¹⁵
9. The splitting of the sea¹⁶

Other miracles of Moses (as) are: the gushing of 12 springs from stone¹⁷, the descending of /mann/ and /salwa/¹⁸

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

*"The purpose of **lmin qayri su'l (without harm)** is that this whiteness of the hand was not because of sickness of leprosy. ¹⁹*

Anyhow, the second miracle of Moses (as) was given to him, as the verse says:

"And put your hand in your bosom, and it will come forth white (shining) without harm..."

This whiteness of hand which is an interesting shining and luminosity, and not as the result of leprosy, itself denotes to the existence of a miracle and an extraordinary event.

In order to grant some more grace to Moses and give further possibility to deviated persons to be

guided, the Qur'an, implicitly says to Moses (as) that his miracles are not limited to these two ones, but:

“...(this miracle is) among the nine signs to Pharaoh and his people; verily they are a transgressing people.”

You are sent to Pharaoh and his people equipped with these nine miracles, as well as other great ones, because they are a transgressing people and they need guidance.

From the apparent of this verse, it is understood that these two miracles have been among nine known miracles of Moses (as).

In commenting on Surah Al-'Isra', No. 17, verse 101 it was concluded before that there are seven other miracles for Moses, five of which are: storm, plant-pests, locusts, forges, and turning of the Nile water into the colour of blood.

When each of these events came to Pharaohs as a warning and they encountered with some difficulty, they used to come to Moses and asked him to remove the pest.

There were two more miracles: draught and scanty of fruits, which are mentioned in Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 130.

It says:

“And certainly We afflicted the clan of Pharaoh with draught and scanty of fruits, so that they may take admonition.”

At last, Moses was equipped with the strongest weapon of miracle and went towards Pharaoh and his people. He invited them to the religion of truth.

The Qur'an says:

“So when Our clear signs came to them, they said: ‘This is a manifest sorcery’.”

We know that this accusation was not charged only on Moses (as) but, in order to adjust their oppositions against prophets, and in order that they produce a barrier in the way of others, the arrogant fanatic people brought forth the accusation of sorcery for the prophets which itself is a clear sign for the greatness of their extraordinary work.

It is in the case that we know that prophets are some pure, pious and truth-seeking men, while sorcerers are some deviated and corrupted persons and are qualified with all qualities that a deceitful one may have.

Moreover, sorcerers had always been able to do some limited affairs, but prophets, whose customs and the content of their godly invitations made their legitimacy manifest, had no similarity to sorcerers.

Surah An-Naml – Verse 14

وَجَحَدُوا بِهَا وَاسْتَيْقَنَتْهَا أَنْفُسُهُمْ ظُلْمًا وَعُلُوًّا فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

14. “And they denied them unjustly and proudly though their hearts acknowledged them; consider, then how was the end of the mischief-makers.”

There are different sorts of infidelity and denial:

1– Disbelief may be as a result of following the fathers and customs and carnal desires. Most of disbelievers are of this kind.

2– Disbelief can be because of mere ignorance and conjectures:

“...but only fancies and mere conjectures.”²⁰

3– Disbelief may be hidden by hypocrisy for the one who is apparently Muslim but inwardly he is a disbeliever.

4– Disbelief may emerge out of apostasy. When a person turns back from Islam, or denies some principles of the religion, such as Hajj, prayer, Zakat, and other main ordinances of the religion, or produces an innovation in the religion, he is a disbeliever.

5– Disbelief of the denial kind can come into being for the person who heartily is assured in the legitimacy of the truth, but denies it arrogantly and because of enmity. The verse under discussion states this kind of disbelief.

So it indicates that those accusations that they brought against Moses (as) were not for the sake that they were really in doubt, but they denied the miracles unjustly and because of self-superiority.

The Qur'an says:

“And they denied them unjustly and proudly though their hearts acknowledged them...”

It is understood from this sentence that Faith has a reality besides knowledge and certainly, and blasphemy may exist because of denial and negation while there is knowledge and awareness.

In other words, the reality of the correct Faith is an ‘outward and inward submission’ before the truth. Thus, if a person is certain of something but he does not surrender to it inwardly or outwardly, he has not faith, but he is a disbeliever of the denial kind. This is a vast matter that now we suffice only to this short explanation here.

Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition, explaining five kinds of disbelief, counts one of them this kind of disbelief and that one of its branches is ‘denial’, and he said:

“That is something that one denies while he knows that it is surely the truth which has been proved with him”,

then he recited this verse.²¹

It is interesting that the Qur’an considers the motivation of the denial of the people of Pharaoh in two things: injustice and pride.

Their ‘injustice’ may refer to usurpation of others’ rights, and their pride refers to their self-superiority over the Children of Israel.

It means that they saw if they surrendered to the signs and miracles of Moses, they both would find their unlawful interests in danger and that they would stand in the same row with their slaves, the Children of Israel, and none of them were tolerable for them.

Or the purpose of the Qur’anic word ‘**unjustly**’ is the injustice they did to themselves or to the Divine verses, and, the purpose of the word ‘proudly’ is oppression over others, as Surah Al-’Araf, No. 7, verse 9 says:

“...for they used to be unjust unto Our Signs.”

However, at the end of this verse, as a lesson and gazing-stock, with a short and very expressive sentence, the Qur’an points to the evil end of the people of Pharaoh that they were drowned and destructed, where it says:

“...consider, then how was the end of the mischief-makers.”

The Qur’an does not uncover the matter here, because they had read the painful story of this disbelieving people in other verses of the Qur’an and by this short sentence they may understand what they must understand.

By the way, from among their ugly qualities entirely, the Qur’an has emphasized on ‘making mischief’ which has a comprehensive concept. It includes both mischief in belief, speech and action, and mischief in individual and society. In fact, all their evil deeds are gathered in the word ‘mischief’.

1. Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 2

2. An-Nahl, No. 16, verse 102

3. Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39, verse 15

4. Surah Al-’Asr, No. 103, verses 1-3

5. Surah Al-Hajj, No. 22 verse 11

6. Surah Al-Kahf, No. 18, verse 104
7. Madinat-ul-Balaqah, Vol. 2, P. 492
8. Madinat-ul-Balaqah, Vol. 2 , P. 492
9. Qisar-ul-Hikam, No. 208, Al-Mu'jam
10. Qurar-ul-Hikam, Vol. 2, P. 746
11. Qurar-ul-Hikam, Vol. 1, P. 195
12. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, Letter No. 43
13. Current Surah, verse No. 4
14. Al-'A'raf, 133
15. Al-'A'raf, 130
16. Al-Baqarah, 50
17. Al-Baqarah, 60
18. explained under Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 57
19. The Commentary of Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
20. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 78
21. Kafi, Vol. 2, P. 287

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