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Section 23: The Qur'an testified in the previous heavenly Books

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 163

Heavenly Books were revealed to the previous messengers – The disbelievers –The truth about the personality of Jesus

إِنَّا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ كَمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى نُوحٍ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ
وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَعِيسَى وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُونُسَ وَهَارُونَ
وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَآتَيْنَا دَاوُودَ زَبُورًا

163. "Verily We revealed to you as We revealed to Noah and the prophets after him, and We (also) revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the Tribes, and Jesus and Job and Jonah and Aaron, and Solomon, and We gave David the Psalms."

The names of twenty-five prophets of Allah have been mentioned, in the Qur'an. Eleven names of these prophets are referred to in the verse under discussion, and the rest of them are: 'Adam, Andreas, Hud, – Salih, Lot, Yusuf (Joseph), Shu'aib (Jethro), Thilkafil, Moses, Elyas (Elija), Yasa' (Elisha), Zakaria (Zachariah), Yahya (John), and 'Uzair (Ezra).

Some Islamic recorded traditions denote that whatever had been revealed to the former prophets (as) were revealed to Prophet Muhammad (S), too. 1

The Qur'anic term /asbat/ is a title for those prophets who are the children of Ya'qub (Jacob).

The word /zabur/ in philology means 'book', but, as a technical term, it is used for David's Book. Psalms

of David can be found in the Books of the Old Testament. This book contains 150 Chapters, each of which is a Psalm. (p.p. 606 to 681 of the Holy Bible). Here is the verse:

"Verily We revealed to you as We revealed to Noah and the prophets after him, and We (also) revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the Tribes, and Jesus and Job and Jonah and Aaron, and Solomon, and We gave David the Psalms."

Allah sent down revelations to all prophets one after another. But here, in this regard, before mentioning the names of some other prophets, Allah says:

"We revealed to you."

This precedence may be for the superiority of the holy Prophet's rank. .

Explanations

1. In the history of man, revelation and Messenger ship has been an unalterable process and rule.
2. In revelation both aim, and style, and the generality of the content, and the origin of them, wholly is the same; and that origin is Allah.

"Verily We revealed ..."

3. The divine revelations unto the prophets have repeatedly occurred in the history. Yet, why do the opponents of prophet hood not accept the Prophet of Islam (S) and do differ between him and other prophets? (Such people are certainly astray).

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 164

وَرُسُلًا قَدْ قَصَصْنَاهُمْ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَرُسُلًا لَمْ نَقْصُصْهُمْ عَلَيْكَ وَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ مُوسَى تَكْلِيمًا

164. "And earlier (there were) messengers We have already told you of, and messengers We have not told you of; and Allah spoke directly unto Moses a (peculiar) speech."

Suras Hud (No.11) and Al-'Anbiya (No.21), comparing other Suras of the Qur'an, are more inclusive in stating the stories of the prophets. In regard to learning good qualities, acquainting oneself with the history of the lives of prophets is so useful for men that Allah (s.w.t.) has paid to it, too. It says:

"....messengers We have already told you of...."

The history of prophets, of course, is more abundant than what has been mentioned in the Qur'an. Neither the length of the life of a person is enough to listen to the whole history, nor is listening to the whole history necessary.

But listening to it should be as much as to take example and to take lesson from it. This very thing shows that the Qur'an is a Book of guidance and teaching, not a Book for telling stories.

"... and messengers We have not told you of ..."

However, the styles of receiving revelations are different, inspiration in heart, or sending down the angel, or revealing from behind the (curtain), and all prophets had been the addressee of *Allah* (s.w.t.), but among them only Moses (as), as his epithet, was entitled /kalim-ul-lah/ 'The Interlocutor of *Allah*'.

"... and Allah spoke directly unto Moses a (peculiar) speech."

This title was given to Moses (as) maybe for the reason that it was necessary for him to communicate repeatedly with *Allah* in order to struggle and work hard against Pharaoh, or against obstinacy and stubbornness of the Children of Israel.

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 165

رُسُلًا مُّبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنْذِرِينَ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللَّهِ حُجَّةٌ بَعْدَ الرُّسُلِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ
عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا

165. *"(We sent) messengers as givers of glad tidings and as warners, so that people might have no argument against Allah after the (invitations of) the messengers, and Allah is the Mighty, the Wise."*

This verse expresses the words of prophets' invitation and the method of their effort, together with the purpose of the mission of prophets to prophet hood.

The method of the work of prophets is based on two pivots: 'glad tidings' and 'warning'.

"(We sent) messengers as givers of glad tidings and as warners, so that people might have no argument against Allah after the (invitations of) the messengers, and Allah is the Mighty, the Wise."

The philosophy of the mission of prophets is *Allah's* 'completing the argument' for humankind so that they cannot say that they had not any leader or guide.

It is necessary to mention that from the point of personal epithets, background of life, social, political, genealogical, and physical situation, and also from the point of having miracles, clear statements, and being aided by hidden helps, prophets should be in a state that no one be able to object any things of theirs.

And, since 'Allah is the Mighty, the Wise', none has any proof against Him, as the Qur'an states:

"Say: ' Then Allah's is the conclusive argument;...' " 2

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 166

لَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَشْهَدُ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكَ أَنْزَلَهُ بِعِلْمِهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ يَشْهَدُونَ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا

166. "But Allah bears witness to what He has sent down to you that He has sent it down with His knowledge, and the angels (also) bear witness; and Allah is Sufficient as witness."

This very fact that the high standard of knowledge of the Qur'an has been delivered by an illiterate person in an environment full of ignorance and enmity, and that it changed the state of people from dispersion to unity, from avarice to donation, from paganism to theism, from ignorance to knowledge, and from descent to spiritual ascent so that they reached to the condition of formation of 'the Islamic Ummah', is an evidence for Allah's grace (s.w.t.) toward the holy Prophet (S) and for His favour to his religion.

That is why the best shelter and the source of hope in all prophets has been the support and aid of Allah.

"But Allah bears witness to what He has sent down to you ..."

By the way, the origin of revelation is the infinite knowledge of Allah. So, with the advance of science, every day some parts of the Qur'anic wisdom will be manifested.

"...that He has sent it down with His knowledge. ..."

It should be regarded that if there are some obstinate sinful persons in some corners of the world who seek pretexts, in spite of that, there are all the pure knowledgeable angels in the world of existence who bear witness alongside the Holiness of Allah. It says:

"... and the angels (also) bear witness; and Allah is Sufficient as witness."

Surah An-Nisa', Verses 167 - 169

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ قَدْ ضَلُّوا ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَظَلَمُوا لَمْ يَكُنِ اللَّهُ لِيَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ وَلَا لِيَهْدِيَهُمْ طَرِيقًا

إِلَّا طَرِيقَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا

167. ***"Verily, those who disbelieve and hinder (people) from the way of Allah, have gone astray far away (from felicity)."***

168. ***"Verily, those who disbelieve and act unjustly, it is not for Allah to forgive them, nor will He guide them to a way."***

169. ***"Except the way to Hell, to abide therein forever and that (retribution) is easy for Allah."***

In the first verse of the above verses, the phrase '**have gone astray far away (from felicity)**' denotes to the intensive stray of the disbelievers. Infidelity is an aberration, and hindering others from Faith is another one!

Disbelief is a deviation, while a disbeliever considering oneself rightful, is a deviation greater than that. Disbelief in a person is injustice to his own self, while hindering others from the right path is injustice unto generation, in the history.

"Verily, those who disbelieve and hinder (people) from the way of Allah, have gone astray far away (from felicity)."

The objective meaning of the phrase 'act unjustly', mentioned in verse No. 168, may be in the same sense of hindering others to be guided. Which injustice, in comparison, can be higher than the mental, cultural, and creedal injustice?

"Verily, those who disbelieve and act unjustly, it is not for Allah to forgive them, nor will He guide them to a way."

The most painful chastisement and the most disgraceful senses have been appointed against those pagans who hinder the message of truth to reach the ears of the truth-seekers by different kinds of

propagations, accusations and intimidations.

The lack of forgiveness, the lack of guidance, to be counted among those who abide in Hell forever and the like of them is the fruit of the indecency of their deeds.

"Except the way to Hell, to abide therein forever and that (retribution) is easy for Allah"

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 170

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ الرَّسُولُ بِالْحَقِّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَأَمِنُوا خَيْرًا لَكُمْ وَإِنْ تَكْفُرُوا
فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا

170. "O' mankind! the Messenger has come to you with the truth from your Lord; then believe (in him), it is good for you And if you disbelieve, still, to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth, and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

The invitation of Islam is an invitation to all humankind throughout the world. The verse says:

"O' mankind!...."

The means of the spread of this invitation, and the weapon of the prophets for the aim, has been its rightfulness.

"... with the truth from your Lord...."

Before the advent of the holy Prophet (S), the People of the Book, and even the pagans, were waiting for a prophet to come.

When the same prophet came, they should believe in him and they would know that believing in him is beneficial for the people themselves. So, they might not hold Islam under obligation for their belief in it, but *Allah* has conferred a favour upon them for that He has guided them.

"...then believe (in him), it is good for you...."

Neither the disbelief of people incurs a loss to *Allah*, nor does their belief bring a gain for Him.

".. And if you disbelieve, still, to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth...."

Allah knows that the felicity of people lies in following the path of prophets, and His Wisdom requires sending prophets.

"... and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 171

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ وَلَا تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ إِنَّمَا الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى
ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُ أَلْقَاهَا إِلَى مَرْيَمَ وَرُوحٌ مِنْهُ فَآمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَلَا
تَقُولُوا ثَلَاثَةٌ انْتَهُوا خَيْرًا لَّكُمْ إِنَّمَا اللَّهُ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ سُبْحَانَهُ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ لَهُ مَا فِي
السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا

171. "O' People of the Book! do not exaggerate in your religion, and do not say upon Allah save the truth. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only a messenger of Allah, and His Word that He cast unto Mary and a Spirit from Him. So believe in Allah and His messengers, and do not say (Allah is) a Trinity. Desist! it is good for you; verily Allah is only one God. Far be it from His Glory that there be for Him a son; to Him belongs whatever is in heavens and whatever is in the earth; and Allah is sufficient as a Protector."

Adapting to the contents of the previous verses which were about the People of the Book and pagans, in this verse the Qur'an has pointed to one of the most important deviations of the society of the Christians, i.e. trinity or believing in three foldness (the father, the son, and the Holy Spirit). In a short and reasonable sentence, it tells them to avoid this great aberration.

At first, it warns them that:

"O' People of the Book! do not exaggerate in your religion, and do not say upon Allah save the truth. ..."

The subject of exaggeration about the religious leaders has been one of the most important origins of deviation in heavenly religions. For this reason, Islam has treated with a severe strictness against Extremists, 'Qalat'. So, in Islamic jurisprudence, Qalat have been introduced as the worst infidels.

Then the verse hints to some points where each of which is as a reason for the nullification of trinity, and divinity of Jesus (as). They are as follows:

1. Jesus (as) was but a son of Mary:

"... The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary....."

This phrase indicates that Jesus, similar to every other human being, was in the womb of his mother, and passed the foetal course. Like any other members of men, he was born, sucked milk and grew up in the bosom of his mother.

In other words, all the human qualities existed in him (as). How can such a person, who is object to the laws of nature and the changes of the world of matter, be a God without beginning and without end.

2. Jesus was the messenger of *Allah* and he was sent by Him. This rank does not fit with his divinity:

"...was only a messenger of Allah....."

3. Jesus was the 'word' of *Allah* that He cast unto Mary. This meaning is for hinting to the fact that Jesus was a creature of *Allah*. In the same manner that 'words' are His creatures, all the things of the world of creation are creatures of *Allah*, too.

4. Jesus is a 'spirit' that has been created by *Allah* (s.w.t.). This expression that has been mentioned in the Qur'an for the creation of 'Adam or, in another sense for the creation of humankind, points to that spirit which *Allah* created and set in the selves of human beings, in general, and in Jesus and prophets, in particular.

"...and a Spirit from Him..."

Next to stating this meaning, the Qur'an says:

"... So believe in Allah and His messengers, and do not say (Allah is) a Trinity. Desist! it is good for you....."

Here, the Qur'an emphasizes on the unity of *Allah* once more and says:

"... verily Allah is only One God. ..."

This phrase means that you believe in oneness of God, and yet in the meantime, you accept trinity. But if *Allah* had a child, the child would be like Him, and, in this case, oneness of God is meaningless.

How can *Allah* have a child while He is far from being in need of the deficiency of wife and child, and from the deficiency of body and of being a body?

"... Far be it from His Glory that there be for Him a son....."

Besides that, He is the possessor of what is in the heavens and the earth. They are all His creatures and He is the Creator of them all. And, Muses (as) is one of these creatures.

"...to Him belongs whatever is in heavens and whatever is in the earth....."

How can an exceptional case be assumed for Him? Can a slave and a creature be both the child and the creator of his possessor! *Allah* not only is the Creator and the Possessor of them but also is a controller, protector, sustainer, and guardian of them. And, He is sufficient to direct and guard them.

"...and Allah is sufficient as a protector."

Basically, how is the Lord in need of a child, the One Who is without beginning and without end, and Who is in charge of the guardianship of all creatures from beginning to the end? Is He like us, the mortals, to demand a child in order to substitute that child after His death?

1. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 1, p. 572

2. Surah Al-'An'am, No 6, verse 149

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