

Section 5: Moses' Mission Referred to

Surah Al-Qasas – Verse 43

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ مِنْ بَعْدَ مَا أَهْلَكْنَا الْقُرُونَ الْأُولَىٰ بَصَائِرَ لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى
وَرَحْمَةً لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ

43. “And indeed We gave Moses the Book (Torah) after We had destroyed the earlier generations (as a means) of insight for mankind and a guidance and mercy that haply they might receive admonition.”

The Arabic word /basa'ir/ is the plural form of /basirat/ in the sense of ‘insight and awareness’, and the word /'absar/ is the plural form of /basar/ which means ‘eye’.

A man usually will not be guided unless he obtains /basirat/ (insight and awareness), and he will not be guided unless he receives the favour and grace of Allah.

Religion is inside the nature of human beings, and the Heavenly Books uncover the dust from it.

By this verse, which is the last verse of this section of verses, we reach the tenth scene of the adventurous story of Moses (as). This verse speaks in relation with the revelation of Divine ordinances and Torah, i.e. the period when the ‘negation of deity’ has finished and the period of construction and proof begins.

It says:

“And indeed We gave Moses the Book (Torah) after We had destroyed the earlier generations (as a means) of insight for mankind and a guidance and mercy that haply they might receive admonition.”

Concerning the objective of the Qur'anic phrase: *lqurun al 'ulal* (***the earlier generations who were destroyed***) and that who they are, commentators are divided.

Some of them have said that it refers to the disbelievers among the people of Noah, 'Ad, Thamud, and the like, because, by the past of time, the effects of the former prophets had disappeared and it was necessary that a new Heavenly Book be set at mankind's disposal.

Some other commentators of the Qur'an believe that it refers to the destruction of the people of Pharaoh who were the remaining of the early generations, since Allah gave Torah to Moses (as) after their destruction. But it is no problem that the above-mentioned sentence refers to all of these generations and peoples.

The Qur'anic term *lbasa'ir*, which is the plural form of *basirat*, means insight and awareness and its objective here is the verses and proofs that caused the hearts of believers to be enlightened, and guidance and mercy are also the concomitants of this 'insight', and there follows it admonition and vigilance of the receptive hearts.

Surah Al-Qasas – Verse 44

وَمَا كُنْتَ بِجَانِبِ الْغَرْبِيِّ إِذْ قَضَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَى الْأَمْرَ وَمَا كُنْتَ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ

44. “And you were not on the western side of (Mount Tur) when We passed to Moses the commandment, and you were not one of the witnesses.”

Reiterating the story and adventure of Moses' prophethood with all its qualities from the tongue of a prophet who did not present at those times, is a sign of legitimacy and inimitability of the Qur'an.

Some of the stories of the Qur'an are among the heavenly news, not taken and narrated from eyewitnesses.

Therefore, in this verse the fact is stated, saying that whatever was said about Moses and Pharaoh, with all its details, is a proof for the legitimacy of your Qur'an, because you did not attend in these scenes and did not see these events by your eyes. It was only the Grace of Allah that He sent down these verses unto you for the guidance of people.

The verse says:

“And you were not on the western side of (Mount Tur) when We passed to Moses the commandment, and you were not one of the witnesses.”

It is necessary to note this point that on his way from Madyan to Egypt, which was in the land of Sinai, Moses (as) was going just from East towards West, and, on the contrary, when the Children of Israel came from Egypt towards Syria and passed Sinai, they were coming from West to Egypt. (That is why some of the commentators believe that the sentence:

“Then they (Pharaoh’s hosts) pursued them at sunrise”,¹

which is about the hosts of Pharaoh in pursuance of the Children of Israel, points to this meaning.)

Finally the author of Atyab-ul-Bayan in the following of the verse says:

“Some Islamic narrations indicate that the objective of executorship has been Yusha‘-ibn-Nun- and that every prophet that was sent his executor of testament was appointed by Him and the appointment of executor of testament is in His hand.

That is, you, O’ Messenger of Allah, too, should appoint your executor of testament. Some of these narrations denote that the purpose was ‘going’ toward Pharaoh, but it apparently means if you were there and saw the affairs of Moses and inform them to the Ummat, this would not be a miracle for them.

They would say that he has seen it and informs of it; but now that you inform them of these affairs by means of the Qur’an, this is itself a miracle that without seeing them you inform of Moses’ affairs as well as other prophets and their nations.

*The Qur’an also informs of the future events because Allah (s.w.t.) has the knowledge of everything from beginning to the end of arriving in Hereafter; and this itself is a great miracle.*²

Surah Al-Qasas – Verse 45

وَلَكِنَّا أَنشَأْنَا قُرُونًا فَتَطَاوَلَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْعُمُرُ وَمَا كُنْتَ ثَاوِيًا فِي أَهْلِ مَدْيَنَ تَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ
آيَاتِنَا وَلَكِنَّا كُنَّا مُرْسِلِينَ

45. “But We raised up generations and a long time passed upon them, and you were not dwelling among the people of Madyan, reciting unto them Our signs, but We were sending messengers.”

The Qur’anic word **/awiyān/** is derived from /awi/ which means ‘resident’, and also the term /mawi/ derived from the same root, means ‘abode’.

So, through this holy verse, Allah says:

“But We raised up generations and a long time passed upon them...”

A long time passed and the effects of the prophets as well as their guidance went away from their hearts and thoughts. That was why We brought both you and your Qur'an forth and stated the story life of the old generations in it in order to enlighten mankind.

The verse continues saying:

"...and you were not dwelling among the people of Madyan..."

O Prophet! You were not among the people of Madyan to be acquainted with their signs and the news of their lives so that you can reiterate them for the people of Mecca. But We sent you and gave you these exact news related to thousands years ago in order that you guide them.

The above holy verse continues saying:

"...reciting unto them Our signs, but We were sending messengers."

Of course, the time between the advent of Moses (as) and the advent of the Prophet of Islam (S) lasted about two thousand years.

Surah Al-Qasas – Verse 46

وَمَا كُنْتَ بِجَانِبِ الطُّورِ إِذْ نَادَيْنَا وَلَكِنْ رَحْمَةً مِنْ رَبِّكَ لِتُنْذِرَ قَوْمًا مَّا أَتَاهُمْ مِنْ
نَذِيرٍ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ

46. "And you were not on the side of the Mount Tur when We called (unto Moses), but (this revelation is) a mercy from your Lord that you warn a people to whom no warner had come before you, in order that they may receive admonition."

Like other people, the Divine prophets do not know the heavenly news without the contact with the source of Divine revelation.

The Qur'anic news is entirely from the source of Divine revelation.

Again, for emphasis on this very meaning, this holy verse adds:

"And you were not on the side of the Mount Tur when We called (unto Moses)..."

It was that time that Allah (s.w.t.) issued the command of prophethood for Moses.

The Qur'an continues saying:

"...but (this revelation is) a mercy from your Lord that you warn a people to whom no warner had

come before you, in order that they may receive admonition.”

Shortly speaking, Allah (s.w.t.) reiterated the warnings and awakening events that had occurred in the old nations’ time when the Prophet of Islam (S) was not present and did not witness them, so that he would recite them for this misguided people, probably they cause them to awaken.

There arises a question here that how does the Qur’an say that no warner had come for this nation (i.e. the Arabs contemporary with the Prophet (S)), while we know that there comes no time that the earth is empty of a godly Hujjat (proof) and the vicegerents of the prophets had always been present among this nation, too?

In answer, we say that its purpose is to send a prophet who had a heavenly Book and was a clear warner, because it prolonged for centuries between the time of Jesus (as) and the advent of the Prophet of Islam (S) when no arch-prophet came, and this very matter gave a pretext to the atheists and mischief-makers.

In one of his sermons, Ali (as) says:

“Verily Allah sent Muhammad (S) when none among the Arabs read a (heavenly) Book or claimed prophethood. He guided the people till he took them to their (correct) position and reached them their salvation.”³

Surah Al-Qasas – Verse 47

وَلَوْلَا أَن تُصِيبَهُمْ مُّصِيبَةٌ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ فَيَقُولُوا رَبَّنَا لَوْلَا أَرْسَلْتَ إِلَيْنَا رَسُولًا
فَنَتَّبِعَ آيَاتِكَ وَنَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

47. “And were it not that there should befall them a calamity for what their hands have sent before, they would say: ‘Our Lord! Why did You not send to us a messenger so that we might follow Your signs and so be of the believers?’”

The previous verse denoted that the purpose of coming prophets was warning and admonition. This verse states another aim of the mission of the Prophet (S) which is to complete the argument and to shut the way of seeking pretext.

Thus, in the verse under discussion, the Qur’an, pointing to the grace given unto the Prophet (S), says:

“And were it not that there should befall them a calamity for what their hands have sent before, they would say: ‘Our Lord! Why did You not send to us a messenger so that we might follow Your signs and so be of the believers?’”

In fact, the verse refers to this point that: the path of Truth is clear, and any intellect judges the falseness of paganism and idolatry. The ugliness of a great deal of their vain deeds, like tyrannies and cruelties, belongs to the judgment of intellect, and even without sending prophets in this regard they can be punished.

But, even in this field, upon which the judgment of intellect is clear, Allah sent prophets with heavenly Books and miracles in order to complete the argument and negate any kind of pretexts, so that no one can say their misfortune was because of lacking any leader and if they had divine leader(s) they would not be misguided.

However, this verse is among the verses that have indication to the necessity of Grace through sending prophets.

It shows that Allah's way of treatment is based on this fact that he should not punish any nation for their sins before sending a prophet for them; as Surah An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 165 says:

“(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.”

Surah Al-Qasas – Verse 48

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِنَا قَالُوا لَوْلَا أُوتِيَ مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ أَوَلَمْ يَكْفُرُوا بِمَا
أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ مِنْ قَبْلُ قَالُوا سِحْرَانِ تَظَاهَرَا وَقَالُوا إِنَّا بِكُلِّ كَافِرُونَ

48. “But when the truth came to them from Us they said: ‘Why has he not been given the like of what was given Moses?’ (But) did they not believe also in what Moses was given aforetime? They said: ‘A pair of sorceries supporting each other’. And they (also) said: ‘Verily we disbelieve in all’.”

Magic and sorcery was the most current accusation which prophets were accused of. The enemies confuse the logic and truth in order that they pave the way for their own denial. Therefore, in this holy verse the Qur'an points to their seeking pretexts and implies that, even after sending messengers for them, they did not abandon pretext seeking and continued their deviated way.

It says:

“But when the truth came to them from Us they said: ‘Why has he not been given the like of what was given Moses?’...”

They want to say why does not the Messenger of Islam have a staff like what Moses had? Why did he not have a white Hand? Why does not the sea cleave for him? Why do the enemies not drown? Why and why...?

The Qur'an answers these pretext seekers when it says:

"...(But) did they not believe also in what Moses was given aforetime?..."

Did they not say that these two, Moses and Aaron, were two sorcerers who had exchanged hands with each other to misguide them? And, therefore, they said they disbelieved them. The verse continues stating:

"...They said: 'A pair of sorceries supporting each other'. And they (also) said: 'Verily we disbelieve in all'."

Though customarily there must be said /sahiran/ (sorcerers) in the verse instead of saying /sihran/, it is for the severity of emphasis, because when, in Arabic, it is speaking about a person earnestly, that person is counted as the exact, for example, justice, or injustice, or magic.

It is also probable that the purpose of /sehran/ is the two great miracles of Moses: Rod and White Hand.

If someone says what is the connection of these denials with the pagans of Mecca, and it relates to the people of Pharaoh who were infidels? Its answer is that the purpose of it is that the subject of seeking pretext is not a new thing. All of them are alike and their statement is very similar to that of each other. Their line, method, and program are the same.

Surah Al-Qasas – Verse 49

قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِكِتَابٍ مِّنْ عِندِ اللَّهِ هُوَ أَهْدَىٰ مِنْهُمَا أَتَّبِعُهُ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

49. "Say (O' Apostle Muhammad): 'Bring you then a Book from Allah that gives better guidance than both of them (i.e., Torah and Qur'an), (that) I follow it, if you are truthful'."

Man is surely incapable to bring a book better than the Qur'an and original Torah. The religious leaders must deliver the best speech and the most logical style when confronting the opponents. They must answer the vain sayings of the rejecters with a suitable reply.

Therefore, this verse, addressing the holy Prophet (S), says:

"Say (O' Apostle Muhammad): 'Bring you then a Book from Allah that gives better guidance than both of them (i.e., Torah and Qur'an), (that) I follow it, if you are truthful'."

In other words, they are seeking for a Book of guidance and for miracles. What miracle is greater than the Qur'an and what guiding Book is better than it? If the Prophet of Islam (S) had not anything other than this Qur'an, it would be enough for proving the legitimacy of his invitation. But they do not seek the Truth; they are a group of pretext seekers.

Surah Al-Qasas – Verse 50

فَإِنْ لَّمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَكَ فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّمَا يَتَّبِعُونَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّنِ اتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ بِغَيْرِ
هُدًى مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

50. “But if they do not answer you, then know that they only follow their own low desires, and who is more astray than he who follows his own low desire without any guidance from Allah? Verily Allah does not guide the unjust people.”

Wherever there is not any eligibility of accepting guidance, sensuality dominates. The rejecters of the Truth and sensualists are the most misguided people. Thus, the relation between these two is explicitly stated in this verse, and even the most aberrant people are introduced as those who have taken their own sensual desire as their leader and they have never accepted the Divine guidance.

Sensual desire is a thick curtain before the eyes of man's intellect.

Sensual desire attracts the man's attention to a subject so much that he often loses the ability of understanding the facts because the condition of understanding the fact is an absolute submission for realities, leaving any prophecy and attachment, and to be unconditionally submissive unto whatever outwardly exists, whether it is sweet or bitter; it is alongside our innate wishes or opposite of them; it is on the way of our personal interests or against them; but sensual desire is not consistent with these principles.

In this regard, there is a detailed discussion explained when commenting on Surah Al-Furqan, No. 25, verse 43.

It is interesting that through a lot of Islamic narrations, the abovementioned verse has been rendered into those who have not accepted the Divine leaders and have relied only on their own thoughts.⁴

These narrations which have been narrated from Imam Baqir (as), Imam Sadiq (as) and some other Imams (leaders) of right guidance (as) are, in fact, of the kind of clear aspect. In other words, man is in need of Divine guidance.

This guidance sometimes is found in the heavenly Book, sometimes in the person of Prophet (S) and his

way of treatment, sometime in his immaculate vicegerents, and sometimes in the logic of intellect and wisdom. The important thing is that man should be on the line of Divine guidance, not on the line of his own sensual desire, so that he can enjoy the rays of this guidance.

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1. Surah Ash-Shu'ara', No. 26, verse 60
 2. Atyab-ul-Bayan, following the verse
 3. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, sermon 33
 4. 'Usul-i-Kafi, Basa'ir-ud-Darajat, according to Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 136

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