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Section 3: Similitude of Moses' Missions

Surah As-Sajdah – Verse 23

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَي الْكِتَابَ فَلاَ تَكُن فِي مِرْيَةٍ مِن لِّقَآئِهِ وَجَعَلْنَاهُ هُدًي لِبَنِي إِسْرَآئِيلَ

23. "And certainly We gave the Book (Torah) to Moses, so be not in doubt of his receiving it and We appointed it guidance for the Children of Israel."

There should not be any doubt about the heavenly leader:

"So be not in doubt".

However, the Torah was sent down for the guidance of the Children of Israel, not for mankind:

"...a guidance for the Children of Israel."

This verse briefly points to the story of Moses (as) and the Children of Israel in order to console the Prophet of Islam (S) and the early Muslims, and to invite them to patience and perseverance in the face of the polytheists' denials, rejections and hindering in the affairs.

It is also a glad tidings for the believers that at last they would overcome this group of obstinate disbelievers, as the children of Israel overcame their enemies and became leaders throughout the earth.

In view of the fact that Moses (as) is a great prophet in whom both the Jews and Christians believe, from this point of view this matter can be a motive for the People of the Book to move toward Qur'an and Islam.

At first the verse says:

"And certainly We gave the Book (Torah) to Moses, so be not in doubt of his receiving it..."

Then it continues saying:

"...and We appointed it guidance for the Children of Israel."

Commentators have some discussions that to whom the pronoun in the Qur'anic phrase ***/min liqa'ihi/*** returns, and there are seven probable interpretations about it.

That which seems nearer to the fact among them is that it returns to 'Book' (the Torah, the heavenly Book of Moses), and it is the object of the sentence and Moses is the subject of it.

Therefore, the whole sentence means:

"You should not be in doubt that Moses met the heavenly Book and he received it which had been revealed to him from the side of Allah."

The vivid evidence for this commentary is that there are three sentences mentioned in the above holy verse.

The first and the last sentence surely speak about the Torah. Thus, it is appropriate that the middle sentence also follows the same meaning, not that it speaks about the Hereafter or the Qur'an, in this case it will be a parenthetical clause, and we know that a parenthetical clause is opposite to the apparent and it must not be mentioned unless it is needed.

The only question that remains in this commentary is the word /liqa'/ used concerning the heavenly Book, because this word has often been used in the Qur'an with the term 'Allah', or 'Rabb', or Hereafter and the like, and it refers to the Resurrection.

It is for this reason that some commentators have preferred this probability here to say that the above verse at first speaks about the descent of the Torah to Moses, and then it commands the Prophet of Islam (S) that he should not doubt in /liqa'allah/ and the subject of Resurrection, and again it returns to the subject of Torah.

But it should be admitted that, in this case, the relationship between the sentences of this verse will utterly be disturbed and it ruins the flowing of it.

It must be noted, however, that though the word /liqa'/ has not been used in the Qur'an about the receiving a heavenly Book, the words /'ilqa'/ and /talaqqi/ have repeatedly been used in this sense, as the Qur'an says:

"Has the reminder been made to light upon him (Muhammad) from among us?..."1

and in the story of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba we recite when Solomon's letter reached her, she

said:

"...Verily there has been thrown unto me a noble letter."2

And in this very Surah, verse 6, concerning the Qur'an we recite:

"And most surely you receive the Qur'an from One All-Wise, All-knowing."

And in Surah 'Isra', No. 17, verse 13 we recite:

"...We shall bring out for him a book which he will find wide open."

From the whole of what we said the preference of this commentary to other probabilities mentioned about the above verse is made clear.

But in any case, it is necessary to note this matter that the holy Prophet (S) had no doubt in these issues, but these kind of meanings are usually for emphasis upon the subject and also a lesson for others.

Surah As-Sajdah – Verse 24

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا لَمَّا صَبَرُوا وَكَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يُوقِنُونَ

24. "And We appointed from among them leaders who guided (people) by Our command, when they endured patiently, and they were quite certain of Our signs."

The appointment of Divine leaders is among the rights of Allah (s.w.t.).

Certainty and patience with perseverance are two necessary conditions for leadership. (A leader must have certainty in the aim and he must have patience and perseverance until the last moment.) Therefore, this verse points to the honours that the children of Israel obtained under the shade of perseverance and faith in order that it can be a lesson for others.

It says:

"And We appointed from among them leaders who guided (people) by Our command, when they endured patiently, and they were quite certain of Our signs."

Here the Holy Qur'an counts two things as the secrets and conditions of leadership: one is proving faith and certainty to the Divine verses, and the other is patience and perseverance.

This matter is not allocated to the Children of Israel; it is a lesson for all nations and for the Muslims in all

times. They must strengthen the basis of their own certainty and do not fear from the difficulties found in the way of confirming the line of Monotheism. They must have patience and perseverance in order to become the leader of the nations throughout the history of the world.

The Qur'anic term ***/yahdun/*** (***they guide***) is used in the simple present tense, and also the term /yuqinun/ (they are certain) which is in the simple present tense, too, are two evidences for the continuation of these two qualities throughout their lifetime since the subject of leadership is not far from difficulties even for a moment and in every step the godly leader of people encounters a new problem against which he must permanently struggle by the power of certainty and perseverance and continue the line of guidance by Allah's commandment.

It is notable that the subject of guidance is conditioned to 'Allah's command' and the Holy Qur'an says:

"Who guided (***people***) ***by Our command"***

and the important thing in the subject of guidance is this very thing that it originates from the command of Allah, not from the people's affair and the desire of the self, nor imitation from this and that.

Considering the contents of the Qur'an, Imam Sadiq (as) in his expressive tradition, divides leaders into two kinds: The first are the leaders who undertake the leadership of people by the command of Allah, not by people's affair.

They always give priority to the command of Allah, the Almighty, the Wise, rather than their own affairs and they consider Allah's commandment above their own command.

But the second kind are the leaders who invite others to Fire and give priority to their own command before the command of Allah. They act according to their own carnal desire and against the Book of Allah.3

Whether the Qur'anic word ***/'amr/*** (***command***), here, is a religious command (the Divine commandments in religion) or a genetic command (the influence of Divine command in the world of creation), the apparent of the holy verse leads to the first meaning and the interpretations of the traditions and commentators indicate to this very meaning, too. But some of the great commentators have taken it with "***genetic command***."

Explanation: In the verses of Qur'an and Islamic traditions Guidance has been rendered into two meanings: Showing the way, and taking a person to what he demands (causing him to reach the destination).

The guidance of the Divine leaders is also done by both those ways. Sometimes they suffice only to enjoinment and prohibition but sometimes, by innate influence inside the receptive hearts, they cause them to reach educational aims and spiritual positions.

Patience and Perseverance in Divine Leaders

In the holy verses under discussion, there are two qualities mentioned for the Divine leaders: the first is patience and perseverance, and the second is Faith and certainty to Divine verses.

This patience and perseverance, mentioned in the above, has a lot of branches.

Sometime it is for the afflictions that come to a person.

Sometimes it is in the fact of the freedom which may be given to his friends and advocators.

Sometimes it is alongside of the slanders, ill-talks and profanities that are done against sacred things.

Sometimes it is from the side of malevolent persons.

Sometimes it is from the side of ill-wishing ones.

Sometimes it is from the side of ignorant people.

Sometimes it is from the side of a group of knowledgeable wrong-doers.

In short, an aware leader must always show patience and perseverance in the face of all these difficulties and other than them. He must never go out from the centre of events. He must not be impatient nor does he complain. He should not lose his control. He must not become hopeless. He must not be anxious nor regretful. Such a leader can gain his goal.

There is a conclusive and interesting tradition in this regard narrated from Imam Sadiq (as).

Once he (as) told one of his close companions:

"He who shows patience, is patient for a short time (and after it there comes victory); and he who is impatient, he also shows impatience for a short time (and its fruit is failure)."

Then he said:

"You should be patient in all your affairs, because Allah, the Almighty, has appointed Muhammad (S) to prophecy and commanded him to patience and perseverance, and He told him to show patience in the face of what they say and if it is necessary he may separate from them, but not a separation that hinders his invitation unto the Truth.

Here is the Qur'an's saying:

'And have patience with what they say, and leave them with noble (dignity)'."45

He also told him to do good instead of their bad actions. It is in this case that those who are his enemy

will become as his sincere friends.

The Qur'an in this regard says:

"And not alike are the good and the evil. Repel (evil) with what is best, when lo! He between whom and you was enmity would be as if he were a warm friend."6

Then he (as) added:

"The Prophet (S) showed patience and perseverance so much so that they threw the kinds of arrows of calumny towards him. (They called him mad, sorcerer, and poet and belied him his prophethood.) The breast of the Prophet (S) became straitened because of their words and Allah sent down this verse to him, saying:

'And certainly We know that your breast straitens at what they say,'
'Therefore celebrate the praise of your Lord and be of those who make obeisance',7

because these acts of worship comfort you."

"Again they rejected him and accused him. He became sad. Allah sent this verse to him indicating that He knew that their words had made him sad, but he should know that their aim was not to belie him, but those unjust people belied the verses of Allah.

The Holy Qur'an says:

'Indeed We know that what they say surely grieves you. Yet verily it is not you (that) they belie, but the unjust deny the signs of Allah.'8
'Messengers indeed have been denied before you, but they, were patient on being denied and hurt, until Our help came unto them...'9

The Prophet (S) was again patient until they violated the limit. They uttered the Name of Allah badly and belied."

The Prophet (S) said:

"O Lord! I was patient in respect to myself, my family and my honour, but I can not be patient in the face of their slanders against Your Sacred Rank."

Again Allah commanded him to be patient and said:

*"And certainly We created the heavens and the earth and what is between them in six periods and there touched Us not any fatigue."*10

Then Imam Sadiq (as) adds:

"After that, the Prophet (S) was patient in all cases and for all difficulties, and this patience caused that Allah gave him glad tidings that there would be some Imams (leaders) in his family (his progeny), and He recommended those Imams to be patient, too. 11*"*

"It was here that the Prophet (S) said:

'Patience for the Faith is like head for the body'.

And finally this patience and perseverance caused him to overcome the polytheists and the Divine command was issued that he could take vengeance of those transgressors who were not worthy of guidance, so they were killed by the Prophet (S) and his followers. This was their recompense in this world, in addition to the rewards of the Hereafter."

Then Imam Sadiq (as) said:

*"He who is patient and counts it for Allah, will not go out of the world until the time when Allah enlightens his eyes with the defeat of his enemies, besides the rewards that He will store for him for the Day of Hereafter."*12

Surah As-Sajdah – Verse 25

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفونَ

25. "Verily your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that wherein they used to differ."

To judge between people for what they differ in is one of the affairs of Lordship in Hereafter.

Since the Children of Israel, like other nations, after these true leaders discarded among them and went different ways so that they caused people to separate into various groups, in the verse under discussion, the Holy Qur'an, in a threatening tone, says:

"Verily your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that wherein they used to differ."

And in the Hereafter Day everybody will be recompensed for his own deed.

Yes, the origin of discords is always when the Truth is mixed with desire and wishes, and since the Hereafter is a Day when the desires will be colourless and vanished, and the truth will be manifest in the same form that it is, by His command, Allah will put an end to the dissensions. And this is one of other philosophies of Resurrection.

Surah As-Sajdah – Verse 26

أَوَلَمْ يَهْدِ لَهُمْ كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِن قَبْلِهِم مِنَ الْقُرُونِ يَمْشُونَ فِي مَسَاكِنِهِمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَاتٍ أَفَلاَ يَسْمَعُونَ

26. "Does it not point out to them the right way, how many of the generations, in whose abodes they go about, did We destroy before them? Verily in that are signs: do they not then hear?"

The people of Mecca were aware of the destruction of the former nations and the remaining traces of theirs existed in the roads wherein they used to pass by, but they did not take an example.

The previous verses contained threats upon the faithless sinners, and the verse under discussion is also an explanation and a completion upon this threat.

It says:

"Does it not point out to them the right way, how many of the generations, in whose abodes they go about, did We destroy before them?..."

The afflicted lands of 'Ad and Thamud and the ruined cities of the People of Lot were located on their way towards Syria.

These lands were once the central place of some powerful nations who were also misguided and polluted. Their prophets constantly warned them, but they did not change their manner and, finally, the Divine punishment annihilated them.

Whenever they pass across these lands they hear the shout of the gravels of that desert and the sounds of their ruined castles which have hundred tongues and reiterate the result of infidelity and pollution for them, but they react as if they have entirely lost their hearing ears.

Therefore, at the end of this noble verse, the Holy Qur'an continues saying:

"...Verily in that are signs: do they not then hear?"

Surah As-Sajdah – Verse 27

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا نَسُوقُ الْمَآءَ إِلَي الأَرْضِ الْجُرُزِ فَنُخْرِجُ بِهِ زَرْعاً تَأْكُلُ مِنْهُ أَنْعَامُهُمْ وَأَنفُسُهُمْ أَفَلاَ يُبْصِرُونَ

27. "Have they not seen that We drive the water to the parched land and We bring forth thereby crops of which their cattle and themselves eat? Will they not then see?"

The training method of the Holy Qur'an is that for guiding people it uses some of the natural transformations.

The movement of the clouds which have moist, and the rainfall in the zones far from the sea, is not casual, but it is done by the Wise will of Allah.

This verse points to one of the most important bounties of Allah which is the cause of cultivation of all lands and the means of the life of all living creatures, in order to make clear that in the same manner that Allah, the Almighty, is able to destroy the habitable lands of the transgressors, He can flourish the ruin and dead lands, too, and bestow all kinds of merits on His servants.

It says:

"Have they not seen that We drive the water to the parched land and We bring forth thereby crops of which their cattle and themselves eat? Will they not then see?"

The Arabic term ***/juruz/*** means a land where plants have been rooted out from, or, in other words, there grows no plant from it. It is originally derived from /jaraz/ with the sense of 'to cut off' and 'to chop off'. As if any kind of plant had been cut off from such a land, or the land itself had cut those plants.

It is interesting that the Arabic phrase ***/nusuq-ul-ma'/*** (***we drive the water***) has been applied here. This indicates that for its heaviness the nature of water appropriates that it stays on the land and in ditches, and because of its being liquid it must naturally go down in the depth of the ground, but when Allah's command comes, it loses its nature and changes into some light vapour which goes everywhere by the blow of an ordinary simple wind.

Yes, these very pieces of cloud that are in the sky are some large seas of sweet water which, by Allah's command and by the help of winds, are sent toward the dry lands.

Verily if rain did not fall a great deal of lands would not receive a drop of water, even if supposing there were some rivers full of water they might not flow over them.

But now we see that by this grace of Allah there have grown some forests, plenty of trees and many plants on a lot of high mountains, in impracticable slopes and high hills.

This wonderful power of natural irrigation is found only in the nature of rain, and nothing else can afford it.

The Arabic word ***/zar'/*** has a vast meaning which envelops any plant and tree, though in applications it is sometimes used for trees.

The word ‘cattle’ is mentioned in this verse before ‘men’ and it may be for the sake that the cattle feed entirely from plants while men feed on both plants and the meat of cattle. Or for the sake that as soon as plants grow they are fit for the use of cattle, while the use of plants for men often postpones to later times when the plants deliver their seed and fruit to them to consume.

It is interesting that at the end of the verse the phrase:

“Will they not then see?”

is mentioned, while at the end of the previous verse the phrase:

“…do they not then hear?”,

has come. This difference is for the sake that everybody sees the scene of lands that are quickened by the descent of rain by the eyes while they often hear the details concerning the former nations in the form of some news.

It is understood from then whole explanations of the two abovementioned verses that Allah says to this disobedient group that they may open their eyes and ears to see and hear the facts in order to contemplate that how one day He (s.w.t.) commanded the winds to rain the castles and buildings of the People of ‘Ad and, on another day, He commands the same winds to take clouds toward the dead lands and cause them to become cultivated and green. Do they not yet submit to such a Power?

Surah As-Sajdah – Verses 28-30

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَي هَذَا الْفَتْحُ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

قُلْ يَوْمَ الْفَتْحِ لاَ يَنفَعُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِيمَانُهُمْ وَلاَ هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ

فَاَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ وَانتَظِرْ إِنَّهُم مُنتَظِرُونَ

28. “And they ask: ‘When shall be this Victory, if you are truthful?’”
29. “Say: ‘On the day of Victory, the faith of those who disbelieve will not profit them nor will they be respited’.”
30. “Therefore turn away from them and wait, verily they, too, do wait.”

And in view of the fact that the previous verses threatened the guilty to the Divine vengeance and gave glad tidings to the believers about their later leadership and victory, here the pagans proudly ask this question that when do these Divine promises and punishments will be fulfilled?

As the Qur'an says:

"And they ask: 'When shall be this Victory, if you are truthful?'"

Immediately after this, the Qur'an answers them and the Prophet (S) is commanded as follows:

"Say: 'On the day of Victory, the faith of those who disbelieve will not profit them nor will they be respited'."

That is, if your purpose is that you see the veracity of the Divine promises that you have heard from the tongue of the Prophet (S) and then you believe, that day is too late and that faith does not profit you.

It is understood from what was said that the purpose of the phrase /yaum-ul-fath/ (the day of victory) is 'the immediate punishment', i.e. the punishment which annihilates the pagans and will not give them respite to believe.

In other words, it is a kind of worldly punishment. So it is neither the punishment of the Hereafter nor the ordinary chastisement in this world but it is a punishment which, after completing the argument, puts an end to the life of guilty people.

Finally, in the last verse of this Surah (Surah As-Sajdah) the words are concluded with an expressive and meaningful threat.

Addressing the Prophet (S), it says:

"Therefore turn away from them and wait, verily they, too, do wait."

Now that neither glad tidings nor warning affect them, nor are they some logical and reasonable people that by observing the Divine signs in the expanse of creation know Him and do not worship other than Him, nor do they have a vigilant conscience that they hearken to the cry of Monotheism from inside their own soul, the Prophet (S) should turn away from them and wait for the grace of Allah and they, too, wait for the punishment of Allah, because they deserve only the punishment.

O Lord! Set us among those who by seeing the first signs of the truth submit to it and believe.

O Lord! Separate us entirely from the moods of pride, haughtiness, and obstinacy.

O Lord! Provide the perfect victory of the army of Islam over the army of disbelief as soon as possible.

1. Surah Al-Qamar, No. 54, verse 25
2. Surah An-Naml, No. 27, verse 29
3. Kafi, Vol. 1, P. 168
4. Surah Al-Muzammil, No. 73, verse 11
5. Al-Kafi, Vol. 4, P. 268
6. Surah Fussilat, No. 41, verse 34
7. Surah Al-Hijr, No. 15, verses 97 and 98
8. Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 33
9. Ibid verse 34
10. Surah Qaf, No. 50, verse 38
11. The verse under discussion
12. 'Usul-i-Kafi, Vol. 2, P. 72 (old edition), and Vol. 4, PP. 268-270 (New edition with Persian translation)

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