

(Note: Wherever the word “you” or “your” is singular and refers to one human being, it is printed with an italic *y*, as in: you. Wherever such a word refers to God, the letter *y* is printed in capital, as in: You.)

For Fast 9 – August 30

Chapter 7

156 And ordain for us good in this world’s life and in the Hereafter, for surely we turn to You. He (Allah) said: I afflict with My punishment whom I please, and My mercy encompasses all things.¹ So I ordain it for those who keep their duty and give the due charity, and those who believe in Our messages —

157 those who follow the Messenger-Prophet, the *Ummī*,² whom they find mentioned in the Torah and the Gospel.³ He enjoins them good and forbids them evil, and makes lawful to them the good things and prohibits for them impure things,⁴ and removes from them their burden and the shackles which were on them.⁵ So those who believe in him and honour him and help him, and follow the light which has been sent down with him — these are the successful.

158 Say: O mankind, surely I am the Messenger of Allah to you all, of Him, Whose is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth.⁶ There is no god but He; He gives life and causes death. So believe in Allah and His Messenger, the *Ummī* Prophet who believes in Allah and His words, and follow him so that you may be guided aright.

159 And of Moses’ people is a party who guide with truth and with it they do justice.⁷

Notes:

1 (v. 156) No attribute of God receives such prominence in the Quran as the attribute of *mercy* — *My mercy encompasses all things*. Even punishment is a phase of Divine mercy because it seeks to correct the evil-doers.

2 (v. 157) *Ummī* means *one who neither writes nor reads a writing*. Hence the Arabs are called an *ummī* people, and the *Ummī* Prophet is either *the prophet of the ummī people* (i.e. the Arabs) because he was like them, or he was so called because he himself did not know reading and writing. But according to some, the prophet is called *Ummī* because he came from the *Umm al-Qurā*, i.e. Makkah, which is the Metropolis of Arabia.

3 (v. 157) There are many prophecies regarding the advent of the Holy Prophet in the Bible. The Torah and the Gospel are specially mentioned here because Moses and Jesus were respectively the first and the last of the Israelite prophets.

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- 4 (v. 157) This shows that the lawful things are those *which are good* and prohibited things are those which are *impure*. It is because of being good that they are lawful and because of being impure that they are prohibited.
 - 5 (v. 157) The “burden” on people was their obligation to accept the Promised Prophet when he appeared. This burden was the covenant that previous prophets made with their followers to the effect that they must accept the final prophet when he appears (see 3:81). The “shackles” that were on people were the evil customs and usages in which they were trapped.
 - 6 (v. 158) As against the various prophets spoken of in this chapter, every one of whom was sent to *his people*, the Prophet Muhammad is here spoken of as having been sent to *all people*, to the whole of mankind. Thus the appearance of the Prophet Muhammad was a turning point in the history of humanity. The day of the national prophet was over and a new era had dawned in which the whole of humanity was ultimately to be united under one spiritual head. The idea of *nationality* had to give place to the broader idea of *one humanity*, and the basis of it was laid by the Quran.
 - 7 (v. 159) Thus the Quran recognizes that there were good people among the Jews. See also verse 168 about them: “And We divided them in the earth into (different) groups — some of them are righteous and some of them are otherwise”.