

### Fast 10: Prophets and Messengers of Allāh — as mentioned in the Quran

- Chapter 21 of the Quran is entitled *The Prophets* and mentions several prophets along with some brief information about them. Moses and Aaron are mentioned:

“And certainly We gave Moses and Aaron the criterion and a light and a reminder for those who guard against evil.” (21:48)

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ الْفُرْقَانَ وَضِيَاءً وَ  
ذِكْرًا لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٢١﴾

The “criterion”, or *furqān*, given to Moses and Aaron (Haroun), who were the founders of the Jewish law, was the teaching to enable them to distinguish right from wrong. The same name is given to the Quran — that it is the *furqān* — in a verse about fasting (2:185) and also in chapter 25 in both the title of the chapter and its first verse. The criterion and light given to Moses and Aaron was for their nation, until superseded by the criterion and light given to the Prophet Muhammad.

- Abraham is then mentioned in more detail, from which we quote the beginning:

“And certainly We gave Abraham his rectitude before, and We knew him well. When he said to his sire and his people: What are these images to whose worship you are devoted? They said: We found our fathers worshipping them. He said: Certainly you have been, you and your fathers, in manifest error.” (21:51–54)

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ رُشْدَهُ مِن قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا بِهِ  
عَلِيمِينَ ﴿٥١﴾ إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ مَا هَذِهِ  
الْتَّمَاتِئِلُ الَّتِي أَنْتُمْ لَهَا عَاقِبُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ قَالُوا وَجَدْنَا  
آبَاءَنَا لَهَا عِبَادِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾ قَالَ لَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ أَنْتُمْ وَ  
آبَاؤُكُمْ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٥٤﴾

Abraham preached against the idolatry of his people, as did the Prophet Muhammad some 2500 years later. He is described here as being given “rectitude”, meaning right guidance. Different terms are used for different prophets as regards their qualities and what was bestowed upon them. It doesn’t mean that Moses and Aaron were not given rectitude and Abraham was not given the criterion and light. The different terms indicate what stands out most prominently in that prophet.

In Study 8 we discussed the verses 4:163–164 mentioning several prophets, but saying only about Moses: “And to Moses Allah addressed His word, speaking (to him)” (4:164). Some people have drawn the conclusion from this that Allah spoke to Moses “directly”, in a way different from other prophets, such as at the burning bush (20:11 onwards). But this is not correct. All it means is that Allah’s speaking to Moses stands out more prominently in his life than the other prophets mentioned.

- Towards the end of the story of Abraham in ch. 21, it is stated:

“And We delivered him and Lot (directing them) to the land which We had blessed for the nations. (21:71)

وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ وَلُوطًا إِلَى الْأَرْضِ الَّتِي بَارَكْنَا فِيهَا  
لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٧١﴾

It is mentioned here how God saved Abraham and Lot from the bitter opposition of their people who tried to destroy them. This chapter also mentions the deliverance of other prophets from opposition, persecution and great difficulties and distress. It was revealed when the Prophet Muhammad was suffering the same at Makkah, and it and other similar verses told him that this is what prophets always face. They face what looks like certain destruction at the hands of those who reject and oppose their message, but God rescues them and they fulfil their mission. Abraham and Lot were saved by migrating to another land. Likewise, the Prophet Muhammad was saved by migrating to Madinah.

- After this comes the following passage:

“And We gave him Isaac; and Jacob, a son’s son. And We made (them) all good. And We made them leaders who guided (people) by Our command, and We revealed to them the doing of good and the keeping up of prayer and the giving of charity, and Us (alone) they served.” (21:72–73)

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ نَافِلَةً ۗ وَكُلًّا جَعَلْنَا  
صَالِحِينَ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ آيَةً يُهَدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا  
أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ فِعْلَ الْخَيْرَاتِ وَإِقَامَ الصَّلَاةِ  
وَإِيتَاءَ الزَّكَاةِ وَكَانُوا لَنَا عَابِدِينَ ﴿٧٣﴾

All prophets were good and righteous. They all gave people the same basic teaching, and above all, they themselves acted on the same teachings. The “doing of good” comes from the heart and is mentioned first. The “keeping up of prayer and the giving of charity” are done through a formally organized structure, but the aim is not to simply pray mechanically and give in charity according to some fixed rate or rule like a government tax. The aim of the organized prayer and the regulated charity (*zakat*) is to keep these institutions going and remind people constantly of establishing closeness to God and serving the needy humanity. They should lead to what is called here “the doing of good”, which includes all kinds of good deeds.

- Then Noah’s deliverance is mentioned:

“And Noah, when he cried before (this), so We answered him, and delivered him and his people from the

وَنُوحًا إِذْ نَادَى مِنْ قَبْلُ فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ فَنَجَّيْنَاهُ  
وَأَهْلَهُ مِنَ الْكَرْبِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٧٤﴾ وَنَصَرْنَاهُ مِنْ

great calamity. And We helped him against the people who rejected Our messages. Surely they were an evil people, so We drowned them all.”  
(21:76–77)

الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمَ سَوْءٍ  
فَأَغْرَقْنَاهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾

Like other prophets, Noah cried to God for help, and he and those with him were saved from the flood. It may be noted here that the opponents of the prophets were not destroyed because they refused to accept the message of the prophets. It was because they committed evil deeds in the first place. Then they refused to listen to the prophets and tried their utmost to destroy them. The Quran says:

“And your Lord would not destroy towns unjustly, while their people acted well.” (11:117)

وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ لِيُهْلِكَ الْقُرَىٰ بِظُلْمٍ وَأَهْلِهَا  
مُصْلِحُونَ ﴿١١٧﴾