

Fast 12: Prophets and Messengers of Allah — *Dhul Kifl*

- In the preceding Study, the following passage from ch. 21 was quoted:

“And Ishmael and Idrīs and Dhu-l-Kifl; all were from among the patient ones; and We admitted them to Our mercy; surely they were from among the good ones.” (21:85–86)

Who is Dhul-Kifl? We have already seen verses from the Quran in Study 6 stating that prophets were sent by God in all nations. For example, “For every nation there is a messenger” (10:47). A verse was quoted in Study 8 in which the Holy Prophet was told: “And (We sent) messengers We have mentioned to you before and messengers We have not mentioned to you” (4:164). Another such verse is the following:

“And certainly We sent messengers before you — among them are those We have mentioned to you and among them are those We have not mentioned to you.” (40:78)

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْهُمْ مَنْ قَصَصْنَا عَلَيْكَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ لَمْ نَقْصُصْ عَلَيْكَ^ط

On this basis, Muslims can accept the founders and great men of the religions before Islam as prophets of their times and their nations, even though their names might not be mentioned in the Quran. One such founder of religion who can be accepted is Buddha, the founder of a religion with a huge following over a large part of the world.

- The first verse in the Quran about fasting runs:

“O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you **as it was prescribed for those before you**, so that you may guard against evil.” (2:183)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ
كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَتَّقُونَ

It is well-known that Buddha, before attaining to the status of Buddha (‘the enlightened’ or the ‘awakened one’), undertook a very severe form of fasting over a long period in order to achieve ‘enlightenment’. Therefore, the statement above, about fasting being prescribed to those before the time of Islam, in order to learn to refrain from wrong desires, applies to the Buddha.

The author of a book, *The Sacred Science*, Nick Polizzi, writes in an article entitled *Jesus did this, Buddha did this, Muhammad did this*:

“What do Jesus, Muhammad, and the Buddha all have in common? They each turned to a particular ancient wellness practice **during the most**

transformative and trying periods of their lives. If you were raised Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Rastafarian, or Mormon, you're probably familiar with the concept of *fasting*. Is it just a coincidence that these heroic people, who lived thousands of miles (and hundreds of years) from each other, all turned to this specific protocol in their hour of need?"

If Buddha fits the same pattern as Jesus and the Prophet Muhammad, then according to the principles of the Quran he too was a prophet like them.

- How is Dhul Kifl relevant here? The verse of the Quran quoted at the top of this Study (21:85) describes him among those who were a **model of patience**. That is what Buddha showed for many years as he tried to attain enlightenment. Ishmael (Ismail) is also mentioned in that verse. He too showed patience. When his father Abraham put it to him: "My son, I have seen in a dream that I should sacrifice you: so consider what you think", he replied: "My father, do as you are commanded; if Allah please, **you will find me patient**" (37:102).
- The word *Dhul Kifl* means 'the one having the quality of *kifl*', or one belonging to *kifl*. Buddha was born in Kapilvastu (Nepal). This means the city of Kapil, as the word *vastu* means a 'place of dwelling'. (The word *vastu* is like the Urdu word *basti*. In fact, another name for Kapilvastu is Kapilbastu.) Thus Buddha was from the city of Kapil. The word *Kapil* would be represented in Arabic by a word like *Kifl*, since there is no letter *p* in Arabic, and often the letter *p* of a non-Arabic word is represented by *f* in Arabic. Hence the name Dhul Kifl can indicate the man from Kifl or Kapil.
- Then there is the word Buddha itself. Meaning the 'enlightened' or 'one raised to life', it was a title applied to him after attaining his enlightenment. This is close to the Arabic word *ba'ath* (بعث) which is applied to the appointment or raising of a prophet by Allah. In verses already quoted in Study 6 and Study 7 it is stated:

"Mankind is a single nation (*ummah*).
So Allah raised (بعث) prophets as
bearers of good news and as
warners...." (2:213)

كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ النَّبِيِّينَ
مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ

"And certainly We raised (بعثنا) in
every nation a messenger, saying:
Serve Allah and shun the devil."
(16:36)

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَ
اجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ

The word Buddha is thus similar to the word *ba'ath* in both form and meaning. Perhaps this indicates that he too was a prophet. More on this point in the next Study.