

**Fast 30: Prophets and Messengers — Prophet Muhammad as culmination**

- Chapter 7 of the Quran mentions several prophets, starting with Adam (7:11–25). It moves on to brief accounts of others prophets (7:59–93). After this, it deals with the story of Moses and the later Israelites at some length (7:103–171). It interrupts the story of Moses with a mention of the mission of the Holy Prophet Muhammad in two verses, 7:157–158, and then it resumes the story of Moses, continuing with the later history of the Israelites, in 7:159–171.
- It interrupts the story of Moses after mentioning the incident of the “golden calf”, when during Moses’ absence the Israelites reverted to idol-worship and made a golden calf for worship. It then mentions some punishment befalling them, after which Moses prayed to God and asked forgiveness for his people’s sins. Moses said to God:

“Will You destroy us for what the foolish among us have done? It is only Your trial. You cause to perish by it whom You please and guide whom You please. You are our Protector, so forgive us and have mercy on us, and You are the Best of those who forgive. And ordain for us good in this world’s life and in the Hereafter, for surely we turn to You.” (7:155–156).

The reply from Allah is as follows:

“He said: I afflict with My punishment whom I please, and My mercy encompasses all things. So I ordain it for those who keep their duty and give the due charity, and those who believe in Our messages — those who follow the Messenger-Prophet, the *Ummi* (unlettered), whom they find mentioned in the Torah and the Gospel. He enjoins them good and forbids them evil, and makes lawful to them the good things and prohibits for them impure things, and removes from them their burden and the shackles which were on them. 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.” (7:156–157)

How is it that Allah replied to Moses by saying that His mercy is especially for “those who follow the Messenger-Prophet, the *Ummi* (unlettered), whom they find mentioned in the Torah and the Gospel”? The Gospel was yet 1400 years in the future and the *Ummi* Messenger-Prophet was a further 600 years later, while the sins of Moses’ people took place now.

The reply refers to the fact that the reverting of the Israelites to idol-worship would continue to take place in the future, again and again. Allah will punish them for it and

would also, after punishment, show them mercy. That this happened from the time of Moses to the time Jesus brought the Gospel is easily confirmed from a reading of the Israelite history in their own scriptures of the Old Testament of the Bible. To earn His mercy the Israelites would have to be of “those who keep their duty and give the due charity, and those who believe in Our messages”. The Quran then changes the subject to the future and says that the greatest bestowal of that mercy has come in the appearance of “the Messenger-Prophet, the *Ummi* (unlettered), whom they find mentioned in the Torah and the Gospel.”

But it is his teachings about good and evil, and the lawful and the unlawful, which would bring mercy on those who follow them. Acting on those teachings, they would become free from the burden of sins of their past history and the shackles which previously prevented them from obtaining liberation from slavery to those sins. So, while speaking of Moses’ prayer that his followers be forgiven for sins such as making and worshipping the golden calf, the Quran indicates that they would continue to revert to such sins and that they would find the final path of deliverance from all those sins, and mercy from God, when the Prophet Muhammad arose.

- In the next verse the Holy Prophet is directed as follows:

“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. There is no god but He; He gives life and causes death. So believe in Allah and His Messenger, the *Ummi* (unlettered) Prophet who believes in Allah and His words, and follow him so that you may be guided aright.” (7:158)

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا  
الَّذِي لَهُ مَلِكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآ إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ  
يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ فَأَمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ النَّبِيِّ الْأُمِّيِّ  
الَّذِي يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَكَلِمَاتِهِ وَاتَّبِعُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ  
تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٨﴾

Having mentioned previous prophets in this chapter, and said that they were sent to “their people” and they addressed them, this verse tells the Prophet Muhammad to address all mankind and proclaim that he is the Messenger of Allah to them all (the Arabic word for “all” here being *jamī’ā*).

- At the next verse, the Quran resumes the story of the transgressions of the Israelites, continuing it till verse 171. But that next verse is as follows:

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

وَمِنْ قَوْمِ مُوسَى أُمَّةٌ يَهْتَدُونَ بِالْحَقِّ وَبِهِ  
يَعْدِلُونَ ﴿١٥٩﴾

Despite all the transgressions of the Israelites, recorded in detail in the Bible, the Quran says that a group of them will always adhere to the truth and do justice. This verse is an answer to the allegation against Islam that it is an anti-semitic religion and is “against the Jews”. A verse occurring a little later also provides an answer to this allegation. It says about the dispersal of the Jews in the world:

“And We divided them in the earth into (different) groups — some of them are righteous and some of them are otherwise.” (7:168)

وَقَطَّعْنَاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أُمَّمًا مِّنْهُمْ الصَّالِحُونَ وَمِنْهُمْ دُونَ ذَلِكَ

Both these verses show that the Quran recognises that there were, and are, good people among the Jews. Therefore the Quran’s condemnation of the wrong-doing of the Jews (which is mentioned also in the Bible) is due to the acts of wrong-doing and not because of the race or religion of the people involved.

- It is well known and recognized that in relating the history of the Israelites after Moses, the Quran is indicating that the history of Islam would follow the same course and Muslims after the early centuries of Islam would commit the same transgressions. Therefore the verse 7:159 quoted above is not only about “Moses’ people” but also about Muslims. It means that despite the deviation and moral degeneration of the Muslims there would always be a party of them adhering to the truth and doing justice. This is directly mentioned in the Quran in a command to Muslims as follows:

“And from among you there should be a community who invite to good and enjoin the right and forbid the wrong. And these are they who are successful.” (3:104)

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠٤﴾

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*And lastly, Eid Mubarak to all readers of these Quran Studies,*

*Wishing all of you a very happy and blessed Eid!*