

Fast 27: Belief in all earlier revelation

- The next verse in the passage from the beginning of chapter 2 of the Quran that we have been discussing, relating to the fundamental beliefs required for a Muslim, is as follows:

“and who believe in what has been revealed to you (O Prophet) and what was revealed before you, and of the Hereafter they are sure.” — ch. 2, v. 4

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ
مِن قَبْلِكَ ۚ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ ۗ

- Here Muslims are required to believe in all revelation that came before the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, but it is mentioned *after* belief in the revelation which came to him in the form of the Quran. The reason is that, when the Quran was revealed, the only way left of believing in the revelation which came before it was through this new revelation. Due to the passage of time that had elapsed since the earlier revelations, there was no longer any strong evidence that these had been revelations from God. In fact, they did not even exist in a confirmed and reliable form. It was the Quran which, by providing evidence of its own revelation, showed that the earlier scriptures had also been revelations.
- This is why the Quran repeatedly speaks of itself as:
 - “verifying that which is with you” (ch. 2, v. 41)
 - “verifying that which they have” (ch. 2, v. 89, v. 91, v. 101)
 - “verifying that which is before it” (ch. 2, v. 97)
 - “verifying that which is before it of the Book” (ch. 5, v. 48)

and there are other places where such expressions occur. The Quran tells us that for Islam itself to be a true religion from God, the earlier religions must have been truly revealed as well in their own times. Religions form one system. This is why the Quran sometimes uses the word “Book” to mean **all revelation**, including the revealed books before it. In ch. 2, v. 177, quoted in Study 23, we saw that Muslims are required to believe in “the Book and the prophets”. In ch. 2, v. 213 it is stated that “Allah raised prophets ... and He revealed with them the Book”, and in ch. 5, v. 48, partly quoted just above, the Holy Prophet Muhammad is told:

“And We have revealed to you the Book with the truth, verifying what is (already) before it of the Book” — ch. 5, v. 48

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا
بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ

The “verifying” of what came before the Quran, as mentioned here, means verifying that the earlier scriptures were, in their origin, revelations from God to His true prophets. It does not mean that these scriptures were still in their original forms.

- Ch. 2, v. 4, quoted at the head of this Study, mentions only the requirement to believe in the revelation to the Holy Prophet Muhammad and the revelations before him. This means that there can be *no* revelation from God after the completion of the Quran, no revelation which Muslims are *required to believe in* as part of their faith.

Of course, God’s speaking to an individual in a personal sense, by word, dream or vision, is an experience which Islam recognises as taking place before, during and after the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. The speaking of God to an individual in that sense is mentioned in the Quran when it tells us that God spoke to the mother of Moses and to Mary, the mother of Jesus. Twice in the Quran, God says “We revealed” (أَوْحَيْنَا) to the mother of Moses (ch. 20, v. 38, ch. 28, v. 7), but any such revelation does not constitute part of a “book” of God which everyone else is obliged to believe in. The Quran and Hadith tell us, quite plainly and explicitly, that such communication from God, to strengthen the faith of a believer, will always continue:

“Those who say, Our Lord is Allah, then continue in the right way, the angels descend upon them saying: Do not fear, nor grieve, and receive good news of the Garden which you were promised.” (The Quran, ch. 41, v. 30)

- Since revelation came to prophets, although they are not mentioned in ch. 2, v. 4, they are mentioned later in ch. 2, giving some names as examples:

“(O Muslims) Say: We believe in Allah and (in) what has been revealed to us, and (in) what was revealed to Abraham, and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and (in) what was given to Moses and Jesus, and (in) what was given to the prophets from their Lord, we make no distinction between any of them and to Him we submit.” — ch. 2, v. 136

قُولُوا آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ
إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَ
الْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَمَا أُوتِيَ
النَّبِيِّونَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ ۗ لَا نَقْرُبُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ
مِّنْهُمْ ۗ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٦﴾

The last word of the above verse is *muslimoon*, plural of *Muslim*. This shows that to be a Muslim, after believing in God comes believing in His revelation to His prophets. A few of the prophets are named here, and they are those who are accepted by the Jews and Christians, but the mention at the end of believing in the revelation “to the prophets from their Lord” shows that revelation to every prophet of the world is included.