

The Eloquence of The Qur’anic Interlude the Characteristics of The Prophets from Verse 49 - 56 In Surat Maryam as An Example

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the eloquence of the Qur’anic interlude and its miraculousness in a number of verses from the Qur’an. The use of the interlude does not consider the pronunciation only, but it is also used to complement the Qur’anic meaning. The function of the Qur’anic interlude appears in the choice of words, and it appears in the preference of one word over another in the verses that are concluded with the attributes of the mentioned prophets, peace and blessings be upon them, from Prophet Abraham to Prophet Enoch in Surat Maryam, from verse 49 to 56. The study particularly investigates why these verses end with His saying: “A truthful person and a prophet, we made each of them sincere and a prophet messenger, true to his promise, and we granted him a highly respected status.” This study follows the inductive approach, by studying the interpretation of these verses, and the deductive approach, by deducing the rhetorical purposes of the interlude in the verses under study. The eloquence of the Qur’anic interlude is used to complement the meaning in the Qur’anic context. Surat Maryam refutes the statements of the People of the Book regarding Jesus, peace and blessings be upon him, and regarding other prophets of God.

Keywords: *The Eloquence of The Quranic Interlude, Surat Maryam, Prophets’ Characteristics*

INTRODUCTION

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all worlds. All praise is for Allah who has revealed to His servant the Quran in clear Arabic, devoid of crookedness. Peace and blessings be upon the master of creation and all the messengers of Allah, as well as upon his family and companions. And now to proceed. Indeed, the Noble Quran remains the miracle of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). This book, revealed in the most eloquent style, with the most truthful meanings, and the clearest expressions, has challenged humanity throughout the ages, from the most articulate of people to our present day. Yet, no one has been able to produce its equal. The Quran's miraculous nature extends beyond limits; it is miraculous in its letters, words, and sentences, miraculous in its structure, interludes, and beyond. The Quranic interlude (waqf) is indeed one of the greatest manifestations of this miracle. Within it lie hidden meanings and secrets that require contemplation and deep insight to grasp, enabling the thoughtful reader to comprehend the secret of its eloquence.

Scholars, commentators, and literary figures have spoken about the Quranic interlude. Some have discussed it in terms of literary artistry, while others have regarded it as a color among the hues of eloquence. There are those who have written about it in terms of its significance as evidence of the miraculous nature of the Quran.

In this research, I have chosen to discuss the Quranic interlude in terms of its significance as evidence of the Quranic miracle. My focus is on the verses that conclude with descriptions of the prophets, peace be upon them in Surah Maryam from verse 49 to verse 56. I seek guidance and success from Allah in my endeavor.

The study problem

The study problem can be articulated into through one main question:

"Why were the verses that spoke about the prophets, from Abraham to Enoch peace be upon them, concluded with phrases like: 'a truthful friend and prophet,' 'a tongue of truth on high,' 'devoted and a messenger prophet,' 'Aaron was a prophet,' 'and he was a messenger prophet,' 'a truthful friend and prophet,' and 'held in high esteem'?"

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STUDY OBJECTIVES

Highlighting the Quranic miracle in the consideration of Quranic interludes.

The secret behind concluding each verse in the studied verses with specific phrases.

STUDY IMPORTANCE

Firstly, I have always wondered about the secret behind concluding these verses with specific phrases; why, here, was Abraham, peace be upon him, described as 'a truthful friend and prophet,' while in other verses, he was described with other attributes with compassion and kindness. Hence, the significance of this study lies in attempting to ponder over the Quranic verses firstly.

Secondly, demonstrating the connection between Quranic verses with the context of the verses and the theme of the surah.

Thirdly, the absence of specialized studies on these verses, which is the subject of this study.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

Specialized studies on Quranic interludes and Surah Maryam have been numerous, yet none have addressed the specific topic of this research. Some of these studies include:

The Interlude and Prosody in Surah Maryamas as a model: The Stories of Zechariah and Maryam as Examples" by Dr. Hassani Al-Sayed Mohammed Al-Talawi, Al-Azhar University, Annual Journal of the Faculty of Arabic Language.

Diversity of Quranic Interludes in Surah Maryam" by Amal Mohamed Abdul Kareem AL Abdullah, Basra Research Journal (Humanities), but it did not address the specific verses studied here.

THE STUDY LIMITS

My research focuses on the verses concluding with the descriptions of the prophets, peace be upon them, from verse 42 to verse 57 of Surah Maryam.

THE STUDY METHODOLOGY

I adopted a rigorous inductive methodology in my research, meticulously scrutinizing the interpretations provided by commentators regarding these verses. Furthermore, I employed a deductive approach to extract the rhetorical objectives of the interludes within the verses under investigation.

This study is structured into an introduction, two main sections, and a conclusion.

The first section delves into an in-depth exploration of the Quranic interludes and their critical importance, alongside an extensive elucidation of Surah Maryam. This section is further divided into two robust sub-sections:

The first sub-section delves into an exhaustive exploration of Quranic interludes, elucidating their essence and profound significance as evidence of the Quranic miracle.

The second section, meanwhile, focuses on the Quranic interludes within the verses that discuss the attributes of the prophets in Surah Maryam. It is further divided into three robust sub-sections:

The first sub-section delves into the portrayal of Prophet Abraham, peace be upon him, and his descendants.

The second sub-section explores the depiction of Prophet Moses and Prophet Aaron, peace be upon them.

The third sub-section examines the depiction of Prophet Ishmael and Prophet Enoch, peace be upon them.

FIRST SECTION

INTRODUCTION TO QURANIC INTERLUDES AND SURAH MARYAM

THE FIRST SUB-SECTION: QURANIC INTERLUDES

The term "interlude" refers to the separation between two entities, the dividing line between two entities. It is also said about the judge that he "faisal" because he separates between truth and falsehood”

In terminology, Al-Rummani defined interludes as "similar letters in endings that ensure the clear understanding of meanings." Al-Rummani believes that all interludes are a form of eloquence because they are a means to convey the necessary meanings. He indicates that the interludes in the Quran, with their variety in positioning, omission, and shifts between forms, serve to enhance the meaning. This is considered a form of eloquence. Therefore, he distinguishes between interludes and rhyme, as rhyme follows the words, while interludes follow the meaning. Consequently, the advancing or delaying of words within the interlude is done to preserve the meaning.

This interlude can occur in similar letters, as in Allah's saying: "We have not sent down to you the Quran that you be distressed, but only as a reminder for those who fear [Allah]. A revelation from He who created the earth and highest heavens" (Surah Taha, 2-4).

Interludes can also occur in similar letters, as in Allah's saying: "Nun. By the pen and what they inscribe, you are not, [O Muhammad], by the favor of your Lord, a madman. And indeed, for you is a reward uninterrupted. And indeed, you are of a great moral character" (Surah Al-Qalam, 68:1-4), where the first verses end with the letter "nun" and the following with the letter "mim." Similarly, in the verse: "All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds - The Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful" (Surah Al-Fatiha, 1:1-2), the surah relies on a Quranic interlude combining the sounds of "mim" (ميم) and "nun.(نون) "

In linguistics: "The endings of the verses in the Book of Allah are interludes akin to the rhymes in poetry. The entirety of the Book of Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, is composed of such interludes, with each one being called a 'interlude'."

All the definitions provided by scholars, despite their varied expressions, agree on the meaning that a interlude is "the word with which a Quranic verse ends." It comes to complete the meaning "with harmonized and closely related letters that have a strong and evocative sound pattern."

The Quranic interlude is a manifestation of the miraculous nature of the Quran. This miracle is more evident in the Quranic interlude than in other aspects, as it can be "more impactful on the soul, more convincing to the mind, more delightful, and more impressive in persuasion.

Indeed, anyone with a knack for eloquence can recognize the magnificence of the Quranic interlude. Al-Jahiz mentioned in "Al-Bayan wa Al-Tabyin" that a man during the time of Umar ibn Al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, recited: "But if you slip after clear proofs have come to you, then know that Allah is Forgiving and Merciful." An Arab Bedouin heard him and said, "This cannot be," meaning that Allah would not mention forgiveness alongside slipping, as it might encourage people to slip . The Bedouin's words were correct, as the actual ending of the verse is "Almighty and Wise" (Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:209). The Bedouin, with his innate linguistic intuition, understood that the verse could not end with "Forgiving and Merciful.

"The matter of the Quranic interlude in the Book of Allah follows a unique and wise pattern, completing the meaning and enhancing the expression. It does not adhere to the constraints found in the rhyme of poetry, such as the prohibition against what follows the rhyme or against having two consecutive equal rhymes. In the Quran, there can be two equal interludes, which can be adjacent, and what follows the interlude may be connected to it." An example of this is Allah's saying: 'And indeed, you pass by them in the morning, and at night. Then will you not reason?' (Surah As-Saffat, 37:137-138)."

I will provide examples here to illustrate the eloquence of Quranic interludes in the Book of Allah, the Almighty.

Allah says: "Say, 'Have you considered: if Allah should make for you the night continuous until the Day of Resurrection, what deity other than Allah could bring you light? Then will you not hear?' Say, 'Have you considered: if Allah should make for you the day continuous until the Day of Resurrection, what deity other than Allah could bring you a night in which you may rest? Then will you not see?'" (Surah Al-Qasas, 28:71-72).

These two verses conclude with "Then will you not hear?" (أفلا تسمعون) in the first and "Then will you not see?" (أفلا تبصرون) in the second. The wisdom behind this, and Allah knows best the secrets of His Book, is that the first verse talks about the night, during which people rely more on hearing. Sound has a significant impact at night, which is why the night prayers are vocal. In contrast, the day is characterized by movement and work, which require vision. Therefore, the verse that speaks about the night ends with a reference to hearing, while the verse that speaks about the day ends with a reference to sight.

Allah says: "Ha Meem ((حم) . The revelation of the Book is from Allah, the Exalted in Might, the Knowing" (العزیز العليم) (Surah Ghafir:1-2). And He says: "The revelation of the Book is from Allah, the Exalted in Might, the Wise" (العزیز الحكيم) (Surah Al-Jathiya, 45:2).

Why does the first verse end with "the Knowing" (العليم) and the second with "the Wise" (الحكيم)?

The verse in Surah Ghafir concludes with "the Knowing" (العليم) because it is followed by the statement: "Forgiver of sin and Acceptor of repentance" (غافر الذنب وقابل التوب), which necessitates knowledge. Allah's knowledge encompasses everything, and He knows who deserves forgiveness and who does not. As for the verses in Surah Al-Jathiya, as well as Surah Al-Ahqaf and Surah Az-Zumar, they end with "the Wise" (الحكيم) because they discuss the creation of the heavens and the earth, the blessings of Allah in this universe, and the manifestations of His mercy and power. All of these are evidence of Allah's wisdom, as all His actions are guided by wisdom.

"He knows what penetrates into the earth and what emerges from it and what descends from the heaven and what ascends therein. And He is the Merciful, the Forgiving." (Surah Saba, 34:2)

In this verse, mercy is mentioned before forgiveness because the context emphasizes Allah's power, knowledge, and care for all creatures, encompassing everything in the heavens and the earth, including the sun, the moon, the night, and the day. Therefore, mercy was deemed more appropriate to be highlighted first. As for other verses where forgiveness precedes mercy, they are often mentioned in the context of human sins. This underscores the human need for forgiveness initially, followed by the additional blessing of mercy.

In the verses mentioning the glad tidings given to Abraham (peace be upon him) about the birth of a son, the attribute of "haleem" (حليم) (forbearing) is specifically mentioned in Surah As-Saffat (37:101), while in Surah Adh-Dhariyat (51:28) and Surah Al-Hijr (15:53), the attribute mentioned is "aleem" (عليم) (knowledgeable). Ibn Al-Zubair mentioned that the recipient of the glad tidings in Surah As-Saffat and Surah Adh-Dhariyat is the same person, referring to Ishmael. However, Surah Al-Hijr describes the attributes in reference to Ishaq (peace be upon them both). This indicates that Ishmael was granted a special virtue over Ishaq. The reason for this preference could be attributed to the fact that Ishmael demonstrated patience and acceptance of Allah's decree when Abraham informed him about his vision of sacrificing him, responding with, "O my father, do as you are commanded. You will find me, if Allah wills, of the steadfast" (Quran 37:102). This reaction reflects his patience and acceptance, thus earning him the attribute of "haleem." As for Surah Adh-Dhariyat and Surah Al-Hijr, they describe the qualities of Ishaq, indicating that Ishmael was distinguished with the attribute of forbearance over Ishaq. This is because forbearance typically follows knowledge.

THE SECOND SECTION, SURAH MARYAM

Surah Maryam is a Meccan surah by consensus among scholars. The name "Maryam" is attributed to the surah conventionally. Maryam's name is mentioned several times in the Quran, and she is the only woman whose name is specifically mentioned in the Quran.

The general theme of the verses in Surah Maryam, like other Meccan surahs, revolves around establishing evidence for the Oneness of Allah, refuting the notion of partners or offspring for Allah, and addressing the issue of resurrection, which is based on the concept of monotheism. As for the specific theme, it elucidates Allah's absolute power and His decisive will in defying the norms of the universe. This is exemplified in the fact that Allah granted Zechariah, despite his old age and his wife's infertility, a child, and bestowed upon Maryam a child without a husband. This serves to refute the Christian claim that Allah has taken Jesus as a son or partner.

Then, it mentions parts of the story of Abraham (peace be upon him) and refers to some prophets including Ishaq, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Ishmael, Enoch, Adam, and Nuh (peace be upon them all), as well as our Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The purpose of these stories is to affirm the Oneness of Allah and the resurrection, refute the notion of partners or offspring for Allah, and illustrate the distinction between the path of guidance and the path of misguidance. Undoubtedly, these stories also aim to highlight the truthfulness of these prophets in conveying the message of Allah. They were truthful to Allah, and in turn, Allah, in His glory, affirmed their truthfulness. These prophets were chosen by Allah and elevated their status by what He revealed to them.

The Surah opens with the story of the birth of John the Baptist, peace be upon him, to an old father and a barren mother. Despite their advanced age and the apparent impossibility of childbirth, Allah, by His power, answered the prayer of Prophet Zechariah and blessed him with a righteous son. It then transitions to the birth of Prophet Isa (Jesus), peace be upon him, from a mother without a father, highlighting his miraculous birth and his defense of his mother against accusations of immorality. The Surah then narrates a part of the story of Abraham and his debate with his father regarding idol worship, before mentioning some other prophets, peace be upon them.

After that, the Surah addresses the polytheists who denied the resurrection, warning them that disbelievers will be gathered with the devils and threatening those who claim superiority over believers. The verses warn them that Allah is capable of destroying them just as He destroyed past nations due to their arrogance and transgression. It emphasizes that Allah only grants respite to the wrongdoers, and undoubtedly, those worshipped besides Allah will be enemies to them on the Day of Judgment.

Then the Surah distinguishes between the righteous who approach Allah with honor and the disbelievers who will be driven forcefully into Hellfire. It condemns those who attribute offspring to Allah, contrasting their claims with the approval of Allah, Exalted be He, for the righteous believers. The Quran was revealed to give glad tidings to the righteous and warn the disbelievers.

This Surah has a special context, as it presents emotions and sentiments, both within human souls and within the universe around them. The seemingly inert universe is depicted in this context as possessing its own soul, feelings, and emotions that contribute to shaping the overall atmosphere of the Surah. We witness the heavens, the earth, and the mountains becoming enraged and stirred up to the point where they seem almost ready to burst and crack in indignation at the audacity of those who attribute offspring to the Most Merciful, which is not befitting of His Majesty.

Indeed, the predominant themes in the Surah are those of mercy and contentment. This is evident in the supplication of Prophet Zechariah to his Lord, as well as in the frequent mention of the name "Ar-Rahman" (the Most Merciful) throughout the Surah.

This is a summary of what is mentioned in Surah Maryam, which spreads the shades of mercy - as you said - and you can feel that the Surah has a unique musical rhythm, "so that its words and interludes ring with ease, and depth, such as the words: radiance, serenity, intimacy, salvation. As for the places that require intensity and violence, they often come with an interlude, emphasized: opposition, guidance, restraint.

WHY SURAH MARYAM MENTIONED THIS TRIO OF PROPHETS ONLY?

This issue intrigued me, as well as many other scholars. Why did Allah, in this Surah named after Maryam, mention these prophets, peace be upon them?

"What seems to me - and Allah knows best - is that Allah, in this Surah named after Maryam, wanted to highlight how Zakariyya (peace be upon him) prayed for offspring and was granted John (John), who came before the arrival of Jesus (peace be upon him). Then the mention of Jesus (peace be upon him) follows, who is the focus of this Surah. The Surah also refutes false beliefs about Jesus, emphasizing that he is not a deity or the son of God, but a prophet like others. Then it mentions a series of prophets starting with Abraham, the father of prophets, refuting the claims of Jews and Christians regarding their lineage. The mention of these prophets comes after the story of Maryam and her son, as stated in Surah Al-Imran, where Allah says: "O People of the

Book! Why do you argue about Abraham, while the Torah and the Gospel were not revealed until long after him? Do you not understand? O People of the Book! Why do you argue about Abraham, while the Torah and the Gospel were not revealed until long after him? Do you not understand? Here you are! You disputed about what you have little knowledge of, but why do you now argue about what you have no knowledge of? Allah knows and you do not know. Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian; he submitted in all uprightness and was not a polytheist,(Al-Imran, 65-67).

And Allah honored Abraham with two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, starting with the mention of Isaac, who is the origin of the Children of Israel and their prophets. Then He mentioned his son Jacob, followed by Moses and Aaron, to illustrate that Allah answered Abraham's prayer when he asked Allah to grant him a truthful reputation: "And grant me a reputation of honor among later generations" (Ash-Shu'ara: 84).

O my Lord! Grant me (a son) from among the righteous." (Surah As-Saffat: 100)

Then Ishmael was mentioned, indicating that Allah answered the supplication of Abraham regarding Ishmael, who was righteous, true to his promise, and pleasing to his Lord. Then the mention of Enoch, upon him be peace, followed, whom Allah elevated to a high status. It is reported in the traditions of the Night Journey that the Prophet, peace be upon him, encountered Isa and John, peace be upon them, in the second heaven, while he saw Enoch in the fourth heaven.

SECTION TWO

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROPHETS FROM VERSE 49 TO VERSE 56.

THE FIRST POINT: ABRAHAM, ISHAQ, AND YA'QUB, PEACE BE UPON THEM

We learned that Surah Maryam tells us about Prophet Zechariah and his son John, peace be upon them, then it narrates the story of Lady Maryam and her son Isa, peace be upon him. It then transitions to the narrative of Prophet Abraham, peace be upon him, focusing on the dialogue between him and his father. This is fitting with the theme of the Surah, which addresses those who disbelieve in the signs of Allah and claim that they will be given wealth and offspring. Later in the Surah, it illustrates how the heavens are almost torn apart, the earth is split open, and the mountains crumble because they attribute offspring to the Most Merciful.

The mention of Prophet Abraham, peace be upon him, is directly connected to this theme. We know that the Christians and Jews claim that Prophet Abraham, peace be upon him, was one of them. Therefore, his mention comes immediately after the discussion about Isa and his mother in order to refute this claim.

And let us contemplate the noble verses," God Almighty said. "And mention in the Book the story of Abraham. Indeed, he was a man of truth and a prophet. when he said to his father, 'O my father, why do you worship that which does not hear and does not see and will not benefit you at all? O my father, indeed there has come to me of knowledge that which has not come to you, so follow me; I will guide you to an even path. . . . And each of them We made a prophet." (Maryam: 41-49)

When you examine the noble verses, you find this progression from Abraham (peace be upon him) to his father in these calls, carrying the qualities of kindness and compassion towards his father. The first is "Why do you worship," the second "Indeed, knowledge has come to me that did not come to you," the third is his admonition against worshipping Satan, and the fourth is the fear that his father may incur punishment from the Most Merciful. Then there is a dialogue between him and his father, where the hardness of the father's heart is apparent, as if mercy has been stripped from it, "If you do not desist, I will surely stone you, so avoid me a prolonged time." On the contrary, the mercy of the son is evident: "Peace be upon you. I will ask forgiveness for you from my Lord..." Abraham found no recourse but to disassociate himself from his father and their idols, and to supplicate his Lord, for he would not be miserable in his prayers.

What matters here is the Quranic interlude: "He was a man of truth, a prophet." Before discussing this phrase, it's worth noting that Abraham (peace be upon him) was described with other qualities in various verses. These descriptions serve as a separator for the verse in which they appear. In Surah At-Tawbah, Allah says: "And

Abraham's prayer for forgiveness of his father was only because of a promise he had made to him. But when it became apparent to him that he [his father] was an enemy to Allah, he dissociated himself from him. Indeed was Abraham compassionate and patient." (Quran 9:114) And in Surah Hud, Allah says: "Indeed, Abraham was forbearing, grieving and [frequently] returning [to Allah]." (Quran 11:75).

Al-Alusi said: "Indeed, Abraham was forbearing," meaning he was not quick to seek revenge against those who wronged him. He was "awwāh," frequently sighing over sins and feeling deep sorrow for people, and "munīb," constantly returning to God. The purpose of describing him with these attributes, which indicate compassion and a soft heart, is to explain what motivated him to engage in argumentation. His forbearance implied patience and deliberation in all matters, highlighting that his argumentation arose from his inherent calmness and wisdom, which became evident once fear had subsided and the good news had arrived, something that is clear.

As for His words in Surah At-Tawbah, "Indeed, Abraham was compassionate and forbearing," this came after it became clear that his father was an enemy to God. The term (الأواه) "awwāh" has been interpreted as someone who is humble and fervent in supplication. Zaid bin Aslam said it refers to someone who prays to God like a patient sighing from illness. "Haleem" (حليم) means patient and enduring of harm. It seems that the reason for ending the verse as it was ended is that the reason for seeking forgiveness was solely due to Abraham's promise to his father. This emphasizes the obligation to refrain from seeking forgiveness for a disbeliever after it has been confirmed that he persists in his disbelief. "It is as if it were said: 'He, peace be upon him, disavowed him after it became clear, and he is in full possession of a tender heart and forbearance, so others must be even more careful to avoid seeking forgiveness and disavowal.'"

Let us return to the verse at hand: "And mention in the Book the story of Abraham. Indeed, he was a man of truth and a prophet." I have said that the verses presented us with a compelling dialogue with his father, who was a disbeliever. Undoubtedly, one of his primary tasks in his call to God was to start by inviting his father. The dialogue with the father carries inherent difficulties, as Abraham lived in a society that imposed submission to the father by the son. Therefore, we find Abraham using an emotional approach, addressing a person dear and close to him. He persuades his father that knowledge has come to him that did not come to his father. However, the father wields authority over his son, threatening him with force, expulsion, and abandonment. Nevertheless, Abraham remained truthful.

"And 'ṣiddīq' (truthful) is one of the emphatic forms. It implies the extreme truthfulness and the abundance of what he believed from the unseen matters of God, His signs, His scriptures, and His messengers. The predominant aspect of this truthfulness was regarding the scriptures and messengers, meaning he believed in all the prophets and their scriptures, and he was a prophet himself". Al-Razi said: "He was 'ṣiddīqan nabiyyā' (a truthful prophet). There are two interpretations of 'ṣiddīq': one is that it is an emphatic form of being truthful, which means it was his habit to be truthful, as this structure indicates such a characteristic. The second interpretation is that he was known for his frequent affirmation of the truth until he became renowned for it. The first interpretation is more appropriate because one who affirms something is not described as 'ṣiddīq' unless he is truthful in that affirmation, thus it returns to the first interpretation. If it is said, 'Didn't Allah say: And those who believe in Allah and His messengers – those are the truthful and the martyrs [Al-Hadid: 19]?' We say: Those who believe in Allah and His messengers are truthful in that affirmation. Know that a prophet must be truthful in everything he reports because Allah has confirmed him, and whoever Allah confirms is truthful; otherwise, it would imply lying in Allah's words. Consequently, this necessitates that the messenger is truthful in everything he says. Additionally, the messengers are the witnesses of Allah over the people, as Allah said: So how [will it be when We bring from every nation a witness and We bring you, O Muhammad], against these people as a witness [An-Nisa: 41]? A witness's statement is only accepted if they are not lying. So, it is established that every prophet must be a 'ṣiddīq' (truthful), but not every 'ṣiddīq' needs to be a prophet. This shows the proximity of the rank of 'ṣiddīq' to that of the prophet. Therefore, it transitions from mentioning his being a 'ṣiddīq' to mentioning his being a prophet".

"From this, we find that the attribute of truthfulness ('ṣiddīqīya') precedes prophethood because truthfulness is a prerequisite for prophethood and is an antecedent quality. As for 'nabi' (prophet), it comes from 'naba,' meaning a great news, or from 'naba' meaning to rise, which indicates a high status" .

The difference between a prophet (نبي, Nabi) and a messenger (رسول, Rasul):

Scholars have differed on the distinction between a prophet (nabi) and a messenger (rasul). According to the Sunni perspective, prophethood is defined as a person being chosen by God to receive divine revelation concerning a religious law, whether he is commanded to convey it or not. In contrast, messengership is the selection of a person to receive divine revelation with a religious law that he is commanded to convey to the people. Thus, a messenger is a human sent by God to deliver religious laws to people.

Based on this, a messenger is considered more specific than a prophet. The general characteristic of a prophet is that he receives revelation from God, whether he is commanded to convey it or not, while a messenger must convey the revelation. It has also been said that a prophet does not necessarily bring a new book or law, whereas a messenger must bring a new book or law. Another opinion holds that the terms are equivalent, meaning every prophet is also a messenger and vice versa, with no difference except in terms of their descriptive titles. When God says, "We have sent you," the term "messenger" is used, and when he informs the people of the laws, he is called a "prophet." Thus, prophethood and messengership are essentially one and the same .

In my view, there is no difference between them except in terms of their descriptive titles. This is indicated by what is narrated about Ishmael, peace be upon him, being described as both a messenger and a prophet. I will elaborate on this matter in the future.

The description of Abraham, peace be upon him, as "the truthful" (As-Sadiq) is closely related to the theme and context of the Surah . On one hand, the theme of the Surah revolves around the sincerity of Mary and the devotion to worshiping Allah alone. It highlights the truthfulness of Jesus in being a servant of Allah and not a deity or son of God, but rather a prophet sent by Allah. On the other hand, Abraham's entire life was characterized by truthfulness — with himself, his Lord, and the people around him. He did not flatter anyone in matters of truth, nor did he compromise on matters related to the message. His life was consumed by the message, making it the focus of his thoughts and endeavors. His spiritual experience was rich with diversity, governed by his relationship with Allah and his dedication to the message, reaching the highest levels of spirituality among the prophets and the truthful. Among his remarkable experiences that reflect his spiritual depth could be his interaction with his father.

Then the verses transitioned to discussing the prophets from the Children of Israel. Allah said: "So when he had withdrawn from them and what they worshipped besides Allah, We gave him Isaac and Jacob, and each of them We made a prophet. And We gave them of Our mercy, and we made for them a reputation of high honor." [Maryam: 49-50].

Isaac and Jacob were specifically mentioned here, while Ishmael was not, even though Allah had granted Ishmael before Isaac. Perhaps, and Allah knows best, this is because when Abraham left his people and departed from his homeland with his wife Sarah, Allah granted them Isaac and then Jacob as solace after leaving his father and his people. As for Ishmael, Allah willed for him to be distant from his father, in the honored city of Mecca.

As for the reason for concluding the verse with "And We made each of them a prophet," it is because the Children of Israel fabricated great falsehoods against their prophets, just as they fabricated against Jesus, peace be upon him. So, the verse ended with the attribute of prophethood. And the prophet, as mentioned earlier, may be from the word "naba," meaning great news, indicating their elevated status and the greatness of their position. They are far removed from any falsehood.

And the verse concluded with "And We made for them a reputation of high honor." The reputation of high honor refers to commendation and praise. "Aliya" (high) because all people of religions and laws praise and commend them. The attribute of truthfulness preceded that of high honor because it is the foundation and the cause of commendation and praise.

"Allah arranged the reward for Abraham in a splendid manner by rewarding him with the blessings of this world, which is noble progeny, and the blessing of the Hereafter, which is mercy. And he was rewarded with the combination of these two blessings, which is the tongue of truthfulness, as only those who have acquired both blessings are mentioned with it."

The second section: Our prophets Moses and Aaron, peace be upon them.

"Allah says: 'And mention in the Book, Moses. Indeed, he was chosen, and he was a messenger and a prophet. And We called him from the side of the mount at his right and brought him near, confiding to him. And We gave him out of Our mercy his brother Aaron as a prophet.'" (Quran, Surah Maryam, 19:51-53)

"Mentioning Moses after Jacob is because the discussion is about the prophets of the Children of Israel, and Moses and Aaron, peace be upon them, are from the lineage of our master Abraham, from the lineage of our master Isaac, peace and blessings be upon them."

"And He, glorified be He, described Moses as 'mukhlasan,' meaning that Allah chose him exclusively for Himself and made him His intimate. (i.e., 'mukhlasan'), it means that he dedicated himself to Allah. Ibn Ashur said: 'Moses was singled out with the title 'al-Mukhlis' (the sincere) in both senses because that was his distinguishing feature. He was sincere in calling people to Allah, even confronting the greatest tyrant, Pharaoh, and argued with him skillfully, as mentioned by Allah in Surah Ash-Shu'ara [18-19]: 'Have we not brought you up among us as a child? And you remained among us for years of your life. And [then] you did your deed which you did, and you were of the ungrateful.' Up to His saying: 'He said, "Then bring it, if you should be of the truthful.'" Also, what Allah narrated about him in Surah Al-Qasas [17]: 'He said, "My Lord, because You have favored me, I will never be an assistant to the criminals.'" Therefore, sincerity in fulfilling the trust of Allah distinguished him. And because Allah chose him for direct communication before sending the angel with revelation to him, he was sincere in that, meaning chosen, as that was his distinguishing feature. Allah says, 'And I have chosen you for Myself.' [Surah Taha: 41]"

"As for being 'a messenger prophet,' I have mentioned the scholars' opinions regarding the difference between a prophet and a messenger. It was mentioned that the prevailing view is that there is no difference between them except in the honorary titles. Some might ask: if there is no difference between the two words, why are they mentioned together here? The answer is that these two words are like the words 'faith' and 'submission' (Islam). When they separate, they come together, and when they come together, they separate. Similarly, they are like the words 'righteousness' and 'piety.' Wherever the message is mentioned, the meaning is conveying it, and when prophethood is mentioned, it refers to informing creation of the rulings. When they come together, each word carries its linguistic meaning: the messenger is the one who conveys the message from his Lord, and the prophet is elevated in status and position due to his prophethood."

Ibn al-Athir commented on the Prophet's statement to Bara' when he said, "And your messenger whom you sent," to which the Prophet responded, "And your prophet whom you sent." He said: "The Prophet responded in this manner to differentiate between the two expressions, while combining praise for him in both the context of prophethood and messengerhood. This serves as a dual acknowledgment of the blessing in both aspects, expressing gratitude in both regards." Regarding the term "Najiya" (we saved), it acts as a gerund, implying the effect of the intimate conversation. It refers to the secretive dialogue, resembling speech that no one else has spoken or heard, signifying the intimacy of communication. The term "closeness" can denote physical proximity, where Allah spoke to him, or it can indicate closeness in status, meaning we elevated his status and honored him with prophethood and messengerhood.

The Jews fabricated lies against Moses and Aaron, peace be upon them, after they killed Zachariah and John and attempted to kill Jesus, peace be upon him. They falsely accused them of misguidance. It is mentioned in Surah Taha, where Allah says, "So he produced for them a calf of saffron hue, and they said, "This is your god and the god of Moses, but he forgot.'" (Quran 20:88)

They said, "Moses has forgotten his Lord and went away in search of Him." This is one interpretation among the explanations provided by scholars.

Therefore, it seems that the Quranic verses describe Moses as a messenger prophet, sincere to God, and that Aaron was a prophet, to illustrate their esteemed status and refute the accusations made by the Children of Israel against them. This positioning of the attribute of being a messenger before that of being a prophet indicates the act of conveying, delivering the message to people. Undoubtedly, praising him for delivering goodness to people takes precedence over praising him for the elevation of his status before God, or perhaps because being a messenger encompasses a broader scope than being a prophet, as some scholars have suggested.

One of the early Muslims said, "No one interceded for another with a greater intercession in this world than Moses interceding for Aaron to become a prophet. Therefore, if God granted Aaron prophethood due to Moses's intercession, it indicates that Moses held a great position in the sight of God. Yet, Moses was a prophet and a messenger. So why do you exaggerate regarding Jesus and attribute divinity to him.

THE THIRD TOPIC: THE PROPHETS ISHMAEL AND ENOCH , PEACE BE UPON THEM

After mentioning Abraham , his son Ishaq, and his descendants, who are the Children of Israel, the discussion shifts to another son of Abraham , Ishmael , peace be upon him. He is the ancestor of our Master Muhammad, peace be upon him, and the Arabs are from his lineage.

And mention in the Book, Ishmael. Indeed, he was true to his promise, and he was a messenger, a prophet. And he used to enjoin on his people prayer and zakah and was to his Lord pleasing." (Quran, 19:54-55)

"And mention in the Book, Abraham. Indeed, he was a man of truth and a prophet. And mention in the Book, Moses. Indeed, he was chosen, and he was a messenger, a prophet. And We called him from the side of the mount at his right and brought him near, confiding to him. And We gave him out of Our mercy his brother Aaron as a prophet. And mention in the Book, Ishmael. Indeed, he was true to his promise, and he was a messenger, a prophet. And he used to enjoin on his people prayer and zakah and was to his Lord pleasing." (Quran, 19:41-55)

It was stated in his description

He was truthful in his promise. The promise here could be what was between him and Allah, meaning he was obedient to Allah in everything revealed to him, or what was between him and people, fulfilling every promise he made. No one made a promise that he did not fulfill, and the greatest promise was from him, his promise to his father to be among those who patiently endure the sacrifice.

"Messenger Prophet": Herein lies an indication that there is no difference between the two terms except in their descriptive titles. He was described here as a "Messenger Prophet," even though he came to convey the message of his father, Abraham , peace be upon him. The message implies the act of conveying, and prophethood signifies a lofty status. Ibn Kathir said: "And His saying, 'and he was a messenger prophet': in this is an indication of the honor of Ishmael over his brother Ishaq; because he was described only with prophethood, whereas Ishmael was described with both prophethood and messengerhood."

That he used to enjoin his family to observe prayer and give charity.

And he was pleasing to his Lord . This is the pinnacle of praise, as being pleasing to God signifies success in every obedience, attaining the highest ranks. Allah was pleased with him because he obeyed his father when he said to him, "O my son, indeed I have seen in a dream that I [must] sacrifice you, so see what you think." He said, "O my father, do as you are commanded. You will find me, if Allah wills, of the steadfast." (Quran, Surah As-Saffat, 37:102)

As for Enoch , peace be upon him, it is mentioned about him, "And mention in the Book, Enoch . Indeed, he was a man of truth and a prophet. And We raised him to a high station." (Quran, Surah Maryam, 19:56-57).

Enoch , as scholars believe, is one of the forefathers of our prophet Noah, peace be upon him. Some say he is Noah's great-grandfather , while others say he is Noah's grandfather. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani suggested that some claim Enoch is actually Elijah. However, this claim is refuted because Elijah is from the lineage of Noah, as mentioned in the Quran, and Noah is from the lineage of Enoch . The strongest evidence supporting this is

that Allah mentioned Elijah by name in two places, just like He mentioned Enoch . It wouldn't make sense for the same person to be referred to by two different names. Allah says: "And Ishmael, and Enoch , and Dhu al-Kifl; all were patient" (Quran 21:85). Also, regarding Elijah, Allah says: "And [We sent] Zechariah , and John, and Jesus, and Elijah - all of them were of the righteous" (Quran 6:85). Furthermore, Allah says: "And indeed, Elijah is among the messengers" (Quran 37:123). Elijah, peace be upon him, is one of the prophets of the Children of Israel.

The verses described Enoch as being a truthful prophet, and I previously mentioned these two descriptions. Some scholars interpret the mention of "raising him to a high place" in a metaphorical sense, meaning a lofty and noble position befitting of prophethood , while others believe it was physical, indicating an ascent to the fourth heaven.

It is mentioned about him, peace be upon him, that he was the first to write with the pen . In some Jewish sources, it is stated that he did not die but was lifted to the heavens like Jesus. However, there is no evidence to confirm whether he did not die on earth and passed away in the heavens. All that is mentioned in the narrations of the Ascension is that the Prophet, peace be upon him, saw Enoch in the fourth heaven, and the prophets whom the Prophet, peace be upon him, met on the night of the Ascension were not lifted to the heavens while they were alive, except for Jesus, peace be upon him. So, there is no evidence for his being lifted alive or for his death in the heavens.

As for what was narrated by Ibn Abbas, he said: "I asked Ka'ab about the elevation of Enoch to a high place." He said: "As for the elevation of Enoch to a high place, he was a righteous servant, to whom good deeds were raised that were not raised for the people of his time on earth. The angel who was ascending with his deeds was amazed by them, so he sought permission from his Lord to visit him. His Lord granted him permission, so he descended and said: 'O Enoch , rejoice, for good deeds are raised for you that are not raised for the people of the earth.' Enoch asked: 'What has informed you?' The angel replied: 'I am an angel.' Enoch said: 'Even if you are an angel, I am at the door through which your deeds ascend.' Enoch then asked the angel to intercede with the Angel of Death to postpone his death so that he could increase in gratitude and worship. The Angel of Death replied: 'Allah does not postpone a soul when its time has come.' Enoch insisted, expressing his preference. The angel then carried him on his wing and ascended with him to the sky. He addressed the Angel of Death, informing him of Enoch 's righteous deeds. The Angel of Death granted Enoch 's request for intercession, but when he looked in his record, he found that nothing of Enoch 's time remained. Thus, he erased his record, and Enoch passed away in his place." This narration is from the Israeli traditions, which are not considered authentic.

COMMENTS

After mentioning this group of prophets, Allah said: "Those are the ones whom Allah has favored from among the prophets of the descendants of Adam and of those We carried in the ship with Noah, and of the descendants of Abraham and Israel, and of those whom We guided and chose. When the verses of the Most Merciful were recited to them, they fell in prostration and weeping." (Surah Maryam, 19:58)

And among the descendants of Adam, mentioned closest in the verses, is Enoch , peace be upon him. Those whom Allah carried with Noah, the prophets, until Abraham, and the descendants of Abraham are Ishmael and Ishaq , peace be upon them. From the descendants of Jacob are the prophets of the Children of Israel, peace and blessings be upon them, including Moses , Aaron , Zechariah , John , and Jesus before his mother. "So Allah arranged the affairs of the prophets He mentioned in this sequence, indicating that they were favored with their deeds, and they have additional merit through their offspring, compared to these prophets. " Allah guided and chose them for prophethood, and when the signs of Allah were recited to them, they fell in prostration and wept.

CONCLUSION

After this journey through the verses of Surah Maryam, the eloquence of the Quranic interludes becomes evident. They were not merely for auditory punctuation but rather to complement and enhance the meaning.

The interlude is closely linked to the context; Surah Maryam was revealed to refute the claims of the People of the Book regarding Jesus, peace be upon him, and other prophets of Allah, whether from the Children of Israel or elsewhere. Hence, the interlude fits seamlessly with the verses, where 'true to the promise' and 'messenger, a prophet' are mentioned. The truthfulness of the promise precedes the message, and the message precedes the prophethood. The attribute of sincerity precedes the message, just as the truthfulness of speech precedes the exalted status.

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