215231 - A discussion of the miracles of the prophets and the signs of Allah with which He supported them

the question

I read that the miracle of Nuh was the Flood. How can that be so when the Flood happened after the people disbelieved and rejected his message? What is known is that miracles were given to a prophet so that the people would believe him. The same may be asked with regard to Shu`ayb and Hud (peace be upon them). What was the miracle for each of these three messengers?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

There is no prophet to whom Allah, may He be exalted, did not grant a clear sign to prove the truthfulness of the message that he brought, in order to establish proof against everyone who opposed him.

Al-Bukhari, 4981, and Muslim, 152, narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “There is not a single Prophet who was not given signs so that the people would believe in him because of them. but what I have been given is a revelation that Allah has revealed to me, and I hope that I will be the one with the most followers on the Day of Resurrection.”

Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The words “There is not a single Prophet who was not given…” indicate that every prophet must have had a miracle that would lead anyone who witnessed it to believe that he was a true prophet; he would not be harmed by those who stubbornly refused to believe. What is meant is that every

prophet was given one or more signs, so that the people who saw those signs would believe in him because of them. What is meant by signs is miracles; every prophet was given a miracle that was unique to him, and no one else was given the same miracle, with which to challenge his people. The miracle of each prophet was appropriate to the situation of his people. (End quote from *Fath al-Bari* by Ibn Hajar, 9/6).

Secondly:

It is not essential for the Quran and Sunnah to mention the miracle of every prophet, because these miracles were not performed for us. No action is expected of us if we learn about it, and we are not required to believe in the true prophets because of their miracles, because those miracles happened in the past and the time for them is over. Rather we believe in the earlier prophets because of the true texts of the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) which speak of them.

What we must do is know that Allah's Prophet Nuh, Allah's Prophet Hud and other Prophets of Allah were sent to their peoples, and they brought proof and clear evidence that was sufficient for them to accept their message and believe in them. We may know about some of their signs and miracles, or we may not know anything about them, just as we know the names and stories of some of the prophets which are mentioned in sound texts, or we may not know the names and stories of some of the prophets of Allah which are not mentioned in the sound religious texts.

Az-Zajjaaj (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Regarding the words {There has come to you clear evidence from your Lord. So give full measure and weight} [al-A`raf 7:85], some of the grammarians said that Shu`ayb had no sign except prophethood, but this is a serious mistake.

He said: {There has come to you clear evidence from your Lord. So give full measure and weight} [al-A`raf 7:85]. The conjunction *fa* [translated here as so] indicates what is expected of you after the sign has come to you. How could he say, There has come to you clear evidence from your Lord when he has no sign except prophethood? If there was another sign along with prophethood, he

would have brought it to them.

The suggestion that he had no sign is mistaken. If someone had claimed to be a prophet without any sign, that would not be accepted from him. But with regard to Shu`ayb, his sign was clear, as he said. But Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, has mentioned some of the signs of the prophets in the Quran, and has not mentioned the signs of others. In the case of those whose signs were not mentioned, it cannot be said that they had no signs. (End quote from *Ma`ani al-Quran*, 2/353-354)

See also: *Tafsir Ibn `Atiyyah*, 2/426.

Thirdly:

The miracle of Allah's Prophet Nuh (peace be upon him) was the building of the ark on dry land, which was then able to sail on the waves which were like mountains, after he had warned his people of the Flood.

Ibn Kathir (may Allah have mercy on him) said, after mentioning a karamah that was bestowed on Abu Muslim al-Khawlani (may Allah have mercy on him):

This is akin to the miracle of Nuh (peace be upon him), when he sailed on the water in the ark which Allah, may He be exalted, had commanded him to build. (End quote from *al-Bidayah wan-Nihayah*, 9/317)

It is not valid to object to that by saying, as the questioner did, that the Flood occurred after the people disbelieved and rejected the message, and the miracle was given to the prophet so that the people would believe him, because it may be said in response to this that Nuh (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) had warned his people, alerted them and threatened them. Then when there came to them that which they had been warned about, they persisted in their arrogance and did not believe. If they had believed at that point, their faith would have been valid. Do you not see that Nuh (peace be upon him) urged his son to believe and said to him: {O my son, come aboard with us and be not with the disbelievers} [Hud 11:42]? If his son had come aboard

with them, he would have been one of the believers and not one of the disbelievers, and the same would have applied to others. So the miracle happened at the right time, and did not happen after it was too late.

Moreover, it was one of the greatest of signs and proofs that Allah gave him, for it was clear evidence and sound proof for them, as Allah says:

{He said, “O my people, what do you think, if I am relying on clear evidence from my Lord while He has bestowed on mercy from Himself but it has been been obscured from your sight, should we force it upon you while you are averse to it?

And O my people, I ask not of you for it any wealth. My reward is not but from Allah. And I am not one to drive away those who have believed. Indeed, they will meet their Lord, but I see that you are a people behaving ignorantly.

And O my people, who would protect me from Allah if I drove them away? Will you not then pay heed?”

And I do not tell you that I have the depositories [containing the provision] of Allah or that I know the unseen, nor do I tell you that I am an angel, nor do I say of those those who are contemptible in your eyes that Allah will never grant them any good. Allah knows best what is in their hearts. Indeed, I would then be among the wrongdoers.”

They said, “O Noah, you have argued with us for too long. So bring us that with which you are threatening us, if you should be of the truthful”} [Hud 11:28-32].

The story of the proofs and arguments he presented to them is repeated in more than one surah of the Holy Quran.

Having said that, there is nothing to rule out the idea that he could have brought them a clear sign, but we have not been told about it or its nature, as noted above.

See also the answer to question no. 10470.

Something similar may be said about Allah's Prophet Hud and Allah's Prophet Shu`ayb (peace be upon them both). Either each of them had a miracle that we do not know about, and Allah has not told us about it, as noted above in the quotation from az-Zajjaj, or his miracle was the argument that he presented to his people and his prevailing over them with his wisdom and eloquent speech.

Ibn Abi'l-`Izz al-Hanafi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

One of the most subtle of these signs given to the messengers is the sign of Hud, when his people said to him: {O Hud, you have not brought us clear evidence} [Hud 11:53], even though his proof was among the clearest of proof to anyone whom Allah enabled to reflect upon it. Hud pointed that out when he said:

{I call Allah to witness, and you too are my witnesses, that I disavow all those whom you ascribe as partners

to Allah. So scheme against me, all of you, and give me no respite.

I put my trust in Allah, my Lord and your Lord. There is no living creature but He holds it [in His control] by its forelock. Verily, my Lord is on a straight path } [Hud 11:54-56].

This is one of the greatest signs: that one man addressed a great nation with these words, without any fear or panic or losing his nerve; rather he was confident and certain in what he said. Thus he called Allah, first and foremost, to witness that he disavowed their religion and the path they were following, like one who was confident and relied on his Lord, telling his people that Allah was his ally and supporter, and that he was not going to give them power over him.

Then he called on the people to bear witness, telling them openly that he was different from them: he disavowed their religion and their gods, on the basis of which they took as allies those who agreed with their beliefs, and they offered their lives and wealth in support of those gods. Then he confirmed this stance when he expressed how little he thought of them, and said words which indicated how much he scorned and despised them. He told them that even if they all came

together to scheme against him and take action to vent their anger towards him, and they hastened to punish him and did not grant him any respite, they would not be able to harm him with anything except what Allah had decreed for him.

Then he reiterated his call to them in a very eloquent manner, by stating that his Lord and their Lord, may He be exalted, in Whose hand were their forelocks, was his ally and protector Who would support him and help him, and that He is on a straight path; He would not forsake the one who put his trust in Him and believed in Him, and He would not let his enemy have the joy of seeing him harmed.

What sign and proof could be better than the signs, proofs and evidence of the prophets? It is a testimony from Allah, may He be glorified, which He explained to His slaves in the most eloquent manner. (End quote from *Sharh at-Tahawiyyah*, p. 47)

Al-Qasimi (may Allah have mercy on him) said regarding the words of Shu`ayb (peace be upon him), {There has come to you clear evidence from your Lord} [al-A`raf 7:85]:

{There has come to you clear evidence [*bayyinah*] from your Lord} means: that which makes truth distinct from falsehood. What is meant is His call and teachings. Hence one of the scholars said that what is meant by *bayyinah* (translated here as clear evidence) is the coming of Shu`ayb, and that he had no sign except prophethood.

Those who interpreted bayyinah as referring to proof and evidence, and tangible miracles, suggested that as the prophet was calling people to a religion that they must accept, there had to be evidence through which it would be known whether he was telling the truth, and that cannot be anything but a miracle. He said: The miracle of Shu`ayb is not mention in the Quran, for not all the signs of the prophets are mentioned in the Quran.

It is no secret that the word bayyinah is more general in meaning than the word mu`jizah (miracle), according to the scholars. For anyone to whom it becomes clear that what he is following is misguidance, and proof is established for him of the truth to which he is called, proof has come to him, because what proof really means is anything by means of which truth is made

distinct from falsehood. This is something that must be understood. (End quote from *Tafsir al-Qasimi*, 5/146)

And Allah knows best.