

Quran Appreciation - Winter Term (Jan-Mar 2018)

The Story of Nabi Isa (a)

Miracles of Nabi Isa (a)

Verse for the session

وَإِذْ تَخْلُقُ مِنَ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ بِإِذْنِي فَتَنْفُخُ فِيهَا فَتَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِي وَتُبْرِئُ
الْأَكْمَهَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ بِإِذْنِي وَإِذْ تُخْرِجُ الْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِي

And when you made out of clay a form of a bird by My permission, then you breathed into it and it became a bird by My permission, and you healed the blind and the lepers by My permission; and when you brought forth the dead by My permission;
(Sura Maidah, verse 110)

Reflections

- Why is a Prophet given miracles?
- What are the different miracles given to Nabi Isa (a)
- Why does the word by My permission keep on repeating?
- How are these miracles different from the ones given to Nabi Musa (a)?

Cross reference verses

Miracles of Nabi Isa- 3:49-51

Miracles of Jesus in the Bible

- Healing the blind (Matt 8:2, Mark 1:40, Luke 5:12, Luke 17:11), and the leper (Matt 9:27, Matt 8:22; 20:30, Mark 10:46, Luke 18:35, and John 9:1)
- Three cases where Jesus brought the dead back to life by God's permission - the daughter of Jairus (Matt 9:18, 23; Mark 5:22, 35; Luke 8:40, 49), the widow's son at Nain (Luke 7:11), and Lazarus (John 11:43).
- I can of my own authority do nothing. (John 5:30)
- Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves know. (Acts 2:22 KJV).

Tafsir

This part of the verse talks about three miracles given to Nabi Isa; making a form of a bird out of clay and then breathing into it to give it life, restoring eyesight to the blind and healing the lepers, and raising the dead to life. Note that within these miracles, the words ‘by My permission’ is repeated four times. This is to warn people not to get confused. The miracles are not by the power of Nabi Isa himself, rather they are by the power of Allah given to him as a proof of his Prophethood. The words emphasize the fact that Nabi is but a human being who is a Prophet and has God’s permission to perform miracles.

Allah sent every Prophet with a miracle suitable to his time. For instance, in the time of Nabi Musa, magic was the trade of the time and magicians held a high position. So Allah sent him with a miracle that stunned the magicians. When the magicians realized that Musa's miracle came from the Almighty, the Most Great, they embraced Islam and became believers. Nabi Isa was sent during a time when medicine and knowledge in physics were advancing. He brought them the types of miracles that could not be performed except by someone sent by Allah. How can any physician bring life to clay, cure blindness and leprosy and bring back to life those who are dead? The people who could recognize the truth knew it was from the Lord.

Some days thousands of people who were sick would gather to get treatment from Nabi Isa. He would treat them all at the same time through the power of Allah. He would call them towards faith hoping that getting healed by the power of God would soften their hearts to accept Him.

One time his disciple asked him to raise a dead person for them to see. Nabi Isa took them to the grave of Shem, the son and successor of Nabi Nuh (a). Nabi Isa stood by the grave and called out, ‘Stand, by God’s permission, O Shem son of Nuh’. The grave cracked open. Nabi Isa repeated the call. There was movement inside the grave. At the third call, Shem emerged from the grave. He and Nabi Isa exchanged greetings. Nabi Isa asked him; ‘What would you prefer, to remain alive or to return to your grave?’ Shem replied that he would prefer to return. He went back in and the grave closed again. (Biharul Anwar, Vol.14, pg 233)

Story

Once Nabi Isa reflected on his miracles with his disciples. He said; ‘I have treated the sick and cured them by God’s permission. I have healed the blind and the lepers by God’s permission. With a mere touch, I have revived the dead by God’s permission. However I have tried to cure the foolish person but I have not been able to heal him.’

His disciples asked, ‘Who do you mean by the foolish person?’

Nabi Isa replied, 'I mean he who admires himself and is proud of his own opinion, who considers that all are obliged to him and he is obliged to none, who considers all rights due to him while does not consider any rights due to others. Such is the foolish person for whom even I do not have a cure.' (Biharul Anwar, Vol.14, pg 323)

Important Lessons

- 1) Miracles are proofs of Prophethood granted by Allah.
- 2) People should not attribute independent powers to those who perform miracles. Their power is from God.
- 3) Seeing a miracle has an effect on those whose have soft hearts which are receptive to the truth.

Ideas

- 1) Discuss the similarities between messages of Nabi Musa and Nabi Isa and that of the Holy Prophet (all came to guide towards worship of One God, belief in Prophets and in the Day of Judgment, and laws to lead a virtuous life). Children could draw or make posters, or books, with similar messages.
- 2) What is a miracle? Write different definitions for miracles. Discuss different examples of miracles from the lives of the Masumin (a)

Sources:

Tafsir Namune, Ayt. Nasir Makarim Shirazi

Shaykh Rizwan Arastu, God's Emissaries