

91) The Divine Purpose of Prophetic Narratives – Q 11:120

وَكَلَّا نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الرُّسُلِ مَا نُنْثِيَتْ بِهِ فُؤَادَكَ

وَجَاءَكَ فِي هَذِهِ الْحَقُّ وَمَوْعِظَةٌ وَذِكْرٌ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

Whatever We relate to you of the accounts of the apostles are those by which We strengthen your heart, and there has come to you in this [surah] the truth and an advice and admonition for the faithful.

(Sūrat Hūd, No.11, Āyat 120)

Sūrat Hūd recounts the stories of numerous Prophets ﷺ and past nations. Near the conclusion of the *sūrah*, the Almighty encapsulates the overarching objective behind these historical narrations, beginning with the critical reason cited in the beginning of verse above: to strengthen and fortify the heart of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ against the many afflictions he faced.

The term ‘*kullan*’ (each/all) highlights the diversity of experiences narrated in the Qur’ān. These accounts encompass the varied responses of communities to their Prophets, the different types of deviation that afflicted people, and the corresponding forms of Divine punishment met out. This range of experiences illuminates various facets of the human condition. Every aspect of our contemporary struggles finds a parallel in an experience from the past. Historical narratives clearly demonstrate that human nature, though its outer manifestations may change with societal sophistication, remains essentially the same in its inner workings. Relating to these struggles provides a crucial impetus for sustained effort and perseverance.

Consolation and Strength for the Prophet The narration of past prophetic lives was vital for strengthening the Prophet’s heart to face fierce opposition. This included bearing the pain of his people, rejecting the truth, witnessing the suffering

95) The Source of True Exaltation – Q 19:56-57

وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِدْرِيسَ ۚ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صِدِّيقًا نَبِيًّا

وَرَفَعْنَاهُ مَكَانًا عَلِيًّا

And mention in the Book, Idrīs. Indeed, he was a truthful one and a prophet, and We raised him to an exalted station.
(Sūrat Maryam, No. 19, Āyat 56-57)

Prophet Idrīs ﷺ is mentioned in the Noble Qur’ān only twice: here in Sūrat Maryam and again in Sūrat al-Anbiyā’ (21:85-86), where he is praised alongside other prophets for his patience and righteousness.

Scholarly accounts generally agree that Prophet Idrīs ﷺ was a Prophet of Allah ﷻ who lived before Prophet Nūh ﷺ. It is worth noting, as highlighted by contemporary exegete Āyatullah Jawādī Āmulī, that some extraordinary narratives about Idrīs ﷺ have been influenced by *Isrā’iliyāt* (fabricated or unreliable narrations) and must therefore be treated cautiously.

Some Muslim scholars identify Idrīs ﷺ with the Biblical figure of Enoch, who is described as the great-grandfather of Noah and was said to have been taken up by God without experiencing death.

Pioneering Knowledge and Civilization

According to narrations, Prophet Idrīs ﷺ was a pivotal figure in human civilization:

- i) He is credited as the first human to write. God taught him this essential skill which he then transmitted to others, establishing the written word as a vital means of spreading Divine knowledge.
- ii) He knew the arts of weaving and sewing, thus introducing stitched clothing at a time when people predominantly used animal skins for covering.

The Meaning of “Exalted Station” (مَكَانًا عَلِيًّا)

The core reflection point lies in the phrase “We raised him to an exalted station.” Allah ﷻ is the sole source of all true exaltation. His essence is inherently exalted, and anything Divinely connected to Him shares in that quality of exaltation.

Five Qualities of Prophet Ibrāhīm ؑ

1. A Nation (*Ummah*): Ibrāhīm ؑ, though a single individual, is referred to as an ummah (a nation). *Tafsīr Namūne* suggests several possible reasons for this extraordinary designation:

- His personality was so monumental that it was equivalent to the influence of a large community.
- He was a leader and teacher of humanity, whose conduct inspired all followers, making him the origin of their deeds.
- He was the singular monotheist of his time, a nation of monotheism amidst a nation of idolaters.
- He was the spiritual source and origin of the Muslim nation.

A Hadīth found in the book al-Kāfi similarly describes ‘Abdul-Muttalib as a great personality who “‘will be resurrected on the Day of Resurrection as a single community (ummah), upon him the sign of the prophets and the majesty of kings”

2. Obedient to Allah (*Qāni*): He demonstrated total and consistent obedience to Allah in all matters.

3. Upright (*Hanīf*): This word denotes the middle and balanced path—one who stands straight, avoiding all extremes. It describes a pure monotheism, and the term is used over six times in the Qur’ān to define Ibrāhīm’s creed.

4. Thankful to Allah (*Shākir*): His gratitude was manifested in the true spirit of the word: acknowledging that all favors were from Allah and using those very favors to serve Him. The proper use of Divine blessings constitutes true gratitude.

106) The Virtue of Hilm (Forbearance)

فَبَشِّرْنَاهُ بِغُلَامٍ حَلِيمٍ

So, We gave him the good news of a forbearing son.
(Sūrat al-Sāffāt, No 37, Āyat 101)

When Prophet Ibrāhīm ؑ prayed for a son, Allah ﷻ answered his supplication by giving him good news concerning three things:

1. The birth of a child.
2. The child’s growth to the stage of a youth (as indicated by the word *ghulām*).
3. That the child shall possess the distinguished quality of forbearance (*halīm*).

The Definition of Hilm

Hilm (forbearance) is the quality of not rushing to an action before its appropriate time, despite having the ability to execute it immediately. It signifies the ability to control one’s impulses, anger, and negative reactions.

When ascribed to Allah ﷻ, al-Halīm refers to His grace and kindness to His creatures, despite His absolute ability to punish them instantly for their transgressions. The word *halīm* appears 15 times in the Qur’ān, mostly referring to Allah, but it is also used to praise Prophet Ibrāhīm ؑ and his son Ismā‘īl ؑ.

The Hilm of Ismā‘īl ؑ

A *ghulām* is at the stage between a young child and a youth. History recounts that Prophet Ismā‘īl ؑ was approximately nine years old when Prophet Ibrāhīm ؑ saw the recurring dream commanding the sacrifice of his only son.

‘Allāmah Tabātabā’ī in *Tafsīr al-Mīzān* notes that Allah refers to Prophet Ismā‘īl as a *ghulām* (youth) in this verse specifically because it was at this stage that he perfectly demonstrated the quality of forbearance. When his father informed him of the Divine command through the dream, Ismā‘īl ؑ responded with astonishing composure and immediate submission: