

## **Al-A'raf (The Heights) [7:175]**

وَأْتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ الَّذِي آتَيْنَاهُ آيَاتِنَا فَانْسَلَخَ مِنْهَا فَاتَّبَعَهُ الشَّيْطَانُ

فَكَانَ مِنَ الْغَاوِينَ ﴿١٧٥﴾

Relate to them the story of the man to whom We sent Our signs, but he passed them by: so Satan followed him up, and he went astray.

### **MUHAMMAD HUSAIN TABA TABAI (AR)**

*And recite to them the story of him to whom we gave our signs, but he threw them away and Satan followed him up, and he became one of those who strayed.*

The second story about the Bani Israel is that of Baalam Beur. God asked His Messenger to relate this story to his people, to explain to them that following what is manifest is not enough for the well being of a person and his success till God's favor is with him. God does not favor those who want to live forever on this earth and who want to follow their desires. Such person is destined for Hell.

Then the verse says that these are the people who do not use their eyes and ears for profitable things and says very clearly that they all are negligent and ignorant. God says, *Recite to them the story of him to whom we gave our sign but he threw them away.*

The verse describes the realization that enlightens the understanding of God and it is such that the person has no doubts about the Truth. "Ansalqha" means to quickly rent asunder the skin and bring forth and here it says that the real character of Baalam Beur. He disbelieved and Satan followed him and he lost his piety and direction and went astray. He could not save his soul from whirlpool of destruction. Sometimes the words "Ghawa" and "Zalalah" are used to mean the same. Here it means straying from the straight path. The exegists however, differ to who the real person mentioned here is and we will soon discuss the different traditions about it in details. Inshallah.

### **MIR AHMED ALI (AR)**

It is said that "The news of the man whom We gave Our signs" refers to Balam, in the days of the Pharoah, who knew the Ism al Azam (The Great Name of Allah). Firawn asked him to pray for Musa's arrest. He agreed and sat on his donkey to go to a particular place to recite the Ism al Azam for Musa's arrest, but the donkey did not budge. He beat the animal to its death. Then he realised that he had totally forgotten the Ism al Azam. He died as an infidel.

Aqa Mahdi Puya says:

Some commentators think the narrative relates to Balam. Some think the person referred here is Umayya ibn Abu Salt who read the old scriptures and knew that Allah would send a prophet about that time, but when the promised prophet, the Holy Prophet did arrive, he refused to acknowledge him. Some think it relates to Amru ibn Numan ibn Sayfi, an ascetic, who believed in the creed of Ibrahim but mixed it with the false beliefs of Christian monks, and when he was censured by the Holy Prophet, he turned against him.

Imam Muhammad bin Ali al Baqir said: *"Though it relates to Balam, but Allah intends to set an example for those who receive true guidance from Allah, yet prefer to act according to their own desires in order to lay hands on the worldly gains."*

Earthly desires eventually bring man low to the level of beasts and even worse. If he follows the guidance he receives from Allah he is blessed with exalted spiritual honour. He who rejects Allah and His guidance is like a dog who lolls out his tongue, whether he is attacked and pursued, or left alone. It is part of his nature to slobber and be contemptible. Imam Ali has compared such men to a restive she camel who shows unwillingness to tackle when her rider draws rein, and goes aimlessly in any direction, and stumbles when he applies no check to her.

### **AYATULLAH KAMAL FAQIH IMANI AND SEVERAL SCHOLARS**

The verse refers to the story of a man from the Children of Israel. At first, that man was among the believers and those who practically carried out the divine verses and sciences, but later, as a result of Satan's temptation, he went astray. In the concerning religious sources, the name of this person has been recorded ' Bal'am Bā'ūrā '.

As it has been narrated from Ali-ibn-Mūs-ar-Ridhā, the eighth Imam (a.s.) , that Bal'am knew ' the Greatest Name of Allah ', by which his supplication used to be answered. But finally he went to the court of Pharaoh and turned to be an infidel, while, before that, he was one of the studious preachers of the religion of Moses (a.s.) .

The Qur'ān does not directly point out his name in the text, but it mentions his action. Imam Bāqir (a.s.) says that his circumstance adapts to any one who prefers the low desire to the truth. (Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, the commentary)

Such people are found in any time and the subject is not allocated to Bal'am only. The story of Bal'am has been cited in the Torah, too.

Therefore, an aware leader should usually warn people of unexpected dangers. The verse says:

*"And recite unto them the tale of him to whom We gave Our signs, ..."*

Whatever high a person promotes he should not become proud, since there is a probability of falling. Usually, the final result of the end of the work is important, not the beginning of it. The higher a situation is, the more dangerous it can be. The verse continues saying:

*"... but he withdrew (himself) from them, ..."*

Yes, the one who takes detached from Allah, will become the prey of Satan. The verse ends as follows:

*"... and Satan pursued him, and he became one of the perverse."*