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Section 10: The Ministries of Salih and Lut

Salih's exhortation to believe in an stick to Unity of Allah –The people disbelieved and got punished – Lut preached of life –He was rejected and the people were seized by a severe punishment.

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 73

وَالِى تَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ قَدْ جَاءَتْكُمْ
بَيِّنَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ هَذِهِ نَاقَةُ اللَّهِ لَكُمْ آيَةٌ فَذَرُوهَا تَأْكُلْ فِي أَرْضِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَمَسُّوهَا بِسُوءٍ
فَيَأْخُذَكُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

73. "And unto (the people of) Thamud (We sent) their brother Salih. He said: 'O' my people! Serve Allah. You have no god other than Him. There has come to you a clear proof from your Lord. This is the she-camel of Allah, to be a sign for you. So leave her alone to graze in Allah's earth, and do not touch her with any harm, lest a painful chastisement will seize you."

In the Qur'an, there have been referred to the name of 'she-camel' seven times and to 'the people of Thamud' twenty six times. The story of the people of Thamud is mentioned in Suras: Ash-Shu'ara, Al – Qamar, Ash-Shams, and Hud. As the commentary book Al –Mizan denotes, the people of Thamud lived in Yemen.

The verse says:

"And unto (the people of) Thamud (We sent) their brother Salih. He said: 'O' my people! Serve Allah. You have no god other than Him. There has come to you a clear proof from your Lord. This is the she-camel of Allah, to be a sign for you. So leave her alone to graze in Allah's earth, and do not touch her with any harm, lest a painful chastisement will seize you."

There are some differences between the meaning of the Qur'anic term /bayyinah/ (divine proof, miracle) and the manner of extraordinary accomplishments of human beings, as follows:

A –A miracle needs practice, suggestion, and gaining.

B– Miracles are brought forth by some good and immaculate persons, but other accomplishments may be offered even by some inept persons.

C –The goal of miracles is guidance, while the aim of ordinary people may be ostentation, popularity, gaining wealth, and amusement.

D –The acts of prophets in miracles are accompanied with challenge. That is, they claim that others cannot do the like of them. But there is none of these signs in the act of outstanding intellectual figures, inventors, and the ascetics.

E –Prophets are in need of Divine miracles. Sometimes, miracles have been offered through the demand of people, such as: splitting of the moon, and the she-camel of Salih.

The style and the motto of prophets are the same. Monotheism .is the first invitation of prophets.

"... serve Allah. You have no god other than Him."

Prophets have come out from among people, and they treat like brothers with them.

Explanations

1. To whatever the grace and mercy of Allah reaches, it will obtain sanctity, (like the she-camel of Allah).
2. The retribution of sacrilege is the punishment of Allah. The verse says:

"... and do not touch her"

3. A miracle should be perceptible for human beings in all levels, (like the she-camel which came out of a mountain).
4. The kind of people's demand sometimes concerns to the conditions of their system of thought, and the social and economical circumstances of them. (For example, if it happened to day, perhaps, they might demand that a satellite comes out from the mountain.)

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 74

وَاذْكُرُوا إِذْ جَعَلَكُمْ خُلَفَاءَ مِنْ بَعْدِ عَادٍ وَبَوَّأَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ تَتَّخِذُونَ مِنْ سُهُولِهَا

قُصُورًا وَتَنْحِتُونَ الْجِبَالَ بُيُوتًا فَاذْكُرُوا آلَاءَ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَعَثُّوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ

74. "And remember when He appointed you successors after 'Ad and settled you in the earth, you build castles on its plains and hew the mountains into houses. So remember Allah's bounties, and do not mischief in the earth, doing corruption."

In this verse, the Qur'an says:

"And remember when He appointed you successors after 'Ad and settled you in the earth..."

It means that, on one side, do not forget the abundant bounties of Allah, and, on the other side, be aware that there were some other rebellious nations before you, like the people of 'Ad, who were involved in the punishment of Allah and were destroyed as a result of their oppositions.

Then, the Qur'an emphasizes on some divine favors and possibilities of the people of Thumud. It says that they lived on a land where there were level plains with some suitable soil. They had built castles on its plains and had made houses inside the mountains for themselves. The verse adds:

"... you build castles on its plains and hew the mountains into houses....."

And, at the end of the verse, it admonishes them to remember all the blessings of Allah so that they do not make mischief in the earth and not to be ingratitude due to His bounties. The verse continues saying:

"... So remember Allah's bounties, and do not mischief in the earth, doing corruption."

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verses 75 – 76

قَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ لِلَّذِينَ اسْتُضْعِفُوا لِمَنْ آمَنَ مِنْهُمْ أَتَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ
صَالِحًا مُرْسَلٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ قَالُوا إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلَ بِهِ مُؤْمِنُونَ

قَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا بِالَّذِي آمَنْتُمْ بِهِ كَافِرُونَ

75. "The chiefs of the arrogant among his people said to those who were considered weak –those of them who believed – 'Do you know that Salih is sent by his Lord?' They said: 'Surely we believer in what he has been sent with'."

76. "Those who were arrogant said: 'We, indeed, disbelieve in that which you believe'."

We see again that the wealthy and notable group of those people, who had a good seeming outward but an evil inward, began to oppose with this great messenger of Allah. This group of notable arrogant persons from among the people of Salih told some believing oppressed ones of them asking whether they really knew that Salih was sent from the side of Allah to guide them.

"The chiefs of the arrogant among his people said to those who were considered weak –those of them who believed –'Do you know that Salih is sent by his Lord?' ..."

Then, before long, they faced with their decisive and sharp answer, which indicated of their firm and strong decision. Their answer was that they said not only they knew that Salih was sent by Allah, but also they believed in what he had been missioned for and had invited people to it. The verse says:

"... They said: 'Surely we believe in what he has been sent with'."

These proud arrogant chiefs did not cease their enmity and, in order to weaken the spiritual strength of the believers, they said to them that they did not believe in what the believers believed.

The verse says:

"Those who were arrogant said: 'We, indeed, disbelieve in that which you believe'."

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 77

فَعَقَرُوا النَّاقَةَ وَعَتَوْا عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِمْ وَقَالُوا يَا صَالِحُ ائْتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ
الْمُرْسَلِينَ

77. "So they hamstrung the She-camel and revolted against their Lord's commandment, and they said: 'O' Salih! bring us that you promise us to, if you are of the messengers' ."

The arrogant wealthy persons among Salih's people became despair of weakening the foundations of the Faith of masses of people who were faithful. On the other side, they saw that, with the existence of the 'she-camel' that was counted as – Salih's miracle, their hostile plots were remained useless.

Then, they decided to destroy the 'She-camel'. Before anything else, they hamstrung her and, disobeying Allah's command, they killed her. The verse says:

"So they hamstrung the She-camel and revolted against their Lord's commandment....."

They did not suffice to this vice, but they came to Salih and vividly told him to bring them Allah's punishment as soon as possible, if he was the messenger of Allah.

"... and they said: ' O' Salih! bring us that you promise us to, if you are of the messengers'."

This word, in fact, was making a kind of fight against Salih in order to weaken the spirit of both –Salih and the believers.

Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 78

فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دَارِهِمْ جَاثِمِينَ

78. "Then the earthquake seized them, so they became motionless bodies in their dwellings."

In this verse, the destruction of the people of Thamud is stated that it was done by earthquake. And, in Surah Fussilat. No.41. verse No.17, and Surah Ath- Thariyat. No. 51. verse 44 it is said that it was done by rumbling:

"... so the rumbling overtook them while they were yet looking on."

Rumbling destroyed them while they were gazing. Therefore, there was a combination of two retributions in one moment upon them.

The Arabic term /jaʿim/ is applied for a person who has fallen on his knees and is not capable to stand up.

Thus, the Wrath of Allah (S.w.T.) befalls all of a sudden. Beware! The verse says:

"Then the earthquake seized them, so they became motionless bodies in their dwellings."

The promises of prophets are practically doable. So, take their warnings earnestly.

In the former verses, it was recited:

"... and do not touch her with any harm, lest a painful chastisement seizes you."¹

This 'earthquake' is the same 'painful chastisement'.

There are many earthquakes and natural terrible events which themselves are the punishment of Allah.

"Then the earthquake seized them....."

Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 79

فَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَا قَوْمِ لَقَدْ أَبْلَغْتُكُمْ رِسَالَاتِ رَبِّي وَنَصَحْتُ لَكُمْ وَلَكِنْ لَا تُحِبُّونَ

79. "Then he turned away from them and said: 'O' my people! verily I have delivered to you the Message of my Lord, and advised you sincerely; but you do not like sincere advisers'."

The word of Salih to his people is probable to be fulfilled either before the descent of the chastisement in order to complete the argument, or after their destruction.

It can be in the same manner that the Messenger of Allah (S) also spoke to the dead bodies of disbelievers that were inside the Badr well. The audience asked him (S) whether they were alive, and the Prophet (S) said: "yes".

However, the mission of prophets is to convey the Divine message accompanied with sympathy and benevolence. It is not only a dry, bare communication, like the communication of regulations and circulars in formal offices.

"...and advise you sincerely; ..."

Allah's retributions are given after delivering the message and completing the argument.

"... verily I have delivered to you the Message of my Lord....."

By the way, we ought to like the advisers. He who dislikes those who work sympathetically, provides the means of the Wrath of Allah for himself.

"... and advised you sincerely; but you do not like sincere advisers '."

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verses 80 – 81

وَلَوْطًا إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ أَتَأْتُونَ الْفَاحِشَةَ مَا سَبَقَكُمْ بِهَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِّنَ الْعَالَمِينَ

إِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ شَهْوَةً مِّنْ دُونِ النِّسَاءِ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّسْرِفُونَ

80. "And (We sent) Lut when he said to his people: 'What! Do you commit an indecency which none in the world has ever done before you?'

81. "Verily you come to men in lust instead of women! Nay, you are an extravagant people."

Prophet Lut (as) was from the family of Abraham (as). He was the only man who believed in him and migrated with him. Surah Al - ' Ankabut No.29. Verse 26 says:

"And Lut believed in him ... "

Abraham (as) sent him to a zone where indecencies were circulated at that time.

It has been narrated that they committed the act of sodomy upon their guests so that people be afraid of being a guest. As the Qur'an points out, Prophet Lut suggested them to marry his daughters, but they did not accept.

There are some advantages in marriage that are absent in sodomy. A few of them are such as: 1) Affection, mercy, and intimate ease; 2) offspring; – forming a family organization; and 3) the subjects of humanity and naturalness existed in marriage.

Unfortunately, the world of the west has formally accepted the hideous act of sodomy, and in some European countries the action has become legal:

The Qur'anic phrase "their brother" has been used for Hud, Salih, and Shu'ayb (Jethro) (as), but it has not been applied for Lut . Perhaps, this difference is for the sake that Lut (as) migrated from another zone for divine messenger ship.

Explanations

1– A great part of Lut's preaching was upon the struggle against the indecencies and sexual prohibitions, since the most important problem of his society was indecency.

2– Idol worshippers had the pretext of the belief of their ancestors in idolatry, but followers of indecency had not this pretext, either. They themselves initiated this crime and sin. The verse says:

"And (We sent) Lut when he said to his people: 'What ! Do you commit an indecency which none in the world has ever done before you ' "

3– He who abandons the way of nature is counted as an extravagant person.

The verse says:

"Verily you come to men in lust instead of women! Nay, you are an extravagant people."

Surah Al-‘A’raf, Verse 82

وَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا أَخْرِجُوهُمْ مِّنْ قَرْيَتِكُمْ إِنَّهُمْ أَنَاسٌ يَّتَطَهَّرُونَ

82. "And the answer of his people was no other than that they said: 'Expel them from your town; verily they are a people (who seek) to purify (themselves) '."

This verse contains a hint to the illogical obstinate answer of those people of Lut. It implies that they had no answer in response to the invitation of this benevolent and sympathetic prophet, save that they angrily ordered their men to expel Lut and his followers from their town. What was their fault? Their fault was that they were some pure people who did not use to commit sin.

Those people of Lut accused these pure believers that they not only did not have the same opinion of theirs, but also made trouble for them.

The verse says:

"And the answer of his people was no other than that they said: 'Expel them from your town; verily they are a people (who seek) to purify (themselves) '."

Explanations

1– Sinners are illogical.

"And the answer of his people was no other than that they said: 'Expel them from your town....."

2– Whenever corruption of a society increases, the purified and sincere persons will be deserted, and purity is counted a crime therein. It will be like the state that criminals maintain no right in the society for the pure ones.

"Expel them from your town....."

Thus, in the path of 'forbidding the wrong', we should be prepared to be banished, and for accepting other hardships.

3– At the same time when the people of Lut were accustomed to sins, they knew Lut and his followers as some purified persons.

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 83

فَأَنجَيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ إِلَّا امْرَأَتَهُ كَانَتْ مِنَ الْغَابِرِينَ

83. "So We delivered him and his family, except his wife; she was of those who remained behind (in the ashes of punishment)."

Regarding what was stated in the three above-mentioned holy verses, any just arbitrator can issue the command of condemnation of this mischievous nation.

That is why the Qur'an in this verse implies that since they did thus, Allah saved Lut and his true followers and his family, who were pious, except his wife, whom He left among the mischievous people, because, from the point of belief and creed, she was the same as the people of Lut were.

The verse says:

"So we delivered him and his family, except his wife; she was of those who remained behind (in the ashes of punishment)."

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 84

وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَطَرًا فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ

84. "And We rained down on them a rain (of punishment). Consider then how the end of the guilty was!"

The destruction of the people of Lut was done by means of raining aerolites over them. They were some aerolites like clay that were marked with the Lord. Or, every stone was particularized to destroy a definite person. This meaning is taken from **Surah Hud No.11. Verses 82-83** that say:

"... and rained down upon them stones, of what had been decreed, one after another." "Marked (for punishment) with your Lord ..."

The current verse itself is recited as follows:

"And We rained down on them a rain (of punishment). Consider then how the end of the guilty was! "

Besides committing sodomy, the people of Lut used to do some other indecencies. They used to gamble, to talk idle, to asperse, to throw stones at wayfarers, and to uncover the private parts before public eyes.²

Upon the philosophy of prohibition of sodomy, Imam Sadiq (as) has said:

"Sodomy decreases the family affection between wife and husband and ceases generation. It destroys the natural sexual intercourse and brings up many other corruptions."³

In Islam, the retribution of homosexuality and sodomy is execution, whether for the active sodomy or the

passive sodomy. As a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) denotes, at the moment of performing homosexuality the throne of Heaven shakes and on Resurrection Day its doer will be mustered in a state of major ritual impurity. The one will be involved in the Wrath of Allah and will abide in Hell.⁴

The Messenger of Allah (S) said that the curse of Allah will be upon those men who make themselves like women and go to sensual men.⁵

Explanation

The Wrath of Allah is not particular only to one group of criminals, but all criminals must be careful.

"... Consider then how the end of the guilty was! "

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1. The current Surah, Verse 73.
 2. Safinat-ul-Bihar, Vol. 2, P. 517
 3. Was'a'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 14, P. 252
 4. Was'a'il-ush-Shiah, Vol. 14, P. 249
 5. Wasa'il-ush-Shiah, Vol. 14, P. 255

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