

Section 11: The Ministry of Shu 'ayb

Shu'ayb exhorts his people to believe in and stick to the Unity of Allah –His rejection and the punishment.

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 85

وَالِي مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ قَدْ جَاءَتْكُمْ
بَيِّنَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَأَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَالْمِيزَانَ وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي
الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

85. "And (We sent) unto (the people of) Madyan their brother Shu'ayb. 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. Therefore give full measure and weight and do not diminish to men their things, and do not make mischief in the earth after its improvement. This is better for you, if you are believers."

Jethro's Messengership in Madyan

Jethro, whose genealogical tree, according to the history records, with several dynasties reaches Abraham, was missioned to go towards the inhabitants of Madyan. At that time, Madyan was one of the cities of Syria the people of which were mostly merchants.

Idolatry, short weighing, defraudation and falsification in social relationships were fully current among them. The explanation of the conflict and dispute between this great prophet (as) and the inhabitants of Madyan is stated in several Suras of the Qur'an, and in Surah Hud, No.11 and Surah Ash-Shu'ara, No.26, in particular.

In this current verse, the Qur'an says that Allah sent to the people of Madyan their brother Jethro.

The verse says:

"And (We sent) unto (the people of Madyan their brother Shu'ayb. ..."

Then the verse adds that Shu'ayb, like all other prophets, began his invitation with the subject of Monotheism and, as the Qur'an remarks:

"... He said: ' O' my people! Serve Allah! You have no god other than Him. ..."

He emphasized that not only the mentioned ordinance was the command of wisdom, but also it was proved by the clear evidences that had come from their Lord for them. The verse says:

"... There has come to you a clear proof from your Lord. ..."

Next to the invitation to monotheism, he tried to struggle against their social, economical, and ethical corruptions.

At first, he restrained them from defraudation, falsification in social relationships which they were polluted with, and told them now that the path of Allah was revealed to them they should pay the right measure and weight so that the due things of people might not be diminished. The verse says:

"... Therefore give full measure and weight and do not diminish to men their things....."

Then, he points to one of other wrong actions of those people, and says:

"... and do not make mischief in the earth after its improvement. ..."

It is certain that none may make profit from making mischief, irrespective of ethical mischief, faithlessness, and insecurity. So, at the end of the verse, it adds:

"... This is better for you, if you are believers."

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 86

وَلَا تَقْعُدُوا بِكُلِّ صِرَاطٍ تُوعِدُونَ وَتَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ مَنْ آمَنَ بِهِ وَتَبْغُونَهَا
عُوجًا وَانْظُرُوا إِذْ كُنْتُمْ قَلِيلًا فَكَثَّرَكُمْ وَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

86. "And do not sit in every path, threatening and hindering from the path of Allah those who believe in Him, desiring to make it crooked. And remember when you were few, then He multiplied you; and consider how the end of the mischief makers was."

In this verse, the fourth advice of Shu'ayb has been pointed out, where it says:

"And do not sit in every path, threatening and hindering from the path of Allah those who believe in Him, desiring to make it crooked. ..."

Then, at the end of the verse, the fifth advice of Jethro has been referred to. It reminds them the bounties of Allah in order to stimulate the feeling of gratitude and thanksgiving in them. The verse says:

".. And remember when you were few, then He multiplied you....."

It is understood from this phrase of the verse that, in most instances, multiplicity of persons can be the origin of power and greatness of the development of the society.

Finally, the Qur'an advises people to carefully observe the end of the mischief-mongers that how evil was their fate, and that they do not follow the way of makers of mischief.

".. and consider how the end of the mischief makers was."

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 87

وَإِنْ كَانَ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْكُمْ آمَنُوا بِالَّذِي أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ وَطَائِفَةٌ لَّمْ يُؤْمِنُوا فَاصْبِرُوا حَتَّىٰ
يَحْكُمَ اللَّهُ بَيْنَنَا وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحَاكِمِينَ

87. "And if there is a party of you who believe in that with which I have been sent, and a party who do not believe, then wait with patience until Allah judges between us, and He is the best of the judges."

The opponents of Jethro scornfully asked him where the punishment of Allah was. On the other side, the adherents of the Faith were also waiting for the helps of Allah. The content of the verse is something in the middle, so that neither the disbelievers become proud nor the believers lose hope.

Thus, the history of the adherents of both right and wrong should be studied regarding the end of their fates.

However, in the school of thought and philosophy of prophets, the Faith in the goal and their way is important, not those persons themselves.

The verse says:

"And if there is a party of you who believe in that with which I have been sent, and a party who do not believe, then wait with patience until Allah judges between us, and He is the best of the judges."

The apparent seeming uniformity of the lives of this fleeting world of the disbelievers and believers should not disturb you. Do persevere, since the final judge is Allah (S.w.T.).

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