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Section 18: Prayer, sacrifice, life and death to be only for Allah

The Quran was sent down for the guidance of mankind – The law of requital – The object of life of mankind must be only to please Allah – The believers in Allah will be the rulers of the earth

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 155 – 156

وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مُبَارَكٌ فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

أَنْ تَقُولُوا إِنَّمَا أَنْزَلَ الْكِتَابُ عَلَي طَائِفَتَيْنِ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا وَإِنْ كُنَّا عَنْ دِرَاسَتِهِمْ لَغَافِلِينَ

155. "And this (Qur'an) is a Book which we have sent down, blessed, so follow it, and keep from evil so that mercy may be shown to you."

156. "Lest you should say: The Book was sent down only to two parties (the Jews and the Christians) before us, and we were truly unaware of their studies."

In order to complete the previous discussion upon the heavenly Book, this holy verse points to the revelation of the Qur'an and its teaching. It says:

"And this (Qur'an) is a Book which we have sent down, blessed, so follow it, and keep from evil so that mercy may be shown to you."

In the second verse, mentioned in the above couple of verses, the Qur'an has closed all the ways of flight and seeking excuses to the pagans.

It announces that Allah has sent this heavenly book down, with those advantages, in order that the pagans do not say that the Book was sent down only to the couple of former parties, the Jews and the Christians, and that they were neglectful of studying, reviewing and discussing them.

And, they should not say that they disobeyed the command of Allah because His commandment was under the control of others and it was not available for them.

The verse says:

"Lest you should say: The Book was sent down only to two parties t (the Jews and the Christians) before us, and we were truly unaware of their studies."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 157

أَوْ تَقُولُوا لَوْ أَنَّا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا الْكِتَابُ لَكُنَّا أَهْدَىٰ مِنْهُمْ فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَيِّنَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ
وَهُدًىٰ وَرَحْمَةٌ فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّن كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَصَدَفَ عَنْهَا سَنَجْزِي الَّذِينَ
يَصْدِفُونَ عَن آيَاتِنَا سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَصْدِفُونَ

157. "Or (lest) you should say: 'If the Book had been sent down to us, we would certainly have been better guided than them. 'So indeed there has come to you clear proof from your Lord, and guidance and mercy. Who then is more unjust than him who denies the Signs of Allah, and turns away from them? Soon We will recompense those who turn away from Our Signs with a terrible punishment for what they used to turn away."

The same excuse that was referred to in the previous verse is pointed out more vastly and with some more claims and prides of theirs in this verse.

The holy verse implies that if the Qur'an were not sent down upon them, they might claim that they were so prepared and eager to fulfill the commands of Allah that no other nation could match them in that regard. The verse says:

"Or (lest) you should say : 'If the Book had been sent down to us, we would certainly have been better guided than them. '...'"

Standing before these claims, the Qur'an implies that Allah has shut the gates of all ways of seeking excuses to them, because clear proofs and meaningful verses, accompanied with guidance and mercy of Allah, have come to them from the side of their Lord. It says:

"So indeed there has come to you clear proof from your Lord, and guidance and mercy...."

Yet, is there anyone more unjust than those who belie the Signs of Allah and turn away from them? This circumstance shows that they not only turned away from the Signs of Allah, but also kept themselves terribly far from them. The verse says:

**"...Who then is more unjust than him who denies the Signs of Allah, and turns away from them?
..."**

The painful punishment of such thoughtless and obstinate persons who, without studying them, intensively deny the facts and run away from them is stated in a short arid expressive sentence. These people even ban the way of others, and this chastisement is the fruit of their own proofless denial.

The verse says:

"...Soon We will recompense those who turn away from Our Signs with a terrible punishment for what they used to turn away."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 158

هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَوْ يَأْتِيَ رَبُّكَ أَوْ يَأْتِيَ بَعْضُ آيَاتِ رَبِّكَ يَوْمَ يَأْتِي
بَعْضُ آيَاتِ رَبِّكَ لَا يَنْفَعُ نَفْسًا إِيْمَانُهَا لَمْ تَكُنْ آمَنَتْ مِنْ قَبْلُ أَوْ كَسَبَتْ فِي إِيْمَانِهَا
خَيْرًا قُلْ انتظروا إِنَّا منتظرونَ

158. "Do they await anything but that the angels should come to them, or your Lord should come, or some of your Lord's Signs should come? On the day when some of the Signs of your Lord come, the faith (and repentance) will not benefit anyone who had not believed beforehand and had not earned goodness through his faith. Say: 'Wait! we too are waiting'."

This fact was pointed out in the former verses that Allah completed the argument to the pagans and He sent the heavenly Book, i.e. the Qur'an, for the guidance of all. Now, this verse indicates that these obstinate persons are so arrogant in their affairs that these clear evidences do not affect them.

It seems that they are waiting for their own annihilation, or losing their last opportunity, or they are expecting some impossible affairs to come forth.

At first, it says:

"Do they await anything but that the angels should come to them, or your Lord should come....."

That is, do they expect that Allah comes to them and when they see Him they believe in Him? In fact, they are waiting for an impossible thing to happen.

Then, it adds that they may expect to see the occurrence of some of the signs of Allah which will occur at the threshold of Resurrection, the end of the world, whereupon the doors of repentance will be closed. The verse says:

"...or some of your Lord's Signs should come?..."

Then, following this meaning, it adds:

"... On the day when some of the Signs of your Lord come, the faith (and repentance) will not benefit anyone who had not believed beforehand and had not earned goodness through his faith. ..."

Since, on that Day repentance and belief will gain a form that will be obligatory, this kind of repentance and belief is not worthy, of course. They are worthy and acceptable when they are arbitrary.

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an addresses these obstinate persons and, with a threatening tone, says that now that they are waiting for such a thing, they may remain in their waiting and We wait, too, for their painful retribution. It says:

"... Say: 'Wait! We too are waiting!'"

One of the interesting things that can be understood from this verse is that the Qur'an introduces the way of felicity in Faith. This Faith is the one under whose ray a goodness may be obtained and some good deeds be fulfilled.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 159

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شِيَعًا لَسْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ ثُمَّ
يُنَبِّئُهُم بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ

159. "Verily those who divided their religion and became parties, you have no concern with them. Their affair is only with Allah, then He will inform them of what they used to do."

Following the explanation of 'Ten Commandments' that were discussed through previous verses, this verse, indeed, can be counted as an emphasis and a commentary upon the subject mentioned in the tenth commandment.

Its content commands us to follow 'the Straight Path' and to struggle against any hypocrisy and discord.

At first, it says:

"Verily those who divided their religion and became parties, you have no concern with them. ..."

It means that, in no respect you have concern with them, and they have no concern with your school of thought, because your school of thought is the school of theism and Straight Path, and there is only one 'Straight Path' for all, not more than that.

Then, as a threat and reprimand against these dispersive persons, the Qur'an says:

"... Their affair is only with Allah, then He will inform them of what they used to do."

It is noteworthy that the content of this verse is a general and common commandment about all those who cause discord among people. By creating kinds of innovations, they scatter the seeds of hypocrisy and discord amongst the servants of Allah, irrespective of those who were from the former nations, or those who are in this nation.

With a full emphasis, this verse intensifies once more the fact that Islam is a religion of Unity and Oneness. It hates any kind of hypocrisy, discord and dispersion.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 160

مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ عَشْرُ أَمْثَالِهَا وَمَنْ جَاءَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ فَلَا يُجْزَى إِلَّا مِثْلَهَا وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ

160. "Whoever brings a good (deed), he shall have ten times its like, and whoever brings vice, he shall not be recompensed but with its like, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly."

In this holy verse the multifold reward given for good deeds is referred to. Through previous verse, the wrong doers were threatened and reprimanded upon their evil deeds, while here, in this verse, the Qur'an clearly says:

"Whoever brings a good (deed), he shall have ten times its like...."

But as for those who commit a sin, Allah will punish them equally as much as their sin. As a result of the greatness of His grace and generosity, Allah bestows the reward of a good action more than it's due, and forgives the faults of the sinners. And, if he punishes one, He punishes as much as the one deserves, not more than that. The verse continues saying:

"...and whoever brings vice, he shall not be recompensed but with it's like...."

Some of the commentators believe that the purpose of the Qur'anic word /hasanah/ (a good deed) is

'Unity', and the purpose of the word /sayyi'ah/ (a vice) is 'infidelity'. According to this meaning, the essence of good deeds is Unity and the essence of vices is infidelity.

"... and they shall not be dealt with unjustly."

There will not be done any unjust against anybody, because none will be punished more than what one deserves.

Therefore, Allah treats with His grace when He gives reward, but He treats with His justice when He punishes. The tenfold rewards that He gives for a good action, only one part is the wage of it and the rest nine parts are 'Allah's grace'. **Surah An-Nisa. No.4. Verse 173** says:

"... He will pay them their rewards fully and will bestow them more out of His Grace."

It is worthy to note that the tenfold reward is for all believers in general, but some deeds which are done in some circumstances by some qualified persons will be bestowed up to seven hundred times rewards, and even without measure rewards either.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 161

قُلْ إِنِّي هَدَانِي رَبِّي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ دِينًا قِيمًا مِّلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنْ
الْمُشْرِكِينَ

161. "Say: Verily my Lord has guided me to a Straight Path, the established religion, the creed of Abraham, the upright one, and he was not of the polytheists."

This verse, together with the next verses by which Surah Al-'An'am ends, is, in fact, a summary of the subjects discussed about the struggle against paganism and Idolatry stated in this Surah.

At first, in order to stand against the illogical notions and claims of pagans and idol worshippers, Allah orders His Messenger to tell them that his Lord has guided him to the Straight Path, which is the nearest path among all paths.

This 'Straight Path' is the same path of Unity and monotheism, and the path of eradication of the creed of paganism and polytheism. It says:

"Say: Verily my Lord has guided me to a straight path....."

Thus, the Qur'an explains 'the Straight Path' in this verse and the next two verses. First of all, it implies that it is a direct religion with the utmost correctness and veracity, eternal, and subsisting to the affairs of

both religion and life, body and soul.

"... the established religion...."

And, since Arabs showed a special affection to Abraham, so that they even introduced their creed as Abraham's creed, the Qur'an adds that he true creed of Abraham is the very one toward which you have been invited, not that which you have forged under his name.

"... the creed of Abraham...."

That very Abraham (as) is the one who turned away from the superstitious creed of his time and environment, and attached the Truth, i.e. the monotheism.

"... The upright one...."

This meaning seems to be an answer to the expressions of polytheists who blamed the opposition of the Prophet (S) with the creed of idolatry, which was the creed of the ancestors of Arabs.

In answer to them, the Prophet (S) said that his manner of breaking wrong customs and turning away from the superstitious notions of the environment was not only his job, but Abraham (as), whom they wholly respect, also did like that. Then, as an emphasis, it says:

"... and he was not of the polytheists."

Abraham (as) was a hero of breaking idols. He was an active and steadfast challenger against idolatry.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verses 162 - 163

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَبِذَلِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

162. "Say: ' Verily my prayer and my worship, my life and my death are for Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. "

163. "No associate (there is) for Him, and this (submission) I have been commanded to, and I am the first of the Muslims. "

In the first verse, mentioned here, it points to the matter that the Prophet (S) should tell the pagans that

not only from the point of belief he is a Unitarian and a monotheist, hut also, from the point of action, whatever good deed he does, including his prayer, all his worships, and even his death and life, in all, are for the sake of the Lord of the Worlds. The verse says:

"Say: ' Verily my prayer and my worship, my life and death are for Allah, the Lord of the Worlds."

That is, I am alive for Him, and I die for His sake. I devote whatever I have in His way. All my desires, the whole love of mine, and the entire existence that I have is Allah's .

In order to nullify all kinds of paganism and idolatry, in this verse, it emphasizes that Allah (S.w.T.) is the One that there is no associate and no compeer for Him. It says:

"No associate (there is) for Him....."

And, finally, the verse continues saying:

"... and this (submission) I have been commanded to, and I am the first of the Muslims."

To be the first of the Muslims for the Prophet of Islam (S) is either from the point of quality and importance of Islam, because the degree of his submission and his Islam was higher than all prophets, or that he was the first person of this community who accepted the religion of the Qur'an and Islam.

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 164

قُلْ أَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ أَبْغِي رَبًّا وَهُوَ رَبُّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَلَا تَكْسِبُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ إِلَّا عَلَيْهَا وَلَا تَزِرُ
وَازِرَةً وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ

164. " Say: ' shall I seek a Lord other than Allah while He is the Lord of all things? And no one earns anything but to his own account; and no one bears the burden of another; then to your Lord is your return, so He will inform you of what you used to differ (about)."

In this verse, the Qur'an criticizes the logic of the pagans in another way. It tells the Prophet (S) to ask them whether it is appropriate to take a lord except Allah as their Lord, while He is the owner, the trainer, and the Lord of all things and His ordinance and His command is current in the entire particles of the world. The verse says:

"Say: ' shall I seek a Lord other than Allah while He is the Lord of all things? "

A group of the short-minded pagans came to the Prophet of Islam (S) and said that he should follow their creed. They added that if their creed was false, they might bear the burden of his sin.

This verse answers them by saying:

"... And no one earns anything but to his own account; and no one bears the burden of another....."

Then the verse adds:

"... then to your Lord is your return, so He will inform you of what you used to differ (about)."

Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 165

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خَلَائِفَ الْأَرْضِ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَكُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِّيَبْلُوكُمْ فِي
مَا آتَاكُمْ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ سَرِيعُ الْعِقَابِ وَإِنَّهُ لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

165. "And He it is Who has made you successors in the earth, and raised some of you above others in grades that He may try you in respect to what He has given you. Verily your Lord is swift in retribution, and indeed He is Forgiving, Merciful."

In this verse, which is the last verse of Surah Al-'An'am, in order to complete the former discussions upon strengthening the foundation of Unity and struggling against paganism, the Qur'an points to the rank of man and his situation in the world of existence. So, firstly it says:

"And He it is Who has made you successors in the earth....."

Man is Allah's vice-regent on the earth, and all the sources of the world are set at his disposal. Allah has issued Man's command and dominion over all these creatures. Such a man must not let himself fall so low that he becomes more degraded than an inanimate thing and then he prostrates before it.

Then the verse points to the difference of talents and the various bodily and spiritual merits of human beings, and to the aim of this difference and variation among men. The verse says:

"... and raised some of you above others in grades that He may try you in respect to what He has given you. ..."

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an refers to man's freedom in; choosing the path of happiness and wretchedness, stating the conclusion of these trials, as follows:

"...Verily your Lord is swift in retribution, and indeed He is Forgiving, Merciful."

The Difference of Men and the Principal of Justice

No doubt, there are a series of artificial differences among the individuals of humankind which have been emerged as a result of the transgressions and cruelties of some human beings performed upon some other people.

For example: some persons are the owners of abundant wealth, but some others are terribly poor. Or, a great deal of people is unsound and sickly weak as a result of deficiency of nutrition and lack of hygiene, while some other people are in the best condition of health, because all possibilities of life are available for them.

These kinds of differences, such as: richness and poverty, knowledge and ignorance, health and sickness, and so on, are often the consequences of colonialism, exploitation, various forms of slavery, and apparent and concealed transgressions.

Surely, these kinds of differences cannot be considered as the acts of the system of creation. So, there is no reason for us, to defend the existence of such unacceptable differences.

Humankind, all together, form also a society resembled to a great, tall and fruitful tree. Every group, or even an individual, of them is responsible for a particular mission in this huge body, which demands a proportional construction peculiar to it.

That is why the Qur'an says that these differences are as a means of your trial, and the term 'trial', in the divine statements is used in the sense of 'training and education'.

Man's Vicegerency on the Earth!

The Qur'an has repeatedly introduced Man as the 'vicegerent' and 'representative' of Allah on the earth. This introduction, in addition to making clear the position of Man in creation, also explains this fact that properties, wealth, talents, and the whole merits that Allah has bestowed on Man are, in deed, in possession of Allah.

Man is merely His representative who has been given leave by Him. It is evident, of course that no representative is independent in his dominations, but his dominations ought to be limited to the leave and permission of the main owner.

This explanation may make this fact clear that, for example, regarding to the question of ownership, Islam keeps distance from both the camp of communism and the camp of capitalism.

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life-and-death-be-only