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Section 19: Mercy Promised to Those Who Accept the Apostle (Muhammad)

Surah al-'Araf – Verse 152

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا الْعِجْلَ سَيَنَالُهُمْ غَضَبٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَذِلَّةٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُفْتَرِينَ

152. “Verily those who adopted (worshipping) the Calf soon shall reach them a wrath from their Lord and abasement in the life of the world. And thus do We recompense the forgers of lies.”

Finally, that intensive harsh reaction of Moses (as) brought forth its own effect and the calf-worshippers from the Children of Israel, who formed the majority of the people of Moses, showed regret for their treatment. But, in order that none consider that this mere regret and remorse was enough for their repentance from such a great fault, the Qur'an adds the statement as follows:

“Verily those who adopted (worshipping) the Calf soon shall reach them a wrath from their Lord and abasement in the life of the world...”

Again, in order that none imagine that this law is allocated only to those people, it is added at the end of the verse:

“...And thus do We recompense the forgers of lies.”

Surah al-‘Araf – Verse 153

وَالَّذِينَ عَمِلُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ ثُمَّ تَابُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهَا وَءَامَنُوا إِنَّ رَبَّكَ مِنْ بَعْدِهَا لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

153. “And those who commit evil deeds, then repent thereafter and believe, verily, after that (repentance), your Lord is certainly Forgiving, Merciful. ”

This verse has completed the previous meaning. As a general rule, it implies that those who do some wrong actions and, under the presence of all conditions of repentance, repent thereafter and renew their belief in Allah, so that they return from any polytheism and disobedience, after that the Lord will forgive them, for Allah (s.w.t.) is Forgiving, Merciful. The holy verse says:

“And those who commit evil deeds, then repent thereafter and believe, verily, after that (repentance), your Lord is certainly Forgiving, Merciful. ”

Surah al-‘Araf – Verse 154

وَلَمَّا سَكَتَ عَنْ مُوسَى الْغَضَبُ أَخَذَ الْأَلْوَابَ وَفِي نُسْخَتِهَا هُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِلَّذِينَ هُمْ لِرَبِّهِمْ يَرْهَبُونَ

154. “And when Moses’ anger calmed, he took up the Tablets, and in the inscriptions of them was guidance and mercy for those who are in awe of their Lord. ”

In this verse, the Qur’ān informs that when the fire of the anger of Moses (as) quenched and he got the result he expected, he stretched his hand and took up the Tablets from the ground. The records of those Tablets were wholly guidance and mercy. That very guidance and mercy was for those who felt responsibility and were in awe of Allah and submitted to His command.

The verse says:

“And when Moses’ anger calmed, he took up the Tablets, and in the inscriptions of them was guidance and mercy for those who are in awe of their Lord. ”

Surah al-‘Araf – Verse 155

وَاخْتَارَ مُوسَىٰ قَوْمَهُ سَبْعِينَ رَجُلًا لِّمِيقَاتِنَا فَلَمَّا أَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ قَالَ رَبِّ لَوْ شِئْتَ أَهْلَكْتَهُم مِّن قَبْلُ وَإِيَّايَ أَتُهْلِكُنَا بِمَا فَعَلَ السُّفَهَاءُ مِنَّا إِنَّ هِيَ إِلَّا فِتْنَتُكَ تُضِلُّ بِهَا مَن تَشَاءُ وَتَهْدِي مَن تَشَاءُ أَنْتَ وَلِيُّنَا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْغَافِرِينَ

155. *“And Moses chose seventy men from his people for Our trust, and when the earthquake overtook them, he said: ‘O’ Lord! had You pleased, You could have destroyed them and me before. Will You destroy us because of what the fools of us have done? It is naught but Your trial, whereby You cause to stray whomever You wish and guide whomever You wish. You are our master, so forgive us and have mercy on us, for You are the best of the forgivers.”*

Once more, in this verse and the next one, the Qur'ān refers to a part of the story of Moses (as) when he, accompanying with a group of the Children of Israel, went to the tryst of Tūr.

At first, the Qur'ān says:

“And Moses chose seventy men from his people for Our trust...”

But when those men of the Children of Israel heard the word of the Lord, they demanded Moses (as) to ask Allah to show Himself. At that time a great earthquake occurred and caused those people to pass away and Moses (as) fell down senseless. When he recovered his senses he said to the Lord that if He had wished He could have destroyed them and him before that. The verse says:

“...and when the earthquake overtook them, he said: ‘O’ Lord! had You pleased, You could have destroyed them and me before.

That is, Moses (as) meant how could he answer his people whose representatives became like that?

Then he said to the Lord that that undue request was the utterance of some fools of those people. Then he questioned Allah whether He destroyed them for what their fools had done. The verse says:

“...Will You destroy us because of what the fools of us have done?...”

Next to this supplication and request, he said to Him:

“...It is naught but Your trial, whereby You cause to stray whomever You wish and guide whomever You wish...”

And the statement of Moses (as) to the Lord, mentioned at the end of the verse, continued as follows:

“...You are our master, so forgive us and have mercy on us, for You are the best of the forgivers.”

From the totality of the verses of the Qur'ān and the Islamic traditions, it is understood that, at last, the

people who were destroyed thereby were restored to life again and returned to the Children of Israel with Moses (as). They detailed for them what they had seen and began preaching those unaware people.

Surah al-‘Araf – Verse 156

وَكَتُبْ لَنَا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ إِنَّا هُدْنَا إِلَيْكَ قَالَ عَذَابِي أُصِيبُ بِهِ
مَنْ أَشَاءُ وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَسَاكْتُبُهَا لِلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ
وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِآيَاتِنَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

156. “And prescribe goodness for us in this world and in the Hereafter, (for) verily we have come back to You (repentantly). He (the Lord) said: ‘My chastisement, I will afflict with it whom I please, but My mercy embraces all things. Soon I shall prescribe it for those who keep from evil and pay the alms and those who believe in Our signs.’”

Following to the request of Moses (as) from Allah and the completion of the subject of repentance, which was referred to through the previous verse, in this verse, the continuation of supplication of Moses (as) to the Lord (s.w.t.) is announced as follows:

“And prescribe goodness for us in this world and in the Hereafter...”

Then, he states the reason of this request unto Allah and that he has asked forgiveness for the undue words that those fools had said. Here is his reason:

“...(for) verily we have come back to You (repentantly)...”

At last, Allah answered the invocation of Moses (as) and accepted his repentance, but with some conditions which are stated at the end of this very verse. The verse says:

“...He (the Lord) said: ‘My chastisement, I will afflict with it whom I please, but My mercy embraces all things...’”

But, in order that some persons do not imagine that the acceptance of repentance, together with the vast mercy of Allah and its generality, is not given undue and with no condition, at the end of the verse, He adds that His mercy is prescribed for those who fulfil the following three things. The verse says:

“...Soon I shall prescribe it for those who keep from evil and pay the alms and those who believe in Our signs.”

Surah al-‘Araf – Verse 157

الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الْأُمِّيَّ الَّذِي يَجِدُونَهُ مَكْتُوبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ
وَالْإِنْجِيلِ يَأْمُرُهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ
الْخَبَائِثَ وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ فَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِهِ
وَعَزَّزُوا وَنَصَرُواهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا النُّورَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ مَعَهُ ۙ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

157. “(And also for) those who follow the Messenger, the unschooled Prophet, whose explanation they find written with them in the Turah and the Evangel. He enjoins on them what is right and forbids them what is wrong, and he makes lawful for them the good things and prohibits for them the corrupt things; and he removes from them their burden and the bondages that were upon them. Then, those who believe in him, and honour him, and help him, and follow the light which has been sent down with him, these are they that are the prosperous ones’.”

The Arabic word /‘ummi/ is derived from /‘Umm/ which means ‘mother’. It is also used for a person who has not learnt to read and write. In this regard, he is like a new born child.

Some commentators have said that the term /‘ummi/ means a person who is from among the ummah and common people, not from among notables. Some other commentators of the Qur’ān consider that the word is related to the term /‘umm-ul-qur’ā/ which is an appellation for Mecca, and it, therefore, means Meccan.

Basing on some evidences, we count the existing Turah and the Bible perverted. Yet, there are some hints and glad tidings in both of them about the Prophet of Islam (S) which indicate that the People of the Book knew the Prophet of Allah so much so that a father knows his child.

Some of these references are as follows: the Turah, Genesis, Chapter 17, verses 18,20 and 21; Genesis, Chapter 49, verse 10: the Bible, John, Chapter 14, verse 15; and Chapter 15, verse 26.

At the time of the advent of Islam, there were only 17 men and one woman in Mecca who could read and write. Thus, if the Prophet (S) had studied and learnt even one word before a person, he could not be called /‘ummi/ among those people.¹

The verse says:

“(And also for) those who follow the Messenger, the unschooled Prophet, whose explanation they find written with them in the Turah and the Evangel...”

The Qur’ānic term /‘aql/ (chains), used in this verse, had been applied for the false notions,

superstitions, idolatry, and some troublesome customs mainly remained from the Age of Ignorance.

Therefore, false customs and habits are as chains on the thoughts of people. Thus human beings who do not believe in any prophet are always dependant and they live as captives. The verse says:

“...He enjoins on them what is right and forbids them what is wrong, and he makes lawful for them the good things and prohibits for them the corrupt things; and he removes from them their burden and the bondages that were upon them...”

A mere belief in the Prophet (S) of Islam is not enough, helping him and supporting him is also necessary. The holy verse says:

“...Then, those who believe in him, and honour him, and help him...”

However, we must know that the Qur’ān is a light which enlightens the hearts and thoughts of its believers. The verse continues saying:

“...and follow the light which has been sent down with him...”

The help and respect to the Prophet (S), like belief in him, is not allocated to a particular time. Therefore, honouring the grave of the Prophet (S) and his effects is also the extension of that help and respect.

In any case, felicity comes into being under the shade of following the prophets. The verse concludes:

“...Then, those who believe in him, and honour him, and help him, and follow the light which has been sent down with him, these are they that are the prosperous ones’.”

Some Traditions

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

“He who enjoins right and prohibits wrong is the vicegerent of both Allah and His Messenger on the earth.”²

Imam Bāqir (as) said:

“Verily, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong is the way of prophets and the method of good doers. It is such a great obligatory deed (wājib) by which other obligatory deeds can survive, other creeds can be saved, bargains are lawful, injustices are warded off, and prosperity can be filled in the earth...”³

Imam Amir-ul-Mu’mineen Ali (as) said:

“The firmness of the religion is due to enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and observing the limits of Allah.”⁴

Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said to Imam al-Hassan and Imam al-Husayn (as) when Ibn-Muljam (the curse of Allah be upon him) struck him (fatally with a sword):

"...Fear Allah (and again) fear Allah in the matter of Jihād, (struggle for the Holy War), with the help of your property, lives and speech in the way of Allah..."

*"Do not give up bidding for good and forbidding from evil lest the mischievous gain positions over you, and then (in that case) when you pray, your invocations will not be granted to you..."*⁵

1. Narrated from Futūḥ-ul-Baladīn Bilḥārī, p. 459.

2. Mustadrak-ul-Wasṭīl, vol. 12, p. 179

3. Al-Kḥfi, vol. 5, p. 56

4. Qurar-ul-Hikam, p. 236

5. Nahjul-Balaqah, Letter 47, p. 422

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