

Section 1: Qur'an Revealed to Lead Mankind to Light

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Surah 'Ibrahim – Verse 1

الر كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ لِتُخْرِجَ النَّاسَ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ

1. “Alif, ‘A’ Lam, ‘L’ Ra, ‘R’. (This is) a Book which We have sent down to you so that, by their Lord’s permission, you lead out the people from the darkness (of ignorance) into the light (of faith), into the way of the Mighty, the Praised (One).”

Similar to some of other suras of the Qur'an, this Surah begins with the abbreviated letters. What is worth mentioning here is that out of 29 Suras, which begin with abbreviated letters, in 24 of them the words next to them are about the Glorious Qur'an.

This indicates that there is a connection between these two, i.e. the abbreviated letters and the Qur'an the Lord is perhaps seeking to exhibit that this great celestial Book, with such great meaningful content, that tops in the leadership of all human beings, begins with simple letters of the alphabet, which by itself is a sign of the significance of this Divine miracle.

Anyway, after the mention of the letters Alif, Lam, Ra, He says:

“(This is) a Book which We have sent down to you so that, by their Lord’s permission, you lead out the people from the darkness (of ignorance) into the light (of faith)...”

In fact, all the educational objectives, as well as spiritual and material aims of the revelation of the Holy Qur’an are condensed in this single sentence:

‘leading the people from the darkness to the light’,

which means directing them towards enlightenment from the state of utter darkness; or directing the people from the state of darkness of paganism towards the state of illumination of faith; from the state of the darkness of oppression and tyranny towards the state of the enlightenment of justice; from the state of corruption and injustice into the state of righteousness and justice; from sin to piety and virtuosity, and finally from the state of disunity and dispersion into the state of unify.

As the source of all good is the Pure Essence of Allah, and the main pre-condition of understanding of monotheism is focusing on this very reality, the Qur’an adds immediately that all of these are achieved in accordance with the permission of people’s Lord:

“...by their Lord’s permission...”

To clarify the issue further for the direction towards enlightenment, the Qur’an implies that this enlightenment of faith is in the path of the Lord, the Dear and the Praised One. The Lord Whose Glory is a sign of His Power; and His Praised state is a sign of His unlimited favours and blessings.

The verse says:

“...into the way of the Mighty, the Praised (One).”

Explanations

To bring people out of darkness into the light has been repeated several times in the Qur’an. At times, this act is attributed to Allah:

“...Allah is the Guardian of those who have faith; He brings them out of the darkness into the light...”¹

Sometimes, this is attributed to the prophets:

“...‘Bring forth your people from the darkness into the light...’”²

At other times, it is attributed to the Book, like the verse under discussion.

Using metaphors of profanity, disunity, ignorance and skepticism as well as paganism, described as

“**darkness**”, is for the sake that man in these cases is amazed, like the time when he is in darkness.

Light is the means for seeing, awakening, movement, guidance and development, as they are all included in the celestial Book and the way of Allah.

The Qur’an is not adequate in itself; the Divine leader is also necessary for guiding the people as well.

The philosophy underlying the revelation of the celestial Books, and the prophetic mission of the prophets are concerned with the salvation of mankind from the darkneses: from the darkness of ignorance into the light of knowledge; from the darkness of profanity into the light of faith; from the darkness of disparity into the light of unity, and finally from the darkness of sin into the light of virtue.

Surah ‘Ibrahim – Verse 2

اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَوَيْلٌ لِلْكَافِرِينَ مِنْ عَذَابٍ شَدِيدٍ

2. “Allah, unto Whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and woe to the unbelievers for severe chastisement.”

In this verse, a lesson on monotheism is discussed as a way of introducing Allah, where He says:

“Allah, unto Whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth...”

At the end of the verse, the Qur’an attracts the attentions, to the issue of Resurrection, after concentration on the original cause of the universe, it implies: woe unto the disbelievers for whom awaits the severe chastisement of the Doomsday.

The verse continues saying:

“...and woe to the unbelievers for severe chastisement.”

Surah ‘Ibrahim – Verse 3

الَّذِينَ يَسْتَحِبُّونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا عَلَى الْأٰخِرَةِ وَيَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَيَبْغُونَهَا عِوَجًا أُولَٰئِكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ بَعِيدٍ

3. “Those who prefer the life of the world to the Hereafter, and hinder (others) from the path of Allah, and seek to make it crooked. They are in far error.”

To enjoy oneself in this world is permissible, but to prefer this world to the next is a dangerous thing, for one's adherence to this world, necessarily obstructs him from his worship, spending out of belongings, participating in the Holy War, obtaining the allowed profits, truthfulness, and the performance of religious duties.

And, eventually, seeking of worldly pleasures paves the way for paganism and is leading a campaign against religion which consequences aberration.

Therefore, the Qur'an tends to introduce the pagans in this verse, and it makes their position quite transparent by mentioning three parts of their characteristics so that everybody can recognize them at first sight.

At first, it says:

“Those who prefer the life of the world to the Hereafter...”

And they sacrifice every thing even their faith and the truth in face of the mean interests, passions, and their low desires.

Then the Qur'an implies that they are not even content with this, but, in addition to their own seduction, they seek to seduce others as well. They stand in the way of the people in order to obstruct them from the path of Allah. Or they even tend to introduce changes in it as well.

In fact, their job is to decorate the low desires and persuade the people to commit sins, frightening them of being honest and pure, while seeking to bring others in line with themselves. Through adding superstitions and all kinds of distortions to it as well as creating dirty and ugly traditions, they try to achieve their objectives.

The verse says:

“...and hinder (others) from the path of Allah, and seek to make it crooked...”

It is obvious that such people distance themselves from the true path in an extensive manner with such qualifications and overt behaviour. Such a state of being misled which makes it an impossibility for them to return to the point of the truth because of its remote distance. However all such conditions and states of mind are the product of their own behaviour.

The verse says:

“...They are in far error.”

Incidentally, one must know that obstruction of Allah's path is not confined to one or two cases.

On the contrary, inappropriate propaganda, overt committing of sins, spread of the methods of corruption

and of ways of negligence, inciting of skepticism, creating and spreading the means of discord, and spreading of seducing films and publications, misrepresenting the religion of the truth, introducing the wrong kind of people as the identification religious figures, are all among tens of examples of the obstruction of Allah's path.

Surah 'Ibrahim – Verse 4

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا بِلِسَانِ قَوْمِهِ لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ فَيُضِلُّ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

4. “And We never sent a messenger except with the language of his people, so that he might explain (Our Message) to them clearly; then Allah leads astray whom He pleases and guides whom He pleases, and He is the Mighty, the Wise.”

The object in mind as of /lis an-i-qaum/ in this verse is not confined only to the language of the people, for it sometimes happens that a speaker speaks in the language of a people though they might not understand him properly.

As Allah remarks in other verses:

“So We have made it (the Qur'an) easy in your tongue...”³

Hadrat-i-Musa also asks Allah to release his tongue in such a manner that the people understand his words:

“And loose a knot from my tongue,”

“(That) they may understand my saying.”⁴

The verse under discussion says:

“And We never sent a messenger except with the language of his people, so that he might explain (Our Message) to them clearly...”

In the meantime, the purpose of **“Allah leads astray”** is depriving of obstinate people from His grace. Otherwise if Allah wanted to mislead any one directly, He would neither send any Books, nor would He send any prophet.

In other verses we read that Allah misleads the unjust, transgressors, and the lavish persons. That is, man deprives himself from the divine guidance and paves the way for his own seduction by committing

sins and acts of tyranny.

Some commentators have claimed that the subject of /yaš a' is the people and not Allah. That is, Allah misleads him who wishes himself to be misled and leads the one whom he wishes to be led. The verse says:

“...then Allah leads astray whom He pleases and guides whom He pleases, and He is the Mighty, the Wise.”

He is Omnipotent under all circumstances and as a result of His Glory and Power though He will not mislead any one for no reason as a consequence of His wisdom. However, the first steps are voluntarily taken with their utmost freedom by the servants on the path of Allah (s.w.t.) and then the enlightening rays of guidance are cast and the grace of Allah covers them in their hearts.

Those who have alienated themselves from eligibility of meriting Allah's approbation because of their obstinacy and fanaticism, and their hostility against the truth and as a consequence of being immersed in the abyss of their passion or tyranny, are deprived from the favour of guidance and are lost in utter darkness.

As it can be seen, the origin and the source of guidance and seduction lay in our own hands.

Incidentally, one must keep in mind that the propagation of the truth by the Prophet (S), which has been done in the language of his local people, is not incompatible with the cosmopolitan and universal nature of the religion.

For, the content of the text or message does not have any particular medium of expression, and, on the recommendation of the Qur'an, some groups must learn religious matters, whether by going on exodus or by giving up their special favours so as they can teach others.

Surah 'Ibrahim – Verse 5

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا أَنْ أَخْرِجْ قَوْمَكَ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَذَكِّرْهُمْ بِأَيَّامِ
اللَّهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ

5. “And indeed We sent Moses with Our Signs (saying): ‘Bring forth your people from the darkness into the light and remind them of the days of Allah. Verily there are signs in this for every patient, grateful (one)’.”

Allah is alluding in this noble verse to one of the samples of the sending of the prophets as against their contemporary despots for getting them out of the darkness and directing them to light.

He says:

“And indeed We sent Moses with Our Signs (saying): ‘Bring forth your people from the darkness into the light...’”

Then, referring to one of the great missions of Moses (as), it remarks:

“... and remind them of the days of Allah. ...”

“The days of Allah”

are all those days which stand prominent in the history of mankind.

Each day which marks the beginning of a new chapter and provides an instructive lesson for man and has witnessed the emergence or the uprising of a prophet or has witnessed the downfall of an unruly despot or pharaoh, is considered as “the day of Allah”.

In short, on every day when one witnesses that justice is being achieved and an injustice or any innovation has been wiped out, all such days are among the days of Allah.

A tradition quoted from Imam Baqir (as) indicates that he remarked:

“The days of Allah refer to: the day on which the uprising of the promised Mahdi (as) takes place, and to the day of Return to life, as well as the Resurrection day.”

At the end of the verse the Qur’an remarks that: in these words and throughout all the days of Allah there are signs for each man and for every persevering, resisting and grateful individual.

The verse says:

“... Verily there are signs in this for every patient, grateful (one).”

Therefore, the faithful people will neither lose their way when they are having a hard time so that they submit to the events, nor do they become arrogant and negligent during the days of victory and affluence. All they often do is that they constantly show their gratitude towards Allah.

Explanations

1- Concentration on history leads to and paves the way for one’s patience and gratitude. The remembrance of the catastrophes and of the past bitter events and their removal, makes man grateful and thankful, and once his attention is focused on the resistance of the nations and on their eventual victory, this invites man to patience and perseverance.

“... Verily there are signs in this for every patient, grateful (one).”

2- All days are the days of Allah (s.w.t.), though the day of the glorification of Allah's power is a different matter. (The glorification of His Power is seen through His punishment over the pagans, and the glorification of His favor over the believers is regarded as the days of Allah).

Surah 'Ibrahim – Verse 6

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ لِقَوْمِهِ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ أَنْجَاكُمْ مِنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ
يَسُومُونَكُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ وَيَذُبُّونَ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَاءَكُمْ وَفِي ذَلِكَ بَلَاءٌ مِنْ
رَبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ

6. “And (remember) when Moses said to his people: ‘Remember Allah’s favour to you when He delivered you from Pharaoh’s people. They afflicted you with evil chastisement, slaughtering your sons, and sparing your women; and in this was a great trial from your Lord.’”

He alludes to one of those Divine days, in this verse, and to those eventful and illuminated days which existed in the history of the Children of Israel, and the mentioning of which provides an appropriate admonition for the Muslims.

The Qur’an, addressing them, implies that you should remember the time when Mūsa told his own nation that they would remember Allah’s blessings and favor at the time when He liberated you from the hands of the Pharaoh’s people.

Verily they were punishing you and inflicting the worst kind of chastisement on you, used to decapitate your sons before you and used to keep your wives alive for the sake of service to them.

The verse says:

“And (remember) when Moses said to his people: ‘Remember Allah’s favour to you when He delivered you from Pharaoh’s people. They afflicted you with evil chastisement, slaughtering your sons, and sparing your women...’”

Such has been the case with every colonizing power throughout history that it has always sought to destroy and perish parts of the aggressive, active and resisting powers, or to render useless other sections of such powers, and finally, to weaken other segments so as to utilize them for the sake of and in line with their own interests.

The verse continues saying:

“...and in this was a great trial from your Lord.”

Incidentally, such trial and test has not been the case only in connection with the Children of Israel, but it has also been the case with all the nations as well that the day of their liberation and independence from the hands of the despots, has been always remembered as the Divine days.

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1. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 257
 2. The current Surah, verse 5
 3. Maryam, No. 19, verse 97
 4. Surah TaHa, No. 20, verses 27–28

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