

Section 1: The Existence of Allah Proved by Nature

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 1

أَتَى أَمْرُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلُوهُ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

1. “Allah’s commandment has come, hence do not seek to hasten it. Glory be to Him and Exalted is He above every thing with which they associate Him.”

A considerable part of the commencing verses of this Surah have been revealed in Mecca, during which time the Prophet (S) was intensively entangled with the pagans and idol-worshippers who used various pretexts every day for the liberating and life-saving call of Islam.

Among such pretexts one might name the Divine chastisement, which, whenever the Prophet (S) warned them against, some obstinate folks would declare.

“Why would such a chastisement which you claim, if truly said, do not come to be inflicted on us?”

They might sometimes add that if supposedly there was such a case impending, they should take recourse to their idols to serve as mediators with Allah (s.w.t.) to be rescued from punishment.

The first verse of this Surah drew an obliterating line over such imaginary claims by implying that they should stop making haste in that connection for Allah's commandment had definitely been issued already.

It says:

“Allah’s commandment has come, hence do not seek to hasten it...”

If you think that the idols will be involved as mediators with Him, you are seriously mistaken, as Allah is far more intact and superior to being attached with associates.

The verse continues saying:

“...Glory be to Him and Exalted is He above every thing with which they associate Him.”

Explanation

Notwithstanding the case in question in this verse is the pagans' impatience in their receiving of the Divine punishment, but the beginning sentence of the verse is not confined to the Divine punishment.

Rather, it includes all the Divine commandments such as that relating to waging of the Holy war, the commandment concerning the reappearance of the contemporary Imam (a.j.), the Return of the Immaculate Imams (as), and the commandment for the stepping up and staging of the resurrection day about which one must not make haste.

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 2

يُنَزِّلُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ بِالرُّوحِ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ أَنْ أَنْذِرُوا أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاتَّقُونِ

2. “He sends down the angels with the inspiration of His commandment upon whomever of His servants He wills as to warn (people) that there is no God but I, so be in awe of Me.”

The Arabic term /r^ḥ/ refers to one of the Divine near-stationed angels the name of which is mentioned separately in the Qur'an and has come beside the word 'the angels':

“The Day (on which) the spirit (R^ḥ) and the angels shall stand arrayed...”¹

However, in the verse under discussion the letter /b/ (with) is employed between the two words used instead of the conjunction /wa/ (and). Perhaps, the meaning intended in this verse is not 'that angel' when dealing with /r^ḥ/, but it may mean the literal sense of the word which is the spiritual life.

In this case the verse signifies: Allah sends down the angels along with the means of life to those servants whom He pleases; as is the case in verse 50 from Surah Ash-Shour a, where the word /rḥ/ denotes the Qur'an which is the source of spiritual life.²

In any case, as no punishment and retribution will be inflicted on anyone without adequate explanation and without delivering a just ultimatum, the Qur'an implies that Allah sends down angels with the Divine spirit to those of His servants whom He wants, ordering them to awaken the people to the fact that there is no other one to be worshipped except Him.

Therefore, they should avoid any opposition to His commandments and feel responsible when confronting Him.

The verse says:

“He sends down the angels with the inspiration of His commandment upon whomever of His servants He wills as to warn (people) that there is no God but I, so be in awe of Me.”

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 3

خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ تَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

3. “He created the skies and the earth with the truth; Exalted is He above everything with which they associate Him.”

Here, the Qur'an selects two ways for dealing with the issue of the eradication of paganism and focusing all people's attention on the One God.

First, He tackles the issue with rational reasoning regarding the magnificent order of creation and its system. Secondly, He tackles the issue through emotional ways and the explanation of the various blessings towards man and by instigating man's sense of gratitude.

At first, it says:

“He created the skies and the earth with the truth...”

The rightfulness of creation of the skies and the earth is evident both when one considers the amazing system of well-regulated creation, and the goal and the various interests which exist in it.

Are those idols whom they associate with Him able to bring about such a creation process, or can they create a small mosquito or create a particle of dust?

The verse says:

“...Exalted is He above everything with which they associate Him.”

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 4

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ فَإِذَا هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُبِينٌ

4. “He created man out of semen, yet behold! He is an open adversary.”

After allusions made to the issue of the creation of the skies and the earth and their endless mysteries, He enters into the discussion of man himself; the man who is closer to Him than any other one.

The Qur'an in regard to man implies that: And eventually when he was a worthless sperm with no soul, he was made into a rational being as well as defendant, expressive of his own interior, and engaging in disputations with foes. (This meaning refers to the different stages of man's development process!)

The other meaning attributed to this verse is that man eventually turned into Allah's enemy, rejecting his own Creator. (This alludes to the retrogression and meanness of the sinful ones.)

The verse says:

“He created man out of semen, yet behold! He is an open adversary.”

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 5

وَالْأَنْعَامَ خَلَقَهَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا دِفْءٌ وَمَنَافِعُ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ

5. “And He created the cattle for you, therein is warmth and (other) advantages, and of them you eat.”

There are many advantages in animals for man. Their meat and milk serve for his food; their skin and wool serve for making shoes and clothing; their back serves for loading, their feet are utilized for cultivation, and even their feces are used for fertilization. In spite of all the above advantages, they cause the least trouble for man.

The verse says:

“And He created the cattle for you, therein is warmth and (other) advantages, and of them you

eat.”

In Islamic quotations, next to agriculture, the best job proposed is breeding live-stock. This has been mentioned on condition that the job is coupled with the payment of one's religious dues of Zakat and with an eye on the deprived people.

Incidentally, focusing one's attention on the divine blessings enlivens the love unto the Creator as well as the spirit of His servitude in man.

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 6

وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا جَمَالٌ حِينَ تُرِيحُونَ وَحِينَ تَسْرَحُونَ

6. “And there is beauty in them for you when you drive them (home in the evening), and when you send them forth to pasture (in the morning).”

The Qur'anic term /tasrah/ is derived from /saraha/ which signifies sending livestock to the pastureland; and the Arabic term /turih/, which is derived from /rauh/, means the time when the cattle return to their stable.

Allah, the Gracious, does not confine Himself to the mentioning of the ordinary advantages provided by the useful animals, but He also insists on the psychological benefits which can be drawn out of them.

The verse says:

“And there is beauty in them for you when you drive them (home in the evening), and when you send them forth to pasture (in the morning).”

This, in fact, provides the beauty of the self-sufficiency for the society, as this is a way of the provision for the needs by a society which are to be fulfilled. In other words this provides a picture for the beauty laid out in the process for achieving economic independence as well as the stoppage of all source of dependence.

Explanations

The four-footed animals are (just like other creatures,) created for the sake of man.

Vegetarianism is not a value in itself. Allah recounts the eating of the meat of lawful animals as one of their advantages:

“...of them you eat.”

Certainly, indulgence in consumption of meat is not recommended.

The perfection of the glory of a society resides in its independence, self-sufficiency, production and expanding of its livestock breeding industry.

‘Beauty and decoration’ is one of the natural needs of the individual and society.

The perfection in beauty of a society rests with the struggle, and not with stagnation and impasse; the struggle which is achieved through mass movement, and not through individualistic achievements.

Beauty in perfection requires being of service to the people; it is not attained through only filling up of one’s own stomach.

That kind of beauty makes perfect in case of being under the umbrella of a shepherd which is coupled with one’s own wisdom, and not being left alone and to oneself.

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 7

وَتَحْمِلُ أَثْقَالَكُمْ إِلَىٰ بَلَدٍ لَّمْ تَكُونُوا بِالْغَيْهِ إِلَّا بِشِقِّ الْأَنْفُسِ إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَرَوُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ

7. “And they carry your heavy loads unto a land that you could not reach except with distress of (your) self. Verily your Lord is Compassionate, Merciful.”

The Qur’an points out to another of the advantages of animals in this noble verse. It implies that animals carry your heavy loads on their back, going towards towns and regions which you could not reach without undergoing tremendous troubles.

The verse says:

“And they carry your heavy loads unto a land that you could not reach except with distress of (your) self...”

This is a sign of Mercy and compassion of Allah Who has created these four-footed animals with such tremendous strength, and has made them tamed and submissive to you.

The verse continues saying:

“... Verily your Lord is Compassionate, Merciful.”

As one may note, these four-footed animals, firstly, provide man with means for covering him against cold and heat. In the second place, their milk products are used and, then, their meat. And, finally, they

provide those psychological effects which leave an impact on man's heart, and their use as a means of transportation.

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 8

وَالْخَيْلَ وَالْبِغَالَ وَالْحَمِيرَ لِتَرْكَبُوهَا وَزِينَةً وَيَخْلُقُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

8. “And (He created) horses, and mules and donkeys that you may ride upon them, and for ornament, and He creates what you do not know.”

The Qur’anic term /xayl/ means: ‘pride, arrogance’, but here, in this verse, the objective is ‘horse’, as if man feels a kind of pride and arrogance in horse riding.

The Arabic word /biq al/ signifies ‘mule’ which comes to being by a horse and a donkey; and the word /hamir/ is the plural form of /himar/ in the sense of ‘ass’.

In this holy verse, the Qur’an points to some other animals which man uses for riding.

The verse says:

“And (He created) horses, and mules and donkeys that you may ride upon them, and for ornament...”

In conclusion, Allah points out to a more important issue and calls everybody’s attention to the various means of transportation and mounts which will be made available to man in the future, and, which he can make better use of them.

And Allah will create other things that you know nothing about them, like the modern various means of transportation, whether be it cars, trains, or airplanes which are indeed Allah’s creatures, not those of men.

The verse continues saying:

“...and He creates what you do not know.”

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 9

وَعَلَى اللَّهِ قَصْدُ السَّبِيلِ وَمِنْهَا جَائِرٌ وَلَوْ شَاءَ لَهْدَاكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

9. “And upon Allah is to show the right way, and of them (the ways) are the deviating ones; and if He had willed He could have guided all of you.”

From among the affairs which Allah regards them as His Own obligations is leading people and providing them with proper guidance, as He remarks:

“Verily We take upon Ourselves to guide,”³

and again in this verse the Holy Qur’an states:

“And upon Allah is to show the right way...”

Here, the Qur’anic term /qasd/ signifies moderation, and the aim in referring to /qasd-us-sabil/ is the in-between way or the ‘straight way’.

Anyway, in pursuing the various blessings, which were discussed in the previous verses, the Qur’an points out here to one of the most important spiritual blessings of them, when it implies that it is up to Allah to show the right and straight path to the people, a path which has no deviation found in it.

The verse says:

“And upon Allah is to show the right way...”

As for this ‘straight path’ which alludes to either the ‘genetic’ or the ‘religious’ dimension, the commentators have offered various interpretations. However, their ideas are not incompatible with each other if they include both cases.

On the other hand, Allah has sent the prophets equipping them with revelations, adequate instructions and regulations required by man, so that, from the religious laws point of view be able to discriminate the good from the evil and, by means of kind of statements, to persuade man to cover the straight way and refrain him from the deviate paths.

Afterwards, as there are many deviating paths, He warns human beings, implying that some of these paths are deviating and have dead ends.

The verse says:

“...and of them (the ways) are the deviating ones...”

And since the blessings of freedom of choice and free will are among the most important factors in man’s perfection, the Qur’an refers to them with a short sentence and remarks in implication that if Allah wanted, He would lead all of you by compulsion to the straight path in such a way as you would not be able to deviate in the least from that path.

The verse continues saying:

“...and if He had willed He could have guided all of you.”

But, He did not do that, for compulsory guidance is neither something which makes one proud; nor is it a development for him.

Anyway, Allah has not deemed it appropriate to make people believers by compulsion; on the contrary, He has left man free to choose his own path.

1. Surah An-Naba', No. 78, verse 38

2. “And thus did We reveal to you an inspired book by Our command.”

3. Surah Al-Layl, No. 92, verse 12

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