

Home > An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an vol. 3 > Section 4: The Christians were invited to the Spiritual Contest – Promise of Rescue to Jesus > Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 64 > An Invitation to Unification

Section 4: The Christians were invited to the Spiritual Contest – Promise of Rescue to Jesus

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 55

إِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَا عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ خُذْ بِكَؤُفِيكَ وَارْتَمِعْ بِالَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الرَّاغِبُونَ
إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ لِقَائِي أَتْلُوهُنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوكَ فَوْقَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ ثُمَّ إِلَيَّ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَأَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ
فِيمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ

55. *"(Remember) when Allah said: 'O' Jesus! I will take you and raise you up to Myself and purify you of those who disbelieve and place those who follow you above those who disbelieve until the Day of Judgement. Then, unto Me shall be your return and I shall judge between you as to that therein you used to differ."*

This holy verse is again the continuation of the explanatory verses concerning the life of Jesus (as) Basing on Surah Nisa', No.4, verse 157, it is popularly assumed amongst the Islamic commentators that Jesus (as) was never killed but *Allah* took him to heaven. The verse under discussion is something referring to the same meaning. It says:

"(Remember) when Allah said: 'O' Jesus! I will take you and raise you up to Myself.."

And, then it adds:

"... and purify you of those who disbelieve..."

The purpose of this purification is saving him from the grips of disbelieving filthy people; or saving him

from unjust accusations and dastardly plots that ended in the victory of his religion.

Then, it continues saying:

"... and place those who follow you above those who disbelieve until the Day of Judgement..."

This verse is one of the miraculous predictive verses of the Qur'an which speaks of the hidden news when it says that the followers of Jesus (as) will be always above the Jews who were opponent to Jesus. Then it adds:

"...then, unto me shall be your return and I shall judge between you as to that therein you used to differ."

That is, what was said about those victories are related to this world, while the final court and the ultimate Judgement over the deeds of people is something that will happen in Hereafter.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 56

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَعَذَّبْنَاهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِّن نَّاصِرِينَ

56. "And as to those who disbelieve, I will chastise them with a severe chastisement in this world and the Hereafter, and they will have no helpers."

This verse and the following one are addressed to the Christ (as). It says: when people return to the Lord and He judges between them, the rows of people separate from each other. Then, this is the fate of those who recognized the right and rejected it:

"And as to those who disbelieve, I will chastise them with a severe chastisement in this world and the Hereafter, and they will have no helpers."

It is cited in Majma'ul-Bayan that the chastisement of this world for them is that they become contemptible by being killed or captured, giving poll-tax, and whatever from despite and insolence come upon them. And the chastisement of the Hereafter is the blazing fire of Hell. 1

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 57

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَيُوَفِّيهِمْ أُجُورَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ

57. "And as to those who believe and do righteous works, He will pay them their rewards (fully) and Allah does not love the unjust."

After the explanation about the first group, in this verse, it refers to the second group and says:

"And as to those who believe and do righteous works, He will pay them their rewards (fully) ..."

Then, in conclusion, it emphasizes again that:

"... and Allah does not love the unjust."

Thus, the Lord, Who does not love the unjust, will never treat with the servants unjustly and will give them their rewards completely.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 58

ذَلِكَ نَتْلُوهُ عَلَيْكَ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ وَالذِّكْرِ الْحَكِيمِ

58. "This We recite unto you of the Signs and the Wise Reminder."

Next to the explanation of the story of Jesus (as), this verse addresses the Prophet of Islam (S) and says:

"This We recite unto you of the Signs and the Wise Reminder."

That is, this is that which was revealed to you in the form of the verses of the Qur'an that is free from any falsehood and superstition.

It is in the case that others had polluted the story and the fate of this great prophet, Christ (as), with thousands legends, superstitions, and innovations.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 59

إِنَّ مَثَلَ عِيسَىٰ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ آدَمَ خَلَقَهُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ

59. "The likeness of Jesus, with Allah, is as the likeness of Adam. He created him from dust then He said to him 'BE!' and he 'was'."

A group of Christian people entered in Medina and went to meet the Prophet of Islam (S). They, talking

with him, stated that the birth of Jesus (as), without having a father, was a sign of, and an evident for, his divinity.

Then the verse was revealed and answered them such that: if the fatherless creation is the evidence for Christ's divinity or being the Son of *Allah*, the creation of Adam is something more important than that, because Adam had neither father nor mother. So, why do you not consider Adam the Lord or Son of the Lord?

"The likeness of Jesus, with Allah, is as the likeness of Adam. He created him from dust then He said to him 'BE!' and he 'was'.

Explanations

1. The opponents are usually invited to the right in the same way which they have accepted. (The Christians have accepted that Adam (as) is the creature of Allah although he had no parents.)
2. Stating the events of history, explaining the past experiences and presenting the actual specimen are the best way of invitation.
3. Power of *Allah* is not limited.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 60

الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُنْ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ

60. (This about Jesus is) the truth from your Lord, therefore be not you of the doubters.

The Arabic term /Mumtarin/ is derived from /miryah/ which means 'doubt, suspicion'. An expression rather similar to the words of this verse has also occurred in Surah Al-Baqarah, No.2, verse 147. By this verse, it makes clear that the right firm statement and the fix real speech should come from the side of the Lord Who is right and fix.

Otherwise, a fix rule and a steadfast proper speech cannot be expected from some human beings who, because of the storms of desires and instincts, are not often steadfast.

Explanations

1. There is no rightfulness but in the path of *Allah*, the word of *Allah*, and the Law of *Allah*.

"(This about Jesus is) the truth from your Lord ..."

2. The large number of the opponents, their hard effort and strive, their wealth, their propagation, and so on; ought not have any effect on you.

"... Therefore be not you of the doubters."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 61

فَمَنْ حَاجَّكَ فِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءَنَا وَأَبْنَاءَكُمْ
وَنِسَاءَنَا وَنِسَاءَكُمْ وَأَنْفُسَنَا وَأَنْفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَلْ لَعْنَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِينَ

61. "And whoever dispute with you concerning him, after what has come to you of knowledge, say: 'Come! Let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, and our selves and your selves, then let us invoke in earnest and lay the curse of Allah upon the liars."

This holy verse, because of containing the phrase /nabtahel/ in its Arabic text, is known in Islamic literature as the verse of 'mutual cursing' /mubahilah/. The Arabic term /mubahilah/ means: to leave the personal tendencies and attracting the attention towards invocation and supplication before *Allah* for asking curse and perdition unto the one who is not right.²

In books from both Sunni and Shi'ah school of thought as well as in some books of tradition and history books, it is recited that in the tenth year A.H., from the side of the Prophet (S), some Muslims were commissioned to go to Najran, a region in Yemen, in order to preach Islam.

The Christian inhabitants of Najran set out a religious mission from their side to attend Medina and discuss with the prophet of Islam (S).

After some debates and disputes between them and the Prophet (S), they felt hesitation and sought for pretexts. Then, this verse was revealed, stating:

"And whoever disputes with you concerning him, after what has come to you of knowledge say: 'Come! Let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, and our selves and your selves, then let us invoke in earnest and lay the curse of Allah upon the liars."

That is, any curse which would reach either of two parties showed that that party was not right. Thus, the revelation of this verse put an end to that discussion thereby.

As soon as the missionaries of the Christians of Najran heard the suggestion of performing the mutual curse from the Prophet (S) looked at each other while they were surprised. They asked the Prophet of Islam (S) for respite to contemplate and consult over the subject.

Then, when they were dismissed from the presence of the Messenger of *Allah* they began consulting with each other. The Chief Monk, the Leader of the selected holy group of the Christians told them that they could accept the suggestion.

Then, if the Prophet of Islam (S) came for cursing with ceremonies and followed by a large group of people, they would not be worried about it and knew that nothing might happen.

But, if they saw that he came to the spot with a few people, they would give up the act of /mubahilah/ and compromise with him.

On the day of cursing, they saw that the Prophet of Islam (S) entered the appointed spot followed by two boys, a young man and a lady. Those two boys were Hassan and Husayn, (as) the young man was Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as), and the lady was Fatimah (as), the Prophet's daughter.

When the Chief Monk saw them, he exclaimed:

"By God! I see the faces that, if they pray to God for mountains to move from their places, the mountains will immediately move."

"If they curse you, you will be wiped out of existence to the last day of the life of the earth."

Therefore, the Christians asked Muhammad (S) to give up the idea of the agreed /mubahilah/ (mutual cursing) and they announced they were ready for compromise. They offered to pay two thousand suits – each of which cost, more or less, at forty dirhams (drachma) every year (in addition to some other things)... .

This event is cited in books of both great sects of Islam: Sunnites and Shi'ites.³

According to some of the Islamic traditions, the day of Mubahilah (mutual curse) was the twenty fourth or twenty fifth day of Zil-Hajj, and fits place, at the time of the holy Prophet (S), was somewhere outside of Medina which has located inside the city now.

At this place, there has been built a mosque by the name of Masjid-ul-'Ijabah which is about two kilo meters far from the Holy Tomb of the Prophet (S) in Masjid-un-Nabi.

'Mutual curse' /mubahilah / was not confined to that time. Some of Islamic traditions indicate that every believer can apply it, too, if the one wishes. In Nur-uth- Thaqalayn, vol. 1, p. 351 a tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) is narrated upon this subject who has issued a few instructions about it.

In Usul-Kafi, vol. 2, 'mutual curse', there are also cited five traditions which denote that every believer can apply 'mutual curse' with the opponents, too, by improving oneself through observing the fast for three days. Its order is such that: at twilight he puts his right hand fingers in his opponent's fingers and recites the concerning special supplication.

There may arise a question that when Faimah (as) was the only woman attended in that event, why does the Qur'an has applied the plural form of the word; " *nisa'ana* " (our women)?

The answer is that there are some examples of this specimen in the Quran where *Allah* refers to a single person in the form of plural, like **Surah** Ale-Imran. No.3. verse 181 wherein *Allah* says: "...**those who say: 'God is poor...**" while only one Jewish person had said that aspersion sentence.

Or, the Quran, referring to Abraham (as) as an Ummah in himself standing alone against his world, says:

"Abraham was indeed a model..."⁴

Explanations

1. Ali-ibn-'Abitalib (as) has been counted as the 'self' of the Messenger of *Allah* (S):

"Our selves. "

2. When logic, reasoning, and miracle do not make a person accept the Truth, he must be threatened to destruction.

3. The last winning means and the forceful weapon of a true believer is supplication.

4. If you stand firm, the enemy, because of not being right, will retreat.

5. By that great event, the Lord and the Messenger of *Allah* (S) made us understood that these holy persons were the assistants and the associates of the Messenger of *Allah* (S) in inviting people to the Truth and to his sacred goal. They, following him, were ready to face with dangers, and continued the path of his movement.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 62

إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْقَصَصُ الْحَقُّ وَمَا مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

62. "Verily this is certainly the true explanation. There is no god but Allah; and verily, Allah is Mighty, Wise."

Next to the explanation of the life of Jesus (as), in this verse, as an emphatic statement, it says that these explanations are the real story of Jesus (as). They are not some false claims such as the divinity of Christ or that he is the son of God:

"Verily this is the true explanation ..."

Neither the claimants of his divinity nor those who called him the son of God were right. The right is that which Muhammad (S) brought forth and he (S) said that he (Christ) (as) was a mortal creature and a prophet of *Allah* who, by a divine miracle, was borne from an immaculate mother without having a father.

Again, for a more emphasis, it says:

"... There is no god but Allah..."

And for *Allah*, considering His power, the birth of a child without having a father is not an important subject.

"... and verily, Allah is Mighty, Wise."

Yet! such a One deserves to be worshipped, not other than Him.

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 63

فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُفْسِدِينَ

63. "But if they turn back, then, verily Allah is All-Knowing of the mischief makers."

In this verse, the Qur'an threatens those who reject accepting these facts after having the proper clear evidences before them. It says:

"But if they turn back, then, verily Allah is All-Knowing of the mischief makers."

Surah 'Ali-Imran, Verse 64

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ

64. "Say: 'O' People of the Book! come to a ward common between us and you, that we worship none but Allah, and that we associate not anything with Him, and (that) some of us do not take any others for lords other than Allah '. And if they turn back, then say: 'Bear witness that we are Muslims'."

An Invitation to Unification

In the former verses, the direction of invitation was towards Islam with its all specialities. But, in this verse, the aim is an invitation to the common points between Islam and other creeds of the People of the Book. It addresses the Prophet (S) and states:

"Say: ' O' People of the Book! come to a ward common between us and you, that we worship none but Allah, and that we associate not anything with Him, and (that) some of us do not take any others for lords other than Allah '..."

By this method of reasoning, it teaches us that if there are some people who are not willing to cooperate with us in all holy aspects, we may try to attract their cooperation at least in common aims and utilize it as a base for the progression of our holy affairs. Then, at the end of the verse, it say:

"... And if they turn back, then say: 'Bear witness that we are Muslims '!"

That is, after this logical invitation to the common points of theism, when they still reject the Truth, tell them: We totally submit to Allah but you do not. And, therefore, your distance from the Truth will not have the least effect on our selves and we will keep and continue our way, viz. the path of Islam.

So, we worship Allah alone, and only His Laws we follow. And, there will be no human worshipping, of any kind, among us.

1. Majma ul-Bayan, vol 2, PP. 450 & 451

2. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 702, P. 452

3. The author of Al-Mizan has cited in his commentary book, Al-Mizan, vol. 3, P. 25⁷ that this event has been reported similarly by 51 Companions of the Prophet. Also, in commentary books by Fakhr-Razi, Aloosi, Maraqi, and in Kitab-ul-Kamil, by Ibn-'Athir, Vol. 2, P. 293, in Mustadrak Hakim, vol. 3, P. 150, in Musnad Ahmad-ibn-Hanbal, vol. One, P. 185, and also in Ruh-ul-Bayan, Al-Minar, Commentary of Ibn-Kathir, and in many other Islamic sources, this event has been recorded and it has been confirmed that the Messenger of Allah, (S) Ali-ibn-'AbiTalib, Fatimah Zahra, Hassan and Husayn (as) were the ones whose prayers were answered. This is a worthy document evidence for the greatness and magnificence of Ahlul-Bayt (as). In Ihqaq-ul-Haq, vol. 3, p. 49 the names of 61 respected people from the Sunnis school of thought are mentioned who all said this verse is on the greatness of the holy Prophet (S) and his Ahlul-Bayt (as)

4. Surah Nahl. No.16, verse 120

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