

Section 4: The Guardianship of the Sacred Mosque

Surah Al-Anfal – Verse 29

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَجْعَل لَّكُمْ فُرْقَانًا وَيُكَفِّرْ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

29. “O you who have Faith! If you be in awe of Allah, He will assign for you a discrimination (between right and wrong), and absolve you of your misdeeds, and forgive you, and Allah is the Lord of Mighty Grace.”

The current criterions of recognizing right from wrong are numerous. Among them are the followings:

A) Prophets and saints of Allah are criterions. An Islamic tradition says:

*“He who leaves Ali (as) has really left Allah.”*¹

B) The Book of Allah is a criterion. By adapting things with the Qur'an, the right can be recognized from wrong.

C) Piety is another criterion. When the storm of instincts, accompanied with love and enmity that are nourished from impiety, arrives, piety is dismissed and impiety hinders the recognition of facts:

The ability of the recognition between right and wrong is a knowledge given by Allah, and it does not merely depend on the ability of reading and writing or necessarily on the standard of knowledge.

The verse says:

“O you who have Faith! If you be in awe of Allah He will assign for you a discrimination (between right and wrong), and absolve you of your misdeeds, and forgive you, and Allah is the Lord of Mighty Grace.”

Fakhr-i-Razi has explained: “The expiation of sins is concealment in this world, while ‘forgiveness’ is a deliverance from the punishment of Allah in Hereafter. According to the statements of some other commentators of the Qur’an ‘expiation’ is to wipe out the social and psychological effects of sins, while forgiveness is a remittance in respect to Hell.”

Therefore, those who put aside the mental desires will recognize the truth, and their piety causes a proper insight to come forth in them and a great virtue and reward to be obtained.

Surah Al-Anfal – Verse 30

وَإِذْ يَمْكُرُ بِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيُثْبِتُوكَ أَوْ يَقْتُلُوكَ أَوْ يُخْرِجُوكَ ۚ وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ
اللَّهُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَاكِرِينَ

30. “And (remember) when those who-disbelieved plotted against you to take you captive, or to kill you, or to expel you. They devised and Allah devised, and Allah is the best devisers.

Occasion of Revelation

This verse is a hint to /laylat-ul-mabit/ (the night when Ali (as) laid himself in couch of the Prophet (S) and a reference unto the heathens' plot for killing the Messenger of Allah (S).

The Prophet (S) was informed of that plot by means of the Messenger Angel Gabriel, and then Ali- ibn- Abi- Talib (as) laid himself in the couch of the Holy prophet (S) under his mantle-piece. So, the Holy Prophet (S) went out of his house by the same night and took shelter in the cave of Thur, from where he migrated to Medina.

There were three plots, mentioned in the verse under discussion, by either of them infidels wanted to work against the Prophet (S). Those plots were designed in the meeting that the elders of pagans held in Dar-un-Nudwah, where they finally approved the second plan.

By that plan they decided that a young man from each of the tribes be chosen and they would be prepared so that all of them together could attack to kill him, in order that the charge of the murder might be laid equally on each tribe and the relatives of the Prophet (S) might not be able to fight against all those tribes together and thus there would be left to them no other choice but to receive his blood-money.

The Arabic word /makr/ means: ‘deceit and trick’. ‘Azhari, a commentator, says: “People's deceit is recompensed by Allah's deceit and trickery.”

There is a difference between the Arabic term s /qadr/ (treachery) and /makr/ (deceit). The meaning of the former is accompanied with breach of promise, while the meaning of the later is deceit in general.

The verse addresses the Prophet (S) to remember when pagans began devising and consulting with each other how to defeat him and to kill him. The verse says:

“And (remember) when those who disbelieved plotted against you to take you captive, or to kill you, or to expel you...”

They devised about him and Allah devised about them, too.

That is, some of them plotted so that he (S) could not understand, and Allah devised against them in a way that they did not know, and punished them. The verse says:

“...They devised and Allah devised...”

Allah is the best devisers, because He pays to nothing but what is true and right. This meaning lies in this fact that: He sends down the punishment upon those who deserve it. The verse ends as follows:

“...and Allah is the best devisers.”

Surah Al-Anfal – Verse 31

وَإِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا قَالُوا قَدْ سَمِعْنَا لَوْ نَشَاءُ لَقُلْنَا مِثْلَ هَذَا ۖ إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا
أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ

31. “And when Our signs are recited to them, they say: ‘We have heard. If we like, we (too) can say the like of this (Qur’an). This is naught but the tales of the ancients’.”

In the previous verse, the words were about the plot of the enemies of the Prophet (S) who wanted to kill him. Here, this holy verse refers to their decision that they decided to belittle the religion of Islam and the Qur'an. The verse says:

“And when Our signs are recited to them, they say: ‘We have heard...”

The Arabic word /'asatir/ is the plural form of the Qur'anic term /'usturah/ with the sense of ‘myths’, and ‘imaginary superstitious tales’.

Before the appointment of the Prophet (S) to his Divine mission, Nasr-ibn-i-Harith once had come to Iran and had learnt the Iranian story of Rostam and Isfandiyar. When he returned back to Mecca and Medina, he said to the people of his own locality that he could also speak like Muhammad (S) and tell stories.²

Among the common weapons of enemies, of course, are demagogy, belittling, and disparaging. The verse continues saying:

“...If we like, we (too) can say the like of this (Qur’an)...”

This fact must also be known that enemies of Islam are usually some haughty persons. They claim, but in action, they are incapable to bring the like of the Qur’an. They said that those verses had not any important content in them and they were the myths of the ancient people. The verse says:

“...This is naught but the tales of the ancients’.”

They said such a statement while they had repeatedly tried to challenge with the Qur’an, but they failed every time. So, they knew well that they could not oppose against the Qur’an or challenge with it.

Surah Al-Anfal – Verse 32

وَإِذْ قَالُوا اللَّهُمَّ إِن كَانَ هَذَا هُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ فَأَمْطِرْ عَلَيْنَا حِجَارَةً مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
أَوْ ائْتِنَا بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

32. “And (remember) when they said: ‘O Allah! if this (Quran) is the truth from You, then rain down upon us stones from the sky, or bring us a painful punishment’.”

Such prayers of curses were either because of intense zeal and obstinacy that they considered their own way as a right way and the way of Islam wrong, or it was a kind of demagogy. They cursed themselves in order that some simple- hearted people might feel that Islam was wrong.

When the Prophet (S) under the command of Allah in Ghadir Khumm, appointed Ali (as) for Imamate, Nu'man- ibn-Harith, one of the hypocrites, came to the Prophet (S) and said:

“You ordered us to Unity, prophethood, Holy Struggle, Hajj, fasting, prayer and alms giving, and we accepted them all. Now have you appointed this lad as Imam over us?”

The Prophet (S) said:

“It was the command of Allah.”

Then Nu'man, the hypocrite, cursed– himself, and in his curse he imitated this very verse.³

Therefore, an enemy may also expose himself to a curse in order to show himself true. The verse says:

“And (remember) when they said: “O Allah! if this (Qur'an) is the truth from You, then rain down upon us stones from the sky, or bring us a painful punishment’.”

Surah Al-Anfal – Verse 33

وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَأَنْتَ فِيهِمْ ۚ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ مُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ

33. “But Allah is not to punish them while you are among them, nor is Allah to chastise them while they seek forgiveness.”

The purpose of negation of punishment is removing the general punishment from Muslims because of the existence of the Prophet (S) among them, as former nations were punished; else, in some particular cases, some persons may encounter the Divine punishments.

Some Islamic traditions denote that because of the existence of some purified persons and godly scholars or for the sake of those who seek forgiveness and really repent, Allah (s.w.t) removes His punishment from people among whom they live. The verse says:

“But Allah is not to punish them while you are among them, nor is Allah to chastise them while they seek forgiveness.”

In this regard, the existence of the Prophet (S) is a safety for the population of the earth: “...***while you are among them...***”; and, also, seeking forgiveness hinders calamities, as the above mentioned verse says:

“...while they seek forgiveness.”

It is cited in Nahjul-Balagha that after the departure of the Prophet (S) Hazrat Ali (as) said:

“There were two sources of deliverance from Allah's punishment, one of which has been raised up, while the other is before you. You should therefore adhere to it...” (which is seeking forgiveness).⁴

In the supplication of Kumayl, there is a clause that points to the sins which cause afflictions to come down. It is recited as follows:

“O Allah! forgive me the sins which bring about tribulation.”

Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 117 says:

“And it did not beseem your Lord to have destroyed the towns tyrannously, while their people acted well.”

Surah Al-Anfal – Verse 34

وَمَا لَهُمْ إِلَّا يُعَذِّبُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَهُمْ يَصُدُّونَ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَمَا كَانُوا أَوْلِيَاءَهُ ۗ إِنْ
أَوْلِيَائِهِ إِلَّا الْمُتَّقُونَ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

34. “And what (plea) have they that Allah should not chastise them, while they bar (people) from the Holy Mosque, and they are not guardians of it? Its guardians are not but only the pious ones, but most of them do not know.”

The previous verse indicated that because of the existence of the Prophet (S) among his community and for the sake of their seeking forgiveness, Allah removed from them a punishment like the punishment of the people of ‘Ad and Thamud.

This verse refers to their punishment. The purpose of this punishment may be tile worldly punishment and fighting on the earth. It can also be said that they deserve divine punishment, but Allah does not punish them for the sake of the Prophet (S). Or it may mean that they will not be punished in tile present world, but they will be punished in the coming world.

However, those who hinder people to arrive into the Holy Mosque should expect the Divine punishment. The holy verse says:

“And what (plea) have they that Allah should not chastise them, while they bar (people) from the Holy Mosque, and they are not guardians of it?...”

They should also know that the custodianship of the Sacred House, which had been built by Abraham the Friend of Allah (as) and based upon piety, must not be left under the control of some impious persons. The verse continues saying:

“...Its guardians are not but only the pious ones, but most of them do not know.”

Surah Al-Anfal – Verse 35

وَمَا كَانَ صَلَاتُهُمْ عِنْدَ الْبَيْتِ إِلَّا مُكَاءً وَتَصَدِيَةً ۗ فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ

تَكْفُرُونَ

35. “And their prayer at the (Sacred) House is naught but whistling and clapping. Therefore taste the punishment for what you used to disbelieve.”

The Arabic term /muka’/ means ‘to whistle’, and the Qur’anic word /tasdiyah/ means ‘to clap’.

Their whistling might be for announcing their presence to the idols which were settled in Ka’bah.

In the length of the history of human beings, the religious ceremonies have been being distorted, so that sometimes the most sacred centers have become the pivot of the greatest superstitions.

The verse says:

“And their prayer at the (Sacred) House is naught but whistling and clapping...”

By the way, changing the recitation of Salawat into claps and whistles in the meetings of today is a sign for changing prayers into their clapping and whistling, which causes the descent of calamities and punishments. The denotation expansion of punishment in this verse is the defeat of pagans in the Battle of Badr.

In Islamic literature, it is recorded that during the time when the Prophet (S) was busy praying frequently, two men from the tribe of Bani- ‘Abd-ud-Dar came and stood at his right side to whistle and two men stood at his left side to clap.

They did so in order to hinder him to establish his prayer easily. Later, the Prophet (S) killed all of them in the Battle of Badr. Now, this verse, addressing them and other members of Bani- ‘Abd-ud-Dar, says:

“...Therefore taste the punishment for what you used to disbelieve.”

That is, as the retribution of their disbelief, they should taste the punishment of the sword of the Battle of Badr and the punishment of the Hereafter, too.

Surah Al-Anfal – Verse 36

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ لِيَصُدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۚ فَسَيُنْفِقُونَهَا ثُمَّ تَكُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسْرَةً ثُمَّ يُغْلَبُونَ ۚ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ يُحْشَرُونَ

36. “Verily those who disbelieve spend their wealth in order that they hinder (men) from the way

of Allah, and still they will spend it, (too), then it will be to them a cause of regret, then they will be overcome, and those who disbelieve will be mustered unto Hell.”

It has been said that this verse was revealed upon the heavy treasury that the pagan of Mecca spent for the Battle of Badr. But the general meaning of the verse includes all the treasuries which may be spent on opposition against Islam.

Disbelievers spend properties in charity for their evil aims, why do Muslims not spend for their sacred aims?

So, in this holy verse, it says that those who spend their wealth on the way of fighting against the Prophet (S) in order that they hinder people from the way and religion of Allah, will be regretful soon and they will understand that they will not be benefited from that, but it will be the cause of their misfortune.

The verse says:

“Verily those who disbelieve spend their wealth in order that they hinder (men) from the way of Allah, and still they will spend it, (too), then it will be to them a cause of regret, then they will be overcome...”

Thus, those who disbelieve, after being involved with regret as a result of their failure in this world, will also be sent into Hell in Hereafter. The verse says:

“...and those who disbelieve will be mustered unto Hell.”

Why the phrase: ***“those who disbelieve”*** is repeated twice in this verse is for the reason that some of the disbelievers, who spent their wealth for the opposition of Islam, embraced Islam later, therefore the punishment of the Hereafter belongs to those persons who died before becoming Muslims.

Surah Al-Anfal – Verse 37

لِيَمِيزَ اللَّهُ الْخَبِيثَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ وَيَجْعَلَ الْخَبِيثَ بَعْضُهُ عَلَى بَعْضٍ فَيَرْكُمُهُ جَمِيعًا
فَيَجْعَلُهُ فِي جَهَنَّمَ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ

37. “So that Allah may separate the corrupt from the good and place corrupt one another, and pile them up all together, and put them in Hell; those are the losers.”

The Arabic term, /yarkumah/ means: ‘to accumulate and to pile up together.’ From among the results of oppositions, molestations and the fights between right and wrong is that spiritualities, motives, revenues, promises, and plots are usually made manifest, and the essence or substance of man will be shown.

To make separate the supporters of the right from wrong is one of Allah's ways of treatment, the verse says:

“So that Allah may separate the corrupt from the good and place corrupt one another...”

On Resurrection Day, Allah will gather the corrupt persons with together and send them wholly into Hell. The verse says:

“...and pile them up all together, and put them in Hell; those are the losers.”

As some Islamic literature indicates, accumulation, pressure, and tightness of place are from the specialties of the people of Hell. These impious people are in narrowness there, though Hell is very vast and it repeatedly asks for more and more wrong-doers. It is like a large wall where there are many points of place for a great deal of nails, but every nail is in pressure.

1. The index of Ihqaqul-Haqq, vol. 4, p.26.

2. Cited in some commentary books such as: the one compiled by 'Alusi, Majma'-ul-Bayan, and Fi-Zilal-il-Qur'an.

3. Al-Ghadir, vol. 1, pp. 239-266, narrated from 30 scholars of the Sunnites.

4. Nahjul Balagha, saying 88

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