

## Section 5

How the former disbelievers were seized with distress and affliction – Warning against the approach of the punishment

### Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 42

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمَمٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَأَخَذْنَاهُم بِالْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَضَرَّعُونَ

**42. "Indeed We sent (messengers) to nations before you, then We seized them with distress and affliction in order that they might humble themselves."**

The Qur'anic word /ba'sa'/ has been applied in the senses of difficulties, fight, poverty, famine, flood, earthquake, and infectious diseases; and the Arabic term /qarra' / has been used in the Arabic language with the meanings of: 'sorrow, grief, disgrace, ignorance, and failure'.

The appointment of Divine prophets, of course, and completing the argument has been a process and a Divine way of treatment in the length of history. So, the history of the past is an example for the coming generations.

Meantime, difficulties are some means for regarding Allah and managing transgressors.

Therefore, neither any welfare is a grace nor any difficulty is a wrath. At the time of calamities, the hands are raised up for supplication and asking help.

The verse says:

**"Indeed We sent (messengers) to nations before you, then We seized them with distress and affliction in order that they might humble themselves."**

It is cited in Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 1, p. 717 that Imam Ali-ibn-Abi-Talib (as) said:

*"If people invoke truthfully to Allah when calamities fall down upon them, they will be removed from all their difficulties....."*

## Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 43

فَلَوْلَا إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا تَضَرَّعُوا وَلَكِنْ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

**43. "Why then did they not entreat when Our distress came to them? But their hearts were hard, and Satan made all that they used to do seem fair unto them."**

To be heedless unto divine warnings and not to be regardful is a sign of hard-heartedness.

It is for this reason that the verse implies why they did not take counsel from these painful and awakening factors, and they did not awaken from the sleep of negligence, and did not return toward Allah. The Qur'an says:

***"Why then did they not entreat when Our distress came to them?..."***

In fact, the reason of their unawareness was two things. The first was that, as a result of extra amount of sin and persisting in disbelief, their hearts became dark and hardened, and their souls changed to be inflexible.

***"... But their hearts were hard....."***

The second factor was that (applying their mood of sensuality) Satan made their deeds seem decorous to them. So, they considered right whatever wrong they did, and counted aright and correct every offence they committed. The verse says:

***"... and Satan made all that they used to do seem fair unto them."***

## Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 44

فَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ أَبْوَابَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَتَّى إِذَا فَرِحُوا بِمَا أُوتُوا أَخَذْنَاهُمْ بَغْتَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْلِسُونَ

**44. "Then, when they forgot that which they had been admonished to, We opened for them the doors of all things (of enjoyments), until when they rejoiced in what they were given, We seized them suddenly when, behold, they were in utter despair."**

The Arabic term /ilas/ means a grief accompanied with despair. It is a status that criminals may have in the court when they cannot find an answer to offer.

It is not such that always the welfare of life to be a sign of mercy. On the contrary, it is sometime the cause of chastisement.

Giving respite to evildoers and preparing welfare and comfortable life for offenders is one of Allah's way of treatment. The world and its bounties can be both a favor and indignation. It depends to whom they are given. In Surah' A 'raf, No.7, verse 94 faith and piety have been counted as the cause of blessings of Allah. It says:

**"And if the people of the towns had believed and guarded (against evil) We would certainly have opened up for them blessings from heavens and the earth ..."**

In the verse under discussion, the world has been counted as a divine blessing. 1 The verse says:

**"Then, when they forgot that which they had been admonished to, We opened for them the doors of all things (of enjoyments), until when they rejoiced in what they were given, We seized them suddenly when, behold, they were in utter despair."**

This fact should also be noted that the wrath of Allah *and* death both happen suddenly. So, we should be always prepared. Verily, it happens that the happy shout of men of pleasure usually changes into a despondent groan all of a sudden.

## **Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 45**

فَقُطِعَ دَابِرُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

**45. "So the people who were unjust were rooted out, and praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds."**

The annihilation of unjust people is conclusive and certain. Cruelty cannot resist long. Transgression is also effective in generation. The verse says:

**"So the people who were unjust were rooted out...."**

Therefore, as it is mentioned in the current holy verse, when the transgressors are destroyed, Allah

should be thanked and praised. So, the verse continues saying:

**"... and praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds."**

This phrase, mentioned in this verse, hints to this fact that cutting off the roots of mischief and transgression, which ends to the destruction of a people who can continue committing it, is so important that requires to thank Allah and to be gratitude of Him.

A tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) says:

*"He who loves the imperishability of the unjust, its meaning is that Allah to be disobeyed (by means of sins), and (the phenomenon of transgression is so important that) Allah (the Blessed and Exalted) has praised His Essence for the destruction of the unjust and He has said:*

***"So the people who were unjust were rooted out, and praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds'." 2***

## **Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 46**

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ سَمْعَكُمْ وَأَبْصَارَكُمْ وَخَتَمَ عَلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ مَنْ إِلَهٌ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ يَأْتِيكُمْ بِهِ أَنْظِرْ كَيْفَ نُصَرِّفُ الْآيَاتِ ثُمَّ هُمْ يَصْدِفُونَ

**46. "Say: 'Have you considered if Allah takes away your hearing and your eyesight and seals on your hearts, which god other than Allah can give it back to you?' See you, how We repeat the Signs, yet they turn away."**

### **Do know the Bestower of Bounties**

In this verse, the Qur'an addresses the pagans and, at first, it implies if Allah takes away His worthy blessings, such as your ears and your eyes, from you and sets a seal on your hearts so that you cannot realize between right and wrong and good and evil, which god, save Allah, is able to return these blessings to you? The verse says:

***"Say: 'Have you considered if Allah takes away your hearing and your eyesight and seals on your hearts, which god other than Allah can give it back to you?'..."***

In fact, pagans believed this fact that the creator and the giver of sustenance is Allah, but they worshipped idols as the intercessors with Allah.

Then, the Qur'an continues the statement and commands them to see how Allah stated the verses and

reasons in different forms for them, but they still turn away from the Truth. It says:

*"... See you, how We repeat the Signs, yet they turn away."*

## Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 47

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَتَاكُمْ عَذَابُ اللَّهِ بَغْتَةً أَوْ جَهْرَةً هَلْ يُهْلِكُ إِلَّا الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمُونَ

**47. "Say: 'Have you considered if the punishment of Allah comes to you suddenly or openly, will anyone be destroyed but the unjust people!'"**

Next to mentioning these three great blessings of Allah, (i.e. eyes, ears, and comprehension), which can be the origin of all blessings in this world and the next, this verse hints to the possible removal of all these blessings in general. It says:

**"Say: 'Have you considered if the punishment of Allah comes to you suddenly or openly, will anyone be destroyed but the unjust people!'"**

The purpose of this statement is that the only one who is able to punish through different chastisements and to take up the existing blessings, is Allah. Thus, idols have no function in this process.

Therefore, there is no reason that you refuge to them.

## Surah Al-'An'am, Verses 48 - 49

وَمَا نُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ فَمَنْ آمَنَ وَأَصْلَحَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَمَسُّهُمُ الْعَذَابُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ

**48. "And We do not send the messengers but (as) announcers of good news and warners, then whoever believes and amends (himself) -no fear shall be upon them, nor shall they grieve."**

**49. "And as for those who belie Our Signs, chastisement shall afflict them for what they were transgressing."**

In this verse, the Qur'an points to the situation of messengers of Allah and indicates that not only the lifeless idols are not able to do anything, but the great prophets and divine leaders also have not anything, to do except communicating messenger ship, glad tidings, warning, encouragement, and threat.

So, all blessings that exist are from the source of Allah (S.w.T.) and they wholly have come into being merely under His command.

Therefore, whatever even the prophets desire, they may ask Him. The verse says:

***"And We do not send the messengers but (as) announcers of good news and warners...."***

Then, The Qur'an adds that the way to felicity is found in two things. Firstly people should believe, and secondly they amend themselves (by doing good deeds). For such people, there will be no fear because of Divine punishments, nor shall they grieve for their former actions. The verse says:

***"... then whoever believes and amends (himself) - no fear shall be upon them, nor shall they grieve."***

Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

*"Whoever is in awe of Allah, He, the Purified, will secure him from every thing."* 3

Imam Zayn-ul-'Abidin (as) said:

*"The origin and the commencement of every knowledge is the awe of Allah ".* 4

Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

*"Whoever is in awe of his Lord stops transgressing."* 5

The contrary status is for those who reject the Divine revelations. They will be confronted with the punishment of Allah for the very mischief and disobedience. The verse says:

***"And as for those who belie Our Signs, chastisement shall afflict them for what they were transgressing."***

Imam Sajjad, the fourth Imam, (as) said:

*"Avoid being a companion of sinners, helping transgressors, and neighboring with evil-doers; and beware of their sedition, and go away from their surroundings."* 6

## Surah Al-'An'am, Verse 50

قُلْ لَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي خَزَائِنُ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ وَلَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ إِنِّي مَلَكٌ إِنْ أَتَيْتُ  
إِلَّا مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَىٰ وَالْبَصِيرُ أَفَلَا تَتَفَكَّرُونَ

**50. "Say: (O' Our prophet!) , I do not say to you that the treasures of Allah, are with me, nor do I know the Unseen, nor do I say to you that I am an angel. I do not follow but what is revealed to me.' Say: 'Are the blind and the seeing one equal? Do you not then ponder?'"**

### Knowing the Unseen!

This verse is a complementary statement to answering the different protests of pagans and polytheists. Here, three divisions of their protests are responded in some short sentences.

The first one is that they suggested the Prophet (S) to bring some surprising and wonderful miracles. Secondly each of them suggested a separate thing as the one wished. Thirdly they were not contented with observing the miracles that some others asked for.

Their desires were sometimes some houses made of gold, sometimes the descent of angels, and another time they wished the dry hot land of Mecca to be changed into; a vast garden full of water and fruits.

By demanding these amazing things from the Prophet (S), as if, they expected the rank of a kind of divinity and ownership of the earth and the heaven for him. That is why, in answer to these people, Allah commands the Prophet (S):

**"Say: (O' Our Prophet!), I do not say to you that the treasures of Allah, are with me....."**

The Arabic term /xaza'in/ is the plural form of /xazinah/ with the meaning of 'source and treasure of everything '. Thus, the Qur'anic phrase /xaza'inullah/ (the treasures of Allah) encompasses the treasures of the whole things. This originates from His Infinite Essence, Who is the source of all virtues and powers.

Some of those people expected that the Prophet (S) would inform them of the entire secrets concerning the future and the past. They expected him to tell them what happenings would occur in their lives, so that they could try to repel their harms and attract their profits.

Then, in answer to such people, through the continuation of the verse, the Prophet (S) was told to say:

**"... nor do I know the Unseen....."**

Some of them expected that the Prophet (S) himself to be an angel, or an angel could accompany him. They desired that there would be no quality of human beings in him, such as eating food, walking in the roads and markets, and so on. To answer the rejection of these people, in the third sentence of the verse, the Qur'an says:

***"...nor do I say to you that I am an angel...."***

Then, in the continuation of this statement, he adds that he follows only the commandments and instructions that are communicated to him through revelation from the Lord.

***"... I do not follow but what is revealed to me. !... "***

At the end of the verse, the Prophet (S) is ordered to ask them whether the blind and those who can see are equal. Are those whose eyes, minds and intellects are shut equal with those whose eyes see the facts well and recognize them?

***"... Say: ' Are the blind and the seeing one equal? Do you not then ponder? ' "***

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1. Faith and piety bring the blessing of the heavens and the earth for the bearers of them, while negligence shut the gates of all good things to the ignorant persons.

2. Majma'ul-Bayan. Vol. 3 P. 302

3. Qurar-ul-Hikam, vol. 5, p. 421

4. Bi har-ul-'Anwar, vol. 74, p. 180

5. Qurar-ul-Hikam, vol. 5, p. 275

6. Bihar-ul- Anwar. vol. 75, p. 151

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