

Section 6: To Return Good For Evil and to Be Patient

Surah al-Mu'minun – Verses 93–95

قُلْ رَبِّ إِمَّا تُرِيْنِي مَا يُوعَدُونَ

رَبِّ فَلَا تَجْعَلْنِي فِي الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ

وَإِنَّا عَلَيَّ أَنْ نُرِيْكَ مَا نَعِدُهُمْ لَقَادِرُونَ

93. “Say: ‘My Lord! If You show me what (chastisement) they are promised, ”

94. “My Lord! Then set me, not among the unjust people.”

95. “And verily We are able to show you that which We promise them.”

These verses are addressed to the Prophet (S), but they have the same objective as the previous verses; that is, they threaten the unbelievers and polytheists with Divine punishment.

In the beginning, Allah commands His Prophet (S):

“Say: ‘My Lord! If You show me what (chastisement) they are promised, ”

(Meaning their punishment in the War of Badr), then put me not among the wrongdoing folk. This means that when Allah decides to send down the punishment upon the unbelievers, He would separate the

Prophet away from them so that by Allah's grace and mercy he would not be involved with the affliction of the oppressors at that time.

There is no doubt that the conduct and program of the Prophet (S) could not make him subject to Divine punishment. It is also a fact that the Divine law is not indiscriminate and would not suffer the good to be punished with the guilty. Even if there were one dutiful worshipper of Allah in a whole society of evildoers, Allah would save that individual.

The verse says:

“My Lord! Then set me not among the unjust people.”

By this prayer of the Prophet (S) Allah intends to warn the unbelievers that the issue is so serious that by Divine command the great Prophet of Islam himself sought the protection of Allah from the consequences of their beliefs and actions, and secondly it is a lesson for the followers of this Prophet that they are not safe from Allah's punishment and must always seek His protection regardless of whatever state they might be in.

But what kind of punishment is it? Most interpreters believe that it refers to the worldly punishments that Allah had inflicted upon the polytheists, including the disastrous severe defeat they had suffered in the Battle of Badr.¹ There are other interpreters, however, that think that the verse probably includes the punishment both in this world and in the Hereafter.²

Bearing in mind that this Sura was revealed in Mecca when the believers were forced to undergo many hardships, these verses gave them much solace and comfort.

The next verse emphasizes the fact that Allah is Almighty, and removes any doubt and uncertainty about the victory of the believers over their enemies and gives them solace.

The verse says:

“And verily We are able to show you that which We promise them.”

As history has ever shown, this power of Allah has been demonstrated over and over in different places and on different occasions after the Battle of Badr where a much smaller military force inflicted a major defeat upon a much larger and well equipped enemy by Allah's command.

Allah gave His Prophet solace by saying that He had the power to punish the unbelievers but He often postpones their punishment for various reasons some of which have been listed below:

1. They are given time and opportunity to repent.
2. They are given a final argument.

3. In their future generations some believers are going to be born.
4. For the sake of the Prophet (S) who is the cause of blessings and grace.

Surah al-Mu'minun – Verses 96–98

ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ السَّيِّئَةِ نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَصِفُونَ

وَقُلْ رَبِّ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ هَمَزَاتِ الشَّيَاطِينِ

وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ رَبِّ أَنْ يَحْضُرُونِ

96. “Repel evil with that which is best. We know best what they describe.”

97. “And say: ‘My Lord! I seek refuge in You from the suggestions of Satans, ”

98. “And I seek refuge in You, my Lord, lest they attend me’.”

The Prophet (S) has been taught by Allah and has been called upon to treat the enemies of Islam in the best manner.

Evil can be repelled with evil, but this method is not appropriate for a spiritual leader. Thus, the Prophet (S) has been explicitly ordered to behave with this group with moderation, compassion and justice, to repel their evil deeds with indulgence, forgiveness, and goodness, and to answer their unpleasant words with reason and intelligence.

The Noble Qur'an in this holy verse says:

“Repel evil with that which is best...”

“... We know best what they describe.”

The verse means that Allah knows that they aggravated the Prophet (S) with inappropriate deeds, harsh words, and various kinds of persecutions, but he was not commissioned to reciprocate their violence and vilifications in like manner, rather he should respond to their evil deeds against him with good manner which is one of the best ways to awaken the ignorant and those who have been deceived.

In addition to this, the Prophet (S) should rely on Allah, as the verse suggests:

“And say: ‘My Lord! I seek refuge in You from the suggestions of Satans, ”

It means that not only should he (S) seek refuge in Allah from the suggestions of Devils, but he should also take refuge in Allah in order to prevent them from coming to him and taking part in his assemblies causing hurt and temptation by their presence.

So the next verse says:

“And I seek refuge in You, my Lord, lest they attend me’.”

Note to Some Points

1) The Qur’anic word ‘hamazat’ is the plural form of the word ‘humazah’, meaning intense release, discharge, and stimulation. The Arabic letter ‘hamzah’ is called by the same name because it is articulated with force at the back of the throat.

Some interpreters are of the opinion that the Arabic words ‘hamz’, ‘qamz’ and ‘ramz’ have the same meaning, but ‘ramaz’ is light, ‘qamaz’ is stronger than ‘ramaz’, and ‘hamaz’ is even more so.

Regarding the fact that the Arabic word /šayatin/ is plural, it refers to all Satans whether manifest and concealed, man and jinn.

In the Commentary by Ali ibn Ibrahim we read that the Imam (as) concerning the meaning of the verse:

“And say: ‘My Lord! I seek refuge in You from the suggestions of Satans, ”

said that it meant that which of the satanic suggestions that enter your heart.³

When the Prophet (S), who is infallible and divinely protected from sin and error, asks for such a thing from Allah, the Almighty, it becomes quite clear to others that this command is even more imperative for those who do not enjoy this infallibility.

All believers must seek the protection of Allah, their Owner and Lord, from the evil temptations of devils and that He should not leave them alone on their own. Not only must they not let themselves be tempted by evil suggestions, but also they must not take part in satanic gatherings and assemblies.

Thus, all those who want to follow the Truth must constantly avoid the satanic suggestions and always refuge in Him from this aspect.

2) One of the most effective ways of striving against obstinate and stubborn enemies is to reciprocate their evil with good. This may create an upheaval and revolution in their consciences and this matter causes the wrongdoers in many instances to end up being severely reproached and reprimanded, leading them to abandon their activities.

By studying the biographies of spiritual leaders and the practical method of the Prophet (S) and the immaculate Imams (as), we see that they used to reciprocate the worst offenses some persons committed against them with goodness and they showed kindness towards their oppressors.

This behaviour used to bring about a spiritual revolution and upheaval in the souls of their enemies and often led such wicked people back to the Path of Truth.

The Holy Qur'an reminds Muslims many times to keep this principle in mind when they find themselves confronted by wrongs done against them and the result of this action is that the severe enemies may become a warm friend.

For example, in verse 34 of Sura Fussilat, No. 41, it says:

"...Repel (an evil deed) with that which is better, then will he between whom and you there was enmity become as though he were a bosom friend."

However, it must be noted that this command refers to those instances that the enemy does not exploit and misuse it, or counts it as a weakness and becomes bolder because of this command.

The meaning of this sentence also is not to yield to the temptations of the enemy. Perhaps because of this very reason, after giving this command in the above verses, the Prophet (S) is immediately ordered to take refuge in Allah from the temptations of Satans and their attendance.

1. Majma' ul-Bayan, The Commentary, Al-Mizan, The Commentary, Abul ul-Futuh, the Commentary, and ruh ul-Ma'ani

2. The great commentary of Fakhr Razi

3. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, Vol. 3, p. 552

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