

Section 8: Qur'an, the Guidance and the Mercy

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 61

وَلَوْ يُؤَاخِذُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بِظُلْمِهِمْ مَا تَرَكَ عَلَيْهَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَجْلُهُمْ لَا يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ سَاعَةً وَلَا يَسْتَقْدِمُونَ

61. “And if Allah were to take people to task for their inequity, He would not leave on it (the earth) a single moving being, but He respites them until an appointed time; so, when their term comes, they can not delay (it) an hour nor (yet) can they advance (it).”

The general rule of Allah is the postponement of the punishment, but it sometimes happens that He teaches the oppressors a lesson so as to provide instruction for others such as whatever happened to the nation of Lot, Noah, and Thamūd.

This respite provided by Allah is for the sake of repentance and compensation for one's sins and is based on His favour. Hence, do not become arrogant because of it.

Anyway, after discussing about the terrible crimes of the Arab pagans through previous verses in connection with the evil innovations they committed and the crime of burying alive of their own daughters, some may raise this question as to why is it that Allah does not immediately punish the culprit subjects with all these oppressions, and abhor-able crimes?

This very verse in question seeks to provide an answer to this question implying: If Allah were to punish people for the oppressive offences which they commit, no moving object will survive throughout the earth.

The verse says:

“And if Allah were to take people to task for their inequity, He would not leave on it (the earth) a single moving being...”

The Arabic term /dabbah/ refers to whatever moving and living animal there is. It may, here, allude to ‘human beings’ metaphorically by procuring the symmetrical dimensions to it which in this case is /‘al a zulmihim/ (for their inequity). That is, were Allah to question human beings with regard to their tyranny, there would remain no mankind throughout the earth.

This possibility also exists that by this, all moving objects is meant, for, we know that such beings are generally created for the sake of human beings, as the Qur’an says:

“It is He Who has created for you all that is in the earth.”¹

Once mankind is perished altogether, the rationale for the existence of other living objects on the earth will also be nonexistent, and their entire generation will be exterminated.

This question may be raised in here that if we look closely at the generalization and at the comprehensiveness of the significance of the verse, the result will be that no one exists on the earth except those who are oppressors and everybody has had his share of committing cruelties.

So if the punishment is to be administered rapidly, no one will be excluded. Nevertheless, we know that not only the prophets and the Imams who are immaculate and thus not subjected to such punishments, for this rule does not apply to them, but also there are certain devout people and people of true faith whose good deeds surely excel as compared to their petty sins, thus they do certainly not fall into this category of fitting for the extermination as a way of being punished.

The answer to this question lies in the fact that the verse provides a typical verdict which is not to be regarded as a universal or general verdict.

The proof for such an exception is provided in verse 32 of Surah Fatir, No. 35 which declares:

“Then We gave the Book for an inheritance to those whom We chose from among Our servants; but of them is he who makes his soul to suffer a loss, and of them is he who takes a middle course, and of them is he who is foremost in deeds of goodness by Allah’s permission; this is the great excellence.”

According to this verse, the people are divided into 3 groups: The oppressive group, the moderate group, who have committed light sins, and the group who are counted good people; that is, those who are categorized as pioneers of whatever is good and acceptable.

Certainly, out of these three groups only the first one is subject to the rule expressed in the verse under discussion and neither the second nor the third ones can be categorized and included. And, since the first group usually constitutes the majority of the people of the societies, making mention of such a

generalization is not surprising at all.

Then the Qur'an makes mention of this point that Allah provides all oppressors with a respite for a certain amount of time until their nominal death (certain limited time), thus delaying their death time.

However, as their death approaches, no advancing nor delaying for the least time will occur. By contrast, their death will take place at that exact date which will neither come in advance nor in retardation.

The verse says:

"...but He respites them until an appointed time; so, when their term comes, they can not delay (it) an hour nor (yet) can they advance (it)."

As for the significance of the phrase: *ʾajalin musamm a/* (an appointed time), the commentators have expressed various ideas.

However, with regard to other verses of the Qur'an, including verse 2 of the Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6 and verse 34 of Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7 it seems that the purpose is to be the arrival of death itself.

That is, Allah respites people until the end of their lifetime in order to complete the argument, so that haply the oppressors try to reform themselves, reconstructing their life experiences, and thus returning to Allah, the truth and justice.

When this respite expires, the order as to their death will be issued, and just from that very moment their punishments and retributions start.

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 62

وَيَجْعَلُونَ لِلَّهِ مَا يَكْرَهُونَ وَتَصِفُ أَلْسِنَتُهُمُ الْكُذْبَ أَنَّ لَهُمُ الْحُسْنَىٰ لَا جَرَمَ أَنَّ لَهُمُ
النَّارَ وَأَنَّهُمْ مُفْرَطُونَ

62. "And they assign unto Allah what they (themselves) dislike and their tongues assert the falsehood that the better (portion) will be theirs. Inevitably the Fire is theirs and they will be the foremost (to it)."

The Qur'an condemns once again the ugly innovations and superstitions which the Ignorant Arabs entertained concerning the hatred towards their daughters with a novel expression. It also condemns their belief saying that the angels are daughters of Allah.

The verse says:

“And they assign unto Allah what they (themselves) dislike...”

This is an astonishing contradiction. If the angels are daughters of Allah, then it becomes obvious that girls are ‘good things’, why then are you unhappy for having daughters born to your own families? In case it is a bad thing to have daughters, then why do you consider it for Allah?

Nevertheless, they falsely claim that the ultimate good result and good reward belongs to them. How can they expect such a reward and with what good performance? Do they expect it by burying alive their innocent daughters who are defenseless, or by perjury with regard to the holy presence of Allah? By which deeds do they expect it?

The verse says:

“...and their tongues assert the falsehood that the better (portion) will be theirs. Inevitably the Fire is theirs and they will be the foremost (to it).”

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 63

تَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمَمٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَهُوَ وَلِيُّهُمُ الْيَوْمَ
وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

63. “By Allah, We verily sent (messengers) unto the nations before you, but the Satan made their (abominable) acts fair-seeming to them. Then he (the Satan) is their guardian today, and they will have a painful punishment.”

The objective of this holy verse is to console the Prophet of Islam (S) as not to be worried for the sake of the people’s remaining heedless and being negligent, since all prophets used to confront such individuals.

In view of the fact that those people who may raise this question after listening to the stories of the pre-Islamic Arabs how one can be so cruel as to bury alive his own daughter and how can such a thing be practical, the Qur’an apparently seems to be providing an answer to the question, saying:

“By Allah, We verily sent (messengers) unto the nations before you, but the Satan made their (abominable) acts fair-seeming to them...”

Certainly, the Satan is so advert in his own whimsical acts that he makes the worst and the most abominable acts as nice that even one imagines such acts as a source of pride for himself, just in the same way that the ‘pre-Islamic Arab’ was proud of burying alive his own daughter(s) and praised that as protecting his chastity and saving the prestige of his own tribe. He would proudly say:

“I buried my daughter with my own hands so as not to let the enemy capture her in a battle later.”

While the most shameful behavior is made possible under the guise of the most favored masks owing to the Satan’s temptations, the rest of the matter is clearly evident. We nowadays witness such seemingly good-looking acts in many cases of theft, robberies, and crimes which are provided with proper justifications and under enticing pretexts.

Then the Qur’an adds that the present-day pagans follow the same deviant programs of the previous nations to whom the Satan presented their acts as nice, and the present-day Satan is their guardian, and they are being inspired by him.

The verse says:

“...Then he (the Satan) is their guardian today...”

It is for this very reason that the painful Divine punishment is awaiting them.

“...and they will have a painful punishment.”

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 64

وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا لِتُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ الَّذِي اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِقَوْمٍ
يُؤْمِنُونَ

64. “And We have not sent down unto you the Book (the Qur’an), except that you may make clear to them that about which they differ; and (as) a guidance and a mercy for a people who believe.”

This verse explains the objective of the prophetic mission of the messengers of Allah, so as to clarify that if nations and tribes put aside their passions and whims and personal tastes, and take recourse to the prophets, there will not be any of such superstitions, disagreements, and contradictory acts left.

He says to the Prophet (S) that We have not revealed to you the Qur’an except that you make transparent to them the issues about which they disagree. And this Book is a source of guidance and mercy for those who embrace the Faith.

The verse says:

“And We have not sent down unto you the Book (the Qur’an), except that you may make clear to them that about which they differ; and (as) a guidance and a mercy for a people who believe.”

And it also polishes all Satanical temptations from their heart as well as the enticing layers of one’s

despotic soul.

It also derives away the mischievous curtains from mixing up the facts and, at the same time, reveals and exposes the superstitions and crimes which are covered under the enticing guise. It removes all disagreements which have their roots in the passions and low desires and puts an end to all cruelties and oppressions. It sheds the light of guidance and mercy all over.

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 65

وَاللَّهُ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِقَوْمٍ
يَسْمَعُونَ

65. “And Allah has sent down water from the sky, and therewith given life to the earth after its death. Verily, in that is a sign for a people who listen (to the words of truth whole-heartedly).”

The previous verse dealt with the revelation of the ‘Book’, which serves as a source of enlivening of the hearts. In the current verse, the process of descending of rain is being discussed which provides life for the earth.

Therefore, He returns once again to the issue of the explanation of the various blessings and the favors which serve both as an emphasis concerning the issue of monotheism and cognition of Allah, and alludes to the issue of resurrection in that passing. Moreover, by stressing these graces, He incites the sense of gratitude of the servants, thus enabling them to approach Allah more and more.

At first, it says:

“And Allah has sent down water from the sky, and therewith given life to the earth after its death...”

There are clear signs for those who lend their ears as to the magnanimity of Allah while furnishing clues for all regarding His power and splendor.

There are also justifications provided for the coming of the resurrection day while exhibiting one of the numerous blessings of Allah. Nevertheless, the sinful man has been so deafened and become out of touch with realities that he can neither hear nor understand.

The verse continues saying:

“... Verily, in that is a sign for a people who listen (to the words of truth whole-heartedly).”

But as for those who do not hearken by their hearts, they are the ones who relate these issues to nature, and we have proclaimed repeatedly that such people are overtaken by blasphemy, paganism, dissidence, and sinfulness, and their rational souls are not moralized and they are the examples of the people who: “do not understand,” “do not see”, “do not listen”, and “do not know”.

As for those who have managed to elevate their souls by the light of faith and moral values, the examples of the following hold true in their cases: to be said: “they understand”, “they listen”, “they see”, and “they know”.

The first category is addressed as:

“They are a cattle, rather they are more astray...”²

For they had the power to discriminate the vices from the virtues though they did not implement their sense of discrimination. They are those who took no notice of Allah, the Resurrection Day, and the ultimate aim of their existence, forsaking them for the worldly matters.

The second category comprises of the examples of: Surah Ar-Ra’d, No. 13, verse 19 which signifies that only the sage and men of wisdom are considerate with regard to this.

1. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 29

2. Surah Al-’A’raf, No. 7, verse 179

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