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Ayat no. 41-44

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful
***And a sign to them is that We bear their offspring in the laden ship. And We have created for them the like of it, what they will ride on. And if We please, We can drown them, then there shall be no succorer for them, nor shall they be rescued, But* (*by*) *mercy from Us and for enjoyment till a time.* (*36:41-44*)**

Among all other signs and proofs of God's bounties is the subjugation of the sea for mankind. Allah has made this huge ocean along with its great depth and fearsome animals subservient to man. This ocean is indeed such that if man looks at it, he is frightened.

The giant waves, when in motion, are really fierce. Yet man has overpowered it so that he can sail on its surface for trade, tourism and past time. By constructing a ship he rides it with a strong heart and travels for miles and miles. He catches fish and obtains other marine products. He brings out pearls etc. Now he even does mining in the seabed. Man makes the loaded ship move over the waves of the sea.

Camel, the ship of desert and the airplane also are from God

And We have created for them the like of it, what they will ride on.

We created things like the ships and many other things for you. For example the camel, which is a ship of desert. In the words of modern day commentators, aeroplanes flying in air are also made by God. They also are like the ships. The electricity and steam too are from God Almighty. Man has only assembled the parts with the help of his intelligence which is again provided by God.

And if We please, We can drown them, then there shall be no succorer for them, nor shall they be rescued,

Meaning, if We desire, We can drown the seafarers with a huge wave. The protector is Only One God, not the ship. Automobiles and airplanes too are like it. Be it in sea or in the air, the protector is only God. If He wants to kill, there is none to save.

But* (*by*) *mercy from Us and for enjoyment till a time.

That is, the safety is Our Mercy until its time (of death) does not arrive. God saves and protects it till that time.

Worship only one God with your body and wealth

These Holy verses contain all the signs and proofs of God's might, wisdom, divinity and Lordship. It necessitates that, O man! As it is God Who has put the land and the sea under your control, you must obey Him.

It is Only One God Who created for you all these varieties of food, bounties, drinks and grains. It is He and only He Who created all these vegetables and fruits for you. So you must be thankful to Him and you must not be slack in worshipping Him physically and monetarily.

Physical worship acts through tongue and body organs are prayer, fasting, hajj and ordering good and prohibiting evil. All these are bodily worship acts and thankfulness.
Monetary worship acts are connected with man's relationships.

...and keep up prayer and spend out of what We have given them... (***2:3***)

In all divine religions, Prayer and Zakat are ordered jointly. If there is bodily or physical worship but no worship through wealth, then it is incomplete. Fasting is there in its place, but providing breakfast and giving predawn food is also a must. Though the Lord Almighty revealed these verses with regard to the people of Mecca, it is applicable to all humanity till the Day of Judgment.

Take precautions regarding past and present sins

Meccans were extremely unlucky with regard to physical worship. When they were told, "Fear God, mend your manners, offer prayers", they used to mock it. When they were told, "Why do you not offer Prayers? Why do you not observe fasts?" They would retort, "Why does God need my Prayer and fasts." Well, but you surely need to worship so that God may, as a reward give you bounties in the Hereafter.

And when it is said to them: Guard against what is before you and what is behind you, that mercy may be on you. (***36:45***)

The best explanation for “What is in front of you”, as mentioned in *Kashaf-e-Haqaiq,* is provided by Imam Ja’far Sadiq (‘a) who is reported to have said, “It denotes sins attracting divine punishment and torture. They are being asked, ‘Look at your sins, see what you have forwarded for your life in grave.’”

Instead of sending sweet smell and fragrance for your Hereafter (life after death) you have forwarded fire.

Another reason is also given that “what is before you” indicates the present sins and “what is behind you” means the past sins.

…that mercy may be on you.

Though the reply has not been explained in detail it becomes apparent by the next verse.

They are turning away their faces from the signs of God

And there comes not to them a communication of the communications of their Lord but they turn aside from it.

When the verse of Quran is recited to them, they turn away their faces. When it is said to them, “Fear the chastisement of Barzakh (grave life)”, their response is the same. Be they the legislative verses or verses explaining religious beliefs, all are from God.

None of the Divine Words about bounties and creations etc has any effect on them. What about the physical worships? Of course we should apply them to ourselves. May be they apply to us. There are applicable to all though the verses were revealed in the context of Meccans.

God Himself would have given to the poor

And when it is said to them: Spend out of what Allah has given you,

When it is said to them, “Out of what God has given to you, you should give some of it to the needy in the path of God,” for example: Khums, one fifth of whatever you have saved at the end of the year after taking care of your expenses etc. Actually this is very easy but they reply, “Had God wished, He Himself would have given it to them (the poor people).

…those who disbelieve say to those who believe: Shall we feed him whom, if Allah please, He could feed?

O shopkeeper! If you know that your sales boy is short of money, you should support him by giving an advance.

The unbelievers replied to those who recommended them to help the needy, “Should we feed those whom had God wished to feed, He would have fed? Actually God wished that they should remain hungry and needy.”

You are in naught but clear error.

That is you are clearly misguided and you do not know that you are encouraging begging. Now the fact is that these people themselves are in clear misguidance.

God’s will with regard to free will of man

Will of God is of two kinds, the destined nature and the legislative will. The first kind is for example that if God willed that rain must come at a certain time or that He decides that the lifespan of such and such person must end by such and such time.

This is not changeable. The second Will is with regard to the legislative aspect that God wishes that man should incline himself towards good, should offer Prayer and observe fasts etc.

Example of destined nature: God desired that a donkey and a cow must always remain bowed (like in Rukoo during Prayer). But in respect of man, He wishes that man must genuflect (Rukoo) willingly and thus, with his own intention understand the Might and Greatness of God. He must recite, “Glory be to the Lord, the greatest, and praise be to Him.”

Insects live in dust. They have no option but to remain so. But man is commanded that he should, with self-intention and self will, prostrate before Only One God so that he be rewarded and get a fitting rank. God wants that, if one is poor, then those who are needless should feed him and fulfill his needs.

Wealth and poverty—a test for the people

God has not created all the people alike. In every age, some are rich and some poor so that they may be tested.
and We have made some of you a trial for others... (***25:20***)

O Mr. Millionaire! God has given you a lot so that you may support thousands of helpless people; that your own spiritual ailments may be cured. If the curtain is raised, everyone will sigh over his illnesses. Spending in the path of God cures you from such diseases, so be generous.

In case of the poor also, the truth is that if in spite of needfulness, he maintains his self-respect, then it

in itself is a great blessing. If you remain patient and forbearing you earn everlasting rewards. The poor who is patient, is also as lucky as a rich man who spends in the path of God willingly.

Both earn good rewards. This is the legislative wish of God that both the rich and the poor should benefit. A miser is deprived of paradise. It is narrated that a generous disbeliever is nearer to Paradise than a miserly believer.

There is no hope for such a miserly Muslim. If he dies with such animal–like characteristics there is no hope of his salvation.

When a dog from outside comes to another area what do the other dogs of that area do? They chase away the new dog, fearing that the newcomer would participate in enjoying the bones available in their area.

O co–workers! What are you doing with your co–workers? The remedy of miserliness is to give away and I have said this repeatedly. Illness of heart cannot be cured by doing what you want, so spend in the path of God from what you love most.

By no means shall you attain to righteousness until you spend (***benevolently***) ***out of what you love...*** (***3:92***)

You must not give away what you do not like for yourselves.

O you who believe! spend (***benevolently***) ***of the good things that you earn and of what We have brought forth for you out of the earth, and do not aim at what is bad that you may spend*** (***in alms***) ***of it, while you would not take it yourselves unless you have its price lowered...*** (***2:267***)

Building on rented land

A man came to the house of Ali (‘a). When he saw that necessities of life were very short and unorganized in that house he asked, “O Al! You are the Caliph of Muslims. Why is your house in such a condition?” Ali (‘a) replied, “A wise man does not build properties on rented land. Whatever we possess, we have forwarded for the next life.”

To give more importance to a rented place is against wisdom. One day, Bahlool was in a graveyard. There came the vizier of Haroon and asked him, “How is it that you are not leaving the graveyard?” Bahlool replied, “Yes, there is more peace here.

No one has to do anything with me here. If I go to the town or market, children and fools trouble me.” The vizier said, “Do you have any dialogue with the dead?” Bahlool, “Yes. I stand by every grave and

ask, ‘When are you going to move out?’ They reply, ‘We are waiting for you. When you join us, we shall move out together.’”

Generosity of Imam Hasan and Imam Reza (‘a)

The wealth you have is a loan to you, with which you can do something for your life after death. It is a very important matter. So much so that if one has got only a date, he should give half of it to the needy. Imam Reza (‘a) divided his entire wealth in two parts thrice and every time he gave half of it in the path of God.

Likewise, when Imam Reza (‘a) used to sit for meals he used to take a utensil and put something from every available eatable for the needy. He used to recite:

But he would not attempt the uphill road, And what will make you comprehend what the uphill road is? (***It is***) ***the setting free of a slave, Or the giving of food in a day of hunger*** (***90:11-14***)

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