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Ayat no. 67-68

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful
And if We please We would surely transform them in their place, then they would not be able to go on, nor will they return. And whomsoever We cause to live long, We reduce (him) to an abject state in constitution; do they not then understand? **(*36:67-68*)**

We can make your exterior like your interior

Allah says:

And if We please We would surely transform them in their place

The hint is towards the end of deniers and polytheists who revolt despite so many verses being recited to them. They have blinded their internal eye. It deserves that, "We also make them blind in such a manner that they cannot see and recognize their path."

Thus they deserve to be disfigured by Us. We may dry them up wherever they are so that they become like a stone whereby they may not be able to move forward or backward. They deserve this treatment. Those who do not shiver at such admonishment deserve that their faces become like their hearts.

Their mentality is like beasts. They are like wolves or other carnivorous animals. It is, therefore, better that We make their exterior like their interiors like We did with the People of Sabt; who, when they woke up found themselves transformed into monkeys and pigs.

So, if We wish We can do this, but it is a divine strategy to give respite, perhaps they may return to the right path. Had it been so that every man who sinned is put to instant chastisement there would be no life on earth any more.

And if Allah had destroyed men for their iniquity, He would not leave on the earth a single

creature... (***16:61***)

Rather, they should be given respite. Perhaps, they may feel ashamed and show regret. Even if they do not regret they cannot escape from the kingdom of God. Where can a sinner servant flee from God's reach? God can take revenge from him any moment. It is divine mercy that you are treated kindly, but when you cross the limits, God puts you to shame.

Husain releases the stuck hands

A sinful man was so reckless that he did not hesitate to look at and touch a stranger lady and he committed such a sin in the precincts of the Holy Ka'ba at Hajre Ismail, where people pray for forgiveness. A woman had clung to the curtain of Ka'ba when that fellow placed his hand over that of the lady's.

Suddenly the hands got stuck and a shamefulness scene was created. According to what is mentioned in *Manaqib,* they were taken to a Qazi in the masjid who said, "There is no way to separate these hands except by cutting them apart with a knife."

It was the time of the arrival of Husain (ʻa) to the mosque. So when he came, these two persons were brought to him. The Imam first took a promise from the man that he would never again indulge in such a sin. Then he prayed to God Almighty, brought his own hand between the stuck up hands and separated them.

Her face stuck when she turned it during Prayer

It is mentioned in volume 12 of *Biharul Anwar* that a woman had a bent back whose husband took another wife. The second wife was always on the look out for her rival. One day, her husband came home when she was praying. He went in to the first wife while the second wife in the state of Prayer, turned her face to see what the man was doing.

Her neck remained in that condition forever. The respected scholar, Shahid Thani has also narrated this event in his book *Asrarus Salat.* Thus one who turns the face this way or that during Prayer should be afraid that God might make his face like that of an ass.

The poor woman requested her husband to call for a physician. All who knew were of the opinion that if the neck is turned forcibly it may break the bones. At once they came to Imam Moosa bin Ja'far (ʻa) who asked her to perform repentance. After she made a sincere repentance, the Imam extended his Holy hand and corrected her neck.

Prevent open breach of fasting

O sinners and reckless people! It is heard that eating and drinking openly during the fasting month has become common. Are those Muslim shopkeepers who see people openly breaking the fasting rules like this and keep quiet, in the words of Ali (ʿa), they are the living dead. O moving corpse! O silent spectators! Do you not fear God? You must prevent and prohibit such shameless disobedience of divine laws. Even if one is a traveler, he should not eat or drink openly during Ramadan.

That Allah can change the condition and appearance of people is proved by the changes in our body as we become older.

***And whomsoever We cause to live long, We reduce* (*him*) *to an abject state in constitution; do they not then understand?* (*36:68*)**

Honoring the aged protects one from the great terror

Islam has made many recommendations in favor the old and aged people. It is obligatory for every Muslim to take care of his aged father and mother. If you give them discomfort, first of all, it is possible that you will see its result in this world.

If you are spared here, your Hereafter is certainly in danger. Besides this, every Muslim has the duty respecting aged people. Everyone whose hair has become grey while he or she was a Muslim is entitled to respect from every Muslim. If he is unable to walk properly, give him support by placing your hand under his arm.

If he needs anything it must be provided to him. Help him in every way. Among the things, which protect one from the fear of the Day of Judgment, is “Honoring the hair, which has become grey in the state of Islam”.

…do they not then understand?

How is it that one who has observed gradual changes during the lifetime, does not think of the Almighty God’s might to disfigure or remove faces? Just look at your photograph taken in youth and compare it with your face in the mirror. “Verily We are able to turn him into forms, which are worse than monkeys and swines.”

Abilities ripen in old age

Man is having two directions: Creation and Command.

…surely His is the creation and the command; blessed is Allah, the Lord of the worlds. (***7:54***)

Man has a body and a soul and the matter of decline refers to “creation” (physique or body construction). Bodily strength goes on decreasing so much so that he becomes the lowest in ability like a senseless baby. However, as for the soul, it can take man to perfection; but only if from his youth, he has strengthened, perfected and purified it.

If he has reformed himself by the age of forty and become a real human, that is, he has freed himself from love of wealth, sensuality, materialism etc. If he has become a perfect monotheist, and is not affected by anyone except Allah; he has nothing like lust, jealousy, miserliness, hypocrisy and he does not harm anyone, he is a reformed man.

A dog bites a man and not the other way round, but there are some who use their teeth like dogs, with a difference that, whereas a dog injures a body, this fellow injures the heart of a man. Thus if one reforms himself in ones youth, one improves himself in such a way that all the virtues become habits. Then these virtues improve and become perfect after forty.

Woe unto him who became undisciplined during his youth, turned towards every prohibited thing, became self-seeker, self-worshipper and comfort lover. By the age of forty, these habits become stronger.

It is narrated that if one does not improve himself by forty, the Satan kisses his forehead saying, “May I be sacrificed for the one from whom no one can hope for good.”[1]

And whomsoever We cause to live long, We reduce (***him***) ***to an abject state in constitution…***

It is said that this decline is for the body, not for the soul. “We reduce him to an abject state in constitution”. Though his body goes on weakening, his spirit becomes stronger in old age, regarding the virtues cultivated during his youth. If he had been a generous person in his youth and was also kind and forgiving, his virtues become stronger in his old age so much so that he is ready to sacrifice his life in the path of God. While seeing the angel of death, he gives up his life happily.
This life which was given to me by the friend as a trust.

When I see His face, I submit it to him readily. (Persian Couplet)

Woe to the one who hoarded wealth and did not spend out of it in the way of Allah. This miserliness and lust intensify during old age.

When a faithful virtuous man reaches the age of ninety. A voice is heard: O prisoner of God on earth, God has pardoned all of your past and future sins.

Thus in advanced age, man is humility from head to toe. That is why Muslims are ordered, “O Muslims! Respect old people. Be kind to them; honor them.”

Prime time worships recorded in the old age scroll of deeds

Look at the old and aged people. God keeps calamities away from the places where they live, because they have earned God’s mercy.2

If he had appreciated his youthfulness, all good deeds of his prime time, will be recorded for old age that has come to him or her.

It is mentioned in narrations that if one had worshipped God during youth it will be recorded in his scroll even if he is unable to worship in his age of infirmity.

O those who have not yet reached the age of forty, move your hands and feet so that you get its reward hereafter.

Imam Zainul Aabedeen (‘a) prays, “O Lord! Extend my life as long as I spend it in Your worship. But when my life turns into a grazing field for Satan, and when it begins to be spent in Your disobedience, when I turn away from the path of Your worship, give me death before Your anger falls on me and I become entitled to Your chastisement.”3

1. Layaliul Akhbar
2. Biharul Anwar, vol. 3
3. Sahifa Sajjadiyah

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