

Section 11: The Hour of Judgment Shall Arrive Suddenly

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 77

وَلِلَّهِ غَيْبُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا أَمْرُ السَّاعَةِ إِلَّا كَلَمْحِ الْبَصَرِ أَوْ هُوَ أَقْرَبُ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

77. “And to Allah belongs the Unseen of the heavens and the earth; and the matter of the Hour (of Doom) is but as a twinkling of the eye, or it is nearer still. Verily Allah is All-powerful over everything.”

The Qur'anic term /qayb/ (unseen) when facing intuition, is a relative matter. That is, something may be invisible to someone while the same thing may be present and visible to someone else.

The Arabic phrase /'amr-us-s a'ah/ (the matter of the Hour) signifies the advent of the resurrection day which is an important example of /qayb/, the 'invisible world', and which is one of the blessings of Allah when the timing of which has been kept secret from us.

As we have frequently seen, the Qur'an usually mixes the issues concerning monotheism with those relating to paganism, resurrection day, and the great court in Hereafter, here, after our discussion in passing about monotheism and polytheism, it touches upon the issue of resurrection and answering a part of the pagans' objections, who said: the dust particles of us scatter all over the places, who will be aware of their location to reassemble them, so that to be able to evaluate their record, it implies at first:

It is exclusive to Allah the unseen and the invisible world of the skies and the earth. And he knows them all.

The verse says:

“And to Allah belongs the Unseen of the heavens and the earth...”

Then, it adds:

“...and the matter of the Hour (of Doom) is but as a twinkling of the eye or it is nearer still...”

These two sentences are self-explanatory and live allusions to the infinite Divine Power (s.w.t.), especially in such areas as of resurrection and the rising from the dead of men. Thus, at the end it says:

“... Verily Allah is All-powerful over everything.”

That is, Allah can create resurrection day or everything else, as He is Omnipotent.

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 78

وَاللَّهُ أَخْرَجَكُمْ مِنْ بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ
وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

78. “And Allah has brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers (while) you knew nothing, and He appointed for you hearing and sight and hearts; that perhaps you may give thanks.”

The Holy Qur’an, once again, refers to another lesson in monotheism and theology as well as the different bounties of Allah.

In this section of the issue of blessings, it devotes its first part to the blessings of science and learning as well as the means leading to knowledge.

The Qur’an declares:

“And Allah has brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers (while) you knew nothing...”

Certainly, in such a confined environment which lacked openness, such an ignorance was tolerable.

However, in this vast universe, that sort of ignorance was impossible to be continued, therefore, from among the devices for the cognition of the world, that is, eyes, ears, and reason were placed at your disposal, so that you understand the facts of life and these great blessings and your sense of gratitude be motivated as in face of such benevolent Creator in order, perhaps, to give Him His due gratitude.

The verse says:

“...and He appointed for you hearing and sight and hearts; that perhaps you may give thanks.”

One way of expressing one's thanks for something, is its correct application, for the Qur'an criticizes those who have got eyes, yet they do not see, and they have got ears, yet they do not hear and they are not ready to hearken the truth.

The true way of expressing one's gratitude for having eyes and ears, is the acquisition of knowledge, for the verse, at first, says that you did not know; it was Allah Who gave you eyes and ears to thank; that is, to devote your life to learning.

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 79

أَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى الطَّيْرِ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ فِي جَوْ السَّمَاءِ مَا يُمَسِّكُهُنَّ إِلَّا اللَّهُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ
لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

79. “Do they not look at the birds, constrained in the middle of the sky? Naught holds them but Allah; verily there are signs in that for a people who believe.”

As was said before, the content of this Surah provides us with acquaintance about the blessings and focuses attention on their creator.

Up until now, we have noted Him mentioning such blessings as rainwater, milk, fruits, honey, the blessings of having wife and children. In this verse, and the next one, the blessings of birds, skin, wool of the four-footed animals, and the ways of utilization of mountains are being discussed.

The flight of birds, alone or in flocks, sometimes regulated and sometimes without any proper order, at times for escaping and at other times all take place for food.

Every bird flies with the right kind of wings commensurate with its weight and needs, all of which must focus the attention of the wise on Allah. Thus, Allah wants us to meditate on those creatures, and then He criticizes the ones who do not so. Birds are all, in all cases and everywhere, dominated by Him.

The verse says:

“Do they not look at the birds, constrained in the middle of the sky?...”

In modern warfare, some planes fly outside the range of anti-aircraft guns. However, birds are all within Allah's area of power wherever they go.

I was once in an airplane when the airhostess declared, we would soon land in a few minutes at airport. I

asked her why she did not mention the words, ‘Allah–willing’. She said:

“There is no need for saying ‘Allah–willing’ as the plane computer has set all such as: timing, distance and everything.”

I told her all those planes which crash in the air in the east and west of the world do have such equipments. Allah’s will does not wait for your computers. She then thought for a while. Returning, she proclaimed that we would, Allah–willing, land after a few moments. I also thanked her by offering her a gift.

We must not forget about Allah because of having access to equipments, energy and being able to utilize instinctive, experimental and scientific laws as it says:

“...Naught holds them but Allah...”

It is only Allah Who protects them from falling to the ground. It is just like swimmers who swim inside water and they are protected by water. Birds are ‘hanging’ also in the air or ‘floating’ in the air and the air, which itself is a created being by Allah, preserves them, like water which keeps man alive. In fact, it is Allah Who keeps the air underneath their body.

Briefly speaking, one must look out at the birds so that he may become aware of the fact that they have got an on–looker Who looks after them and manages everything and Who is Omnipotent. He is Who has created such beings so as to enable people to take lessons and to receive their share of rewards by obeying the truth.

The verse says:

“...verily there are signs in that for a people who believe.”

That is to say: There are abundant reasoning involved in this matter for the believers as to the unity and potentialities of Allah. Obviously, it is only the believers who benefit from such dear evidences.

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 80

وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُم مِّن بُيُوتِكُمْ سَكَنًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُم مِّن جُلُودِ الْأَنْعَامِ بُيُوتًا تَسْتَخِفُّونَهَا
يَوْمَ ظَعْنِكُمْ وَيَوْمَ إِقَامَتِكُمْ وَمِنْ أَصْوَابِهَا وَأَوْبَارِهَا وَأَشْعَارِهَا أَثَاثًا وَمَتَاعًا إِلَى
حِينٍ

80. “And Allah appointed a place of rest for you of your houses, and He appointed tents for you of the skins of the cattle, which you find light (to carry) on the day of your departure and on the

day of your dwelling; and of their wool and their fur and their hair, (He designated for you) household stuff and a provision for a time.”

The issue of the discussion about the blessings of Allah is being continued in this verse as well.

The Qur'an proclaims:

“And Allah appointed a place of rest for you of your houses...”

Truly speaking, the blessing of having somewhere as a dwelling place, is of utmost importance, without which other blessings do not find their real place.

Following His discussion of the 'stationary houses', He begins His discussion with regard to the itinerant houses, saying:

“...and He appointed tents for you of the skins of the cattle...”

They are houses which are very light in weight and you can remove them easily from place to place.

The holy verse continues saying:

“...which you find light (to carry) on the day of your departure and on the day of your dwelling...”

Moreover, in addition to these, He allocated to you for a fixed period of time, goods and utensils and various life appliances out of the wool, woven-wool and hair of the four-footed animals.

It says:

“...and of their wool and their fur and their hair, (He designated for you) household stuff and a provision for a time.”

The mentioning of two words /a aan/ and /mat a'an/ in a successive way, may be an allusion made to the fact that you are able to provide numerous means for your life out of the wool, woven wool and the hair of the four-footed animals, and utilize them.

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 81

وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُم مِّمَّا خَلَقَ ظِلَالًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُم مِّنَ الْجِبَالِ أَكْنَانًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُم سَرَابِيلَ
تَقِيكُمُ الْحَرَّ وَسَرَابِيلَ تَقِيكُمُ بَأْسَكُمْ كَذَلِكَ يُتِمُّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُسْلِمُونَ

81. “And Allah appointed shadows for you, out of what He has created, and appointed shelters for you of the mountains; and He appointed garments for you to protect you from heat (and cold),

and garments to protect you from your (other) violence. Even so does He complete His favours upon you; that haply you will surrender (to Him).”

The Arabic term /’akn an/ is the plural form of /kinn/ which refers to an object that is the means for covering something. The objective in this verse is the caves and the tunnels which run under the mountains.

In the previous verse, Allah dealt with the blessing of a dwelling place for the inhabitants of the town and the blessing of tent for the moving tribes and their removable dwelling places. In this verse, He deals with the blessings of the caves for the cave-dwelling people.

The verse says:

“And Allah appointed shadows for you, out of what He has created, and appointed shelters for you of the mountains; and He appointed garments for you to protect you from heat (and cold)...”

From among the garments the name /sar abil/ signifies ‘shirts’ which are sorts of usual clothing for women, men, children as well as adults in all cases and for all circumstances and which can cover the whole body.

Here, the Holy Qur’an mentions only the ‘protection from heat’ while garments are mostly used for protection from cold and not merely from heat. The reason is that whatever protects people from heat it will protect them from cold as well.

Moreover, in their locality the Arabs were facing more with heat than with cold. Thus, they needed something to protect them from heat. In addition, by talking about one of two things, the Arabs overlook the second for the second goes without saying.

The verse continues saying:

“...and garments to protect you from your (other) violence...”

This may refer to the meaning that He has provided you with ‘iron-garments’ ‘armours’ so as to protect you from being beaten by bullets, blades, and the hostile arrows.

Such is the way by which Allah has completed His worldly favours for you. You may perhaps know, O’ the inhabitants of Mecca, that no one else but Allah is able to perform such acts, then worship Him alone and believe in His Prophet (S).

The verse says:

“...Even so does He complete His favours upon you; that haply you will surrender (to Him).”

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 82

فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ

82. “So (O’ Prophet!) if they turn away, then on you is (incumbent) only the clear conveyance (of the message).”

To provide the blessed Prophet of Islam (S) with comfort, He implies that if they turn away and disbelieve in you, and / or do not meditate upon Our blessings, thus not take an example, you are not to be blamed, because you are not commissioned to perform any other duty than delivering the message, and you have performed this duty well.

The holy verse says:

“So (O’ Prophet!) if they turn away, then on you is (incumbent) only the clear conveyance (of the message).”

Incidentally, if a man does not possess a sound mind, the most transparent messages from the most virtuous individuals, i.e. prophets, will have no impact on him.

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 83

يَعْرِفُونَ نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُنْكِرُونَهَا وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ

83. “They recognize the blessing of Allah, then they deny it, and most of them are ungrateful.”

To complete the discussion, the Holy Qur’an asserts that they know the blessings of Allah and are familiar with their dimensions while delving into their depth. Nevertheless, they deny them.

The verse says:

“They recognize the blessing of Allah, then they deny it...”

Therefore, one must not be on the look out for the reason of this paganism in their lack of awareness. On the contrary, one must be searching this factor of paganism in their other vicious attributes which have obstructed them in their pursuit of faith, which comprise their selfishness and in their hostile attitude towards religion.

It is perhaps for this reason that He concludes the verse by saying:

“...and most of them are ungrateful.”

The Qur'an has repeatedly raised the issue of the deliberate and obstinate denial of the disbelievers.

At times it says:

“And they denied them unjustly and proudly while their souls had been convinced with them...”¹

At other times, it says:

“...they recognize him (the Prophet) as they recognize their sons...”²

At other times, He says:

“...but a group of them most surely conceal the truth while they know (it)...”³

And, Finally, He declares:

“...when there came to them that which they recognized (to be Truth), they disbelieved in it...”⁴

Imam Sadiq (as) remarks:

*Once: Ali-Ibn-Abi-Talib (as) was in the stage of bowing in his prayer rituals in the Prophet's mosque, when he offered his ring to a poor man, upon which occasion the 55th verse of Surah Al-Ma'idah was revealed indicating that your guardians are Allah, the Prophet, and he who spends out while bowing in his prayer rituals.*⁵

Some found out about their guardian yet rejected him.

Then, this verse was revealed saying:

“They recognize the blessing of Allah, then they deny it...”

Imam Sadiq (as) has said:

*“Swearing to Allah, we are the blessings which Allah has accorded His servants, and only under the auspices of us the people will be salvaged.”*⁶

1. Surah An-Naml, No. 27, verse 14

2. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 146

3. Ibid

4. Surah Al-Bqarah, No. 2, verse 89

5. Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, p. 72

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