Al-Islam.org
Ahlul Bayt Digital Islamic Library Project
Published on *Al-Islam.org* (https://www.al-islam.org)

Section 15: Every Soul Shall Be Paid in Full What It Has Earned

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 111

يَوْمَ تَأْتِي كُلُّ نَفْسٍ تُجَادِلُ عَن نَّفْسِهَا وَتُوَفَّي كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ وُهُمْ لاَ يُظْلَمُونَ

111. "The day (that) everyone will come disputing in his own behalf; and everyone will be rewarded in full (for) what he has done, and they will not be dealt with unjustly."

The resurrection scene is so dangerous that the culprit and the sinful utter something at every moment. Sometimes, he says:

"*Swearing to Allah, we were not pagans.*"

At other times, he says:

"*It was they who misled us.*"

Sometimes he says:

"*If you were not there, we would be believers.*"

Ultimately, this noble verse expresses as a general warning, implying: Remember the day when every one is thinking only about himself and stands up only to defend himself so that he can relieve himself from the painful punishment.

The verse says:

"The day (that) everyone will come disputing in his own behalf..."

However, this struggle of theirs is entirely useless as the consequences of every body's action will be made available to him and they will not be oppressed.

The verse says:

"...and everyone will be rewarded in full (for) what he has done, and they will not be dealt with unjustly."

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 112

وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلاً قَرْيَةً كَانَتْ ءَامِنَةً مُّطْمَئِنَّةً يَأْتِيهَا رِزْقُهَا رَغَداً مِن كُلِّ مَكَانٍ
فَكَفَرَتْ بِأَنْعُمِ اللَّهِ فَأَذَاقَهَا اللَّهُ لِبَاسَ الْجُوعِ وَالْخَوْفِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ

112. "And Allah sets forth a parable: a township that was secure, at rest, its sustenance coming to it in abundance from every side; then it was ungrateful for the favours of Allah. So Allah made it taste the garment of hunger and of fear because of what they used to do."

Those who became ungrateful and were entangled. We have repeatedly said that this noble Surah is the 'Surah of blessings', whether spiritual and material. We note the consequences of ungratefulness of the Divine blessings in the form of an objective allegory in this verse.

At first, the Qur'an implies that Allah sets forth a parable for those who are ungrateful; a developed area which enjoyed utmost safety and security. It was such that its inhabitants were confident in their life and were never compelled to go on an exodus or emigrate.

In addition to its blessings concerning safety and security, its means of sustenance were also coming to it from all places in abundance. However, the inhabitants of that village ultimately became ungrateful for the blessings, and Allah inflicted hunger and fear upon them so as to punish them for their deeds.

The verse says:

"And Allah sets forth a parable: a township that was secure, at rest, its sustenance coming to it in abundance from every side; then it was ungrateful for the favours of Allah. So Allah made it taste the garment of hunger and of fear because of what they used to do."

Indeed, as the safety and security as well as welfare had covered them from the onset, in the end those blessings were replaced by poverty and insecurity.

Point to Remember

Allusions made here to the term ‘garment’ in the cases of ‘hunger’ and ‘fear’ probably reflects the fact that the two serve as clothing, covering them all over, as is the case with the term ‘tasting’ which refers to the pangs of hunger and fear felt deeply within their selves.

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 113

وَلَقَدْ جَآءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مِنْهُمْ فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَاَخَذَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَهُمْ ظَالِمُونَ

113. “And certainly there came to them a messenger from amongst them, but they rejected him; so the punishment overtook them while they were unjust.”

This blissful verse, following the previous one, suggests that: The ungrateful people not only showed ingratitude due to the material blessings but they also rejected and denounced the most important spiritual blessing which was ever conferred upon them by Allah, that is, the Divine prophets as well, the consequence of which was the Divine punishment that covered them all over in the midst of their oppression.

The verse, pointing to this meaning, says:

“And certainly there came to them a messenger from amongst them, but they rejected him; so the punishment overtook them while they were unjust.”

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 114

فَكُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ حَلاَلاً طَيِّباً وَاشْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ إِن كُنتُم إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ

114. “Therefore, eat out of what Allah has provided for you, lawful and good, and give you thanks for Allah’s bounty if (only) Him do you worship.”

Islam only allows one to eat what is both ‘clean’ and ‘allowed by the religion’. Those things such as wine and pork are forbidden in Islam, for they are inherently nasty and unclean, as well as those eating stuffs which are bought with usurped money even if they are ‘clean’ by themselves.

They are bought in exchange for the money which does not belong to the person himself, thus they are unlawful and forbidden.

Now that being ingratitude towards the divine favours and their rejection of the prophets will lead to the Divine outrage and punishment, therefore, instead of ungratefulness and infidelity, we should always necessarily benefit from the allowed favors and consume them in the 'allowed way', remaining thankful to Him if we truly worship Him.

The noble verse says:

"Therefore, eat out of what Allah has provided for you, lawful and good, and give you thanks for Allah's bounty if (only) Him do you worship."

This verse, as well as the previous one, probably refers to a group of the Children of Israel who used to live in a developed region and were caught in the entanglement of famine and insecurity because of their ingratitude for the blessings.

The proof for this claim is provided by a 'tradition' which has been quoted from Imam Sadiq (as) who declared:

"A group of the Children of Israel used to enjoy such an affluent life that they used to build small statues out of the food-stuffs and, at times, they used to clean their bodies with them.

Consequently, they were led to the point where they were compelled to eat out of those spoiled unclean food-stuffs, which is the case that Allah referred to in the Qur'an, saying:

"And Allah sets forth a parable: a township that was secure, at rest...""[1]

This parable serves as a warning to all those individuals and nations which are encompassed fully by the Divine blessings so that they may abstain from any kinds of wasteful prodigality, extravagance, and spoiling of the blessings which would lead to certain heavy compensation from their part.

This example also serves as a warning to those who throw away half of their additional meal to the dustbins, while at the same time, it serves as a warning to those who hoard the food-stuffs in their houses storage area for their personal consumption and for selling them at a dearer price whereas, they become spoiled and become out of use.

Nevertheless, despite knowing this, they are not ready to make them available to others at a cheaper rate.

Certainly, all of such acts are punishable by the Divine Will, the least punishment of which is withholding of such blessings by Allah.

And a comprehensive religion has also got comprehensive and all-encompassing rules and regulations. It has got a set of rules for both the 'apparent cleanliness' of things which are pre-requisites for their consumption, as well as their inherent and 'legal cleanliness'.

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 115

إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ الْخِنزِيرِ وَمَآ أُهِلَّ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلاَ عَادٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌرَحِيمٌ

115. "Verily He has forbidden for you only carrion, blood, swine flesh, and whatever has other (name), than Allah's, been invoked upon it. But whoever is forced (to eat them by necessity), not desiring, nor (willfully) transgressing (the limit), then Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

As the previous holy verses dealt with the good Divine blessings and the gratitude which is due and outstanding for them, this verse refers to the truly forbidden cases of blessings and the untrue forbidden ones which had been brought about in the religion of Allah through innovation owning to certain heretical views, all of which is done to complement the circle.

Firstly, the Qur'an says:

"Verily He has forbidden for you only carrion, blood, swine flesh, and whatever has other (name), than Allah's, been invoked upon it..."

However, the infection generated by the first three cases nowadays is not unknown to the public today. The corpses of animals are the sources of all kinds of microbes, and one's blood is more prone to the activities of the microbes than other parts of the body, while pork is a factor in itself for several dangerous diseases.

As for those animals which are slaughtered in the names of other than 'Allah', their philosophy for being forbidden does not concern sanitary reasons, but there are ethical and spiritual considerations involved, for, on the one hand, they constitute a campaign against paganism and the worshipping of the idols and, on the other hand, they form the basis for focusing one's attention to the Almighty, the Creator of such blessings.

Incidentally, summing up the content of this verse and the following verses, we can infer this point that Islam opts for moderation with regard to the consumption of meat.

It neither rejects this source of nutrition altogether as in the case of vegetarians; nor does it commend it outright in the case of the people of the Age of Ignorance or in the case of some of our so-called civilized contemporaries who approve of all kinds of meat (including even the meat of crocodiles and crabs as well as worms).

In conclusion, as is the case with the Qur'anic method in many aspects, it explains the exceptional

circumstances, saying that but those who are obliged (that is, they are required to eat certain forbidden meat to stay alive while in danger in a desert) if they do not exceed the limits in eating, Allah will forgive them for He is Compassionate and Merciful.

The verse says:

"...But whoever is forced (to eat them by necessity), not desiring, nor (willfully) transgressing (the limit), then Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Explanations

The contents of this noble verse are also repeated in Suras of Al-'An'am and An-Nahl, which are Meccan, and in Suras of Al-Baqarah and Al-Ma'idah which are Medinan.

The Arabic term /'ihlal/, derived from /hil al/ means raising one's voice when seeing the crescent of the moon. As the pagans, when slaughtering animals, used to invoke the name of the idols with a loud voice, this action of theirs has been termed /'ihlal/.

Certain foodstuffs have been banned in this verse, but they are not confined to these only. On the contrary, there are certain other cases named by the blissful Prophet (S) which we must take into consideration according to the recommendation of the Qur'an itself.

Banning certain things are only in His Own authority and no one is entitled to ban or to make lawful (halal) anything by himself or on the basis of superstitions and hallucinations.

The rationale for banning certain foodstuffs is not based solely on the sanitation and material issues; but, distancing oneself from the spiritual vices, like paganism, is also another criterion.

Surah An-Nahl – Verses 116 - 117

وَلاَ تَقُولُوا لِمَا تَصِفُ أَلْسِنَتُكُمُ الْكَذِبَ هَذَا حَلاَلٌ وَهَذَا حَرَامٌ لِّتَفْتَرُوا عَلَي اللَّهِ
الْكَذِبَ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَي اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ لاَ يُفْلِحُونَ

مَتَاعٌ قَلِيلٌ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

116. "And do not utter whatever lie your tongues describe (saying): 'This is lawful and this is forbidden' in order to forge falsehood against Allah. Verily those who forge falsehood against Allah will not prosper."

117. "A brief enjoyment* (*will be theirs*) *while for them is a painful punishment* (*in Hereafter*)*."

These two noble verses condemn whatever analysis or bans which are not based on the Divine law, considering it to be attributing false words to Allah in order to arrive at the insignificant petty worldly goods.

Therefore, this verse describes explicitly the issue which the pagans had raised with regard to their baseless bans which were already implicitly discussed, saying: Stop saying such a thing is allowed and the other one is forbidden by religion, charging Allah with false accusations.

The verse says:

"And do not utter whatever lie your tongues describe* (*saying*)*: 'This is lawful and this is forbidden' in order to forge falsehood against Allah..."

That is, this is a clear lie which has only been uttered by your mouth. You falsely ban certain things and forbid certain other things by yourselves. Allusion is here being made to the four-footed animals some of which were marked as allowed while others were considered as forbidden by them, and others were allocated to the idols.

Has Allah entitled you to legislate in such a way? Or else, your superstitious beliefs and blind obedience have led you to hold such innovations?

To issue a serious warning, the Qur'an declares at the end of the verse:

"...Verily those who forge falsehood against Allah will not prosper."

In principle, lying and false accusations and allegations are the sources of misfortune and of not being salvaged, no matter who is concerned, lest the one in question should be Allah, the Almighty.

Thus, in the second holy verse, He explains the reasons for the lack of salvation as: It is a meagre advantage which is allocated to them in this world, while they must be prepared for a painful punishment which is awaiting them.

The verse says:

"A brief enjoyment* (*will be theirs*) *while for them is a painful punishment* (*in Hereafter*)*."

As for the meagre advantage referred to might be an allusion to the dead animals in the wombs which they regarded as 'allowed' (Halal) and the meat of which was used by them.

At any rate, to exceed the limits of what is 'allowed' or 'forbidden' will be followed by both the wretchedness of this world and the painful punishment of the Hereafter.

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 118

وَعَلي الَّذِينَ هَادُوا حَرَّمْنَا مَا قَصَصْنَا عَلَيْكَ مِن قَبْلُ وَمَا ظَلَمْنَاهُمْ وَلَكِن كَانُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ

118. "And for those who were Jews, We prohibited what We have already related to you. And We did them no injustice, but they were unjust to themselves.

A question may be raised in here as to why, besides the above-mentioned four things, other forbidden things from animals were also prohibited for the Jewish nation?

This verse, dealing apparently with this issue, proclaims:

"And for those who were Jews, We prohibited what We have already related to you..."

Here is allusion made to verse 146 of Surah Al-An'am which implies that Allah prohibited every nailed animal for the Jews (allusion is here made to those animals like horses which possess single all-spreading bars in their palm of their feet such as horse), and Allah prohibited them from eating the fat of cows and sheep except all the fat which they carry on their back, or that which is found in-between their stomach intestines, their lateral sides or is mixed with their bones.

Allah did that for the punishment of their cruel behavior and He is true.2

In fact, such prohibitions, which are additional, are for the sake of punishing the Jews in exchange for their cruelties.

Thus, He adds at the end of the verse saying:

"...And We did them no injustice, but they were unjust to themselves.

There are two sorts of prohibitions in Islam: One is permanent and is for all people; the other one is temporary prohibitions which are concerned with a selected group, like the group from among the Jewish nation which were banned from using certain things for their role in committing oppression.

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 119

ثُمَّ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لِلَّذِينَ عَمِلُوا السُّوءَ بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ تَابُوا مِن بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَأَصْلَحُوا إِنَّ رَبَّكَ مِن بَعْدِهَا لَغَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

119. "Yet verily your Lord, unto those who do an evil act in ignorance and afterward they repent and amend, your Lord after that will definitely be Forgiving, Merciful."

Islam experiences no deadlocks and there is always room for reconstruction for man and the way is left open. The acceptance of repentance is a matter of Divinity and is among the methods of education.

Certainly, true repentance is achieved when it is coupled with reformation and making up for the wrongdoings. Those sins which come about as a result of the domination of passions, and are not caused by rejection and out of enmity, are more within the acceptance range. Incidentally, Allah is more compassionate towards the repentant after and on top of accepting one's repentance.

The verse says:

"Yet verily your Lord, unto those who do an evil act in ignorance and afterward they repent and amend, your Lord after that will definitely be Forgiving, Merciful."

To conclude, one must confirm that 'ignorance' signifies not knowing; nonetheless it is also applied to the cases in which man usually knows the right kind of behavior, but is overwhelmed by his passion. In verse 54 of Surah Al-'An'am, and verse 17 from the Surah An-Nisa', ignorance is applied in this sense as well.

---

1. The current Surah, verse 112
2. This verse (146) in the Qur'an says:

"And those who were Jews We forbade every (animal) having claws, and of oxen and sheep unto them the fat of both, save what is upon their backs or the entrails or what is mixed with bones. This (prohibition) We recompensed them for their rebellion, and verily we are truthful."

Source URL:
https://www.al-islam.org/enlightening-commentary-light-holy-quran-vol-8/section-15-every-soul-shall-be-paid-full-what-it-has