

Section 3: Believers Shall Be Rewarded

Surah Al-Hajj – Verse 23

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدْخِلُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
يُحَلَّلُونَ فِيهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَلُؤْلُؤًا وَلِبَاسُهُمْ فِيهَا حَرِيرٌ

23. “Verily, Allah will admit those who believe and do righteous deeds into gardens beneath which rivers flow, they shall be adorned therein with bracelets of gold and (with) pearls, and their garments therein shall be of silk.”

In these holy verses, by the usage of the style comparison, the Qur'an states the status of the righteous believers in order that the circumstances of both of them might be distinguished through the way of comparison. So, the Qur'an explains five sorts of reward for them here.

At first, it says:

“Verily, Allah will admit those who believe and do righteous deeds into gardens beneath which rivers flow...”

The first group, i.e., the disbelievers, are qualified as being sent down into the burning Fire, while this group, the righteous believers, are said to be inside the gardens of Heaven, resting beside the flowing rivers.

Then, the Qur'an refers to their adornments and garments when it says:

“...they shall be adorned therein with bracelets of gold and (with) pearls, and their garments therein shall be of silk.”¹

Those two merits are their rewards in addition to others.

Thus, they will wear the most beautiful clothing which they were deprived of in the world, and they will also have bracelets of gold, decorated with jewelry.

If they were forbidden to use such garments and ornaments in this world, it was for the reason that they would be the origin of pride and negligence and caused the deprivation of another group. But in Heaven, where there is nothing of this kind, these prohibitions are also absent and those deprivations are compensated.

Surah Al-Hajj – Verse 24

وَهُدُّوا إِلَى الطَّيِّبِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ وَهُدُّوا إِلَى صِرَاطِ الْحَمِيدِ

24. “And they are guided unto the purest of speeches, and they are guided to the Path (of Him who is) Worthy of (all) Praise.”

The fourth and fifth merits which Allah bestows on them, the righteous believers, and which are merely in spiritual aspect, are that, firstly, they are guided toward the speech which is pure.

The verse says:

“And they are guided unto the purest of speeches...”

These are some enlivening speeches with some pleasant words and sentences; such words which are spiritual and full of serenity, bring the soul high up in the stages of perfection, and smooth the spirit and mind of man.

It also continues saying:

“...and they are guided to the Path (of Him who is) Worthy of (all) Praise.”²

This is the path of knowing Allah (s.w.t.) and spiritually approaching Him, His nearness, which is the path of love and theosophy.

Yes, by guiding the true believers unto these spiritual meanings, Allah leads them to the utmost stage of spiritual pleasures.

The tradition, which has been cited by Ali-ibn-’Ibrahim, the great Islamic commentator in his commentary, denotes that the purpose of the phrase: ‘the purest of speech’ is monotheism and sincerity; and the objective of the Qur’anic phrase: /sirat il hamid/ (the path (of Him Who is) Worthy of (all) Praise)

is 'Wilayah' (mastership) and the acceptance of leadership and divine leaders. (This meaning, of course is one of the clear examples of the verse.)

However, the different interpretations expressed upon the abovementioned holy verses, as well as their occasions of revelation, lead us to the recognition that those heavy and grievous punishments are consequently for a particular group of disbelievers, those who hostilely dispute against Allah and try to mislead others.

Such persons are the leaders of infidelity, the example of them are those who fought against Ali (as), Hamzat-ibn-'Abd-ul-Mutalib, and 'Ubaydat-ibn-Harith.

Surah Al-Hajj – Verse 25

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَيَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ الَّذِي جَعَلْنَاهُ لِلنَّاسِ
سَوَاءً الْعَاكِفُ فِيهِ وَالْبَادِ وَمَنْ يُرِدْ فِيهِ بِالْحَادِ بِظُلْمٍ نُذِقْهُ مِنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

25. “Verily those who disbelieved, and hinder (the believers) from the way of Allah and the Sacred Mosque which We have made equally for all men, (for) the dweller therein and (for) the visitor from the country, and whoever does intend to wrong therein unjustly, We will make him taste of a grievous chastisement.”

In previous verse, the disbelievers were spoken about ‘generally’, which in the verse under discussion a particular group of them are referred to, those who have committed violate offences and faults concerning the Sacred Mosque (Masjid-ul-Haram) and the splendid rites of Hajj.

At first, it says:

“Verily those who disbelieved, and hinder (the believers) from the way of Allah...”

They also hinder the believing people from the Great Center of Monotheism, i.e. Masjid-ul-Haram (The Sacred Mosque). It is the same center that Allah appointed for all believers equally, irrespective of those who live in that land or those who come from a far distance unto it.

The verse continues saying:

“...and the Sacred Mosque which We have made equally for all men, (for) the dweller therein and (for) the visitor from the country...”

Such people, who hinder them are deserving of a painful chastisement, because the Sacred Mosque is an international place which, like skies and oceans, is not allocated as a right specially to a person, a

country and a government.

Therefore, the verse implies that whoever intends to deviate from the path of the truth and commits injustice and oppression, Allah will taste him of a painful punishment.

The verse says:

“...and whoever does intend to wrong therein unjustly, We will make him taste of a grievous chastisement.”

In fact, these disbelievers, besides rejecting the Truth, have committed three great crimes:

1. Hindering people from the path of Allah, Faith, and obeying Him.
2. Hindering from the path of Allah and appointing a privilege for themselves.
3. In this Holy land, they commit injustice, sin, and heresy.

So, Allah will punish this group who deserve painful chastisement in the Hereafter.

By the way, Imam Sadiq (as) concerning this verse, said:

*“Whoever worships other than Allah in the Sacred Mosque, or takes other than the saints of Allah as the administrator of this sacred site, then he has been involved in injustice and heresy.”*³

Some Points

1. In this verse, the disbelief of this group has been stated in ‘past tense’, but ‘hindering (people) from the way of Allah’ has been said in ‘simple present tense’. This refers to the fact that their disbelief is ancient while their effort and endeavor for misleading people is habitual and continues.

In other words, the first phrase refers to their false belief, which is a fixed matter, and the second phrase refers to their action which is the repetition of:

“hinder (the believers) from the way of Allah.”

2. The purpose of:

“hinder (the believers) from the way of Allah.”

is any effort and endeavor that is done in order to hinder people from believing in the Truth and doing righteous deeds, as well as all the propaganda and activities which are performed for destroying their right beliefs and preventing them from the straight and pure ways, all of them are gathered in this vast concept.

3. All people are equal in this center of worship. The commentators have stated different ideas upon the Qur'anic phrase: /sawa'-ul-'akifu fihi wal bad/

(... (for) the dweller therein and (for) the visitor from the country,...).

Some of them have said that the purpose is that all people are equal in the ceremonies of worship in this center of Monotheism, and nobody is allowed to bother another one in the subject of Hajj and worshipping beside the Sacred Mosque.

But some other commentators have considered a vaster scope of meaning for this holy phrase. They have said that people are equal not only in the rites of worship but also in using the lands and houses around Mecca for their rest and other needs. That is why some of the jurists have banned buying and selling the houses of Mecca according to the above verse as a reference.

Some Islamic narrations have emphasized that the pilgrims of the Holy Mosque should not be hindered to rest in the houses of Mecca.

Ali (as) in a letter to Qathm-ibn-'Abbas wrote:

"...Ask the people of Mecca not to charge rent from lodgers, because Allah, the Glorified, says:

'... alike; (for) the dweller therein and (for) the visitor from the country,...'.

'The dweller' means he who is living there while lal-badil means he who is not among the people of Mecca and comes for Hajj from outside."⁴

In another holy tradition Imam Sadiq (as), upon the commentary of this very verse said:

*"(At the beginning) the houses of Mecca had not any gate. Mu'awiyah was the first one who set a door for his house. And no one is suitable to hinder the pilgrims from dwelling in the houses of Mecca."*⁵

Some Islamic narrations also indicate that the visitors of the Sacred Mosque can use the yards of the houses there until the end of the sacred rites of the pilgrimage. This ordinance, of course, considerably relates to the later discussion, saying that the purpose of 'Sacred Mosque', mentioned in this verse, is not limited to that mosque, or it envelops the whole region of Mecca.

If we accept the first speech, it does not encompass the houses of Mecca, but when we consider the whole territory of Mecca inside the content of the verse, the banning of buying and selling or renting the houses of Mecca for the pilgrims is propounded.

And since this matter is not so certain from the point of the sources of jurisprudence and Islamic narrations, to pass a judicial decree is difficult for this banning. But there is doubt that it is fit for the people of Mecca to prepare all facilities for the visitors of the Sacred Mosque and do not consider any priority or privilege for themselves with respect to them, even in relation to the houses.

The narrations cited in Nahj-ul-Balaqah and the like apparently all point to this very thing, too.

However, the decree of the abovementioned banning has not so many supporters among the jurists of Shi'ah and Sunni.⁶

This meaning is also certain that no one has right to cause the least trouble for the pilgrims under the title of custodian of Ka'bah or other names; or that he would make it as particular center for his own propaganda and programs.

4. What does Sacred Mosque mean here? Some commentators have said that the objective is its apparent meaning, i.e. the House of Ka'bah and the whole Sacred Mosque, while some others consider it as a hint to the 'whole Mecca'.

This group take the first verse of Surah 'Isra', which is about the ascension of the Prophet (S), as an evidence upon it, because this holy verse declares that the beginning of that ascension was from the Sacred Mosque, while history says it began from Khadijah's home, or from Shi'b-i-Abi Talib, or from 'Ummi Hani's house. It shows that the objective of Sacred Mosque is the whole Mecca.⁷

But, in view of the fact that the beginning of the ascension of the Prophet (S) from outside of the Sacred Mosque is not certain, and it is probable that it started from the Mosque itself, we have not any proof to change the meaning of the verse under discussion from its apparent, therefore, the subject matter in this verse is the Sacred Mosque itself.

Through the abovementioned Islamic narrations we are acknowledged that for the equality of people in the houses of Mecca this verse had been taken as the evidence. This is for the reason that the said ordinance is apparently a preferential ordinance, and in a preferential ordinance the extension of the matter in respect of suitability is permissible.

5. What does "Ilhadin bi zulm" mean? The Arabic word /ilhad/ philologically means: "to exceed the moderate limits." The word /lahad/ (a niche in the side of tomb) is called such because it is a whole located in the side of the grave and outside of its middle.

Therefore, the objective of the abovementioned phrase is those persons who exceed the limits by applying cruelty and injustice in order to commit wrong in that land.

But, some commentators have rendered the Qur'anic word /zulm/, here, only into the sense of 'disbelief' and some others into making lawful the unlawful things; while some other commentators have considered it with the vast meaning of the world, viz. they believe that its concept encompasses any sin, committing forbidden acts, and even using abuse and bad words against the inferiors.

So, they say that committing any sin in that Sacred land deserves a more intensive punishment.

A tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) indicates that once one of his students asked him about the

commentary of this verse, and he (as) said:

“Any oppression that a person does against himself in the land of Mecca, irrespective of theft, injustice unto others, and any kind of oppression, is inside of this verse and I see it l’ilhadl, (the sins referred to in this verse).”

And, therefore, the Imam forbade people to choose Mecca as a place of living, (because the responsibility of committing sin in this land is heavier).⁸

There have also been cited other narrations with the same meaning which adopt the apparent of the verse.

That is why some jurisprudents, reasoning to the Qur’anic phrase:

“We will make him taste of grievous chastisement ”,

have said if a person commits a sin in the Haram of Mecca which deserves a fixed penalty in Islam, he should also probably bear an arbitrary punishment besides that fixed penalty.⁹

What was said makes this fact manifest that those who have interpreted the above verse exclusively in the sense of prohibition of ‘hoarding’ or entering into the sacred territory without the pilgrim’s garb have meant to state a clear example of it, else there is no reason available to limit the concept of the verse thereby.

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1. The Arabic word /’asawir/ is the plural form of /’asvirah/ which in turn is the plural of /siwar/ in the sense of ‘bracelet’ and originally it has been a Persian word.
 2. The Qur’anic term /hamid/ in the sense of /mahmud/ is used for a person who is worthy of praise, which here refers to Allah. Therefore the Qur’anic phrase /siratil hamid/ means the path unto the rank of nearness and pleasure of Allah.
 3. Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn; and Kafi, vol. 1, P. 337
 4. Nahjul-Balaqah, letter 67
 5. Tafsir-us-Safi, and Tafsir-ul-Burhan, following the verse.
 6. For further explanation see Jawahir-ul-Kalam, vol. 20, P. 48 on
 7. Kanz-ul-’Irfan, vol. 1, P. 335
 8. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, P. 482
 9. Kanz-ul-’Irfan, vol. 1, P. 335
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