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

Section 3: Every Soul Shall Taste Death

Surah Al-'Anbiya' – Verse 30

أَوَ لَمْ يَرَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالاَرْضَ كَانَتَا رَتْقاً فَفَتَقْنَاهُمَا وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَآءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ أَفَلاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ

30. "Do not those who disbelieve see that the heavens and the earth were joined together before We clove them asunder, and We made from water every living thing? Will they not then believe?"

Here, there have been stated a few signs of Allah in the system of the world of existence and its regular order, which is an emphasis on the previous discussions regarding the reasons of Monotheism.

At first it says:

"Do not those who disbelieve see that the heavens and the earth were joined together before We clove them asunder, and We made from water every living thing?..."

Then, the Qur'an questions that, after having seemed these clear signs, do they not believe yet?

The holy verse continues saying:

"...Will they not then believe?"

There are some different ideas offered by the commentators about the purpose of the words /ratq/ (joining) and /fatq/ (separation) mentioned in the above verse, which concern the heavens and the earth. Among them, three interpretations seem more appropriate, and, as it will be explained, all of them may be found in the concept of the verse.1

1. Attaching the heaven to the earth refers to the beginning of the creation.

According to the attitudes of some scientists, this world had been in the form of a single great unit of blazing vapor that, as a result of some different inward explosions and movements, it gradually divided into parts and the stars and planets, including the solar system and the earth, came to being, and still the world is expanding.

2. The purpose of this attachment is the monotony of the substances of the world so that all of them were gathered in one another and formed apparently a single matter. But, as the time passed, the substances separated from each other, and some new compounds appeared.

Thus many kinds of plants, animals, and other creatures existed in the heaven and the earth. These beings are in a condition that each of them has a special system and some effects and properties particular to itself. Every one of them is a sign for the infinite Knowledge, Glory and Might of Allah.2

3. The objective of the attachment of the heaven is that at first it did not rain, and the attachment of the earth is that at that time there grew no plant at all over it, but Allah started both of them. He caused to rain from heaven and He caused plants to grow on the earth.

There are numerous traditions narrated from the Ahl-ul-Bayt (as) which refer to the latter meaning while some of them point to the first commentary.3

No doubt that the latter commentary is something which is visible by the eyes that how it rains and that the lands cleave asunder and plants grow. This is completely adapted with the sentence saying:

"Do not those who disbelieve see",

and it also harmonizes with the sentence declaring:

"...and We made from water every living thing".

But the first and the second above commentaries do not contradict the vast meaning of these sentences, because the word 'see' sometimes is in the sense of 'knowledge'. True is that this knowledge and cognizance is not available for all.

It is only the scientists who can give others some information about the past of the earth and the heaven and their attachment and, then, their separation, which may lead human beings throughout the whole centuries of the life.

It is for this reason that it has such a deep comprehensive content that can be applied by all groups of people in all times. And that is why we think there is no obstacle that this verse can embrace the whole three commentaries, each of which is correct and perfect in its own place.

We have frequently reiterated that the usage of one word, with more than one meaning, not only is not wrong but sometimes is also the reason for a high eloquence. So, some Islamic traditions indicate that

the Qur'an has different layers of meaning. This may refer to this concept, too.

Concerning the Qur'anic meaningful idea, cited at the end of the abovementioned holy verse, indicating that all living things have been created from water, here we introduce two known commentaries:

1. The life of all living things, irrespective of plants and animals, depends on water; this very water that originates the descent of rain from the heaven.

Another matter is that the Arabic word /ma'/, mentioned here, refers to the drop of seed from which the living creatures are usually produced.

It is interesting that the scientists of today believe that the first gemma of life has been found in the depth of the seas, and that is why they think that the life has begun by means of water. And when we see that the Qur'an considers the creation of man out of /tin/ (mud), it is because this substance is a mixture of water and dust.

This subject is also noteworthy that the main part of man's body, as well as that of many animals, mostly consists of water, (about seventy percent).

Some have objected that the creation of the angels and jinn both is certainly not from water, though they are some living creatures. The answer of it is clear, because the purpose in this context is those living creatures which are tangible for us.

An Islamic tradition indicates that once a person asked Imam Sadiq (as) about the taste of water.

The Imam (as) at first said:

"Ask with the aim that you learn something, not with the purpose of seeking pretext."

Then he (as) added:

*"The taste of water is the taste of life. Allah, Be He Glorified, has said: 'And We made from water every living thing'."*4

In the summer, in particular, when a person, tolerating continued thirst, reaches some wholesome water in that hot weather, after drinking the first gulps of it, he feels that a spirit of life is blown into his body. The Imam, in fact intends to clarify the relation and dependence of life and water by this beautiful expression.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' – Verse 31

وَجَعَلْنَا فِي الاَرْضِ رَوَاسِيَ أَن تَمِيدَ بِهِمْ وَجَعَلْنَا فِيهَا فِجَاجاً سُبُلاً لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ

31. "And We set in the earth firm mountains lest it should shake with them (people), and We set therein broad high ways that they may be guided."

This holy verse has pointed to another part of the signs of Monotheism as well as the great bounties of Allah.

It says:

"And We set in the earth firm mountains lest it should shake with them (people)..."

As a shield, mountains have embraced the earth, and this causes that they prevent the intensive shakes of the earth on a large scale which appear as a result of the pressure of the inner gases of it.

Moreover, this very arrangement of the mountains usually decreases the movements of the crust of the earth against the low tides and high tides of the moon to the least.

On the other hand, if there were not any mountains, the surface of the earth would not have any peace because of the hurricanes, as it is seen in the dry hot deserts as well as salt deserts. Mountains are good places for preserving snow to store water in them for the summer.

They are often good and appropriate environments for the growth of plants and animals. The kinds of stone, which are used in buildings, are taken from mountains, and there are cited some other advantages counted among the benefits of the mountains.

Then the Qur'an points to another bounty, which is also one of the signs of the greatness of Allah, when it says:

"...and We set therein broad high ways that they may be guided."

Verily if these valleys and gaps were not, the great series of mountains existing on the crust of the earth, would so separate the different regions of the land that the joint of them was utterly broken, and this shows that all these phenomena have been arranged according to a proper program.

Explanations

1. The Arabic word /rawasi/ is the plural form of /rasiyah/ which means: 'fixed' and its objective in this holy verse is the 'steadfast mountains'. The term /fijaj/ is also called to the wide roads between two mountains, while the narrow roads between mountains, in Arabic, are often named: /šu'ab/.5

2. How can it be believed that Allah, the Wise, has set the mountains in order to prevent from numerous earthquakes, but He has not assigned the patient and powerful leaders to prevent mankind from slipping in events.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' – Verse 32

وَجَعَلْنَا السَّمَآءَ سَقْفاً مَّحْفُوظاً وَهُمْ عَنْ ءَايَاتِهَا مُعْرِضُونَ

32. "And We set up the heaven as a roof well-protected, and yet they turn away from its signs."

In view of the fact that the mere stillness of the earth is not enough for the comfort of human's life and he must also be secured from the upward, in this verse the Qur'an adds:

"And We set up the heaven as a roof well-protected, and yet they turn away from its signs."

The objective of 'the heaven' here is the atmosphere which has encompassed the earth from every side. According to the researches of the concerning scientists, the depth of this atmosphere reaches to hundreds kilometers.

This depth of weather, which apparently is tender, is composed of oxygen and different gases, is so firm and strong that no disturbing thing that comes toward it can destroy it. It protects the earth against aerolites which continuously fall down, day and night, and are more dangerous than any bullet.

Moreover, the harmful parts of the sunrays are taken by it. Thus, it guards the earth against the fatal outside rays that comes towards it from cosmos.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' – Verse 33

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ

33. "And He it is Who created the night and the day and the sun and the moon. They float, each in an orbit."

how do you say soul mate in farsi? This verse has referred to the creation of the night and the day as well as the creation of the sun and moon.

It says:

"And He it is Who created the night and the day and the sun and the moon. They float, each in an orbit."

The commentators of the Qur'an have different opinions upon the interpretation of the sentence:

"They float, each in an orbit".

But what agrees with the conclusive researches of scholars is the fact that: the purpose of the motion of the sun, in the abovementioned verse, is either a circular motion rotating around itself, or the motion it has in the whole solar system.

It is also necessary to be mentioned that the Arabic word /kull/ (each), mentioned in the verse, may refer to the moon, the sun, and also the stars all together. This meaning is understood from the word /layl/ (the night) recited in this holy verse.

Some great commentators have also said that mentioning 'the night', 'the day', 'the sun', and 'the moon' in the verse may refer to the four seasons. For, the night, which is in fact the conical shadow of the earth, has also an orbit for itself.

If a person from outside of the atmosphere looks from a distance at it, he will see that this conical dark shadow is constantly running around the earth. He will also see that the light of the sun, which shines upon the earth and produces the day, is like a cylinder that ceaselessly rotates around this glob. Therefore, the day and the night each has a line and place for itself.

Some others have said that the objective of the motion of the sun, here, is the motion created by our feeling, for, to the consideration of the observers of the earth, it seems that the sun and the moon both are moving.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' – Verses 34 - 35

وَمَا جَعَلْنَا لِبَشَرٍ مِن قَبْلِكَ الْخُلْدَ أَفَإِيْن مّـِتَّ فَهُمُ الْخَالِدُونَ

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَآئِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ وَنَبْلُوكُم بِالشَّرِّ وَالْخَيْرِ فِتْنَةً وإِلَيْنَا تُرْجَعُونَ

34. "And We appointed immortality for no man before you. Then if you die, can they be immortal?"
35. "Every soul shall taste of death; and We try you with evil and good for a testing, and unto Us you shall be returned."

Through a part of the previous verses, we were acquainted with the fact that some polytheists objected about the Prophet (S) as why he was a human being. This verse refers to some other objections that they had. Sometimes they said that the fame that the Prophet (S), or as they called him 'that poet,' had

got was not lasting and everything would be vanished by his death.[6]

Sometimes they thought such that since this man believes that he is the seal of the prophets, he should not die in order to protect his religion, and, therefore, his death in future will be the reason for the falseness of his claim.

The Qur'an answers them for their false imagination in a short sentence. It says:

"And We appointed immortality for no man before you....."

This is the invariable law of creation that no one has an eternal life. Besides that, do these people, who are happy for your death just now, live immortally after your death?

The verse says:

"...Then if you die, can they be immortal?"

The duration of a religion, creed, and a sacred law does not need the ever permanence of its bringer. His successors may continue his line after him.

Then the Holy Qur'an states the general law of death for all souls, with no exception, as follows:

"Every soul shall taste of death;..."

After mentioning the general law of death, there will arise this question that: What is the aim of this ephemeral life, and what is the use of it?

In the continuation of this holy verse, the Qur'an states as follows:

"...and We try you with evil and good for a testing, and unto Us you shall be returned."

The Divine trial is harder when it is done by means of afflictions.

Your main abode has not been assigned in this world. It is somewhere else. You have come here only for taking examinations, and after the end of the examination and gaining the necessary development, you will go to your main abode, the world of the Hereafter.

By the way, Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as), concerning the Qur'anic sentence, saying:

"...and We try you with evil and good for a testing...",

said:

"Health and self-sufficiency is 'good', and sickness and poverty is 'evil' and both of them are for trial."[7]

Surah Al-'Anbiya' – Verse 36

وَإِذَا رَءَاكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِن يَتَّخِذُونَكَ إِلاَّ هُزُواً أَهَذَا الَّذِي يَذْكُرُ ءَالِهَتَكُمْ وَهُم بِذِكْرِ الرَّحْمَنِ هُمْ كَافِرُونَ

36. "And when those who disbelieve see you, they take you not but for mockery;* (*saying each other*)*: 'Is this the one who makes mention of your gods?' And* (*while*) *they, at the mention of the Beneficent* (*Allah*)*, are themselves disbelievers."

Blasphemy takes man to a point that he mocks the strong logic and the statement of the Immaculate Imam, while he is not ready to show the least disrespect to the piece of wood and stone, the idol.

Its example is that if there is a malodorous corpse in a pool, when it rains its putrefaction and fetid smell will increase. Blasphemy is like a corpse of carrion in man's soul. He brings forth some more obstinacy by seeing the Prophet (S).

So, in this verse, the Qur'an encounters the disbelievers in connection with their evil situation against the Prophet of Islam (S) which shows their wrong doctrine in some fundamental subjects. At first, the holy verse implies that they disrespectfully point to the Prophet (S) and say whether this man is the same who mentions their gods and idols maliciously.

The verse says:

"And when those who disbelieve see you, they take you not but for mockery;* (*saying each other*)*: 'Is this the one who makes mention of your gods?' And* (*while*) *they, at the mention of the Beneficent* (*Allah*)*, are themselves disbelievers."

It is surprising that when a person frankly says something disrespectfully about these idols, which are made of wood or stone, and tells the truth by saying that these are some soulless, senseless, and worthless beings, they wonder; but when a person denies the Merciful, Beneficent Allah, Whose impacts of favour have covered all the world, and everything is a reason for His Greatness and Mercy, it will not be wonderful for them.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' – Verses 37 – 38

خُلِقَ الإِنسَانُ مِنْ عَجَلٍ سَأُوْرِيكُمْ ءَايَاتِي فَلاَ تَسْتَعْجِلُونِ

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَي هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

37. "(The nature of mortals is such that as if) man has been created of haste; soon (enough) I will show you My signs, so do not ask Me to hasten (them) on."
38. "And they (the disbelievers) say: When will this promise (be fulfilled) if you are truthful?"

This holy verse points to one of the heinous and irrelevant deeds of those immethodical libertines.

It says:

"(The nature of mortals is such that as if) man has been created of haste;..."

There are various opinions cited upon this sentence, but it is clear that the purpose of 'man' here is the whole mankind, (those untrained people, of course, who are out of the realm of the leadership of the Divine leaders).

As it is also testified by the later holy verses, the objective meaning of the Qur'anic term /'ajal/, here, is 'haste' and 'precipitance'.

The Qur'an in another occurrence says:

"...and man is ever hasty."8

In fact, the sense of 'Man has been created of haste' is an emphasis, which means 'man' is so hasty that as if he has been created out of precipitancy and his whole entity has been made up out of it. And, truly, a great deal of common people are such.

They are hasty both in good deeds and evil acts, so that even when they are told if they pollute themselves with blasphemy and sin the Divine punishment will seize them, they say why it does not come soon.

Then, at the end of the verse, it says:

"...soon (enough) I will show you My signs, so do not ask Me to hasten (them) on."

The Qur'anic phrase '***My signs***' here may refer to the verses and signs of punishment, calamities and chastisement by means of which the Prophet (S) threatened them. Yet, those empty-minded people repeatedly asked for the afflictions that the Prophet (S) had promised them.

The Qur'an, in this verse, says that they should not haste, because they will visit them soon.

This holy phrase may also refer to those miracles which prove the veracity of the Prophet (S). In this case, the phrase means that if you wait, sufficient miracles will be shown to you.

These two commentaries do not contradict each other, because the disbelievers were hasty for both of them, and, finally, Allah gave both of them to them. Yet, the first commentary seems closer to the concept of the verse and is more appropriate to the later verses.

Again, in the next verse, the Qur'an points to one of their requests that they hastily asked.

It says:

"And they* (*the disbelievers*) *say: When will this promise* (*be fulfilled*) *if you are truthful?"

They were impatiently waiting for the event of the Hereafter to happen. They were unaware of the fact that, as soon as the Hereafter happens their full helplessness and misfortune begin. But what can be done; the hasty man makes also haste even for his own misfortune and destruction.

The application of the phrase 'if you are truthful', which is in the plural form, though the Prophet of Islam (S) was the addressee, is for the reason that they addressed his true followers in this expression, too. They wanted to say that the absence of the Hereafter was the reason for that they all were liars.

Surah Al-'Anbiya' – Verse 39

لَوْ يَعْلَمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا حِينَ لاَ يَكُفُّونَ عَن وُجُوهِهِمُ النَّارَ وَلاَ عَن ظُهُورِهِمْ وَلاَ هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ

39. "If those who disbelieve but know the time when they will not be able to ward off the Fire from their faces and from their backs, nor shall they be helped,* (*they would not hasten about the Resurrection*)*."

This holy verse points to one of the examples of the man's haste. The disbelievers repeatedly asked the Prophet (S) what time was the time of the promised Hereafter when they would be punished for their disbelief; and thereby they caused his annoyance.

Allah soothes the holy Prophet (S) by implying that if they were aware of the day when the Fire will encompass them not only from their fronts but also from their backs and they will have no way to run away, they would not haste to reach it. Yes, the haste of man is for his ignorance, since if he knew he would not make haste.

The abovementioned holy verse says:

"If those who disbelieve but know the time when they will not be able to ward off the Fire from their faces and from their backs, nor shall they be helped,* (*they would not hasten about the

***Resurrection*).”**

The application of the words: ‘faces’ and ‘backs’ in the above holy verse refers to the fact that the Hell Fire is not in a state that it comes towards them from one side, but, on the contrary, it covers both the front parts of them and their backs, so that it seems they are in the middle of the Fire and they are buried in it.

And the Qur’anic sentence /walahum yunsarun/ (nor shall they be helped) refers to the fact that these idols, which they imagine they will intercede them and help them, can do nothing for them.

Surah Al-’Anbiya’ – Verse 40

بَلْ تَأْتِيهِم بَغْتَةً فَتَبْهَتُهُمْ فَلاَ يَسْتَطِيعُونَ رَدَّهَا وَلاَ هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ

40. “Nay, but it* (*the Fire*) *will come to them all of a sudden and make them confounded, so they will neither be able to repel it, nor will they be respited.”

Through this holy verse, the noble Qur’an implies that this Divine punishment and the blazing Fire will come to them suddenly so that it will make them astonished.

The above holy verse says:

“Nay, but it* (*the Fire*) *will come to them all of a sudden and make them confounded…”

They will be so confused that they will have no power to repel their punishment. And, even if they ask for respite, in spite of their haste until then, they will not be respited.

The verse continues saying:

“…so they will neither be able to repel it, nor will they be respited.”

Surah Al-’Anbiya’ – Verse 41

وَلَقَدِ اسْتُهْزِئَ بِرُسُلٍ مِن قَبْلِكَ فَحَاقَ بِالَّذِينَ سَخِرُوا مِنْهُم مَّا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ

41. “And indeed Messengers before you were* (*also*) *mocked, but that whereat they mocked encompassed those who scoffed at them.”

In previous verses, it was said that the idolaters and disbelievers used to mock the holy Prophet of Islam

(S). Then, in order to soothe the Prophet (S) and console him, this verse implies that it is not only you whom have been mocked at, but those prophets who were before you were also ridiculed.

The verse says:

"And indeed Messengers before you were (also) mocked,..."

Yet, finally, whatever of the Divine punishments they used to mock at visited them.

The verse continues saying:

"...but that whereat they mocked encompassed those who scoffed at them."

Therefore, O Prophet Muhammad! Do not be grievous, and these kinds of acts, which are ignorantly done, should not have the least impact on your soul, or influence in your strong will.

---

1. Tafsir-ul-Kabir, by Fakhr-i-Razi
2. Al-Mizan
3. Tafsir-us-Safi, and Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
4. Tafsir-us-Safi, and Tafsir-i-Burhan, below the holy verse
5. Taken from Ghamus
6. Surah At-Tur, n. 52, verse 30
7. Mustadrak, vol. 2, p. 149
8. Surah Al-'Isra', No. 17, verse 11

Source URL:
https://www.al-islam.org/enlightening-commentary-light-holy-quran-vol-10/section-3-every-soul-shall-taste-death