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Section 4: Let Not the Life of This World Deceive Anyone

Surah Luqman – Verse 31

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ الْفُلُكَ تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِنِعْمَتِ اللَّهِ لِيُرِيَكُمْ مِنْ آيَاتِهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ
لِكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ

31. “Have you not seen that the ships ran on in the sea by Allah’s favour that He may show you of His signs? Verily in this are signs for every (steadfast) patient, grateful (one).”

In previous verses, the sky, the sun and the moon were pointed out while in this verse the earth, the seas, and ships are referred to. It implies that the movement of a ship on the sea is the consequence of a collection of Allah’s bounties such as: the blow of the wind, specific gravity, and the rules of the pressure of water which causes things to float on it.

So the verse says:

“Have you not seen that the ships ran on in the sea by Allah’s favour...”

The aim of these affairs is that He wants to show you a part of His greatness.

The verse continues saying:

“...that He may show you of His signs?...”

Yes, there are some signs in these things for those who are very patient and are grateful, too.

The verse says:

“... Verily in this are signs for every (steadfast) patient, grateful (one).”

No doubt the movement of the ships on the surface of oceans is the fruit of a series of laws of creation: the regular blow of the winds, from one side; the specific gravity of wood or other materials by which a ship is built, from the other side; the level of the density of water, from the third side; and the pressure emerged from the side of water to the body of the things which cause them to float on it, from the fourth side, are among them.

And if there appears any confusion in one of these things, either the ship sinks into the bottom of the sea, or it turns down, or it remains wandered in the midst of the sea.

But the Lord Who has intended to set the expansion of the seas the best way for the men’s voyage, and carrying the useful goods often from one point to another point, has also provided these conditions, each of which is a bounty out of His bounties.

The greatness of the power of Allah in oceans and the smallness of man compared with it is so much so that, in the past when people used only the power of the wind for the movement of a ship, if all the people of the world gathered to make a ship run in the midst of the sea against the direction of a strong wind, they would not be able to afford it.

And now that the power of great engines has substituted the wind, again the strength of some storms is so hard and heavy that can shake even the greatest ships, and sometime it may break them.

And that at the end of the verse the emphasis has been laid on being patient and grateful, it is either for the sake that living in this world consists of a collection of afflictions and favours, that both of them are means of trial, perseverance and patience against severe events, and thanksgiving for bounties, all form a combination of duties for human beings.

A lot of Islamic commentators have recorded a tradition from the holy Prophet of Islam (S) who said:

“The Faith has two halves: half of it is patience (and perseverance), and the other half is thanksgiving.”

Or there is an indication in this that for understanding the great Divine verses in the expanse of creation man needs to have a motive, like being grateful to the benefactor accompanied with patience, in order to be more careful and more curious.

Surah Luqman – Verse 32

وَإِذَا غَشِيَهُمْ مَوْجٌ كَالظُّلِّ دَعَوْا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ فَلَمَّا نَجَّاهُمْ إِلَى الْبَرِّ
فَمِنْهُمْ مُّقْتَصِدٌ وَمَا يَجْحَدُ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَّا كُلُّ خَتَّارٍ كَفُورٍ

32. “And when a wave covers them like the canopy (of clouds), they call upon Allah in sincere devotion unto Him, but when He has delivered them to the land, some of them follow the middle course, and none denies Our signs, except every perfidious, ungrateful one.”

Man naturally is godly, but some material means may cover the nature like a curtain, and the occurrence of some events and dangers may disclose this curtain.

After stating the movement of ships in the seas which have been the greatest and the most useful means for many men to transport and carry their loads both in the past and today, through this verse the Qur'an refers to one of other features of the same subject, where it points to the time when people embark a ship and in the midst of the sea they may encounter a storm.

It says:

“And when a wave covers them like the canopy (of clouds), they call upon Allah in sincere devotion unto Him...”

The Arabic word ***zulal*** is the plural form of ***zullah*** for which the commentators have mentioned several meanings. Raqib in Mufradat says:

“The term /zullah/ means the cloud that is shady, and it is often used in the cases that there is an unpleasant matter in the affair.”

Some commentators have also rendered it into ‘canopy’, derived from ***zill***.

Some others have taken it with the sense of ‘mountain’.

Though in relation to the verse under discussion these very meanings do not differ very much with each other, regarding that this word has repeatedly been used in the Qur'an with the meaning of Shady clouds, and regarding that the application of the Qur'anic term ***lqaṣṣiyahum*** (***covers them***) is more fitting with the sense of ‘cloud’, this interpretation seems closer to the fact.

Then the verse means that the great waves of the sea will arise and surround the ship so violent that as if a cloud had cast a shadow over them, a shadow which is fearful and horrible.

It is here that man, with the whole apparent powers that he has gained and gathered for him, now sees himself weak, naught, and unable. He receives no help from anywhere, and all spiritual and material means becomes useless for him. There will remain no hope for him except the light which glitters from inside his soul and from the depth of his nature.

It discloses the curtains of negligence and brightens his heart and tells him that there is someone Who can save you. The same One Whose command the waves of the sea obey.

It is here that the pure Monotheism fills his whole heart, and he considers religion, faith, and worship

specific to Him.

Then the verse adds:

“...but when He has delivered them to the land, some of them follow the middle course...”

But there are another group of people who forget everything and the army of polytheism and paganism overcome the country of their heart.

Some of the commentators believe that the above holy verse refers to ‘Akramat-ibn-’Abijahl who became Muslim.

At the time of the conquest of Mecca, the Prophet of Islam (S) forgave all people of Mecca except four persons, one of whom was ‘Akramat-ibn-’Abijahl.

The Prophet (S) had issued the order of execution against them and had said wherever they could be found they should be killed, (because these four vicious persons had fulfilled every kind of hindrance, enmity, and crime that they could against Islam and the Muslims).

Therefore, ‘Akramah had to flee from Mecca.

He came to the bank of the Red sea and embarked a ship. In the middle of the sea, a dangerous storm threatened the ship.

The people in the ship told each other:

“Let us say fair well to the idols and only ask help from Allah, the Merciful, because our gods can do nothing.”

‘Akramah said:

“If but Monotheism does not save us in the sea, it will not save us in the land either.”

He continued saying:

“O’ Allah! I may covenant with You that if You deliver me from this affliction I will go to Prophet Muhammad (S) and shake hand with him for I know him a forgiver and gracious.”

At last, he was delivered and went to the Prophet (S) and embraced Islam. This very event has also been recorded in ‘Usd-ul-Qayah fi Ma’rifat-is-Sahabah, Vol. 4, P. 5.

It has also been cited in some Islamic history books that later ‘Akramah was counted in the row of the true Muslims and he got to be a martyr in the Battle of ‘Yarmuk’ or ‘Ajnadin’.

At the end of the verse, the Qur’an adds:

“...and none denies Our signs, except every perfidious, ungrateful one.”

The Arabic term ***/xattar/*** is derived from ***/xatr/*** in the sense of perjury. This term in Arabic is an amplification form. The polytheists and the guilty repeatedly turn to Allah for their afflictions and covenant with Him or make vows, but when the affliction is removed, they often breach their covenants one after another and are ingratitudes to the bounties of Allah.

Indeed the Qur’anic words ***/xattar/*** (***perfidious***) and ***/kafur/*** (***ungrateful***) that have occurred at the end of the verse are the opposite points of the Qur’anic terms ***/sabbar/*** (***patient***) and ***/šakur/*** (***grateful***) which were mentioned in the previous verse; (the term ‘Ungrateful’ is opposite of ‘grateful’, and perjury is opposite of ‘patience’ and to be loyal to one’s covenant.)

For, fulfilling the promise is possible only by applying patient. It is they who, when the flame of natural faith is enlightened inside their soul, try to keep this Divine light and not to be quenched any more as the result of being covered by curtains and barriers.

A Few Points Upon Sincerity

Sincerity is the case that an action is perfectly performed for the cause of Allah, so much so that even if one percent of it, or less than it, is for other than Allah (s.w.t.) that worship is nullified or it has problem.

If we take the place of keeping up the prayer for other than Allah, for instance, we try to stand somewhere that so other people see us, or the camera shows us, our prayer is kept up for other than Allah.

If we choose the time of worship for other than Allah, for example, we establish prayer in time in order to attract the attention of people, it will be the same.

If the gesture and our appearance in which we establish prayer is for other than Allah, for example, we may wear a shoulder-mantle; or have a change in our voice, and have an aim other than the pleasure of Allah (s.w.t.), in all these instances our prayer is null and void, and for hypocrisy we have committed sin, too.

In other words, sincerity is in that we do not heed our sensual desires, carnal wishes, false deities, political adherences, and the wrong demands of individuals, but our motive is only one thing: obeying the command of Allah and fulfilling our duty.

Verily obtaining sincerity is not possible but with the help of Allah.

The Qur’an by the verse under discussion says:

“And when a wave covers them like the canopy (of clouds), they call upon Allah in sincere devotion unto him, but when He has delivered them to the land, some of them follow the middle

course...”

The Ways of Obtaining Sincerity

1– We must be attentive to the knowledge and Power of Allah. If we know that all glories, powers, and provisions are in His authority, we never refer to other than Him in order to gain glory, power, and provision.

If we note that the creatures are created by the will of Allah and by His will every thing will be vanished; if we know that He both produces the causes and nullifies the causes, that is, He appoints the dry palm tree the cause of fresh date for Mary, and turns the fire, which could cause Abraham to be burnt, to become cold for him, we do not betake ourselves to other than Him.

There are hundreds verses and stories in the Qur'an that invite people to pay attention to Allah's Providence in order that haply they may leave out other than Him and go sincerely toward Him.

2– We must note the blessings of sincerity: A sincere person has only a single aim which is 'gaining the content of Allah', and the one whose aim is only that, does not seek the encouragement of this one or that one. He does not fear of blames.

He does not scare of loneliness. He never retreats in his way. He never rues. For the sake of people's heedlessness, he never loses hope. In paving the path of the Truth he never tends to majority and minority.

The sincere believers do not afraid that:

“...they fight in the way of Allah, so they slay and they are slain...”

In the threshold of his journey to Karbala, Imam Hussayn (as) said:

“We go to Karbala whether we become martyr or become victorious. Our aim is to fulfil the duty.”

3– We must regard to Allah's favours: Another way which causes us to approach to sincerity is the remembrance of the favours of Allah. We must not forget that we did not exist. The life-germ was made of soil and food stuff and was put inside the darkness of the mother's womb.

It passed the development stages one after another and it was born in the form of a perfect human being. At that time this baby did not know anything save sucking the mother's milk, a complete food which provides all the needs of the body.

The mother's milk, accompanied with mother's affection, was almost always at his service. Does any aware conscience let that after reaching to those abundant bounties, power, and knowledge we incline to others? Why may we sell ourselves to some human beings who neither have any right on us nor have they done us any favour?

4- We must always seek the will of Allah. If we know that people's hearts depend on Allah's will and that He is the converter of the hearts, we will perform any action for Him, and wherever we need the people's supports, we ask Allah to bestow it on us the necessary love, amiability, and position in people's hearts and opinions.

Hadrat 'Ibrahim (as) elevated the basis of Ka'bah in the hot and blazing deserts of Arabia and invoked that He would tend the people's hearts toward his progeny. Now, after thousand years that that event has passed, every year millions of people circumambulate amorously around that House, more exciting than a butterfly.

How many a man that try hard to make some people fairly content, but these people still do not love them, and there are many persons that without having hope to people, properties, name, wealth and position rely on Allah and sincerely fulfil their duty while they are also honoured in the eyes of people. Therefore, the aim must be Allah's pleasure and they ask people's pleasure from Allah, too.

5- We must note to the duration of affairs. If an action is done for Allah its result will remain, since it has a godly colour. But if it is not done for Allah, soon or late it will be vanished.

The Qur'an says:

"What is with you comes to an end, and what is with Allah will endure..."

6- We must compare the recompenses. There are kinds of restrictions in people's recompense. For example, if people decide to give recompense to a prophet, they may give him the best clothing, food, and residence, while all these bounties are limited, and the evil people possess them, too. The wrong doers can also use kinds of ornamentations, palaces, gardens and glorious private mounts.

But when an action is done in the cause of Allah, there will wait some unlimited recompenses for it, whether material and spiritual. Here, too, if we think correctly, wisdom does not allow us to exchange infinite and inclusive recompenses for some limited ones from the side of human beings.

Surah Luqman – Verse 33

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ وَآخِشُوا يَوْمًا لَا يَجْزِي وَالِدٌ عَنْ وَلَدِهِ وَلَا مَوْلُودٌ هُوَ جَازٍ
عَنْ وَالِدِهِ شَيْئًا إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ فَلَا تَغُرَّنَّكُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا وَلَا يَغُرَّنَّكُم بِاللَّهِ الْغُرُورُ

33. "O people! Be in awe of your Lord and dread the Day when no father shall avail aught for his son, nor a son shall avail aught for his father. Verily the promise of Allah is true; so let not the life of the world beguile you, nor let the Deluder delude you concerning Allah."

Everybody must be in awe of Allah and avoid all kinds of creedal, ethical and practical deviations in order to be pious, because the best provision, for the day when even a father and son will not help each other, is piety.

So, in this verse as a conclusion of the last admonishments and the evidences of Monotheism and Resurrection, at first the Qur'an attracts the attention of all human beings to Allah and the Day of Hereafter. Then it warns them against the pride originated from the world and Satan; and after that it refers to the vast knowledge of Allah (s.w.t.) and that it encompasses everything.

It says:

“O people! Be in awe of your Lord and dread the Day when no father shall avail aught for his son, nor a son shall avail aught for his father...”

In fact, the first command refers to the Origin, and the second command refers to Resurrection.

The first command awakens the power of attention in man, and the second divine command awakens in him the feeling of recompense and retribution.

No doubt he who knows an aware and well-informed One Who sees all his deeds, knows them, and records them, and, on the other side, there will be held a just court to investigate all things in detail, such a person hardly commits any sin or corruption.

The Arabic phrase ***llayajzil*** is derived from /jaza'/ which has been used with two senses. One of them is 'to give reward or retribution instead of something'; and the other is: 'to suffice, to succeed and to bear', as the verse under discussion implies that no father shall accept the responsibility of his son's deeds and he does not succeed him nor does avail him.

It is possible that both of them return to one root, for both reward and retribution succeed the deed, too, and each will be given to its doer appropriate to the deed.

However, on that Day every one is so busy with him and is afflicted with the circumstances of his own deeds that he can not do any favour to another one, even neither the father nor the son, who have the closest relation with each other, will think of the other one.

This verse is similar to what has occurred at the beginning of Surah Al-Hajj which, concerning Hereafter and the earthquake of the Resurrection Day, says:

“On the Day you shall behold it, every suckling mother shall forsake her suckling babe...”

It is noteworthy that concerning father the Qur'an applies the Arabic clause ***llayajzil*** (which is in future tense) but concerning son it applies the Arabic word /jaz/ which in Arabic is a 'noun-agent'. This difference may be for variety in speech; or it points to the duty and responsibility of a child before his

father, because an Arabic noun-agent indicates some more permanence and repetition.

In other words, it is expected from the father's affection that at least in some instances he tolerates the punishment of his child in the same way that in the world he eagerly accepted his afflictions, but concerning a child it is expected that he tolerates some more afflictions of his father for many rights he has upon him; while none of them solve the least problem from the other on that Day, for everybody is busy with his own deeds.

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an warns man against two things: the life of the world and Satan.

It says:

"... Verily the promise of Allah is true; so let not the life of the world beguile you, nor let the Deluder delude you concerning Allah."

In fact, instead of two enjoinders that were mentioned at the beginning of the current Surah, there are two prohibitions mentioned here, since if the fear from Divine reckoning and retribution be awakened in a person, there will not need for him to be afraid of existing deviation and pollution in him, except from two ways: the first is that the dazzling glare of the world changes the facts wrongly in his view and takes the ability of discrimination from him since the love of the world is the cause of all sins.

The second is that the temptations of Satan may beguile him, make him proud, and cause him to become far from Origin and Resurrection.

If these two ways of penetration of sin can be closed, no other danger will threaten him, and by these abovementioned four instructions, a complete collection of program is provided for the felicity of man.

In conclusion, Allah's justice makes the existence of Hereafter necessary for man, because we see many good and evil ones that apparently do not reach to their proper reward and retribution in the world. Therefore, Allah, the just, must appoint another place for giving them their due reward and retribution.

Of course, now and then there are seen some rewards and retributions for them in the world, but their main place for a great deal of deeds is only Hereafter, because in some instances there is no possibility for them in this world.

For example, the one who has become martyr in the way of Allah is not present in the world to receive his reward, or the one who has killed a lot of people can not endure more than one retribution in this world; he must get his real chastisement in Hereafter.

Surah Luqman – Verse 34

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ وَيُنَزِّلُ الْغَيْثَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْأَرْحَامِ وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ مَّازَا
تَكْسِبُ غَدًا وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ بِأَيِّ أَرْضٍ تَمُوتُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

34. “Verily Allah is He with Whom is the knowledge of the Hour, and He sends down the rain, and He knows what is in the wombs; and no one knows what he shall earn the morrow, and no one knows in what land he shall die. Verily Allah is Knowing, Aware.”

Only Allah knows the time of the death and the occurrence of Hereafter. If human beings knew that the time of their death were far and the Hereafter were not be held so soon, they would be proud and would commit more sins; and if they are told that the Hereafter will be held very soon, they terrify and leave their job and activity.

So we mortals, who do not know the exact time of our death and Hereafter, must always be prepared.

However, in relation to the discussion about Resurrection mentioned in the previous verse, this verse, which is the last verse of this Surah, speaks of those information which are specific to Allah.

It says:

“Verily Allah is He with Whom is the knowledge of the Hour...”

“...and He sends down the rain...”

“...and He knows what is in the wombs...”

“...and no one knows what he shall earn the morrow...”

“...and no one knows in what land he shall die...”

“...Verily Allah is Knowing, Aware.”

It seems this entire verse is an answer to the question in regard to Hereafter, the same question that the pagans of Quraysh repeatedly asked from the Prophet (S) and said:

“...When will it be?...”

In answer to them, the Qur'an implicitly says no one knows the moment of the occurrence of Hereafter save Allah; and according to some other verses of the Qur'an, Allah has made this knowledge concealed for all humankind so that pride and negligence would never encompass people; He says:

“Verily the Hour (of Doom) is coming, but I will to keep it hidden...”

Then the Qur'an implies that not only the Hereafter is concealed for you, but there are also many things in your daily living and among the nearest affairs of your death and life that you are not aware of.

The time of the descent of the life-giving drops of rain, to which depend the lives of all living beings is not manifest to any one of you, and you discuss about it only by guesses, estimations, and conjectures.

Also no one is aware of the time of your appearance in the mother's womb and the specifications of the embryo.

And, again, the near future, that is, the events of your tomorrow and also the place wherein you shall die are hidden to all.

You, who are not aware of these affairs which are close to your living, do not surprise that you are not informed of the moment of the occurrence of Hereafter.

It is cited in Durr-ul-Manthur that once a man by the name of 'Warrath', from Banymazin Tribe, came to the Prophet (S) and said:

"O Muhammad! When will the Hereafter be held? Moreover, our cities have met drought; when there will affluence come? And also when I set out to come here my wife was pregnant; when will she be confined? And also I know what I have done today, but what will I do tomorrow? And, finally, I know where I have been born, but tell me to know in which land will I die?"

The above verse was sent down and announced that the knowledge of all these things is with Allah.

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