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Section 4: The Disgrace Which the Wicked Shall Have

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 26

قَدْ مَكَرَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ فَأَتَي اللَّهُ بُنْيَانَهُم مِنَ الْقَوَاعِدِ فَخَرَّ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّقْفُ مِن فَوْقِهِمْ وَأَتَاهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيثُ لاَ يَشْعُرُونَ

26. "Indeed, those who were before them (also) devised plans. So (the wrath of Allah) struck at the foundations of their buildings, and then the roof fell on them from above them, and the (Divine) punishment came to them from whence they never perceived."

This noble verse discusses the point that it is not the first occasion when the arrogant accuse the Divine leaders, and consider the Divine revelations as old fables. On the contrary, those who preceded them also devised such conspiracies. Nevertheless, Allah hit the foundations of their life, destroying it from the scratch and thus their roof fell on them from above.

The verse says:

"Indeed, those who were before them (also) devised plans. So (the wrath of Allah) struck at the foundations of their buildings, and then the roof fell on them from above them..."

And Allah's punishment came upon them from where they could never have the slightest idea.

The holy verse continues saying:

"...and the (Divine) punishment came to them from whence they never perceived."

The total destruction of the foundations of the buildings and the falling down of the roofs might be taken as allusions made to the buildings and their apparent roofs which were pounded and devastated as a result of earthquakes and thunderbolts, falling over them.

It might just as well be reference metaphorically to their organizational hierarchy which was eradicated by Allah's command.

Incidentally, it is not incompatible that the verse refers to both meanings.

Explanations

To eradicate the entire mental and organizational system of the enemies, one must deal with them fundamentally and not superficially so that all of them might be vanished.

At times, it happens that a building, with very solid foundations, turns into one's own grave instead of serving as a place for his preservation.

In the meantime, this holy verse serves as a threat to the conspirators while serving as a way of providing calm and comfort for the Prophet (S).

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 27

ثُمَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يُخْزِيهِمْ وَيَقُولُ أَيْنَ شُرَكَآءِيَ الَّذِينَ كُنتُمْ تُشَآقُّونَ فِيهِمْ قَالَ الَّذِينَ
أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ إِنَّ الْخِزْيَ الْيَوْمَ وَالسُّوءَ عَلَي الْكَافِرِينَ

27. "Then on the Day of Resurrection He will disgrace them and say: 'Where are My associates for whose sake you have been disputing?' Those who have been given the knowledge will say: 'Verily, the disgrace and scandal are this day upon the unbelievers."

Knowledge and ignorance have some broader meanings in the context of the Qur'an than the general meanings which are ascribed to them.

A knowledgeable person, in the Qur'anic context, is the one whose thinking and practice are based on the truth even though he may have no command of reading and writing. An ignorant fellow, on the other hand, is he whose actions are based on what is wrong even though he might have mastery of all the subjects of science.

The Qur'an regards the notion of paganism and worshipping of idols as utter ignorance, as it regards the root of the heinous act of the people of Lot as ignorance.

In this verse, also

"Those Who have been given knowledge"

addresses those who are facing against unbelief and paganism. That is, true knowledge leads and directs man to Monotheism and Faith.

In the meantime, what was mentioned about them in the previous verse was regarding their punishment in this world, which does not end at this point. Besides that, Allah will bring them disgrace, shame and scandal in the Resurrection Day.

The verse says:

"Then on the Day of Resurrection He will disgrace them..."

Addressing them, He puts this question to them asking: Where are those whom you fabricated as associates for Me, used to love them and you had hostile attitudes towards others for their sake?

It continues:

"...and say: 'Where are My associates for whose sake you have been disputing?'..."

Most definitely, they shall have no answers here for this question. Nevertheless, those who have been given knowledge, including the angels, prophets and the believers, open their mouth asserting: Shamefulness, scandal and ill-fate are to-day incumbent upon 'the unbelievers'.

(N□r-uth-Thaqalayn and 'Atyab-ul-Bayan)

This itself will be a type of punishment and psychological chastisement for them.

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 28

الَّذِينَ تَتَوَفَّاهُمُ الْمَلآئِكَةُ ظَالِمِي أَنفُسِهِمْ فَأَلْقَوُا السَّلَمَ مَا كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ مِن سُوءٍ بَلَي إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا كُنتُم تَعْمَلُونَ

28. "Those whom the angels take their lives while they are unjust to themselves. Then they would offer submission, (***falsely saying:***) ***'We used not to commit any evil act'. 'Nay; Allah is definitely aware of what you used to do'."***

The unbelievers do both at the time when angels are taking their life: They offer their submission and they deny their evil past. However, neither that faith, to which they confess is of any kind of value, for it

has its origin in ‘necessity’; nor is their denial acceptable from them, for Allah is always aware of everything.

This noble verse with its particular interpretation, which provides a thought-provoking instructive lesson for awakening the ignorant and those who are unaware, describes the pagan as follows:

“Those whom the angels of death take their lives, while they are unjust to themselves…”

For, whatever tyranny one inflicts on others, it will first of all start with himself, and he will ruin his own house before that of the others.

Nonetheless when man finds himself in his deathbed, and the curtains of his own arrogance and negligence are removed from before his eyes, he will immediately offer his submission, falsely claiming that he has not done anything wrong.

The verse says:

“…Then they would offer submission, (***falsely saying:***) ***‘We used not to commit any evil act’…”***

Are they telling lies because, as a result of their habitual repetition, lying has become their inherent characteristic? Or else, they want to say that they know such acts which they have committed have been mistakes. It is probable that the two cases might be involved and both hold true.

Nevertheless, they are soon reminded that they are liars and that they have committed many evil acts, saying that Allah is aware of whatever they have done as well as their intentions under all circumstances.

The verse says:

“…‘Nay; Allah is definitely aware of what you used to do’.”

Therefore, there is no room for them to deny or refute! And this ‘emergency faith’ of theirs, which is instantly expressed for pragmatic reasons, is of no use either.

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 29

فَادْخُلُوا أَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا فَلَبِئْسَ مَثْوَي الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ

29. “Therefore, enter through the gates of Hell, to abide therein. Thus, indeed, evil is the abode of the arrogant.”

Then, enter Hell through its gates where you will always be staying. Note what an awful place is the residence of the arrogant people.

They have not voluntarily entered the inferno! On the contrary, they have been made enter into it.

There are seven gates for the Hell according to the text of the Qur'an, each of which belongs to one category of the seven categories in the Hell.

The Qur'an says:

"It has seven gates, for every gate there shall be a (separate) party of them assigned."[1]

This verse does not signify that they can enter through whichever gate they choose. On the contrary, it means that every class of those sinners can enter through one of the gates according to their intensity of: paganism, disbelief or profanity, opposition or hostility, their intensity of being misled, seductive ability, and oppression as well as the like of them.

For example: the Jews will enter through one gate while the Christians enter through another gate; the pagans enter through their own particular gate-way whereas the dissidents have their own gate; so on and so forth. The gateway of the seventh floor belongs to the hypocrites and those who were unjust unto the Ahl-ul-Bayt of the Messenger (S).

The hell is incidentally the dark prison of Allah in which all kinds of punishments for chastising the evil doers are found, including: Fire, yoke, chains, vertical means of stabbing, lashes, 'Hamim' (boiling drink), Ghassaq (pus), Zaqq□m (bitter drink), and the like.

May Allah keep us away from these means of torture and punishment, and let us enter His Garden of Eden, Paradise; Amen.

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 30

﴿30﴾ وَقِيلَ لِلَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا مَاذَآ أَنزَلَ رَبُّكُمْ قَالُوا خَيْراً لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ وَلَدَارُ الاَخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ وَلَنِعْمَ دَارُ الْمُتَّقِينَ

30. "And (when) those who keep from evil are asked: 'What has your Lord sent down?' They say: 'Good!' Goodness is for those who do 'good' in this world; and certainly the abode of the Hereafter is better, and excellent indeed is the abode of the pious."

In the early days of Islam, those who had heard the names of the Qur'an and the Prophet, when they entered Mecca, they would ask various people they confronted

"What has your Lord descended?"

In answer to them, the pagans would say: *"The old legends",* while the believers would answer them: "***Good!***", meaning He has descended whatever is the source of 'good' and 'happiness'.

We have noted in the previous verses the remarks made by the pagans about the Qur'an. We shall focus our attention here on the beliefs of the faithful along with the consequences of their faith.

At first, the Qur'an implies that when the pious were asked as to what their Lord has descended, they would answer '*The good and happiness.*'

The verse says:

"And (when) those who keep from evil are asked: 'What has your Lord sent down?' They say: 'Good!'..."

What an explicit, beautiful and comprehensive sense it is! 'The good' and, in particular, in its absolute concept of the word, the comprehensive meaning of which encompasses all the decent acts, happiness and successes, whether material or spiritual.

To sum up, as in the case of the pagans through previous verses which have explained their increasing punishment, spiritual, material, worldly and that of the Hereafter, the concluding remarks made by the believers are as follow in the verse in question:
where it says:

"...Goodness is for those who do 'good' in this world..."

It is worth noting that the Qur'anic term /hasanah/ is just like /xayr/ 'the good' which encompasses all kinds of 'decencies' as well as the 'blessings', which are found in this world.

Such are their worldly rewards. Moreover, it emphasizes the fact that: their abode in Hereafter is even better than their worldly life. What a nice place it is the residence of those who are pious.

The verse says:

"...and certainly the abode of the Hereafter is better, and excellent indeed is the abode of the pious."

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 31

جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ يَدْخُلُونَهَا تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الاَنْهَارُ لَهُمْ فِيهَا مَا يَشَآءُونَ كَذَلِكَ يَجْزِي اللَّهُ الْمُتَّقِينَ

31. "Gardens of Eternity they shall enter, therein beneath (the trees of) which rivers flow, wherein they will have whatever they desire for. Thus Allah rewards the pious."

The reward for abstinence from the forbidden pleasures of this world is the unending success in the Hereafter.

In this noble verse, the residence of the pious, which was briefly alluded to before, is being discussed, saying that the residence of the pious are the eternal gardens of Paradise into which all enter, where flowing streams pass beneath its trees.

The verse says:

"Gardens of Eternity they shall enter, therein beneath (the trees of) which rivers flow..."

The issue in question is not merely the gardens and the trees, but for them there are all things which please them at their disposal.

The verse continues:

"...wherein they will have whatever they desire for..."

In conclusion, it states at the end of the verse:

"...Thus Allah rewards the pious."

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 32

الَّذِينَ تَتَوَفَّاهُمُ الْملاَئِكَةُ طَيِّبِينَ يَقُولُونَ سَلاَمٌ عَلَيْكُمُ ادْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ بِمَا كُنتُم تَعْمَلُونَ

32. "Those whom the angels cause to die (while from polytheism and sin) are clean, saying (to them): 'Peace be upon you! Enter the Paradise because of what you used to do'."

The objective in using the Qur'anic term /tayyibin/, which was formerly used in the previous verses with regard to the pagans and the disbelievers, concerns those who have not already been of the polytheists and sinful ones, and it refers to those who are pious.

The term /tayyib/ alludes to those who are clean from all kinds of dirt and pollution or 'impurity' and are decorated with virtues and positive attributes.

In the previous holy verses, we read as to how the angels of death usually take the life of the arrogant

pagans while they are oppressors.

Here, in this noble verse, we read as to how the angels would take the life of those who are clean of everything and are clear of all oppressions, arrogance, and every kind of sin.

In this verse, the angels, addressing them, say:

"***peace be upon you!***"

That kind of 'peace' which is uttered as a mark or a sign of respect, security, safety as a thorough peace of mind.

The verse says:

"Those whom the angels cause to die (***while from polytheism and sin***) ***are clean, saying*** (***to them***)***: 'Peace be upon you!…"***

Then, afterwards, the angels will add:

"…Enter the Paradise because of what you used to do'."

Here, the Arabic phrase /tatawaff ahum/, meaning that 'they will receive their soul', signifies the fact that death does not mean 'mortality' and nothingness or the end of every thing. On the contrary, it is only a transit or a passing stage which paves the way for climbing up the ladder and going up to another stage.

Traditions on the Qualifications of the Paradise and Hell

1- The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"All blessings are perishable except the ones which belong to those who reside in Paradise, and all depressions are temporary except the ones which belong to those who are the dwellers of Hell." 2

2- Ibn-Abbas (r.h.) says:

"Those in Paradise will go through an hour during which time they witness the sun and the moon and ask:

'Did Allah not promise that we shall not see the sun and the moon in our residence in Paradise'?

To which an oracle will exclaim:

'Your Lord has promised you truly that you would no more see the sun and the moon in Paradise. But, that light beam belongs to a man from among the followers of Ali-Ibn-i-Abi-Talib (*as*) *who is going from one compartment into another one, and that which you have been exposed to has been* (*the rays of*) *the light out of his face.'"* 3

3– Abū–Sa‘id says:

*“The Messenger of Allah (S) said: A man from the dwellers of Paradise, of high–ranking position, comes upon those residing in Paradise and illuminates the entire Paradise. It is as if his face brightens everywhere like a brilliant star.”*4

4– The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“Verily the dwellers of Paradise will witness those compartment–dwellers from above their head just like you observing the morning star which has been left in the horizon to the east or to the west.” 5

5– The Prophet of Islam (S) said:

“There are certain (blessings) in the Paradise which neither any eyes have seen nor anyone’s ears have heard; nor has it been revealed to any man’s heart.”

Some Traditions on the Attributes of Hell

6– The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“The least torment for the people of Hell on the day of resurrection will be to make them put on a pair of shoes made of fire which will cause their brains to boil because of the intensity of their heat.” 6

7– It has been narrated from Amir–ul–Mu’mineen, Ali (as) who said:

“Be in owe of that kind of fire the heat of which is excessive, the depth of which is intensive, the ornament of which is of iron, and the drinks of it consist of warm sewage made up of blood mixed with puss.” 7

8– It has been quoted from Imam Sadiq, the sixth Imam (as), in a tradition that the Hell has got seven gateways; through one of which our enemies and those who take up arms against us and humiliate us will enter. This gateway is most definitely the largest and the most burning of all gateways. 8

9– It has also been quoted from Imam Sadiq (as) who said:

“Verily there exists a desert in the Hell for the arrogant which is named /saqar/. The excessive and intensive heat of it will be the main cause of their complaint when they will ask Allah to allow it to breathe, then He will allow it, so it will breathe and put the Hell on fire.” 9

10. ‘Ayyashi quoted from Imam Sadiq (as) who narrated from his father and his grandfather who have quoted in turn from Amir–ul–Mu’mineen (as) saying:

“At the time when ‘Zaqqūm’ (a tree in Hell out of which the hell–dwelling people feed themselves) and ‘Zari‘’ (a substance in hell which is bitter, stinking and burning) boils up in their stomach in Hell, those

people will ask for a drink, then they will be provided with the drink of 'Ghassaq and Sadid', which are in turn made up of sewage secretions mixed with abscess secretion and blood.

They will thus be made to drink the dirty liquid consistently, which would not quench their thirst. They aspire towards death, though they will not die so as to be made to receive terrible punishment the fullest."

The Qur'an says:

"He will drink it little by little which he can hardly swallow agreeably, and death will come to him from every side, while he will not be about to die, and there will be a severe chastisement before him."10

11- The blissful Prophet (S) asked the people:

"Shall I not tell you about the people of Paradise?"

They answered:

"Of course, O', Messenger of Allah (S)."

He said:

"The people of Paradise are the ones whom the people in this world have regarded as weak ones and humiliated them. Were they to swear to Allah to anything, Allah would thereon take them into account."

Then he said:

"Shall I not tell you about the people of Hell?'

They said:

"Yes".

He said:

"They are the hostile, stupid, nonsensical, vociferous, uncharitable wealthy people, (who are) tyrants." 11

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 33

هَلْ يَنظُرُونَ إِلاَّ أَن تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْمَلآئِكَةُ أَوْ يَأْتِيَ أَمْرُ رَبِّكَ كَذَلِكَ فَعَلَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ
وَمَا ظَلَمَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَكِن كَانُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ

33. "Do they expect aught but the angels (of death) come to them, or the decree of your Lord comes (to pass)? Thus did those before them. And Allah was not unjust to them, but they were unjust to themselves."

Were the warnings provided by the prophets not to awaken the people, the lashes of chastisement would surely do that job. However, to what effect will it be?

The descending of punishment after the delivering of an ultimatum, and sending prophets with Books, not only is not unjust but also is identical with the realization of justice in particular following the assigning of the prophets on their mission.

Once again, analyzing the attitudes and procedures of the pagans and oppressors, the Qur'an takes up the issue with a threatening vocabulary, and implies: What kind of expectations do they have?

Do they expect to receive any other things except that the death angels call upon them, while the 'gates' leading to repentance close up to their faces, their records be rolled up, and there remain no bridges for their return?

The verse says:

"Do they expect aught but the angels (of death) come to them..."

Or else, do they keep waiting for Allah's command to be issued as to their chastisement and then they seek repentance? Nonetheless, their repentance is untimely belated at that time and hence ineffective.

The verse continues saying:

"...or the decree of your Lord comes (to pass)?..."

Then, the Qur'an implies that those who undertake such acts are not confined to this group only. Contrarily, those who preceded them acted in just the same way.

It says:

"...Thus did those before them..."

It is not Allah Who did them injustice; however, it is they who did that to themselves, for they reap what they have sowed.

The verse says:

"...And Allah was not unjust to them, but they were unjust to themselves."

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 34

فَاَصَابَهُمْ سَيِّـَٔاتُ مَا عَمِلُوا وَحَاقَ بِهِم مَّا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ

34. "So the evil (consequences) of what they did afflicted them and that which they used to ridicule encompassed them."

The Qur'anic term /sayyi'ah/ signifies petty and minor sins as compared to the capital sins, like what Surah An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 31 says:

"If you avoid the great sins which you are forbidden, We remit from you your small sins..."

Therefore, whatever of chastisement is afflicted on man in this world is only the retribution of part of what has been due to him for his evil actions and the principal punishment will be saved for the Day of Resurrection.

The Qur'anic phrase /haqa bihim/ is in the sense of /halla bihim/ which in fact signifies: 'whatever they mocked and ridiculed were reflected and returned upon themselves'.

In this noble verse, the Qur'an deals once again with the consequences of their performances, stating: The viciousness of their evil performances was returned to them.

The Qur'an says:

"So the evil (consequences) of what they did afflicted them..."

And the promises and pledges of the Divine chastisement were afflicted on them which were already the subject and the main issues of their mockery and ridicule. The verse continues saying:

"...and that which they used to ridicule encompassed them."

The above verse once again emphasizes the fact that it is man's own deeds, acts and performances which will entangle him, getting him involved both in this world and in the next and they will be reflected in various forms and shapes, and which will serve him as a source of trouble, harm, and torture, and not any other thing.

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1. Surah Al-Hijr, No. 15, verse 44
2. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, vol. 14, p. 474
3. Bihar, vol. 8, p. 149
4. Kanz-ul-Ummal, vol. 14, p. 468

5. Kanz-ul-Ummal, vol. 14, p. 475
6. Mahhaja-tul-Bayza', vol. 8, p. 356
7. Bihar, vol. 8, p. 206, from Nahj-ul-Balaqha
8. Bihar, vol. 8, p. 285
9. Mahajjat-ul-Bayda', vol. 8, p. 361
10. Surah 'Ibrahim, No. 14, verse 17
11. Sahih-i-Muslim, vol. 4, p. 2190

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