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Section 5: Even the Disbelievers Helplessly Acknowledge the Glory of Allah

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 78-79

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنشَأَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالاَبْصَارَ وَالاَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلاً مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ

وَهُوَ الَّذِي ذَرَأَكُمْ فِي الأَرْضِ وَإِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ

78. "He it is Who produced for you hearing, and eyes, and hearts (minds); (very) little it is what you give thanks."
79. "And He it is Who multiplied you in the earth, and unto Him you shall be mustered."

Remembrance of Divine Blessings often paves the way for gnosis and thanksgiving. Therefore, The Holy Qur'an tries to arouse this sense of thanksgiving by mentioning the Divine blessings.

The verse says:

"He it is Who produced for you hearing, and eyes, and hearts (minds); (very) little it is what you give thanks."

The emphasis is put on these three things, 'hearing, sight and understanding', because they are the main means of gnosis. Physical phenomena are mostly perceived through the ear and eye. Mental issues are understood through the mind.

To comprehend how important the senses of vision and audition are, it will be enough to imagine the

state that man would be in if these senses were lost, how limited his world would be, how empty of light and awareness!

By losing these senses, he might even lose other faculties under his control, such as the ability to speak, which is assisted in its function through audition and acts as a means of communicating with others. (Those who are congenitally deaf are usually always impaired of speech as a consequence.)

Thus, these two senses are the keys to the world of perceptible things. The mind, however, is the key to the metaphysical world, and it criticizes, concludes, generalizes, and analyzes the data provided by those two senses.

Should not those who do not thank Allah for these great means of knowledge be blamed and justly punished? Does not contemplating the intricacies of these three faculties suffice to make man familiar with his Creator?

It is obvious why the blessings of the ear and eye precede that of the understanding. But why does the blessing of the ear come before that of the eye? Scientific research has shown that the ear of a newborn starts to function before its eyes begin to do so.

This is because the environment of the womb is without light and the eyes can see nothing. The ear is not the same. The fetus can hear while in the womb and is familiar with the sound of its mother's heart and even her voice.

The mention of these three invaluable favours motivates us to seek knowledge of the One Who has granted them to us. Some of the scholars of religion say that such knowledge leads us to thanking Him for these gifts, which is the basis for the rational obligation of knowing Allah.

The next verse speaks of one of the most important signs of Allah, which is the creation of man from the earth:

"And He it is Who multiplied you in the earth…"

And, because the human being is made of earth, he will return to it, and will be raised up and then will be mustered unto Him.

The verse continues saying:

"…and unto Him you shall be mustered."

If we ponder over the fact that we are made of earth, it will be enough for us, the mortals, to know the Giver of Existence and understand the possibility of the Resurrection.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 80

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَلَهُ اخْتِلاَفُ الَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ أَفَلاَ تَعْقِلُونَ

80. "And He it is Who gives life and death, and to Him belongs the alternation of the night and the day. Have you then no sense?"

Monotheism is mainly achieved through contemplation and reflection.

(***".. .Have you then no sense?"***)

After speaking about the proliferation of human beings, the Qur'an turns to the issue of life, death, and the alternation of day and night which are of the great signs of Allah.

It says:

"And He it is Who gives life and death, and to Him belongs the alternation of the night and the day. Have you then no sense?"

Thus, these recent three verses start with motivating us to know Allah and then end with mentioning some of the most important signs in the microcosm and the macrocosm. In other words, they mention man's journey from birth to death and his return to Allah, all of which, are at the mercy of Allah and decided by His will.

Note: The creation of life and death is juxtaposed with the creation of 'day' and 'night', for light and darkness in the world of existence are like death and life in the world of living creatures.

As the world of existence moves and functions under the rays of light and becomes still and motionless under the curtain of darkness, living creatures also begin their movement with the light of life and cease it and its function with the darkness of death. Moreover, both of them are gradual phenomena.

The alternation of day and night means that one of them takes the place of the other. It can also mean their gradual lengthening and contraction, which result in the four seasons of the year and are important factors in the life of the plants. These factors all serve to guide us to knowing and thanking Allah.

Thus, at the end of the verse it says:

"...Have you then no sense?"

Some Traditions On the Intellect

1. The Prophet (S) said:

*"Intellect is something by which Paradise will be detained and through which the pleasure of Allah is achieved."*1

2. Imam Ali (as) said:

*"The intellect guides and ignorance misleads."*2

3. Imam Ali (as) said:

*"Allah, the Glorified, has not distributed anything better than the intellect among His servants."*3

4. Imam Hassan al-Mujtaba (as) said:

*"By means of the intellect one can achieve both the goodness and reward of this world and the Hereafter and the one who has no intellect is deprived of the benefits and advantages of them all together."*4

5. Imam Rida (as) said:

*"The intellect is the friend of every man, and his enemy is his ignorance."*5

6. Imam Ali (as) said:

*"One cannot overcome the world except by the power of the intellect."*6

7. The Prophet (S) said:

*"Man's religion is his intellect and whoever has no intellect has no religion."*7

8. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

*"Pondering much on science (and knowledge) opens the gate of the intellect."*8

9. The Prophet (S) said:

"Everything has a tool (and a support), and the believer's tool (and support) is the intellect. Everything has a vehicle and man's vehicle is the intellect. Everything has an end and the end of worship is the intellect.

Every nation has a guardian and the guardian of the worshippers is the intellect. Every merchant has a capital and the capital of the strivers is the intellect. Everything ruined is mended by something and the Hereafter is mended by the intellect. Every traveler has a tent in which he takes refuge and the tent of

*the Muslim is the intellect."*9

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 81-83

بَلْ قَالُوا مِثْلَ مَا قَالَ الاَوَّلُونَ

قَالُوا أءِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَاباً وَعِظَاماً ءَإِنَّا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ

لَقَدْ وُعِدْنَا نَحْنُ وَءَابَآؤُنَا هَذَا مِن قَبْلُ إِنْ هَذَآ إِلاَّ أَسَاطِيرُ الاَوَّلِينَ

81. "Nay, but they say the like of what the ancients said."
82. "They say: 'What! When we die and become dust and bones, shall we then be raised up again?"
83."Certainly we and our fathers have been promised this aforetime; this is naught but fables of the ancient."

The Arabic word /'asatir/ is the plural form of /'usturah/, meaning a story or legend that is false. The word /'usturah/ itself is derived from the word 'satr', meaning line. Thus words that come one after the other can be said to line up.

The Qur'an mentions nine times from the tongue of the unbelievers this word to oppose the message of the prophets. They had no reasons or arguments to refute them; their only responses to the Truth were incredulity and denial,

(***"...shall we then be raised up again?..."***)

In the previous verses, those who denied the oneness of Allah and the Resurrection were called to ponder the world of existence and the signs in the microcosm and macrocosm. Now, as these verses indicate, they have abandoned intellectual thinking and simply, blindly imitate their ancestors, and have dismissed the Resurrection as tales of the ancients.

The verse says:

"Nay, but they say the like of what the ancients said."

But their argument about the denial of Resurrection is also the same thing that the ancients used to say.

Then their exact words are reiterated in the next verse:

"They say: 'What! When we die and become dust and bones, shall we then be raised up again?"

This question of theirs shows that the unbelievers were rather ignorant, for if they had contemplated their creation in this world, that is, the possibility of their coming into existence from nonexistence, then they would have been able to conclude that their resurrection from the dead would have been just as possible and they would confess that Allah is their Creator.

In the next verse, they indicate that this is an unbelievable action. Such things have been promised to us and our forefathers before. They are nothing but fables of the men of old.

The verse says:

"Certainly we and our fathers have been promised this aforetime; this is naught but fables of the ancient."

By this, they mean that their re-creation, the Reckoning, Paradise, and Hell are nothing but mere fancy.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 84-87

قُل لِمَنِ الاَرْضُ وَمن فِيهَآ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ أَفَلاَ تَذَكَّرُونَ

قُلْ مَن رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ

سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ أَفَلاَ تَتَّقُونَ

84. "Say: 'Whose is the earth and whosoever is in it, if you have knowledge?'"
85. "They will say: 'Allah's'. Say: 'Will you not then remember?'"
86. "Say: 'Who is the Lord of the Seven Heavens, and the Lord of the Mighty Throne?'"
87. "They will say: 'Allah's'. Say: 'Will you not then keep from evil?'"

The Arabic word /rabb/ means an owner who intends to maintain and manage his estate. It also means educator and trainer. The Qur'anic word "***Arsh'"*** is used here to mean the Throne of Allah, which is beyond the Seven Heavens. When this word is applied to Allah it means the totality of the world of existence, which is ruled by Allah.

"…His Throne includes the heavens and the earth…"10

Since the unbelievers and the polytheists were more afraid of the Resurrection than anything else, they consequently avoided it and their responsibilities by making various kinds of excuses and using delicate tricks. The Holy Qur'an thus placed emphasis on the Resurrection and elaborately explained it.

Thus, in the verses under discussion, the Holy Qur'an refutes the faulty logic of the rejecters of Resurrection with three arguments:

1. Allah's ownership of the world of existence.

2. His Lordship.

3. His sovereignly over the whole world of existence.

The conclusion here is that from every aspect Allah is capable of causing the Resurrection and His justice and wisdom necessitate that the Hereafter must be a reality after the end of this world.

It is notable that in the answers to every one of the questions posed in the verses above, the unbelievers confess the reality of Allah (s.w.t.) as the Lord and Master, contradicting their very attitude and belief.

At first, the Qur'an announces:

"Say: 'Whose is the earth and whosoever is in it, if you have knowledge?'"

Here is their answer:

"They will say: 'Allah's'. Say: 'Will you not then remember?'"

This clear answer is based on their innate disposition that testifies to the belief in Allah, the Creator of the existence.

This answer, however, contradicts the egoistic claims that issue from their mouths and because of this the Qur'an replies to them:

"Will you not then remember?"

After such a clear and explicit confession, how could they think that a human being's resurrection after death would be unlikely and beyond Allah's all embracing power?

Through the next holy verse, the Qur'an orders that the unbelievers should be asked again:

"Say: 'Who is the Lord of the Seven Heavens, and the Lord of the Mighty Throne?'"

Once again, they answer, automatically out of their own innate monotheistic disposition and their belief in Allah, as the Creator of the whole existence.

The verse says:

"They will say: 'Allah's'..."

But in spite of this explicit confession, they still do not fear Allah and deny the Resurrection and the return of man to life again, so they are asked in response:

"...Say: 'Will you not then keep from evil?'"

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verse 88-90

قُلْ مَن بِيَدِهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ يُجِيرُ وَلاَ يُجَارُ عَلَيْهِ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ فَأَنَّي تُسْحَرُونَ

بَلْ أَتَيْنَاهُم بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ

88. "Say: 'In Whose hand is the dominion of all things, and Who protects (all), but is never protected, if you have knowledge?'"
89. "They will say: '(It belongs) to Allah.' Say: 'How then are you bewitched?'"
90. "Nay, We have brought them the Truth, and verily they are liars."

In the first holy verse here they are asked again about the sovereignty over the heavens and the earth.

The noble verse announces:

"Say: 'In Whose hand is the dominion of all things, and Who protects (all), but is never protected, if you have knowledge?'"

They know who the absolute sovereign is, for here is their answer:

"They will say: '(It belongs) to Allah.'…"

Nevertheless, they say something far from the truth their hearts claim and thus they are deluded.

"…Say: 'How then are you bewitched?'"

These are the facts that they confess to at every stage. They acknowledge Him as the Owner of existence, and they confess that He is the Creator of all things and is the All Wise Manager and Ruler.

Can He Who has such power and ability, Whose dominion is so all pervasive not be able to gather together and reconstitute a human being who had passed away and had returned to dust, given that he had been made from dust in the beginning?

Why did they evade the facts? Why did they condemn the Prophet (S) as insane or as a sorcerer, when their hearts confessed that these facts were true? Indeed they belied with their egos what they believed in the core of their being.

The verse says:

"Nay, We have brought them the Truth, and verily they are liars."

This phrase implies that what had been sent to them through the Prophet (S) was not magic or anything else, it was the Truth but they refused to acknowledge it.

Allah and His prophets had left no stone unturned when they proclaimed the message. Those who have closed their eyes to it have deviated and, indeed, many of them stubbornly stick to their lies.

From the verses of The Holy Qur'an, it can be accurately inferred that the deniers of the Resurrection were mostly against the idea of a physical resurrection. They thought it is incredulous that a human being, who had disintegrated into dust, could be returned to life.

Because of this, many verses stress upon the power of Allah and show examples of it in the world of existence in order to eliminate this skepticism and their wonder.

In the verses above, this issue is addressed in three ways:

A) His power over the earth and its inhabitants.

B) The heavens and the Mighty Throne.

C) The power of His management over the world of creation.

These three ways can be placed under one heading; guiding and challenging the unbelievers while they are presented as responses to their various opinions.

There is another probability that each of these three issues refers to one of view points of the deniers of Resurrection. It implies that if their denial is based on the idea that human beings that have been dead and gone would be outside Allah's power, they are wrong, for they acknowledge that Allah is the Lord of the earth and all that is within it.

If it is because resurrecting the dead requires a powerful Lord, they themselves call Him the Lord of the heavens and the 'Arsh.

If this denial is because they doubt the existence of an all powerful administrator of this world and the world to come or the giving of a new life to the dead, this denial would not be valid because they have acknowledged the power of His management over the entire world of existence and that He looks after the needs of all creatures. Thus, there is no room for their denial.

The concordance of the unbelievers' answers:

(***"They will say: '(It belongs) to Allah..."***)[11]

strengthens the first commentary.

It is interesting that the first, second, and third answers respectively appear in the following forms:

"...Will you not then remember?"[12]

"...Will you not then keep from evil?"[13]

"...How then are you bewitched?"[14]

These reproaches and reprimands, indeed, as the discourse progresses show a logical progression in educating and guiding the unbelievers. Condemning a person has three levels; first, a light upbraiding, then a firm reprimand, and finally a severe scolding.

Surah al-Mu'minun - Verses 91-92

مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ مِن وَلَد وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِذاً لَّذَهَبَ كُلُّ إِلَهٍ بِمَا خَلَقَ وَلَعَلاَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَي بَعْضٍ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ

عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَتَعَالَي عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

91. "No son has Allah begot, nor is there any god along with Him, else each god would have certainly taken off that which he had created, and some of them would certainly have risen up over others. Glorified be Allah above what they describe!"
92. " (He is) the Knower of the Unseen and the Visible! So exalted be He, above what they ascribe as partners (unto Him)!"

Having belief in any kind of offspring for Allah is forbidden; (whether considering Jesus as the son of Allah or the angels or others).

In the previous verses, the subject of the Resurrection and Allah's ownership, sovefeignty and Lordship were discussed. The verses now under consideration criticize the ideological base of polytheism and state some of the deviations of the polytheists with their responses. The Qur'an answers them in these verses.

It says:

"No son has Allah begot, nor is there any god along with Him…"

The belief that Allah had begotten an offspring or some children was not limited to the Christians, who held that Jesus (as)was God's actual son. This belief was also current among some polytheists.

They thought that the angels were God's daughters and there is evidence to assume that, perhaps, the Christians had taken this concept from old polytheists. Since offspring share in the nature of their parents, they assumed that Jesus, the angels, and the like also shared in the Divine nature of God which is one of the most common characteristics of polytheism.

The verse then mentions the reason why the concept of a plurality of gods should be rejected. It implies that if Allah had had partners and more than one god had ruled over the world, each of these gods would have managed and established his control over the realm of his own creations.

Consequently different parts of the universe would end up being managed under different laws and systems. This would have given rise to chaos and disorder in the universe and this does not accord with the unity of creation that we witness around us.

The Holy Qur'an says:

"No son has Allah begot, nor is there any god along with Him, else each god would have certainly taken off that which he had created, and some of them would certainly have risen up over others…"

In the end, as a general conclusion, the verse says:

"…Glorified be Allah above what they describe!"

The result of this discourse is that we can discern a unified system of laws that governs the world of existence. These laws are the same everywhere in the heavens and the earth.

They are found, unchanged, regulating and governing the behaviour of the minutest sub atomic particle and the components of the solar system and other great galaxies. Indeed, if an atom is magnified, it will appear like a miniature solar system, and, on the contrary, if solar system is seen from afar it will look like an atom.

Modern researches conducted on .distant objects in space by experts from different disciplines also show that there is unity in the general order of the world.

On the other side, the idea of a multiplicity of gods necessitates the existence of differences and contrasts between them, for if two objects were alike in every aspect, they would become one object and the state of multiplicity between them would be meaningless.

If we suppose that the world of existence had numerous gods, this polycentrism would have an effect on the order of the universe. This would result in a lack of unity in the order of creation.

Furthermore, all beings seek to perfect themselves. This is true unless an entity is perfect in every aspect, in which case it would be meaningless for it to seek perfection.

The logical conclusion of a plurality of gods, each having separate sovereignties would be that, because of the limitation of their spheres of sovereignty, they would not be perfect and each of them would naturally seek to perfect itself.

Each one of them would want to bring the entire world of existence under its sovereignty, and thus they would compete with each other for dominance and plunge the order of existence into chaos and confusion.

One might counter this argument and say that if we assume that these gods were wise and merciful they would certainly be able to manage the universe cooperatively. In other words, the problem of chaos and disorder could certainly be eliminated if these gods formed a council of themselves to manage the universe.

The answer to this question is not very complicated. Their wisdom does not negate their multiplicity. When we say they are multiple, it means that they are not similar to each other. Ifthey were similar in every aspect, they would have been one god.

Therefore, whenever there is multiplicity, differences and dissimilarities would certainly be found, and this would influence these gods in their actions and their managing of the universe which results chaos and confusion.

Concerning this subject there is a tradition that says:

One day Hisham ibn Hakam asked Imam Sadiq (as):

"What is the reason that Allah is unique and singular?"

The Imam answered:

"Because there is union and coherence in the management of the universe and the creation is perfect, as Allah, the Exalted, has said:

'If there were therein (other) gods besides Allah, they would both (the heavens and the earth) go to ruin…'15*"*16

The next verse gives another answer to these unbelievers who advance the absurdity of a multiplicity of gods.

It implies that He does not know any gods that unbelievers claim, where it says:

" (He is) the Knower of the Unseen and the Visible!…"

Allah knows all things that exist both in the visible and invisible worlds. It is therefore impossible for these unbelievers to know about the existence of another god unknown to the Creator.

The content of this verse is similar to verse 18 of Sura Yunus, No. 10, where Allah says:

"…say: 'will you inform Allah of what He does not know either in the heavens or in the earth?…"

Finally, it reduces the superstitious imaginations of the polytheists to nothing:

"…So exalted be He, above what they ascribe as partners (unto Him)!"

Similarly, the end of this verse is just like that of verse 18 of Sura Yunus, No 10. It says:

"…Glory be to Him! High be He exalted above what they associate (with Him)."

And it shows that both of the verses follow the same subject.

This sentence also threatens the polytheists, for it means that Allah is aware of both their hidden and manifest secrets. He knows these arguments very well and will judge and punish them in His Court when the time comes.

Concerning the phrase,

" (He is) the Knower of the Unseen and the Visible!…",

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

“What has not taken place is ‘the Unseen’ and what has taken place is ‘the Visible’.”

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1. Madinat ul-Balaghah, Vol. 2, p. 519
2. Madinat ul-Balaghah, Vol. 2, p. 515
3. Qurar ul-Hikam, Vol. 6, p. 80 and Vol. 2, p. 745
4. Bihar, Vol. 75, p. 111
5. Al-kafi, Vol. 1, 11, 4
6. Bihar, Vol. 75, p. 7
7. Nahj ul-Fasahah, p. 330
8. Bihar, Vol. 75, p. 116
9. Mustadrak ul-Wasa’il, Vol. 2, p. 286
10. Sura Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 255
11. Verse 89 in the above
12. verse 85
13. verse 87
14. verse 89
15. Sura Al-’Anbiya’, No. 21, verse 22
16. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, the Commentary, Vol. 3, p. 417 & 418 and Tawhid Sauq

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