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Section 5: Everything in the Heavens and in the Earth Glorifies Allah

Surah Isra' – Verse 41

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لِيَذَكَّرُوا وَمَا يَزِيدُهُمْ إِلَّا نُفُورًا

41. “And certainly We have explained (the facts in various ways) in this Qur'an so that they may receive admonition, but it does not add to them save aversion.”

The Qur'anic phrase /sarrafna a/ (We have explained) refers to the varied explanation and different reiterations of it for the clarification of the issue in question.

Man is searching for variations by nature; whether in the natural sphere or in the domain of the Divine Book and, hence, this is the secret of some repetitions and variations of the statements in the Qur'an.

As raining over an infected corpse produces foul odour and a stinking smell, the introduction of the Divine verses into the realm of the arrogant and some obstinate people who are so habituated, leads to their further detestation.

Therefore, the holy verse implies that Allah has thus far reiterated His proofs in the noble Qur'an, citing in detail, their significance and proverbial sayings and whatever else has been instructive and wise so that they can contemplate and make sure of their truthfulness.

The verse says:

“And certainly We have explained (the facts in various ways) in this Qur'an so that they may receive admonition...”

However, those pagans do not benefit from these instructive matters and they always add up to their abomination and hatred unto the truth.

The verse says:

“...but it does not add to them save aversion.”

One can, in the meantime, draw up this conclusion with regard to educational objectives that there is not necessarily a limited number of ways to gain the better educational aims.

On the contrary, there exist various means and methods which can be utilized, for there are individuals differences in interests and in abilities which must be taken into account and one must infiltrate in a different manner in each of the cases.

This point is also one of the methods of eloquence employed in expression.

Surah Isra’ – Verse 42

قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ مَعَهُ ءَالِهَةٌ كَمَا يَقُولُونَ إِذَا لَابْتَغَوْا إِلَىٰ ذِي الْعَرْشِ سَبِيلًا

42. “Say: ‘If there were (other) gods with Him as they (the pagans) claim, then, they would certainly have sought a way unto the Lord of the ‘Arsh.’”

The pagans believed in the Lord and regarded ‘Allah’ as the creator of the world of existence.

Nevertheless, they used to consider the icons as their intercessors or as the Lord’s partners. This verse refutes the existence of such a relationship between the Lord and the icons, for the idols can neither grasp the power from the hands of the great Almighty; nor can they find the means for their own reinforcement.

The hierarchy of the system of creation proves best the monotheistic nature of Allah. Were there other gods besides the Almighty, that would certainly require competition, in which case, there would necessarily be disruptions appearing in the entire system.

Therefore, this noble verse alludes to one of the evidences for monotheism, which, in the context of literature of the scientists and the philosophers, has been referred to as ‘the mutual hindrance proof’.

This means that type of the anarchical world run by ‘dualism’ the nature of which requires the existence of various gods, centered around all kinds of disruptions¹.

It is for this reason that the Qur’an addresses the Prophet (S) to tell them that if there were other gods

alongside the Almighty, as they claim, then these gods would certainly try to seek their way through to the great Lord of the heavens and thus dominate Him, for it is natural that every powerful person wishes to add up to his power, extending his sphere of influence further.

If there were other gods, truly speaking, such a kind of struggle and incompatibility over the extension of their power would result in anarchy and disruptions in all spheres of life.

The verse says:

“Say: ‘If there were (other) gods with Him as they (the pagans) claim, then, they would certainly have sought a way unto the Lord of the ‘Arsh.’”

Surah Isra’ – Verse 43

سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يَقُولُونَ عُلُوًّا كَبِيرًا

43. “Glory be to Him and Exalted is He far above from what they say! He is High, the Great.”

And, now, the Lord differentiates Himself and distances Himself from having got partners. The Qur’an implies that the Almighty is so far superior to what they say and excels in everything for which no limits can be set.

The verse says:

“Glory be to Him and Exalted is He far above from what they say! He is High, the Great.”

The objective in mentioning superiority in this connection, is excellence in the Lord’s attributes which are unmatched by any means and unequalled for any one else, because none is more omnipotent and omniscient than Him. In other words, the Lord is far superior and pure to what they claim.

Surah Isra’ – Verse 44

تُسَبِّحُ لَهُ السَّمَاوَاتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا

44. “The seven heavens and the earth, and every being therein, celebrate His glory, and there is not single thing but glorifies Him with His Praise, but you do not understand their glorification; verily He is Forbearing, Forgiving.”

This noble verse proclaims that all the cosmic order has its own way of glorification, prostration, and individual prayer for the Lord (s.w.t.). Some commentators claim that this type of glorification is of a genetic kind.

That is, the structural part of the existence of every particle in the world, is a sign and a symbol of the Lord's Will, Wisdom, Knowledge, and of His Justice.

Others are of the opinion that the world of existence has its own kind of consciousness and knowledge, and all are glorifying at all times though our ears are incapable of hearing their voice. This latter view is more consonant with the apparent form of the verses. Vocalization of the things is not impossibility, for such a process will actualize in the Hereafter.

"...they shall say: 'Allah', Who makes everything speak, has made us speak..."²

Even stones have got and possess sensibilities and feel frightened, and, for fear of the Lord, they fall down from the mountains.

"...and others tumble down through fear of Allah..."³

Solomon (as) could understand the medium of expression used by ants and was in full command of the expression symbols used by birds. A kind of bird called 'Hud Hud' used to inspect and recognize the deviation shown by some people and came to report it to Solomon.

The Lord, in many cases of the revelations, used to address the mountains.

For example, He tells them to pray along with Dawūd, saying:

"...O' mountains! Sing praises with him..."⁴

There are frequent allusions made to the glorification by all beings, besides the above cases, in the Qur'an.

We also have it in quotations that bees glorify Allah. ⁵

A small pebble which was in the hands of the Prophet (S), testified as to the legitimacy of the Prophet's mission (S). ⁶

The shrill voices of the birds are their way of glorification of Allah⁷.

All the above Islamic quotations refer to the real cases of glorification and they do not include their non-verbal language.

A Persian poetry says:

"Every one is using one way for You glorification and thankfulness to You. A nightingale goes on

twittering sonnets while 'qomri' sings common songs."

"The entire particles of the world are addressing You during day and night and in private."

"They say: We are all-eyes all-ears, and all well-aware though we remain voiceless when we are with you."

Later, to prove the magnitude of the position of the Lord and that it is aside from the imagination of the pagans, the Qur'an refers to the glorification of the beings of the world in the presence of His Sacred Essence, when it says:

"The seven heavens and the earth, and every being therein, celebrate His glory, and there is not single thing but glorifies Him with His Praise..."

The profoundly deep universe of such magnitude with its amazing system and with all those secrets along with its breath-taking art all glorify and thank Him.

Nevertheless, He is forbearing and forgiving, at the same time, and you will not be immediately interrogated and questioned for your paganism and disbelief. Contrarily, He will provide you with an adequate respite while He will be leaving the gates of repentance open to you so as to complete the argument to you.

The verse says:

"...but you do not understand their glorification; verily He is Forbearing, Forgiving."

Surah Isra' – Verse 45

وَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ جَعَلْنَا بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ حِجَابًا مَسْتُورًا

45. "And when you recite the Qur'an, We place between you, and those who do not believe in the Hereafter, a hidden barrier."

Occasion of the Revelation

This noble verse has been descended with regard to a group of pagans who used to do harm to the Prophet (S) while he used to read the Qur'an at night within a corner of the House of Ka'bah. They used to throw stone at him and they also used to obstruct or stand in the way of him to invite people to embrace Islam.

The Lord, through His grace, made it impossible for them to hurt him. Perhaps, it was owing to the awe

and fear which He inspired in them from the Prophet (S).

Pursuing our discussion of the previous holy verses, this question may be raised for some as to how it is that the pagans avoid accepting the reality of the issue of monotheism despite its self-explanatory nature which is widely accepted by all beings of the world and testified by them.

Why is it that they hear the eloquently expressed and explicit verses of the Qur'an and do not wake up?

The Lord proclaims to the Prophet:

“And when you recite the Qur'an, We place between you, and those who do not believe in the Hereafter, a hidden barrier.”

This ‘*veil*’ or ‘*barrier*’ was that same obstinacy, tenacity, egotism, arrogance and ignorance which used to hinder them from having access to the Qur'anic facts, putting them at a dead end in their mental and rational quest for knowledge, and would not permit them to grasp or acquire an understanding of such obvious facts as monotheism, resurrection, and the authenticity of the call of the Prophet (S) and the like.

It is for this reason that we declare that if somebody intends to follow the straight path of the truth, remaining secure from deviations and seductions, he must, first of all, seek to reform and reconstruct his own self.

Surah Isra' – Verse 46

وَجَعَلْنَا عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَن يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا وَإِذَا ذُكِّرْتَ بِرَبِّكَ فِي
الْقُرْآنِ وَحْدَهُ وَلَّوْا عَلَىٰ أَدْبَارِهِمْ نُفُورًا

46. “And We have placed coverings on their hearts lest they should understand it (the Qur'an) and in their ears a heaviness. And when you mention your Lord alone in the Qur'an, they turn their backs in aversion.”

The Arabic term /'akinnah/ is the plural form of /kan an/ or /kann/, which signifies some means of covering.

The Qur'anic term /waqr/ means ‘partial deafness’. We have verses similar to this one in other Suras as well!

We have over a thousand times the term monotheism, reiterated in the Qur'an, though, it is unfortunate that the blind-hearted ones are deprive and are being at an unease when hearing those verses

regarding monotheism. However, they are pleased to hear words of praise for paganism and absurd materials.

Nowadays, whenever the issue monotheism is discussed, some detest it, though they are being attracted to the remarks made by the Eastern or the Western agents.

The Qur'an says:

“And when Allah alone is mentioned, the hearts of those who do not believe in the Hereafter shrink, and when those besides Him are mentioned, lo! They are joyful.”⁸

The blissful Qur'an has compared such escapist groups from the truth to the donkeys which flee from the lions.⁹

Certainly, a confined soul and a dead heart does not receive the true spirit of the knowledge and wisdom which are offered by the Qur'an, for hearing and simple understanding of the facts of the Qur'an is different from the understanding in depth of them and the ensuing pleasure which one obtains this way.

The verse says:

“And We have placed coverings on their hearts lest they should understand it (the Qur'an) and in their ears a heaviness. And when you mention your Lord alone in the Qur'an, they turn their backs in aversion.”

Surah Isra' – Verse 47

نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَسْتَمِعُونَ بِهِ إِذْ يَسْتَمِعُونَ إِلَيْكَ وَإِذْ هُمْ نَجْوَىٰ إِذْ يَقُولُ الظَّالِمُونَ
إِنْ تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا رَجُلًا مَسْحُورًا

47. “We are well-aware of what they listen to when they are listening to you, and when they are whispering (with each other), when the unjust say (unto the believers)! ‘You are thus following none but a man bewitched’.”

We have it in commentaries that each one of the chiefs of pagans used to attend behind the house of the Prophet secretly and without informing each other so that, in the darkness of night, they could hear the voice of the Qur'an and thereupon analyze it.

They would bump into each other at times in the darkness and recognized one another, and thus, blamed themselves, reaffirming the fact that while they could not dispense with the voice of Muhammad (S), how could then they expect the common folk to behave in this respect.

This noble verse sympathizes with the Messenger of Allah, recommending him not to despair because of the lack of respect which the pagans showed towards him, for everything is clear before Him.

It is for this reason that He says:

“We are well-aware of what they listen to when they are listening to you, and when they are whispering (with each other), when the unjust say (unto the believers)! ‘You are thus following none but a man bewitched’.”

The main aim is that We are aware of their mood while they are listening to the Qur’an and once they leave you, engage themselves in praying, some call you a sorcerer, others regard you as a poet, and, as they notice the respect of people to the Divine leaders, they hit them by false accusations.

Surah Isra’ – Verse 48

انْظُرْ كَيْفَ ضَرَبُوا لَكَ الْأَمْثَالَ فَضَلُّوا فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَبِيلًا

48. “(O’ Prophet!) Behold how they strike similitudes for you, so they have gone astray, therefore, they cannot find the way (to truth).”

Occasion of the Revelation

Ibn Abbas asserts that: Abﷺ Sufyan, Abu Jahl, and the like sometimes came to call on the Prophet (S) and listened to his words. One day, one of them told others:

“I have not got any idea as to what Muhammad (S) says. I only notice that his lips move.”

However, Abu Sufyan answered:

“I am of the opinion that some of his words are truthful.”

Abﷺ Jahl suggested:

“He is crazy”,

while Abﷺ Lahab added:

“He is a soothsayer.”

The other one said:

“He is a poet,”

under which circumstances of futile speech and inconvenient accusations, the verse was revealed.

In this noble verse, again addressing the Prophet (S), He declares in a short statement, which is a pounding answer and a blow to this seduced group, implying: Watch carefully as to how they are setting examples in your case.

One is calling you a sorcerer while the other one calls you as someone bewitched; one calls you a soothsayer while the other ones call you insane and, therefore, they are all being seduced and, hence, unable to discover the truth for themselves.

The verse says:

“(O’ Prophet!) Behold how they strike similitudes for you, so they have gone astray, therefore, they cannot find the way (to truth).”

This does not imply that the path leading towards the truth is not transparent and the profile of the truth remains hidden. On the contrary, they have not got the right kind of eyes to see, and, hence, they have lost their rational attitude because of their tenacity, ignorance, fanaticism, and obstinacy which have all put their sense of reasoning out of work.

Surah Isra’ – Verses 49 – 50

وَقَالُوا أَإِذَا كُنَّا عِظَامًا وَرُفَاتًا أَإِنَّا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ خَلْقًا جَدِيدًا

قُلْ كُونُوا حِجَارَةً أَوْ حَدِيدًا

49. “And they say: ‘What! When we are bones and (scattered) dust, shall we then certainly be raised up into a new creation?’”

50. “Say: ‘(Nay!) be you stones or iron,”

The Arabic term /ruf at/ signifies shredded clay (Mufrad at Raqib). In the verses of the Qur’an, no reason has been stated by the disbelievers for their rejection due to resurrection. All one finds in them consist of astonishments, questionings and remoteness everywhere. By putting forth some queries in this connection, they seek to incite skepticism in others.

The Qur’an, in answer to them, relies on knowledge as well as Allah’s power and Wisdom in the process of creation. There are also examples offered from nature and historical records as well as, from man, himself which were non-existent at first and emerged later on. Therefore, the Lord is able to re-create

all beings after death.

Thus, in the previous verses, the issue dealt with concerned ‘monotheism’ itself as well as campaign against paganism. Nonetheless, the great issue involved in here relates to the Resurrection, which tends to supplement the significant issue of monotheism and which provides the answers to the three queries raised by disbelievers of resurrection.

They asked: Once we are spread around as decayed bones, shall we be surely raised up again; thus recreated once again?

Such a statement exhibits the fact that the Prophet (S) always tended to discuss the significant issue of the ‘physical resurrection’, asserting the fact that one’s body will be reassembled after being scattered, otherwise, if the issue involved related to the matter of “spiritual resurrection”, the objections raised by the opponents would, by no means, make any sense at all.

In the interpretation of the ensuing verse, while facing the challenges of the pagans who asked as to how they would be enlivened and mustered in the Hereafter, in which case they would be nothing except remaining bones and dust, the Lord, addressing the Prophet, responds: O’ Muhammad (S)!

Say to them! The bones are peanuts while if you were made up of stones and iron He could re-enliven you, returning to you the joy and freshness of life as well.

The verse says:

“And they say: ‘What! When we are bones and (scattered) dust, shall we then certainly be raised up into a new creation?’”

“Say: ‘(Nay!) be you stones or iron,”

Surah Isra’ – Verse 51

أَوْ خَلْقًا مِّمَّا يَكْبُرُ فِي صُدُورِكُمْ فَسَيَقُولُونَ مَنْ يُعِيدُنَا قُلِ الَّذِي فَطَرَكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ
فَسَيُنْغِضُونَ إِلَيْكَ رُءُوسَهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هُوَ قُلْ عَسَى أَنْ يَكُونَ قَرِيبًا

51. “Or any (other) creature harder in your minds!’ They will immediately say: ‘Who will return us?’ Say: ‘He Who created you the first time.’ Then, they will shake their heads at you, and say: ‘When will it be? Say: ‘Maybe it will be nigh’.”

Man will be dismembered and turned into dust after death, but the earth is the source of everything which provides man with life. Plants grow out of soil and living beings flourish on the soil.

Therefore, to re-enliven the dead out of soil is not to be considered as an ordeal by the Lord, given the fact that you have such materials as iron and stone even creatures in mind which are harder than soil and which are far more remote from life than soil, the Lord is, hence, capable of re-enlivening and re-invigorating them as well as everything.

The verse says:

“Or any (other) creature harder in your minds!’...”

The rejecters of Resurrection have got no reason for denying it. The only question relating to the fact as to when and how are we going to be enliven, and by who? The answer provided by the Qur’an is that that same Lord Who has created you in the first place, has also got the power to re-create you as well. The timing of this is not at all far away; maybe it is coming soon.

The verse continues saying:

“... They will immediately say: ‘Who will return us?’...”

Ultimately, to their astonishment, they shake their heads at you, asking you when this resurrection occurs and has its timing?

The verse adds:

“... Say: ‘He Who created you the first time.’ Then, they will shake their heads at you, and say: ‘When will it be?’...”

By raising this objection, in fact, they wanted to unveil this matter that supposing this ‘earthly matter’ is convertible into human shape and supposing we accept the power of Allah with respect to this, this issue is a long-term promise which is far from clear as to when that will take place.

The Qur’an, answers them:

“... Say: ‘Maybe it will be nigh’.”

Certainly, it is approaching soon, for the entire life-span of this world is very short and is just a passing moment when compared to the endless life in the Hereafter.

Moreover, if the resurrection was to be regarded as far away by our small and limited criteria, the threshold of the resurrection day, which is death, is not far away, for your death is ‘a minor resurrection day’ as compared to the ‘major resurrection’ when it is time for the evaluation of the acts of human beings.

Surah Isra' – Verse 52

يَوْمَ يَدْعُوكُمْ فَتَسْتَجِيبُونَ بِحَمْدِهِ وَتَظُنُّونَ إِن لَّبِثْتُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

52. “A day when He will call you forth, then you shall answer with His praise, yet thinking that you have tarried but a little while (in the world or in the purgatory).”

Without mentioning any accurate date for the resurrection day, the Qur'an mentions some of the characteristics of it in this noble verse, implying that: This return to life is that same day on which you will be called forth from your tombs, and you will accept the call while praising the Lord.

The holy verse says:

“A day when He will call you forth, then you shall answer with His praise...”

It is the same day when the distance between death and resurrection, that is, the purgatory, will be regarded as a short time by you. You will then realize that you have only paused for a moment in the purgatory.

The verse in this regard says:

“...yet thinking that you have tarried but a little while (in the world or in the purgatory).”

Some of the commentators of the glorious Qur'an are of the belief that this verse is being addressed to the believers, for, it is they who will answer the Lord while praise Him, and it is they who regard their stay in the purgatory as short, for, they have had a happy time in their graves and have received no punishment therein. Obviously, the days of joy and happiness are short.

1. Refer to Jawami'-ul-Jami', and other 'Books on Theology' for further information.

2. Surah Fussilat, No. 41, verse 21

3. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 74

4. Surah Saba', No. 34, verse 10

5. Bihar, vol. 95, p. 372

6. Tafsir-i-Al-Mizan

7. Bihar, vol. 64, p. 27

8. Surah Az-Zumar, No. 39, verse 45

9. Surah Al-Muddaththir, No. 74, verse 50

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