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Section 5: The Ministry of Hud

Surah Hud – Verse 50

وإِلَي عَادٍ أَخَاهُمْ هُوداً قَالَ يَاقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ إِنْ أَنتُمْ إِلاَّ مُفْتَرُونَ

50. "And unto (the people of) 'Ad (We sent) their brother Hud; he said: 'O my people! Worship Allah! You have no god other than He. You are only forgers (of calumnies)'."

Hud (as) succeeded Noah (as) as a prophet. The story of this prophet of Allah is recorded in verses 65 to 72 of the Surah Al-A'raf.

At first, the Qur'an recounts:

"And unto (the people of) 'Ad (We sent) their brother Hud;..."

There is a point worth further clarification here. It provides us with the connotation, 'brother,' in the case of Hud, which reflects the fact that Arabs refer to all the individuals of a tribe as 'brothers'.

Another connotation signifies that the behavior of Hud had been very much like that of a brother in keeping with the other prophets' relationships with their fellow tribesmen. They did not behave as 'emirs', as commanders or as fathers with respect to their children, but they related just like brothers irrespective of every privilege and superiority.

Hud's first call was like that of all the other prophets, it was the call to monotheism and the negation of idol worship in all its respects. Hud called inviting them to worship Allah since there is no other worth worshipping except Him.

The verse says:

"…he said: 'O my people! Worship Allah! You have no god other than He…"

He told them that in worshipping the idols and believing in them, they were wrong. They only attributed falsity to Allah and claimed that those idols were His partners.

The verse continues saying:

"…You are only forgers (of calumnies)'."

These idols should neither have been considered His partners nor could they have been sources of good or evil. They were of no use. No false accusation could have been more humiliating than considering such worthless things as significant!

Surah Hud – Verse 51

يَاقَوْمِ لآ أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْراً إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلاَّ عَلَي الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي أَفَلاَ تَعْقِلُونَ

51. "(Hud said) 'O' my people! I ask you no reward for it. My reward is only upon Him Who created me. Have you then no sense?"

Hud (as) declared to his people that he did not expect any compensation for his call from them. He did not demand any rewards from them so that they might think that his appeals and his supplications were for the acquisition of wealth and position or whatever else.

It declares:

"(Hud said) 'O' my people! I ask you no reward for it. My reward is only upon Him Who created me. Have you then no sense?"

The only compensation and reward for me is from Him Who has created me.

He Who has bestowed upon me my soul and my body, and to Whom I owe everything; that is my Creator and it is He Who provides for my needs.

In principle, if I take any steps in the direction of your guidance and happiness, it is for the sake of being obedient to His commandments and therefore I expect Him to provide me with my sustenance, not you.

Surah Hud – Verse 52

وَيَاقَوْمِ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ يُرْسِلِ السَّمَآءَ عَلَيْكُم مِدْرَاراً وَيَزِدْكُمْ قُوَّةً إِلَي قُوَّتِكُمْ وَلا تَتَوَلَّوْا مُجْرِمِينَ

52. "And O my people! Ask forgiveness of your Lord, then turn unto Him repentant. He will send you the sky pouring abundant rain, increasing you strength unto your strength; and do not you turn back (***from the Truth***) ***as sinners."***

Eventually, to encourage them and utilize all possible means of awakening the truth – seeking spirit of this misled people, he takes recourse to offering those material rewards that are conditional upon faith which Allah makes available to the faithful in this world; Hud said to his people to ask the Lord for forgiveness for having committed sins, thus repenting and returning to Him.

The verse says:

"And O my people! Ask forgiveness of your Lord, then turn unto Him repentant…"

By doing so, (you will notice that) He will order the skies to provide you with enlivening rain in on a regular basis.

The verse continues saying:

"…He will send you the sky pouring abundant rain…"

He will do all this so that your cultivated lands and your gardens would not fall into the grip of drought and would always remain green. Moreover because of your faith, virtue, abstinence from sin and returning to Him, your power would be increased.

The verse says:

"…increasing you strength unto your strength; and do not you turn back (***from the Truth***) ***as sinners."***

Imam Hasan (as) has been quoted as saying that he once went to Mu'awiyah. On his return, one of Mu'awiyah's gatemen told him that he had a great deal of wealth but he could not father a son. Then he asked the Imam to instruct him in a prayer so that He might enable him to have a child.

The Imam (as) answered:

"Make repentance one of your primary goals."

That man repented over and over again, sometimes repenting seven hundred times a day. Then Allah bestowed upon him a son. On hearing the news, Mu‘awiyah asked the man why he had not asked the Imam as to why repentance carries such a tremendous influence. The next time he encountered the Imam, he thus made this query to which the Imam (as) responded:

“Have you not heard that Allah says in the story of Hud:

“…and increasing strength upon your strength…””

The Qur’anic term /quwwah/ has been interpreted as property (wealth), children, and energy. In the story of Noah, verse 12, the Qur’an implies that if you repent and apologize, He will add to your prestige with children and property.

One should not think that faith in Allah and focusing on Him signifies distancing oneself from wealth and property.

Were we to accept the faith, not only we would not lose anything, but also our wealth and property will be multiplied. If the Islamic state aspires towards economic expansion, it must seek a strategy for expanding the spiritual state of its society.

At any rate, turning away from the prophets and neglecting them is a grave sin.

Surah Hud – Verse 53

قَالُوا يَا هُودُ مَا جِئْتَنَا بِبَيِّنَةٍ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِتَارِكِي ءَالِهَتِنَا عَن قَوْلِكَ وَمَا نَحْنُ لَكَ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ

53. “They said: ‘O Hud! You have brought us no clear proof, and we shall not abandon our gods for your word, nor are we believers in you!’”

Those who worship idols of stone and wood, and offer no solid reasons for their deeds, question the prophets whose way of life is to prove the truth of their claims by performing miracles and offering clear evidence.

Disbelievers’ main response was that they would not abandon their idols for the sake of Hud’s words. They did not mention anything regarding lack of evidence as they were not after reasoning.

They reiterated:

“They said: ‘O Hud! You have brought us no clear proof, and we shall not abandon our gods for

your word, nor are we believers in you!'"

The prophets met with fierce resistance from the idol worshippers in the first stage of their call, but they never neglected their duty in propagating Allah's message.

Surah Hud – Verse 54

إِن نَقُولُ إِلاَّ اعْتَرَاكَ بَعْضُ ءَالِهَتِنَا بِسُوءٍ قَالَ إِنِّي أُشْهِدُ اللَّهَ وَاشْهَدُوا أَنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ

54. "We say nothing but that some of our gods have smitten you with evil. He said: 'Verily I call Allah to witness and bear you (also) witness that I am quit of what you associate (with Allah)."

The Arabic term /'i'tira/ means protest and cursing. Ascribing insanity to the prophets, as well as to revolutionaries, and community reformists, who have risen up against superstition, is nothing new.

On the contrary, declaring their distance from and abhorrence of idol–worshipping and idol worshippers has always been in keeping with the spirit of all the Divine prophets which itself provides us with an example confirming that one must stand decisively against superstition.

The verse says:

"We say nothing but that some of our gods have smitten you with evil. He said: 'Verily I call Allah to witness and bear you (also) witness that I am quit of what you associate (with Allah)."

The resistance and challenging spirit of Hud (as) provides the reason for his legitimacy and the decisiveness of his path. It exhibits the fact that prophets fear Allah only and are not frightened by any other power.

Surah Hud – Verse 55

مِن دُونِهِ فَكِيدُونِي جَمِيعاً ثُمَّ لا تُنْظِرُونِ

55. "Besides Him, (I am quit of everything you worship), therefore, scheme (your worst) against me, all together, and give me no respite."

Hud further goes on to say that not only they are unable to be of any use to you, but also you, with such a large population still lack the power to do anything even with the aid of those whom you worship other

than Him.

So I dare all of you to unite and plan any kind of conspiracies you can against me, give me no chances, you cannot do anything against me.

The verse says:

"Besides Him, (I am quit of everything you worship), therefore, scheme (your worst) against me, all together, and give me no respite."

Surah Hud – Verse 56

إِنّي تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَي اللَّهِ رَبّي وَرَبّكُم مَا مِن دَآبَّةٍ إِلاَّ هُوَ ءَاخِذُ بِنَاصِيَتِهَآ إِنَّ رَبّي عَلَي صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

56. "Verily, I have put my trust in Allah, my Lord and your Lord! (For) there is no moving creature but He holds it (in His control) by its forelock. Verily my Lord is on a Straight Path."

By relying on Allah, one can stand up against the entire world, for Allah is in full command of everything and besides being All-Powerful, He is also Just. Therefore one must rely on him who, besides having power, is just, too; such as Allah, the prophet and immaculate Imams.

The verse says:

"Verily, I have put my trust in Allah, my Lord and your Lord! (For) there is no moving creature but He holds it (in His control) by its forelock. Verily my Lord is on a Straight Path."

One can speak of Divine anger and the Divine system of justice being at work when the issue involved is the enmity and obstinacy of the idol worshippers, so that they may be transformed and become believers.

Surah Hud – Verse 57

فإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَقَدْ أَبْلَغْتُكُم مَآ أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ إِلَيْكُمْ وَيَسْتَخْلِفُ رَبّي قَوْماً غَيْرَكُمْ وَلا تَضُرُّونَهُ شَيْئاً إِنَّ رَبّي عَلَي كُلّ شَيْءٍ حَفِيظٌ

57. "But if you turn away (from my call), I have conveyed the Message with which I was sent to

you and my Lord will make another People to succeed you, and you will not harm Him in the least. Verily my Lord is Guardian over everything."

Eventually, Hud's last words to them are as that is they turn away from the Right Path, it is not he who will be at a loss as he has completed his mission which is conveying Allah's message.

The verse says:

"But if you turn away* (*from my call*)*, I have conveyed the Message with which I was sent to you…"

He means that they should not think that if his call had not been well received it would be a defeat for him. No, he completed his mission, and thus he had been the successful.

Then he warns them of the Divine punishment as the idol worshippers were threatened, saying that if they do not heed Allah's call, the Lord will soon exterminate them, replacing them with another people, and He will not suffer any loss.

The verse says:

"…and my Lord will make another People to succeed you, and you will not harm Him in the least…"

This is the law of creation, which is, if a nation is not eligible to receive Allah's blessings, it will be removed and will be replaced by another more deserving nation.

Also, they should beware, that Allah is the Guardian of everything and keeps a record of all accounts. He never misses a chance, He never forgets nor does He leave the prophets and His friends in the sea of oblivion. On the contrary, He is aware of everything and is in full command.

The verse says:

"…Verily my Lord is Guardian over everything."

Surah Hud – Verse 58

وَلَمَّا جَآءَ أَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا هُوداً وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنَّا وَنَجَّيْنَاهُم مِنْ عَذَابٍ غَلِيظٍ

58. "And when Our decree came, We saved Hud and those who believed with him, by a Mercy from Us and delivered them from a harsh chastisement."

Just as inflicting punishment takes place according to Allah's decree, being rescued from it also is in His hands and the prophets and their companions are exempt from Allah's penalty, because they obey His guidance.

The verse says:

"And when Our decree came, We saved Hud and those who believed with him, by a Mercy from Us and delivered them from a harsh chastisement."

Merely having faith in the prophets is not enough, following them and supporting them is also necessary.

We must also take note that the main source of all blessings is He, but His anger, estrangement and outrage have their roots in our conduct.

Surah Hud – Verse 59

وَتِلْكَ عَادٌ جَحَدُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَعَصَوْا رُسُلَهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا أَمْرَ كُلِّ جَبَّارٍ عَنِيدٍ

59. "And this was (the people of) 'Ad; they rejected the Signs of their Lord, and disobeyed His Messengers, and followed the command of every obstinate tyrant."

He summarizes the sins of the 'Ad into three areas in this verse. First, He says the people of 'Ad denied the Signs of their Lord obstinately, denying every sign sent as evidence of the authenticity of their prophet.

The verse says:

"And this was (the people of) 'Ad; they rejected the Signs of their Lord…"

Secondly, they opposed the prophets, with a roguish behavior and in an unruly manner. The verse continues:

"…and disobeyed His Messengers…"

Thirdly, they abandoned Allah's decree and followed the order of any despot instead.

"…and followed the command of every obstinate tyrant."

What a greater sin can be found that they abandoned faith, opposed their prophets and followed the obstinate tyrants.

The Arabic word /jabbar/ is a term used to denote a person who furiously strikes, kills, and destroys and

does not follow the rule of reason. And the term /'anid/ refers to someone who is extraordinarily hostile towards the truth and never acknowledges it.

These two characteristics describe the profiles of despots and tyrants who, in every epoch, are noted for never lending their ears to the truth, and whenever they face an opponent they mercilessly torture and eradicate him.

Surah Hud – Verse 60

وَأُتْبِعُوا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا لَعْنَةً وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَلَآ إِنَّ عَاداً كَفَرُوا رَبَّهُمْ أَلاَ بُعْداً لِعَادٍ قَوْمِ هُودٍ

60. "And they were pursued by a curse in this world, and on the Day of Resurrection. Behold! the 'Ad disbelieved in their Lord: so away with 'Ad, the people of Hud."

In this verse which ends the story of Hud and the tribe of 'Ad, the Qur'an explains the consequences of their evil acts and falsehood saying that they were damned and cursed in this world for their evil deeds and were made infamous with a notorious history after their death.

The verse says:

"And they were pursued by a curse in this world, and on the Day of Resurrection. Behold! the 'Ad disbelieved in their Lord:..."

It will be said on the Day of Resurrection:

"*Let it be known on the Day of Resurrection that the people of 'Ad refused to recognize their Lord and lost His favor upon them.*"

Although the term 'Ad is adequate for describing and introducing these people, the phrase "***the people of Hud***" has also been mentioned in the above verse which emphasizes and makes allusion to the fact that this group of people is the same one which annoyed their compassionate prophet so much and hence, distanced themselves from Allah's favor.

The verse continues saying:

"...so away with 'Ad, the people of Hud."

Verses number 50 to 60 of this Surah relate to the people of 'Ad. They were of the Arab race and resided in the Jazirat ul Arab or the Arabian Peninsula, but the name of this group of people is not

mentioned in the present Torah.

They were a people who enjoyed a high standard of living and lived in the magnificent towns according to the suras Al-Qamar, Al Haqqa, Al-A‘raf, Al-Sajdah, and Ash-Shu‘ara those people were tall, vigorous and had a unique civilization.

As far as their system of belief was concerned, they worshipped idols and followed tyrants. Hud invited them to worship the One and only God, and become monotheist. However, they did not submit and met their doom with Allah’s anger which was manifested in the form of furious, burning storms.

The people of ‘Ad consisted of two groups; the first ‘Ad and the second ‘Ad. The latter used to live in Ahqaf (a region in the Hijaz) or in the Yemen until seven hundred B.C.

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