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Section 5: Wealth and Children Shall Be of No Avail

Surah As-Saba- Verse 37

وَمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ بِالَّتِي تُقَرِّبُكُمْ عِندَنَا زُلْفَىٰ إِلَّا مَنْ ءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا
فَأُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ جَزَاءُ الضَّعْفِ بِمَا عَمِلُوا وَهُمْ فِي الْغُرُفَاتِ ءَامِنُونَ

37. “And neither your wealth nor your children are that which bring you nigh unto us, except for him who believes, and does righteousness, these are (the ones) for whom is a double recompense for what they did, and they in the exalted places shall be secure.”

Allah (s.w.t.) has appointed faith, righteous deed, charity, and sincerity as means for His nearness, while some unaware people think of wealth, children and race as the factors of nearness to Allah and having prosperity.

So, in this verse, the Qur'an pursues this very meaning more explicitly, and says:

“And neither your wealth nor your children are that which bring you nigh unto us...”

This is a great mistake that a group of people imagine that those who are in deprivation from the point of finance are disfavoured and reprobate in the sight of Allah, and those who are apparently in welfare with affluence of favours are beloved and accepted by Him.

There are many deprived persons who are tried by this means and reach the most superior ranks; and there are many persons who enjoy the comforts of life but whose wealth and properties are some pests for them and work as the cause of their punishment.

Does not the Holy Qur'an explicitly say in Surah Taqabun, No. 64, verse 15:

“Verily your properties and your children may be but a trial; where as Allah, with Him is the highest Reward”?

This statement does not mean that man may stop the necessary effort and endeavour in life, but the purpose is that having financial possibilities and abundant human powers are never counted as the criterion of spiritual values of man with Allah.

Then the Qur'an refers to the standard of the values of individuals and that which causes the nearness to Allah, and (as a separate exception) says:

“...except for him who believes, and does righteousness, these are (the ones) for whom is a double recompense for what they did, and they in the exalted places shall be secure.”

Thus, all these criterions of these two cases return to

“Faith and righteous deed”

from any one, in any time, and wherever they may be, and the difference of persons in the presence of Allah depends on the difference of the degrees of their Faith and righteous deeds, and there is nothing else save this.

Even having much knowledge and relating to some great persons, even to prophets, if they are not accompanied with these two criterions do not lonely increase anything to the value of man.

It is here that the holy Qur'an, with its unique explicitness, nullifies all deviated and superstitious imaginations in the field of the factors of getting nearness to Allah and the man's value of existence, and summarizes the noble standard in two things which all human beings can tolerate and obtain, so that neither anyone's material possibilities nor his deprivation, are effective in them.

Yes, if wealth and children also pave this way, they will take this divine colour and will assume the colour of faith and righteous deed, and they will be the cause of getting nearness to Allah.

But the properties and children that make man aloof from Allah, and like an idol will be worshipped which cause mischief and corruption, they are the fuels of Hell, and, as the Qur'an says, they are the man's enemy and the enemy of his happiness.

It says:

“O' you who have Faith! Verily, among your wives and your children are (some that are) enemies to yourselves so beware of them...”¹

However, as it was also said before, the Arabic term */di'f/* singly does not mean 'two fold', but it means

“many folds”, and it has been used with the same sense in the verse under discussion, because we know that the reward of each good deed is at least ten folds with Allah.

The holy Qur’an says:

“Whoever brings a good (deed) he shall have ten times its like...”,²

and sometimes it is much more than that.

The Arabic word ***/qurufat/*** is the plural form of ***/qurfah/*** in the sense of some rooms which are in the upstairs that have both some lighter and better weather, and the pests are far from them. That is why this meaning has been applied for the best abodes of Paradise.

This word is originally derived from ***/qarf/*** in the sense of lifting and taking something.

The application of the Qur’anic term ***/‘aminun/*** (***those who are in security***), concerning the people of Paradise, is a very comprehensive meaning which reflects the peace of their both body and spirit from any point of view, because they have neither the fear of an annihilation, destruction, and death, nor the fear of the enemy’s attack, nor the fear of sickness, pest, grief and even the fear of fear; and there is no bounty higher than this that one passes time in a complete security; in the same way that there is no affliction worse than insecurity in different aspects of life.

Surah As-Saba- Verses 38-39

وَالَّذِينَ يَسْعَوْنَ فِي آيَاتِنَا مُعَاجِزِينَ أُولَٰئِكَ فِي الْعَذَابِ مُحْضَرُونَ

قُلْ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَقْدِرُ لَهُ وَمَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَهُوَ يُخْلِفُهُ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ

38. “And those who strive against Our signs to void them, they shall be arraigned into the chastisement.”

39. “Say: ‘Verily my Lord amplifies the sustenance for whom He pleases of His servants and straitens (it) for him and whatever thing you spend He replaces it; and He is the Best Sustainers’.”

In order to wipe out the Truth, enemy always uses his best effort. So, in this verse, the Qur’an implies that those who try to nullify Allah’s signs not only they themselves do not have Faith, but also do not let

others pave the path of Truth, while they imagine that they can escape from the grips of the Power of Allah, while they will be brought into the painful chastisement on the Hereafter Day.

Since there is no word about future in the sentence:

“They shall be arraigned into the chastisement”,

it may point to this sense that in this world they are also involved in chastisement just now. What chastisement is worse than this prison which he has built for him by his wealth and children?

The verse says:

“And those who strive against Our signs to void them, they shall be arraigned into the chastisement.”

There is also this probability that the above meaning is for the sake that this Divine promise is so certain that as if they are in it just now in the same way that it has been mentioned in the previous holy verse:

“...and they in the exalted places shall be secure.”

As some philologists have said, the application of the Qur’anic term ***/mu’ajizin/*** means that they imagine that they can flee from the realm of Allah’s Power and His punishment, while this is a mere baseless delusion.

Through the next verse, Qur’an says:

“Say: ‘Verily my Lord amplifies the sustenance for whom He pleases of His servants and straitens (it) for him...”

Then it continues saying:

“...and whatever thing you spend He replaces it; and He is the Best Sustainers’.”

The content of the verse is an emphasis on the previous matter, but from two points of view it is new.

The first is that the previous verse the concept of which was the same as this one was mostly about wealth, children, and disbelievers, while the application of the Arabic word ***/’ibad/ (servants)*** in the verse under discussion shows that it refers to the believers.

That is, concerning the believers, He sometimes amplifies the sustenance – where it is good for the believer – and He sometimes straitens and limits the sustenance in the place where it requires. However, the vastness and narrowness of sustenance can not be the evidence for anything.

The second matter is that the previous holy verse said about the vastness and narrowness of sustenance and living concerning two different groups of men, while the verse under discussion may be

a hint to two different states of one person whose sustenance is vast and sometimes is straitened and limited.

Moreover, what is mentioned at the beginning of this verse is, in fact, a preliminary for that which is at the end of the verse, i.e. encouraging to spending in the cause of Allah.

The Qur'anic sentence *ifahuwa yuxlifuhul (He replaces it)* is an interesting meaning which shows that whatever is spent in the cause of Allah is, in fact, a rich profitable bargain, because Allah undertakes its recompense; and we know that when a gracious one undertakes the recompense of something he does not observe equality, but he pays it back several folds, and sometimes hundred folds.

The promise of Allah, of course, is not limited to Hereafter and next life, which is certain in its turn, but in this world, too, He gives kinds of favours abundantly instead of those godly payments.

The Qur'anic sentence

“...and He is the Best sustainers”

has a vast meaning which can be considered from different dimensions.

He is the Best of all sustainers because He knows what to bestow and how much of provision He may endow that it would not be the cause of mischief and corruption, and He knows everything.

Whatever He wills He can grant to whomever He wishes, because He is powerful to do everything.

Allah does not demand any recompense for what He bestows, because He is self-sufficient in Essence.

Allah grants the things even without asking them from Him, because He is aware of all things, and He is Wise.

And none, but He, is the giver of sustenance, since whatever a person has is from Him, and whatever a person gives to another one the person is the means of transferring the sustenance, not the giver of sustenance.

This point is also noteworthy that for fleeting properties He gives some lasting bounties, and He gives 'abundant' recompense for a 'scanty' deed.

Surah As-Saba- Verses 40-41

وَيَوْمَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ يَقُولُ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ أَهَؤُلَاءِ إِيَّاكُمْ كَانُوا يَعْبُدُونَ

قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ أَنْتَ وَلِيِّنَا مِنْ دُونِهِمْ بَلْ كَانُوا يَعْبُدُونَ الْجِنَّ أَكْثَرُهُمْ بِهِمْ مُؤْمِنُونَ

40. “And on the Day when He will muster them all together then He will say to the angels: ‘Did these worship you?’”

41. “They (the angels) will say: ‘Glory be to You. You are our Guardian, not they, nay rather, they were worshipping the jinn, (while) most of them were believers in them’.”

In Hereafter, besides reprimanding the polytheists, Allah asks from the objects of worship. He asks whether they called them to polytheism, so that it proves that the objects of worship themselves condemn this action. So, in this verse, the Qur’an implies that in Hereafter He musters all, including the worshippers and the objects of worship.

The verse says:

“And on the Day when He will muster them all together then He will say to the angels: ‘Did these worship you?’”

It is evident that this question is not an inquiry that can disclose an unknown thing for the Pure Essence of Allah, because He is Omniscient; the aim is that the facts might be said by the angels’ statements, so that this group of wrong worshippers might become abashed and ashamed, and know that the angels are completely hateful of their action and that they become hopeless for ever.

Mentioning ‘angels’ out of all objects of worship that the polytheists had, is either for the sake that the angels were the most honoured creatures that they used to worship.

Or it is for the sake that the idolaters considered the pieces of stone and wood as the symbol of the heavenly creatures (angels, spirits, and prophets) and they worshipped them under this title. It is cited in the history of idolatry among Arabs that once when ‘Amr-ubn-Luha had travelled to Syria saw some people who were worshipping their idols.

He asked them about that action and they answered that they were some gods that they had made in the shapes of heavenly creatures in order to get help from them and by means of them they asked for rain.

‘Amr-ubn-Luha liked it and followed their idea and he brought an idol with him to Arabia as a present, and since then idolatry began there and continued until when Islam came and rooted it out.

Now we refer to the response of the angel in answer to the question of Allah.

They will choose the most inclusive and the most polite answer as the verse says:

“They (the angels) will say: ‘Glory be to You. You are our Guardian, not they, nay rather, they

were worshipping the jinn, (while) most of them were believers in them’.”

Concerning the kind of the concept of the answer of the angels, commentators have delivered various ideas and each of them has rendered it differently. But what seems nearer to the fact is that: the purpose of ‘jinn’ is Satan and other evil beings that encouraged the idol-worshippers to this action and decorated it in their sight.

Thus, the purpose of ‘worshipping the jinn’ is obeying their commands and accepting their temptations.

By expressing their hate and repudiation and announcing their dislike of this action the angels will say that the main factor of this corruption was Satans, though they apparently worshipped the angels, the real feature of it must be made manifest.

Similar to this meaning is also recited in Surah Yunus, where it says:

“And the Day We shall muster them all, then We shall say to those who associated others (with Us): ‘Get you to your place! You and your associates’, then We shall set a space between them, and their associates shall say: ‘It was not us (indeed) that you used to worship!’” 3

That is, you, indeed, used to worship your own low desires, delusions and conjectures, not us.

Moreover, your worship was done neither by our command nor with our consent, and such worship is not, in fact, a real worship.

Surah As-Saba– Verse 42

فَالْيَوْمَ لَا يَمْلِكُ بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ نَفْعًا وَلَا ضَرًّا وَنَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ
النَّارِ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ بِهَا تُكَذِّبُونَ

42. “So on that Day one of you shall not own for the other any profit or harm, and We will say unto those who did injustice: ‘Taste you the chastisement of the Fire which you used to deny’.”

In Hereafter both sovereignty and ownership belong to only Allah. (None of objects of worship – the Jinn, the angels, and others – has any power. Neither the object of worship can do anything for its worshipper, nor can a worshipper do anything for the object of worship).

This verse implicitly says that on that Day the hope of the polytheists will change into despair and this fact will be clearly made manifest for them that their objects of worship will not be able to work for them the slightest, but, on the contrary, they will be hatred of them.

So, in the above mentioned holy verse, as an expressive conclusion, the Holy Qur’an says:

“So on that Day one of you shall not own for the other any profit or harm...”

Therefore, neither the angels, who were apparently their objects of worship, can intercede nor are they themselves able to help each other.

It is here that Allah announces:

“...and We will say unto those who did injustice: ‘Taste you the chastisement of the Fire which you used to deny’.”

This is not the first time and verse that the Qur’an refers to polytheists as ‘unjust’ and cruel ones, but in many other verses of the Qur’an ‘disbelief’ has been rendered into ‘injustice’ or ‘pagans and polytheists’ have been introduced as ‘the unjust ones’, because, before anything else, they have done injustice to themselves.

They take off the honourable crown of worship of Allah from their own heads and put the abased shackle of servitude of idols on their necks and, thus, they naturally lose their entire honour, personality, and fate.

In fact, in Hereafter, they receive both the punishment of their own polytheism and the punishment of the denial of Resurrection, and both of these meanings are compiled in the sentence:

“...and We will say unto those who did injustice: ‘Taste you the chastisement of the Fire which you used to deny’.”

Surah As-Saba- Verse 43

وَإِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ قَالُوا مَا هَذَا إِلَّا رَجُلٌ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَصُدَّكُمْ عَمَّا كَانَ
يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَقَالُوا مَا هَذَا إِلَّا إِفْكٌ مُفْتَرًى وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ إِنَّ
هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ

43. “And when Our clear signs are recited to them, they say: ‘This is naught but a man who desires to bar you from that your fathers used to worship’; and they say: ‘This (Qur’an) is nothing but a falsehood forged’. And the unbelievers say to the truth, when it has come to them: ‘This is nothing but a manifest sorcery’.”

The Arabic word **/bayyinat/** is the plural form of the term **/bayyinah/** and it is used for a proof that its truthfulness is manifest and the word **/’ifk/** is used for something which has been reversed and its original shape has changed. The verses of Allah are clear, and the denial of disbelievers is because of

their obstinacy.

That is why the Qur'an says:

“And when Our clear signs are recited to them, they say: ‘This is naught but a man who desires to bar you from that your fathers used to worship’...”

This is their first reaction in the face of these clear verses that they propounded among this fanatic tribe in order to move their bigotry.

Specially the application of the term /'aba'ukum/ (your fathers) instead of 'our fathers' is mostly for this very purpose that they might make those fanatic people understand that the legacy of their ancestors was in danger and they should stand against that man and dismiss him.

The application of the phrase:

“This is naught but a man who desires to”

has been used for the contempt of the Prophet (S) by means of two elements: one is the word /haḥa/ (this), and the other is /rajul/ (a man), in an indefinite form, while all of them knew the Prophet (S) very well and that he had a good background.

This is also notable that the Qur'an qualifies the 'signs' by the word 'clear', which means the proofs of their legitimacy are accompanied with them and this fact does not need to be explained.

Then the Qur'an refers to their second statement that they expressed in order to nullify the invitation of the holy Prophet (S).

It says:

“...and they say: ‘This (Qur'an) is nothing but a falsehood forged’...”

The Arabic word /'ifk/, as was explained before, means: 'anything that changes from its original form'. So, the opposite words in Arabic are called /mu'tafikat/, then it has been used also for any falsehood, accusation, and any incorrect statement. Some others say that the word /'ifk/ is used for great lies.

Although the application of the word /'ifk/ for accusing the Prophet of Islam (S) of falsehood was enough, they emphasized it with the Arabic word /muftara/ without having any document for this claim of theirs.

Finally, their third accusation to the Prophet (S) was the denigration of 'sorcery', as the last part of the verse under discussion says:

“...And the unbelievers say to the truth, when it has come to them: ‘This is nothing but a manifest sorcery’.”

It is surprising that this aberrant group used to state these three accusations with the most explicit emphasis which was restriction. Once they said that it was only a manifest sorcery; in another place they said it was but a lie; and, finally, in the third place they said that he only wanted to bar them from the objects of worship of their ancestors.

These three undue charges, of course, do not contrast with each other, although they did not refuse to say contradictory words. Therefore, there is no reason that, according to the statement of some commentators, we attribute each of these accusations to one group of the disbelievers.

This point is also notable that: in the first and second stages the Qur'an has used the word /qalu/ (they said), but in the third stage, instead of that, it has used the sentence: /qalallaḥina kafaru/ (those who disbelieved said), pointing to this fact that all these miseries originate from disbelief, denial of the Truth, and enmity with reality.

Else, how is it possible that, without having any reasoning, one forges all these accusations, one after another, to a man that the proofs of legitimacy are clearly seen from his speech, his deed, and his background? As if, by these three accusations they followed an accurate program in conflicting against the Prophet (S).

On one side, they saw that it was a new religion and had a proper attraction. On the other side, the Prophet's threats to Divine punishment in this world and the next, willy-nilly, had made some people terrified.

On the third side, the Prophet's miracles (S) affected on the minds of common people.

They had devised a way in order to nullify each of these three subjects.

So, in opposition to the new religion, they attached to protecting the heritage of the ancestors, while their ancestors were, as the Qur'an says, the extension of verse which says:

"...had no understanding of anything nor were they guided aright."⁴

It does not matter that he restrains people from such superstitious customs which are the devise of the foolish ignorant ones, and that against the Prophet's threats to Divine punishment, they had propounded the subject of mendacity in order to make people calm.

In the face of miracles, they propounded the accusation of 'sorcery' so that they could justify it thereby and stop people from embracing it.

But, as we know and history testifies it, too, none of these Satanic temptations did work effectively, and finally people accepted this pure religion in groups.

Surah As-Saba- Verse 44

وَمَا آتَيْنَاهُمْ مِنْ كُتُبٍ يَدْرُسُونَهَا وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ قَبْلَكَ مِنْ نَذِيرٍ

44. “And We had not given them (Arab pagans) any Books which they could study, nor did We send unto them before you any Warner.”

The Holy Qur'an in this verse answers their all vain claims by one sentence.

It says:

“And We had not given them (Arab pagans) any Books which they could study, nor did We send unto them before you any Warner.”

This points to this fact that these claims can be brought forth by the one to whom has already come a prophet and has brought a heavenly Book for him that he compares the content of the new invitation with it and he finds it different with and he belies it.

Once he says this new invitation is untrue. Another time he says that the religion of your ancestors must not be lost. And sometimes he calls the bringer of the new invitation a sorcerer.

But the one, who relies only on his own thought and without any heavenly revelation and without having any knowledge, delivers some vanities, has no right to judge like that.

This point is also understood from this verse that by relying only on the power of his own intellect, one can not pave the difficult path of life successfully, but he must get help from the power of revelation and with the aid of the leadership of the Prophet (S) steps in the way, else there is darkness and he must be afraid of the danger of aberration.

Surah As-Saba- Verse 45

وَكَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَمَا بَلَغُوا مِعْشَارَ مَا آتَيْنَاهُمْ فَكَذَّبُوا رُسُلِي فَكَيْفَ كَانَ
نَكِيرِ

45. “And those before them rejected (the messengers) and these have not yet attained a tenth of what We had given them but they belied My apostles; so (see) how was My punishment (unto them)!”

Relying on their wealth and power, pagans used to deny the Truth, and Allah said that their wealth, comparing that of others, is not a tenth of it.

So, this verse has threatened that disobedient group by some effective and expressive words, and says:

“And those before them rejected (the messengers) and these have not yet attained a tenth of what We had given them...”

But you can see what kind of fate they had!

The verse continues saying:

“...but they belied My apostles; so (see) how was My punishment (unto them)!”

Their ruined cities, destroyed because of the Divine punishment, are near to you alongside your way toward Syria. You may take them as a lesson, and hearken the necessary admonitions from the tongue of these ruins and guess your fate according to them, because neither the way of treatment of Allah (s.w.t.) is changeable nor is your state higher than theirs.

The Arabic word */mi'sar/* is derived from */u'sr/* and it is in the same meaning, one tenth.

Some commentators have taken it with the sense of one-hundredth, but many Arabic dictionaries and commentaries have mentioned the first meaning for it. But, however, these kinds of figures do not refer to the number and they are used to show scantiness in comparison with the figures like: seven, seventy, one thousand, and the like which are used to show multiplicity.

Therefore, the concept of the verse is that Allah has vanished some powerful haughty persons that comparing them these people have not even a small part of their power.

Similar to this meaning is said in other different verses of the Qur'an, including Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 6 which says:

“Have they not considered how many a generation We destroyed before them, when We had established in the earth (to the extent) that We have not established you, and We sent abundant (water down from) the sky upon them and made the rivers flow beneath them? Yet We destroyed them for their sins, and raised up after them another generation.”

Again, the like of this very meaning is mentioned in Surah Al-Mu'min, No. 40, verse 21; and in Surah Ar-Room, No. 30, verse 9, too.

The Qur'anic word */nakir/* is derived from */inkar/* in the same sense, and the purpose of denying Allah is the denial of His punishment.

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1. Surah Al-Taqabun, No. 64, verse 14
 2. Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 160
 3. Surah Yunus, No. 10, verse 28
 4. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2 verse 170

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