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Section 6: To Seek Guidance from the People of the Qur'an

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 41

وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا فِي اللَّهِ مِن بَعْدِ مَا ظُلِمُوا لَنُبَوِّئَنَّهُم فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَلَاَجْرُ الاَخِرَةِ أَكْبَرُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ

41. "And those who migrated in Allah's cause after they had been oppressed, undoubtedly We will give them a good abode in this world, and certainly the reward in the Hereafter is much greater, if they know (this);"

Occasion of Revelation

As for the occasion of the revelation of this verse and the following one, it is quoted that some groups of Muslims like 'Bilal', ''Ammar', 'Sahib' and 'Khab ab' fell under great pressure in Mecca after they embraced Islam, and after the migration of the Prophet (S), they went to Medina for the strengthening of Islam and for propagating their religion to others.

Among them Sahib, who was an elderly man, proposed to the pagans of Mecca to confiscate all of his property in exchange for allowing him to go to Medina, to which they agreed.

The above verse was revealed which reiterated the victory for him and for the ones like him in this world and the next.

The Reward of the Emigrants

In pursuance of the previous verses, which dealt with those who rejected the resurrection as well as the obstinate pagans, this verse deals with the true Emigrants, so as to make the situation of the two groups clear as compared to each other.

At first, He proclaims that those who went on exodus after being oppressed for the sake of Allah undoubtedly will be given a decent abode in this world, for they gave up everything they had with utmost sincerity for the propagation of Islam.

The verse says:

"And those who migrated in Allah's cause after they had been oppressed, undoubtedly We will give them a good abode in this world..."

This reward is given to them for this world; and if they know, they shall have greater rewards for the world to come.

The verse continues saying:

"...and certainly the reward in the Hereafter is much greater, if they know (this);"

At the end, migration, perseverance and trust are the codes of conduct for victory over the enemies, and one must rely on his own resistance, trust, and faith whenever confronting the oppressors and he should not rely on the powers and forces of external foreign sources.

Hence, those who give up their belongings and homeland and go on exodus while preserving their own lives for the propagation of religion, will benefit most.

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 42

الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَعَلَي رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

42. "Those who endured patiently and on their Lord did they rely."

The Qur'an describes these true, steadfast emigrants who are truly faithful with perseverance by two attributes in this noble verse, saying:

"Those who endured patiently and on their Lord did they rely."

Some Traditions

1. Imam Baqir (as) said:

"Patience is of two categories: Patience upon calamities, which is good and beautiful; and the best of the two is the patience in avoiding of the prohibitions." 1

2. The Prophet said:

"Patience is the best mount. Allah has not provided any servant with sustenance better and wider than patience." 2

3. Ali (as) said:

*"Patience is the best repeller of affliction."*3

4. Also, Ali (as) said:

*"O' people! Be patient, because he who has not patience has not religion."*4

5. The Holy Prophet (S) said:

"He who loves to be the most virtuous of the people, then he must rely on Allah." 5

6. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"The best of the servants with Allah is the one who mostly relies on Him and obeys Him." 6

7. Imam Rida (as) was asked about the limit of reliance. He said:

"It is that you do not fear any one other than Allah."

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 43

وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَا مِن قَبْلِكَ إِلاَّ رِجَالاً نُوحِي إِلَيْهِمْ فَسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِن كُنتُم لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ

43. "And We did not send before you except men unto whom We revealed; So ask the people of 'Thikr'* (*the Qur'an*) *if you do not know,"

At this time, addressing the Prophet (S), the Qur'an asserts that Allah did not send anyone before him except those individuals from mankind whose hearts were illuminated with the light of Divine revelation. That is, they were just like him in divine messengership benefiting from revelation and in the capacity of

being His own envoys.

This matter was raised in answer to the pagans of Mecca who rejected the prophetic mission of man. Allah points out that the prophet must be of the people's own equals so that they can see him and talk to him and, finally, understand his words. Therefore, in such a case, it is not appropriate that instead of a man, an angel be appointed as a messenger to carry out the prophetic mission.

The verse says:

"And We did not send before you except men unto whom We revealed; So ask the people of 'Thikr' (***the Qur'an***) ***if you do not know,"***

In other words, He recounts in this verse: We did not send before you, O' Mohammad (S), anyone to any nation but the cases confirmed and equipped with Our revelation, to which your people raise objections as to why it is that their prophet is not an angel who is from among the human kind.

Declare that they seek the truth out by referring to the Ahl-uth-Thikr, the knowledgeable people and the scientists of each nation, if they are unable to put questions concerning issues to all prophets who belong to the human kind.

According to Ibn Abbas, the object of 'Ahl-uth-Thikr' are the Christian and Jewish scholars in this context; that is: were they doubtful as to the truth of the matter, they would better refer to the people of Turat, and the nation of the Bible for the clarification of the issues.

These words are addressed to the pagans, for the news which the Jews and the Christians provided them with, out of their Books, were acceptable to them while rejecting the words of the Prophet (S), owing to their intensive hostility. Some, however, claim that 'Ahl-uth-Thikr' signifies the 'followers of the Qur'an,' because /thikr/ means 'the Qur'an'.

Jabir-Ibn-i-Yazid and Muhammad Ibn-i-Muslim, quoting Imam-Mohammad-i-Baqir (as) state that he has proclaimed:

*"We are 'Ahl-uth-Thikr'.*7

To sum up, this noble verse deals with a general universal principle which is acceptable by human reason, and it is referring of whatever one is not knowledgeable about to the experts in that field.

That is, for whatever you do not know, you may ask the knowledgeable ones. Certainly, the best example in religious issues is the Ahl-ul-Bayt of the Prophet (S) who can provide the point of reference.

There are numerous quotations as to the validity of this point in the Shi'ite as well as the Sunni literature which have been dealt with extensively in the third volume of Mulhaqat-i-'Ihq aq-ul-Haqq p.p. 482, onwards.

Tabari, Ibn-i-Kathir, and ' Allusi have also pointed out that 'Ahl-uth-Thikr' is the same and identical with 'Ahl-ul-Bayt' in their commentaries beneath this verse. We also have it that H afiz Muhammad Ibn-i-Mu'min-i-ShiRazi has mentioned the same matter in 'Mustakhraj' when discussing the 'position' of the 'Ahl-ul-Bayt'.

Again, in vol. 23 of Bihar, pages 172 onwards, there have been quoted about 60 quotations concerning this issue, through some of which the Immaculate Imams have confirmed that:

"Swearing by Allah, it is we who are the 'Ahl-uth-Thikr', the responsible, (*to whom the people must put their questions*)*."*

Therefore, one must turn to the specialists in the Qur'anic sciences, namely, the Ahl-ul-Bayt for ones inquiry regarding his religious and ideological questions, who are experts in the field of the Qur'anic knowledge and not at random turn to whoever has got a superficial knowledge of Islam.

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 44

بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ وَأَنزَلْنَآ إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

44. "(We sent the prophets before you) with clear proofs (miracles) and (celestial) Books and We sent down to you the 'Thikr' (the Reminder, Qur'an) that you may make clear to mankind what has been sent down to them, that they may reflect."

The Arabic term /bayyin at/ signifies clear evidences of the prophetic mission and miracles; and the word /zubur/ is the plural form of /zabur/ which means 'Celestial Book'. The verse probably refers to two kinds of revelation, one of which is the Qur'an, which belongs to all the people.

The other one is aimed at the interpretation and explanation of the Qur'an, and which is particular and exclusive to the Prophet (S). It signifies that We sent you the 'Thikr', so as you explain the interpretation and commentary of the Qur'an which has been descended for the people.

Therefore, the prophets have had both miracles and Divine Book, so that the people do not get mixed up between right and wrong.

The verse says:

"(We sent the prophets before you) with clear proofs (miracles) and (celestial) Books..."

Therefore, Allah implies in the Qur'an that: If you are unaware, ask those who are knowledgeable about the clear evidences and the Books of the previous prophets.

It is in this way that the question of specialization has been recognized as having a sound basis in the Holy Qur'an. Furthermore, it has been the only way of acceptance or rejection in all fields, on the basis of which, all Muslims are required to have access to knowledgeable and learned people in all fields who are honest at all times and places for their reference.

Turning to the Prophet (S) later, He declares that We thus revealed to you this 'Thikr' (the Qur'an) so that you explain to them what is descended to the people, so that they meditate upon these verses and on their duties which are incumbent upon them.

The verse says:

"...and We sent down to you the 'Thikr'* (*the Reminder, Qur'an*) *that you may make clear to mankind what has been sent down to them, that they may reflect."

In fact, your call and your mission are not in principle a novelty or an unprecedented matter. It is just in the same manner which We revealed the Books to the previous prophets so as to make the people acquainted with their duties towards Allah, their own selves, and the other people.

Just in the same way We also revealed this Qur'an to you so that you engage in the explanation of its didactic lessons, thus awakening mankind to meditate.

Therefore, it is the duty of the Prophet (S) to explain the Qur'an and it is the duty of the people to accept those explanations on the basis of their sound thinking, for the Qur'an is 'Thikr', 'reminder' and, at the same time, it is a way of mentioning and calling man's attention, while distancing him from the core of negligence, oblivion and erroneous behavior.

Surah An-Nahl – Verses 45 - 47

أَفَأَمِنَ الَّذِينَ مَكَرُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَن يَخْسِفَ اللَّهُ بِهِمُ الأَرْضَ أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لاَ يَشْعُرُونَ

أَوْ يَأْخُذَهُمْ فِي تَقَلُّبِهِمْ فَمَا هُم بِمُعْجِزِينَ

أَوْ يَأْخُذَهُمْ عَلَي تَخَوُّفٍ فإِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَرَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ

45. "Do then those who devise evil (plots) feel secure (of this) that Allah will not cause the earth to swallow them up, or that the wrath will not come upon them from whence they do not perceive?"
46. "Or that He may not seize them during their movement, so that they shall not frustrate (Allah's wrath)."
47. "Or that He will not seize them in the state of fear, for verily your Lord is certainly Compassionate, Merciful."

Allah, the Almighty, in these noble verses, has mentioned four kinds of punishment for the conspirators against the religion:

Punishment on the earth:

"Allah will cause the earth to swallow them up."

Celestial punishment:

"The wrath will come upon them"

Sudden punishment:

"He may seize them during their movement."

Spiritual punishment:

"He will seize them in the state of fear."

He, the Mighty, has pointed out the above punishments so as to make the conspirators against religion aware that certainly their tricks become null and void when confronted the Divine power.

Different Kinds of Punishment for Various Sins

The Qur'an deals with the demonstrative materials and emotional questions, intermingling them in such a way that they make the utmost impact on the audience.

The previous verses dealt with a logical discussion regarding the issues of the prophetic mission and resurrection in connection with the pagans. In here, it concerns itself with the threatening of the oppressors and the tyrants as well as the obstinate sinners, and rather scares them with the different types of the Divine punishments.

At first, it raises the question whether those conspirators who tried to put out the light of the truth with their evil plans feel safe and secure from Allah's making the earth swallow them.

The verse says:

"Do then those who devise evil (plots) feel secure (of this) that Allah will not cause the earth to swallow them up…"

Is it a remote possibility that a terrible earthquake strikes the earth, splitting the crust of the earth, opening it up and swallowing them all with all their belongings, as was the case repeatedly with the previous nations?

Then, it adds: Or when they are in a negligent mood, the Divine punishment overtakes them from whence they never perceive?

The verse continues saying:

"…or that the wrath will not come upon them from whence they do not perceive?"

Or, as they struggle for accumulating more wealth and increasing more income, the Divine punishment strikes them hard, while they are unable to escape the consequences of their punishment?

The verse says:

"Or that He may not seize them during their movement, so that they shall not frustrate (Allah's wrath)."

Or else, the Divine punishment does not strike them all of a sudden; it strikes them on a gradual basis and along with consecutive warnings.

The verse says:

"Or that He will not seize them in the state of fear, for verily your Lord is certainly compassionate and Merciful."

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 48

أَوَ لَم يَرَوْا إِلَي مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ مِن شَيْءٍ يَتَفَيَّؤُا ظِلاَلُهُ عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَالشَّمَآئِلِ سُجَّداً لِلَّهِ وَهُمْ دَاخِرُونَ

48. "Have they not seen all things that Allah has created the shadows of which spread from right and left, prostrating (before Allah) while they are humble?"

The Arabic term /fi'/ refers to the shadow in the afternoon which is reversing; while the term /zill/ refers to any kinds of shadow.

The Qur'anic word /d axir/ signifies 'humble', and it is most probable that the aim in stating 'the right side' and 'the north side'; in the verse it refers to the two sides of the day, namely, morning and evening. Perhaps, because shadow spreads on the earth, the expression of prostration is applied for it, though from the point of creation, all beings are prostrating and humble before Allah.

At any rate, the Qur'an implies in this verse whether those pagans who reject the Oneness of Allah and refute His blessed Prophet (S) do not observe the trees, mountains, shadow-casting objects and buildings which are the created things of Allah and cast their shadows to their right and sometimes to their left-side?

For, at dawn, if man stands facing the 'qiblah' his shadow will be cast in front of him, after dawn, it falls to his right side and, in the late noon, his shadow will be reflected behind him, while at sunset, it falls on his left side.

This is the meaning of the shadows turning to one's right and to the one's left side. This interpretation belongs to Kalbi who remarks that when the Qur'an states that shadows prostrate before Allah, it means that shadows are in obeisance and obey the rules of Allah and their turnings and rotations are not achieved in accordance to their own will.

This verse is like verse 15, Surah Ar-Ra'd, No. 13 which says:

"And whoever is in the skies and on the earth prostrates willingly or unwillingly, and (***so do***) ***their shadows in the mornings and the evenings."***

So the Qur'anic phrase /wa hum d axir□n/ signifies that they are mean and humiliated.

The verse says:

"Have they not seen all things that Allah has created the shadows of which spread from right and left, prostrating (***before Allah***) ***while they are humble?"***

Thus, Allah wants to make us understand that all beings, living and inanimate, are humble before Him because of their needs for their Omnipotent and Wise Creator. That is: because if He tends to be slow in affairs, all 'frames and modes of behavior' will collapse and perish. Therefore, all beings, just like mankind, are prostrating and humble before Him.

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 49

وَلِلَّهِ يَسْجُدُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الاَرْضِ مِن دَآبَّةٍ وَالْمَلاَئِكَةُ وَهُمْ لاَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ

49. "And whatever is in the skies and whatever is in the earth, whether (moving) creatures and angels, prostrate before Allah (only) and they do not pride."

The Arabic term /dabbah/ refers to that living being which moves from a place to another place. This word is used in the cases of 'man', 'animals' and 'jinns'. However, it is not used for 'angels'.

The aim in stating the prostration of all beings, earthly or celestial, is either their genetic humbleness before the laws of existence, or it might be a prostration emanating from their consciousness and understanding, in which case, the latter interpretation is apparently intended, though it is beyond our understanding.

In other words, all beings which are in the skies and all those which are on the earth, prostrate before Allah. The intention in stating /min dabbah/ (whatever moves) is those earthly beings which move or come and go on the surface of the earth.

The angels also prostrate before the magnanimity of Allah and worship Him. The Qur'an mentions the angels apart from other beings so as to glorify their position. Another point to be considered is that the word /dabbah/ is applied to those beings which move and which come and go. However, we must keep in mind that the angels have got wings and can fly as well.

The verse says:

"And whatever is in the skies and whatever is in the earth, whether (moving) creatures and angels, prostrate before Allah (only) and they do not pride."

The Qur'anic sentence /wa hum l a yastakbir□n/ signifies that the angels do never abstain from the worshipping of Allah and they never show an arrogant attitude. This sentence qualifies the angels, for it is the angels who do not show the least arrogance in humbleness and prostration before Allah.

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 50

يَخَافُونَ رَبَّهُم مِّن فَوْقِهِمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ

50. "They fear their Lord (supreme) from above them, and they do what they are commanded."

The angels are utterly subservient towards Allah. Our fear of Allah is because of the sins which we have committed. However, the fear of the angels of Allah has its roots in the magnitude and splendor of Allah.

It is for this reason that the Qur'an says in this verse:

"They fear their Lord (supreme) from above them, and they do what they are commanded."

The reason why the Qur'anic phrase /min fauqihim/ 'from above them' has been used is for two aspects:

One side to this issue is that they fear the punishment of Allah, which, in such cases, is mostly inflicted from above one's head.

Allah is qualified as being superior and being above everything else in power and perfection, and He all-encompasses in Guardianship and in 'Omnipotence' over all celestial and earthly possible beings. Therefore, the above-mentioned interpretation is suitable.

One can, therefore, conclude from this holy verse that there are two signs for the negation of oppression: Fear when confronting responsibilities, and the execution of Allah's commandments without any questioning.

Therefore, if all beings, like angels, are humble and God-fearing, and prostrate before Allah, why should we human beings not prostrate before Him and go on oppressing others?

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1. Us□l-i-Kafi, vol. 3, p. 148
2. Musakkin-ul-Fu'ad, pp. 47, 48 and 50
3. Ghurar-ul-Hikam
4. Ghurar-ul-Hikam
5. Mishkat-ul-'Anwar, p. 50
6. Majm□'ah Warram, vol. 3, p. 288
7. Tafsir-i-Burhan

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