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Section 9: Lut Admonishes His People

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 160-164

كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ لُوطٍ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ أَخُوهُمْ لُوطٌ أَلاَ تَتَّقُونَ

إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُونِ

وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلاَّ عَلَى رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

160. "The Lut (people) belied the messengers."

161. "When their brother Lut said to them: 'Will you not fear (Allah)?'"

162. "Verily I am unto you a trustworthy, messenger."

163. "Then be in awe of Allah and obey me."

164. "And I do not ask you any recompense for it, my recompense is only from the Lord of the

worlds."

The rejection of one Divine prophet is always the same as rejecting all prophets.

(Although every nation had its own prophet whom they belied, since all Divine prophets have a single aim and program, belying one of them means belying all of them.)

However, the sixth prophet, a part of whose life story and his deviated people is mentioned in this Surah, is Hadrat Lut (as). Although he was living at the same time with Abraham (as), the statement of his life story has not been mentioned next to that of Abraham's, for the Qur'an is not a history book that explains the events one after another.

It considers the whole aspects of training, education, and improving man which requires some other proportionalities, and here, the life story of Lut and his people is more consistent with the life stories of the prophets who were mentioned recently.

At first, it says:

"The Lut (people) belied the messengers."

As it was mentioned formerly, too, the application of the Qur'anic word ***/mursalin/*** (***messengers***), in the plural form, is either for the unity of the call of the prophets, that rejecting one of them is counted as the rejecting all of them; or, in fact, they believed in none of the former prophets, either.

Then the Qur'aan points to the call of Lut, which is in line with the quality of the call of other ancient prophets.

It says:

"When their brother Lut said to them: 'Will you not fear (Allah)?'"

The tone of his speech and his deep and extraordinary sympathy shows that he speaks like a brother.

Then he added:

"Verily I am unto you a trustworthy messenger."

Have you seen any treachery from me? It is the same from now on, and I will certainly observe the deposit of Divine revelation and conveying the message of Allah to you.

If it is so, be pious, and be in awe of Allah, and obey me because I lead you to happiness and prosperity.

The noble verse says:

"Then be in awe of Allah and obey me."

You may not think that this call is a means for obtaining the worldly wealth and that I pursue a material aim. No, it is not so, and I do not want you to give me the slightest wage.

My wage is only to the Lord of the worlds.

The verse says:

"And I do not ask you any recompense for it, my recompense is only from the Lord of the worlds."

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 165-167

أَتَأْتُونَ الذُّكْرَانَ مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ

وَتَذَرُونَ مَا خَلَقَ لَكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُم بَلْ أَنتُمْ قَوْمٌ عَادُونَ

قَالُوا لَئِن لَّمْ تَنتَهِ يَا لُوطُ لَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُخْرَجِينَ

165. "Of all the creatures in the world, do you come to the males?"
166. "And leave what your Lord has created for you of your wives? Nay, you are a people transgressing (the limits)"
167. "They said: 'If you desist not, O Lut! you shall surely be of those who are expelled'."

For the act of forbidding the wrong, the current sins and unlawful things of every kind and in any time must be recognized and people must earnestly be urged to desist from committing them.

One of the unlawful things is sodomy.

The punishment of the person who commits it is slaughter.This deed is so hideous and indecent that even if a person has sexual intercourse with an animal, the flesh of that animal is religiously forbidden to be consumed.

Sodomy is a very mean, ugly and indecent action and it is unlawful. So, these verses criticize those people's indecent deed and some of their immoral deviations, and since their most important deviation

was sexual deviation and sodomy, Lut (as) emphasizes on this very issue and says:

"Of all the creatures in the world, do you come to the males?"

It means that although Allah has created so many members of the opposite sex for you and by a safe and right marriage you can have a pure and peaceful life, you have left this pure and natural bounty of Allah and you have polluted yourselves with this mean and indecent action.

Then Lut added:

"And leave what your Lord has created for you of your wives? Nay, you are a people transgressing (the limits)"

Lut wanted to tell them it was not a natural need, whether spiritual and bodily, that caused them to commit that deviated action, but it was disobedience and transgression that polluted them by such an indecency and shame.

Lut implicitly told them that their deed was like that man puts the good fruits, nutritious foods and safe natural things aside and goes to a poisonous, polluted, and fatal food. This is not a natural need, it is an insolence and inordinacy.

Then, the next noble verse implies that the people of Lut, who were engaged with lust, pride and haughtiness, instead of obeying this divine leader and following his advice eagerly and delivering themselves from that polluted pool, they stood against him.

The verse says:

"They said: 'If you desist not, O Lut! You shall surely be of those who are expelled'."

Those people told Lut that his words caused their thoughts to be confused and their peace to be disordered. They were not ready even to listen to him, and if he continued his job, his least punishment would be being expelled from his land.

In some other places of the Holy Qur'an we read that they fulfilled this threat and they ordered that Lut's family to be expelled out of the city, because they were clean and did not commit sin:

"…they said: 'Expel them from your town: verily they are a people (who seek) to purify (themselves)'."1

The misguided and deviated people sometimes reach a point that having piety and chastity is a fault among them and impurity and immorality is an honour for them. This is the evil end of a society that goes hurriedly towards corruption.

It is understood from the Qur'anic sentence:

"…you shall surely be of those who are expelled"

that this mischievous group of people had formerly expelled some pure persons whom they saw as troublesome for their ugly deeds. They threatened Lut, too, and said if he continued his way, his fate would also be like them.

It is explicitly explained in some commentary books that they urged to send the chaste persons out of the city with a very bad manner.2

In some suras of the Qur'an, such as: Al-'A'ra, Had, Al-Hijr, Al-'Anbiya, An-Naml, and Al-'Ankabut, the explanation about the people of Lut and their hideous sin has been hinted to, but the content meaning of every one of them is different from that of the other. In fact, every one of them points to a different inauspicious dimension of this shameful deed.

Some Traditions

1- The holy Prophet of Islam in a tradition says:

*"The odour of Paradise will not reach the one who is catamite."*3

2- Ali (as) in a tradition introduces the act of sodomy nigh to infidelity.4

3- Upon the philosophy of the prohibition of sodomy, Ali ibn-Mus-ar-Rida (as) in a tradition says:

*"The reason of the prohibition of men for men and women for women is that this is spite of the natural sate that Allah has set for man and woman (and opposition with this natural innate nature causes the deviation of man's soul and body) and it is for this reason that if men and women pursue sodomy, man's generation will be ceased and the device of social life will become imperfect, and the world will be wasted."*5

From the view point of Islam, this action is so ugly and shameful that its punishment in Islamic jurisprudence doubtlessly is death. Even for those who act some levels lower than sodomy there have been considered some intensive punishments.

For example, the Prophet (S) in a tradition says:

*"Whoever kisses a boy lustfully, on the Day of Hereafter Allah will rein him with a rein from fire on his mouth."*6

The punishment of the person who commits such an action is to be scourged 30 to 99 whips.

However, there is no doubt that sexual deviation is one of the most dangerous deviations that may appear in human societies, because its inauspicious effects can encompass all moral issues and drug man towards emotional deviation.

Surah Ash-Shu‘ara - Verses 168-172

قَالَ إِنِّي لِعَمَلِكُم مِّنَ الْقَالِينَ

رَبِّ نَجِّنِي وَأَهْلِي مِمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ

فَنَجَّيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ أَجْمَعِينَ

إِلاَّ عَجُوزًا فِي الْغَابِرِينَ

ثُمَّ دَمَّرْنَا الْآخَرِينَ

168. "He said: 'I do detest your doings'."
169. "My Lord! deliver me and my family from (the vice of) what they do."
170. "So, We did deliver him and his family all."
171. "Except an old woman who remained behind."
172. "Then We destroyed the others."

The Qur'anic word ***/qalin/*** is usually used for an intensive opposition and expression of anxiety which comes from the depth of soul.

The Divine prophets do not fear of enemies' threats and they convey their call.

When Lut was threatened to be expelled and being sent out of the city, he expressed his hatred because of their action.

The verse says:

"He said: 'I do detest your doings'."

Abhorring a bad thing should always be shown verbally and practically. Yes, bare anxiety is not enough.

We must think of being delivered from the center of mischief.

However, by this verse, the Qur'an implies that, without heeding their threats, Lut continued his words that he abhorred their doings, namely he would go on his protests and they would do whatever they could, because he was not afraid of their threats in his struggle in the path of Allah against their indecencies.

The application of the Qur'an word /qalin/ in the holy verse shows that another group of the believers also supported Lut by their intense protest, although at last those disobedient people dismissed them from the scene.

It is interesting that Lut says he is the enemy of their doings; that is he had not any enmity with those people, but their deed was shameful; and if they left those actions he would be a sincere friend of them.

Finally, those admonitions and advice got no effect on them and finally corruption had enveloped their entire society thoroughly.

He had sufficiently completed the argument and Lut's mission had been fulfilled. Now he must rescue both him; and those who have believed in his call from this polluted region before the time when the fatal punishment of Allah comes to destroy those indecent people.

Lut as a supplication and invocation asked Allah to deliver him and his family from the vice of what they were doing.

He said:

"My Lord! deliver me and my family from (the vice of) what they do."

By the way, as a result of what was said, this fact became clear that Lut's prayer for his family was not done because of emotional aspects and relationship, but it was for their Faith.

Allah fulfilled this supplication, as He says:

"So, We did deliver him and his family all."
"Except an old woman who remained behind."

This old woman was but the wife of Lut who, from the point of belief and religion, was in line with those misguided people and she did not believe in Lut, so, at last, she faced with the same fate.

Yes, Allah delivered Lut and those few believers who were with him. By the command of Allah, they went out from that polluted land at night and left those mischievous people, who were drowned in corruption and indecency, to themselves.

Early in the morning the command of Allah came. A terrible earthquake covered their land.

It utterly destroyed their good cities, beautiful firm castles and their welfare life which was polluted with unchastity, as the holy Qur'an, in a short sentence points to it, and says:

"Then We destroyed the others."

Surah Ash-Shu'ara - Verses 173-175

وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِم مَّطَرًا فَسَاء مَطَرُ الْمُنذَرِينَ

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَةً وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ

173. "We rained down on them a shower (of brimstone), and evil is the rain of them that were warned."
174. "Verily in this is a sign, but most of them do not believe."
175. "And verily your Lord, certainly He is the Mighty, the Merciful."

The retribution of those who change the path of marriage into the path of sodomy is that the rain of Divine mercy changes into the rain of chastisement, and annihilates them.

Yes, the whole nature is at the service of the Divine Power. The same might which causes to send down the rain from the sky, can send down a shower of brimstone.

So, Allah says:

"We rained down on them a shower (of brimstone)..."

This rain was a rain of pebbles which wiped out even the ruins of their buildings.

The verse continues saying:

"...and evil is the rain of them that were warned."

What a horrible rain it was! The rain which overtook those threatened people.

The ordinary rains are refreshing and enlivening, but this rain was terrible, and destructive.

Verse No.82 from Surah Hud indicates that at first the cities of the people of Lut were destroyed, then a shower of pebbles, layer on layer, came down on them. As we mentioned in the commentary of that verse, the rain of stones was, perhaps, for this aim that their effects would be wiped out, too, and only a heap of stone and dust could be seen from those populated cities.

Were these stone taken from deserts, as the result of a great storm and they were poured over them? Or were they some wandering aerolites which, by the command of Allah, fell on them?

Or, as some say, was there a silent volcano near around there which, by the command of Allah, roared and sent a rain of stones over them? It is not known, but it is certain that this fatal shower left no sign of life in that land.

Again, at the end of this event we encounter the same couple of sentences that were mentioned at the end of the similar events in this Surah concerning other five great prophets of Allah. The Holy Qur'an implies that there is a sign and an instructive lesson in the story of this unjust and indecent people that had a fatal and unsuspicious end.

It says:

"Verily in this is a sign, but most of them do not believe."

What a sign is more clear than that this event makes you acquainted with some important and helpful issues without that you need any personal experimentation.

Yes, the history of the ancient is an instructive lesson and a sign for the coming generations; it is not even an experience, because in experience one must bear some losses so that he obtains some results, but here we obtain the results from the losses of others.

"And verily your Lord, certainly He is the Mighty, the Merciful."

What a mercy can be better than this that Allah does not immediately punish such polluted people and He gives them enough respite to be guided and to review their situation.

And also what mercy is superior to this fact that His punishment does not involve both right doers and wrong doers; it is so that if there is a faithful family among thousand misguided families, He rescues these believers.

What a glory and might is higher than this that in a short moment He destroys the dwellings of those polluted persons so severely that there remains no effect from them. The land, which must be as a comfortable cradle for them, is commissioned for their death; and the enlivening rain is changed into the rain of fatal stones.

1. Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 82
2. The commentaries of Ruh-ul-Ma'ali and Fakhr-i-Razi, following the verse under discussion
3. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 79, P. 67, New edition
4. Ibid
5. Ibid, P. 64
6. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 79, , P. 7

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