



2018

Ramadan Quiz

Answers and Commentary

‘What Du’a Am I?’



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FOREWORD

Assalamu ‘alaykum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh,

We pray this reaches you in the best of health and imaan.

Please find attached the answers and tafsir (commentary) for the Ramadan Quiz. All the tafsir (commentary) has been taken from Ma’ariful Qur’an and/or Tafsir Ibn Kathir. It is NOT written by us personally. We read through the commentary and extract whatever is specific to the question of the day and format it. We do not add to the text from ourselves.

Thus, if anyone is interested in further reading, the aforementioned two kitaabs will be useful insha’Allah.

Having said which, if you come across any mistakes or typing errors – then those are from us and we seek forgiveness for it. Please refer the mistake/error to us at: **info@acquiringknowledge.co.uk** referencing the page number and insha’Allah we will amend it.

Note: The ‘lessons’ are from us – again, if you come across any mistakes, please refer the mistake/error to us at the above email so we may amend.

Request for sincere du’as.

DAY 1

When Sayyidina Musa alayhis salaam received the high honour of conversing with Allah Ta'ala and was granted the mission of prophethood, then, instead of relying on his own self and on his own ability, he turned to Allah Ta'ala and sought His help in the discharge of his duties without which it would be impossible for him to endure and persevere in the face of the trials and tribulations inherent in the performance of his mission.

He, therefore, prayed to Allah Ta'ala to grant him five favours.

The first prayer was Put my heart at peace for me - 20:25.

Meaning to expand the ability of his heart to enable him to receive all the knowledge and wisdom of prophethood, and at the same time to bear with the slander of those people who will oppose him in his mission.

His second prayer was make my task easy for me - 20:26

Having been granted prophethood he realized that it is not the human ability and skill or other apparent causes which make affairs easy or difficult. In reality, things become easy or difficult as Allah Ta'ala wills.

The third prayer And remove the knot from my tongue, that they may understand my speech - 20:27, 28

The first two prayers are of a general nature and sought Allah Ta'ala 's help in all matters. The third prayer is for the removal of a disability because eloquence and fluency of expression are essential elements in the successful conduct of prophetic mission. Some people have argued that in his prayer Sayyidna Musa alayhis salaam had prayed to Allah Ta'ala to loose the knot of his tongue only to the extent that others could understand his words. To that extent his stammer was cured but a trace of it still remained, which is not inconsistent with the grant of his prayer.

The fourth prayer was and make for me an assistant from my own family - 20:29.

The first three prayers of Sayyidna Musa alayhis salaam concerned his own person. This fourth prayer relates to the assembling of means which would facilitate the successful completion of his mission, and the most important among these was the appointment of a deputy or a helper, who would assist him in this task. The literal meaning of the word 'wazir' is "one who carries a burden", and since a minister of a state carries the burden of responsibilities entrusted to him by the ruler, he is called a minister.

This shows the extreme foresight and prudence of Sayyidna Musa alayhis salaam because the success of any movement or enterprise depends on the selection of competent and dedicated supporters. With good and loyal workers it is easy to surmount all obstacles and hurdles, while with irresponsible and indifferent workers the best preparations and arrangements become futile.

In this prayer Sayyidna Musa alayhis salaam has specified that the helper he wants should be from his own family, the reason being that the behaviour and conduct of a member of the family is well-known. Besides, there is mutual affection and understanding between the members of the family which greatly helps towards the accomplishment of the mission. But it is essential that the person selected should be competent and in possession of the merit necessary for the performance of his duties so that his selection may not be attributed to nepotism and favouritism

DAY 1

In his prayer Sayyidna Musa alayhis salaam first asked that the helper he required should be from his own family and then specifically asked for his brother Harun to be his Wazir so that with the latter's support and assistance he could better perform the duties of his prophetic mission.

His final prayer: and make him share my task - 20:32

Sayyidna Musa alayhis salaam had the power to appoint Sayyidna Harun as his Wazir on his own, but he petitioned to Allah Ta'ala to confer the appointment on his brother in order to seek His grace. Besides, he wanted him to share his prophethood and his mission and this power does not rest in any Prophet. Therefore he specially prayed to Allah Ta'ala to make him a partner in his mission.

The story behind this “knot” in Musa alayhis salaam's speech:

As an infant Sayyidina Musa alayhis salaam lived with his own mother who used to suckle him and was paid for her services by the Pharaoh. When he was weaned, the Pharaoh and his wife Asiya adopted him, and took him away from his mother.

One day Sayyidina Musa alayhis salaam caught hold of the Pharaoh's beard and slapped him on the face. Another version has it that he was playing with a stick and with it he struck the Pharaoh on his head. The Pharaoh was enraged and made up his mind to put him to death. His wife Asiya tried to pacify him and said, “O King! Why do you take this matter so seriously? After all he is merely a child who does not understand things. You can test him if you like and you will find that he cannot distinguish between good things and bad things”.

Thereupon, the Pharaoh ordered two trays to be brought. One was filled with live coal and the other with jewellery. It was expected that the child would be attracted by the brightness of the burning coal and reach for it because children are not normally drawn towards jewellery which is not as bright. This would have convinced the Pharaoh that what Sayyidina Musa alayhis salaam did was nothing more than the act of an innocent child.

But Sayyidina Musa alayhis salaam was no ordinary child. Allah Ta'ala had chosen him to be a prophet whose instincts were unusual from the very moment of his birth. He put forth his hand to reach out for the jewellery instead of the coal, but Jibra'il alayhis salaam turned his hand away and placed it in the tray containing coal.

He picked up a piece of burning coal and put it in his mouth and so burned his tongue. The Pharaoh was thus fully satisfied that the action of Sayyidna Musa alayhis salaam was not due to mischief but the result of a child's inability to distinguish between good and bad for himself. This incident caused an impediment in his speech which has been called knot in the Qur'an, and Sayyidna Musa alayhis salaam prayed to Allah Ta'ala to make loose this knot. (Mazhari and Qurtubi)

LESSONS

No matter how big the task, nothing is impossible for Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala.

Ask, ask and ask.

Whether one feels low, one feels ill, one feels nervous, ask Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala to help make things easy.

The first part of this du'a is recommended for students to read before exams, or one to read before they talk to another person about an important matter.

Whether this person be one's teacher, parent or spouse. Read this du'a before speaking so Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala can put understanding in the other person's heart.

Finally, there is no shame in asking for someone's help. A productive person delegates task that they may not be able to complete, but someone else can. Or even if they can complete them, but sharing the burden allows them to shift their focus on something more productive.

If one needs help, ask! Ask Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala first, and then resort to those around you, beginning with family if they are competent enough to help you in your specific matter, as no one wishes the best for you without anything in exchange, more than one's own family members.

DAY 2

Imam al-Qurtubi says that, in this verse (23), the verse preceding the du'a, Allah Ta'ala has made it necessary (wajib) to respect and treat parents well by *combining it with the command to worship Him*

The punishment for depriving parents of their rights comes - much before Akhirah - right here in this world too (see the post below on hadiths - hadith no.6)

To deserve service and good treatment it is not necessary that the parents be Muslims

To support this ruling, Imam al-Qurtubi has quoted an event related with Sayyidah Asma' radiallahu anha, from the Sahih of al-Bukhari.

According to this report, Sayyidah Asma' radiallahu anha asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ, "My mother, a Mushrik, comes to see me. Is it permissible for me to entertain her?" He said, (silli ummaki: that is, respect the bond of relationship with your mother and entertain her).

And as for disbelieving parents, there is that statement of the Qur'an itself (Luqman, 31:15): (that is, if the parents of a person are kafirs and order him too to become like them, then, it is not permissible to obey them in this matter. But, while living in this world, they should be treated in the recognized manner). It is obvious that 'recognized manner' means that they should be treated with courtesy.

Treating parents well: Special consideration in their old age

The old age of parents, when they become helpless, depend on children for everything they need and their life is at the mercy of children, is a terrible condition to be in.

The slightest indifference shown by children at such a time breaks their heart. Then, there are those physical infirmities and diseases associated with old age which make one naturally irritation-prone.

Furthermore, during the period of extreme old age, when usual reason and comprehension do not seem to be working, some of their wishes and demands assume the kind of proportions which children find difficult to take care of.

The Holy Qur'an takes cognizance of these circumstances, but, while giving children the instruction to comfort them, it reminds them of their own childhood. It tells them that there was a time when they too were far more helpless, far too depending on their parents than their parents were on them at that point of time.

Then, was it not that their parents sacrificed their desires and comforts for them and went on bearing by the unreasonable child talk with love and affection.

Now when they have become so helpless, reason and nobility demanded that the past favor done by them should be paid back.

When it was said: (as they have brought me up in my childhood) in the verse, this is what has been alluded to.

Some other important instructions relating to the old age of parents have also been given in the verses under study (Surah Al Israa, verses 22-25). They are as follows:

1. **Do not say even 'uff to them.** Briefly explained parenthetically in the accompanying translation as 'a word of anger or contempt,' 'uff covers every word or expression that shows one's displeasure. The limit is that breathing a long breath after having heard what they said and thereby betraying displeasure

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against them is also included under this very word ‘uff’

In a Hadith narrated by Sayyidna ‘Ali radiallahu anhu, it has been reported that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, ”Had there been some other degree of hurting lesser than the saying of ‘uff,’ that too would have certainly been mentioned.”

(The sense is that even the thing that hurts parents in the lowest of the low degree is forbidden).

2. **Do not scold them.** This is the second instruction. The word: (nahr) in the text: means ‘scold’ or ‘reproach.’ That it causes pain is already obvious.
3. **Address them with respectable words** - This is the third instruction. The first two instructions related to the negative aspects where bringing the least emotional pressure on parents has been prohibited. Given in this third instruction is a lesson in the art of conversation with parents - talk to them softly with love, grace and concern for them.

Says the revered Tabi’i, Sa’id ibn Mussaiyyab, ‘like a slave talking to his strict master!’

4. **Submit yourself before them in humility out of compassion** - This is the fourth instruction. The word: (janah) in the text literally means ‘wings’ or ‘sides of arms’ lending the sense that one should stand in a stance of submission and humility as a mark of respect for parents. The addition of the expression: (out of compassion) at the end of the sentence is there to warn that this stance of grace should not be a mere show-off, instead, it should be adopted on the strong foundation of genuine, heart-felt respect and compassion for them. Perhaps, this may also be suggestive of something else as well - that showing humility before parents is practically no disgrace. In fact, it is a prelude to real honor for it is based on concern, compassion and kindness.
5. And say, **“My Lord, be merciful to them”**- It means, as for the effort to provide maximum comfort for parents, it is humanly not possible. One should do whatever it is possible for him to do in order that they remain comfortable and, then, along with it, he should also keep praying before Allah Ta’la that He, in His infinite mercy, removes all their difficulties and makes things easy on them.

This last instruction is really so extensive and universal that it still continues to be valid and beneficial even after the death of parents. Through this, one can always keep serving parents.

LESSONS

How many a time do our parents make du'a for us, for our success, our health, our forgiveness, every small little thing? - our parents are there to make du'a for us.

Even once they reach old age, they make du'a for us. Our whole life, is a result of their sacrifice. Yet, we forget them and leave them behind, preferring others over them.

When was the last time we made du'a for them?

We strongly recommend one reads the poem attached. That hit hard.

The merits of obeying and serving parents in Hadith narratives

1. In the Musnad of Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah and Mustadrak Hakim, it has been reported on sound authority from Sayyidna Abu 'd-Darda' radiallahu anhu that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "A father is the main gate of Jannah. Now it is up to you to preserve or waste it." (Mazhari)
2. According to a report from Sayyidna Abdullah ibn 'Umar radiallahu anhu appearing in Jami' al-Tirmidhi and al-Mustadrak of al-Hakim (which Hakim rates as Sabih), the Holy Prophet said, "The pleasure of Allah is in the pleasure of a father and the displeasure of Allah in the displeasure of a father."
3. Ibn Majah reports on the authority of Sayyidna Abu Umamah radiallahu anhu that a person asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ, "What rights do parents have on their children?" He said, "They both are your Paradise, or Hell." It means that obeying and serving parents take one to Jannah and their disobedience and displeasure, to Jahannam.
4. Al Baihaqi (in Shu'ab al-'Iman) and Ibn 'Asakir have reported on the authority of Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas radiallahu anhu that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "For one who remained obedient to his parents for the sake of Allah two gates of Paradise shall remain open. And for one who disobeyed them two gates of Hell shall remain open, and if he had just one of the two, either father or mother, then, one gate (of Paradise or Hell shall remain open)."

Thereupon, someone asked, "Does it (the warning of Hell) hold good even when the parents have been unjust to this person?" Then he said thrice: (in nearest meaning) 'yes, there is that warning of Hell against disobeying and hurting parents even if they were unjust to the son.' (The outcome is that children have no right to settle scores with parents. If they have been unjust, it does not follow that they too back out from obeying and serving them).

5. Al-Baihaqi has reported on the authority of Sayyidna 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas radiallahu anhu that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "An obedient son who looks at his parents with mercy and affection receives the reward of one accepted Hajj against every such look cast." People around said, "What if he were to look at them like that a hundred times during the day?" He said, "Yes, a hundred times too (he will keep receiving that reward). Allah is great (His treasures never run short)."
6. In Shu'ab al-'Iman, al-Baihaqi has reported on the authority of Sayyidna Abu Bakrah radiallahu anhu that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "As for all those other sins, Allah Ta'ala defers whichever He wills up to the Last Day of Qiyamah - except the sin of depriving parents of their rights and disobeying them. The punishment for that is given, much before comes the Hereafter, right here in this world as well." (All Hadith reports given here have been taken from Tafsir Mazhari)

LESSONS

A remarkable event

Al-Qurtubi has reported from Sayyidna Jabir ibn ‘Abdullah radiallahu anhu that a man came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and complained that his father was taking away what belonged to him.

He said, “Go and ask your father to come here.” Right then, came Sayyidna Jibra’il alayhis salaa, and told the Holy Prophet ﷺ, “When his father comes, ask him about the words he has composed in his heart and which his own ears have not heard yet.”

When this man returned with his father, he said to the father, “Why is it that your son complains against you? Do you wish to take away what belongs to him?” The father said, “You better ask him on whom do I spend other than his paternal or maternal aunts or myself” The Holy Prophet ﷺ said: (an expression which denoted that he had understood the reality and there was no need to say anything else).

After that, he asked the father of the man, “What are those words that have not yet been heard by your own ears?” The father said, “O Rasulullah, Allah Ta’ala increases our faith in you through everything.” Thereby he meant that he got to know what was not heard by anyone, which was a miracle indeed.

Then, he submitted, “It is true that I had composed some lines of poetry within my heart, something not heard even by my own ears.” The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, “Let us hear them.” Then he recited the following lines of poetry he had composed:

*I fed you in childhood and took care of you when young
You lived on my earnings alone.
When on some night, you became sick,
I spent the whole night remaining awake and restless because of your sickness
As if your sickness was my own and not yours
and because of which my eyes kept shedding tears throughout the night
My heart kept trembling lest something happens to you,
though I knew that the time of death is fixed, being neither early nor late
So, when you reached the age and maturity
that I had always been looking forward to
Then you made hard-heartedness and harshness my return
as if you were the one doing me favors and giving me rewards
Alas, if it was not possible for you to fulfill my right as a father,
you could have at the least done what a good neighbor would have done
So, you could have given me the least right of a neighbor and
abstained from becoming miserly in my case in my own property.*

After having heard these verses of poetry, the Holy Prophet ﷺ held the son by his shirt and said, (meaning that): Go. You and your property, everything belongs to your father.
(Tafsir al-Qurtubi, p. 246, V. 10)

These verses have also been reported in Hamasah, the famous book of Arabic literature as attributed to the poet, Umaiyyah ibn Abi as-Sult.

Others say that ‘Abd al-A’la wrote them. Still others attribute them to Abu al-’Abbas al-A’ma. (Al-Qurtubi, marginal notes)

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Sayyidna Shu'aib alayhis salaam according to Muhammad ibn Ishaq, is among the progeny of Madyan, the son of Sayyidna Ibrahim alayhis salaam, and he is also related to Sayyidna Lut alayhis salaam.

The lineal descendants of Madyan, the son of Sayyidna Ibrahim alayhis salaam also came to be known by the name, Madyan - and the locality where they lived is also called Madyan. Thus, Madyan is the name of a people and the name of a city as well. This city still survives near the port of Ma'an in Eastern Jordan.

When relating the story of Sayyidna Musa alayhis salaam elsewhere, the Qur'an says: (And when he arrived at the watering [place] in Madyan - 28:23), it is referring to this very habitation. (Ibn Kathir)

Sayyidna Shu'aib alayhis salaam was known for his impressive oratory because of which he was called the Orator among Prophets. (Ibn Kathir, AlBahr Al-Muhit)

The people to whom Sayyidna Shu'aib alayhis salaam was sent have been identified by the Holy Qur'an as the residents or people of Madyan, and also as the people of Aikah. The word: (Aikah) means a forest.

Some commentators say that these were two different people and lived in separate settlements. Sayyidna Shu'aib alayhis salaam was sent to one of them first. When they were destroyed, he was sent to the other.

The punishment which came upon these two has also been stated in different words. The punishment of the Rajfah on the people of Madyan is mentioned as Saihah (Sound) at some places, while as Rajfah (earthquake) at others. The punishment of the people of Aikah has been stated as being that of Zullah (shade, canopy). The form in which this punishment came was that the people of Aikah were first subjected to intense heat in their locality which almost roasted them. Then, in the forest close by there came a dense cloud which cast its shade over the entire forest. Attracted by the shade and cool breeze there, all inhabitants of the locality assembled under the shade of that cloud. As Divine arrangement would have it, here were its criminals walking on their two feet and reaching the exact spot where they were to be destroyed, without a warrant of arrest and without a police gun pointed at them. Once they were all there, the clouds rained fire and the earthquake shook the earth. That killed them all.

Then, there are other commentators who say that the people of Madyan and the people of Aikah are the same people and the three kinds of punishment mentioned here converged on these people. First came the Fire from the clouds, then, with it, rose the piercing Sound, and then, the earthquake shook the earth. Ibn Kathir has favoured this view.

However, whether these two people are separate or are two names of the same people, what matters is the message of truth delivered to them by Sayyidna Shu'aib alayhis salaam - and that has been mentioned in the first (85) and second (86) verses of Surah Al-A'raf.

Before we move on to the explanation of this message, let us first understand that the essence of Islam, which is the combined call of all blessed prophets, is the fulfillment of mutual rights. Then rights are of two kinds. First come rights which are related directly to Allah Ta'ala. No visible human gain or loss seems to depend on their fulfillment or abandonment, for example, praying and fasting (Salah and Sawm).

Secondly, there are the rights of the servants of Allah (Huquq al-'Ibad: human rights - in secular terminology) which are related to human beings. These people were heedless to and unaware of both these rights, in fact, were acting counter to both.

By not believing in Allah Ta'ala and His messengers, they were violating the rights of Allah, and on top of it,

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by decreasing weights and measures, they were slicing through and wasting away the rights of human beings. Then, such people would go on to sit on entry points of roads and streets and would terrorize all comers, rob them of their belongings, and warned them of worse consequences if they believed in Sayyidna Shu'aib alayhis salaam.

And thus, on God's good earth, they had made disorder the order of the day. It was to correct these misdeeds that Sayyidna Shu'aib alayhis salaam was sent to them.

COMMENTARY

When the people of Sayyidna Shu'aib alayhis salaam told him: Had you been on the side of truth, believers in you would have been prospering and non-believers in you would have been under punishment. But, what is actually happening is that both parties have come out equal and living a comfortable life. With this incongruity in sight, how can we take you to be true?

Thereupon, the answer that Sayyidna Shu'aib alayhis salaam gave was: **Do not make haste. The time is near when Allah Ta'ala will decide the case between the two of them.**

Not convinced by his answer, the arrogant chiefs of those people said what is always said by oppressive practitioners of arrogance. They said: **O Shu'aib, either you and the rest of your believers return to the fold of our faith, or else, we shall throw you out of our hometown.**

As for the return of the rest of believers in Sayyidna Shu'aib alayhis salaam to the fold of their old faith' is concerned, it is something which can be understood, for all of them were a part of the faith and way of the disbelievers. It was only later that they had embraced Islam.

But, the case of Sayyidna Shu'aib alayhis salaam was different. He had never followed their false faith and way even for a day - nor can a prophet of Allah Ta'ala ever follow a faith which is counter to pure monotheism.

Why then would they be asking him to return to their faith? Perhaps, it was because Sayyidna Shu'aib alayhis salaam - before prophethood was bestowed on him - would maintain silence over their false sayings and doings and continued living among the people as one of them. Because of this, his disbelieving people took Sayyidna Shu'aib alayhis salaam, too as one of the rest, a fellow-traveller and votary of their faith. It was only after he gave his call of true 'Iman that they discovered that his faith or religion was different from their own. Then, this led them to conclude that he had turned away from their old faith.

In the second verse (89), Sayyidna Shu'aib alayhis salaam said to his people: Allah Ta'ala saved us from your false faith. Now if we were to return to your faith, this would amount to a false and grim accusation by us against Allah Ta'ala.

First of all giving Kufr and Shirk the status of faith by itself means that they have been commanded by Allah Ta'ala - which is forging a lie against Him. In addition to that, after having believed in the revealed Truth ('Iman) and after having its knowledge and insight, a return to Kufr (disbelief) would amount to saying that the first way was false and erroneous while the true and correct way was that which has been adopted later. As obvious, this is a compounded lie and accusation - that the true (Haqq) was taken to be false (Batil) and vice versa, the Batil to be Haqq.

There was a certain flavour of claim or assertion in this saying of Sayyidna Shu'aib alayhis salaam that we

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can never return to your religion again. Making such a claim is, at least outwardly, contrary to the spirit of self-less submission a true servant of Allah is supposed to have ('abdiyyah). It does not behove those who are close to the presence of Allah and those who have come to know Him.

Therefore, he said: (and it is not for us that we turn to it unless Allah, our Lord, so wills. Our Lord encompasses everything with His knowledge. In Allah we place our trust).

This statement is a mirror of his humility ('Ijz), an assertion of trust in Allah (Tawakkul) and a confident attitude of resigning matters to Him ('Tafwid). These are master virtues of prophets. They amount to saying: What are we and how can we claim to do something or stay away from it? To be able to do something good and to succeed in staying away from evil is nothing but the grace of Allah Ta'ala - as said by the Holy Prophet ﷺ (Had there not been the grace of Allah Ta'ala, we would have not been guided right, nor been able to give in charity, nor to make Salah).

It was due to this quality of trusting in Allah alone that when, after having talked to the arrogant chiefs of the people, Sayyidna Shu'aib alayhis salaam realized that nothing seems to move these people in any manner whatsoever, he stopped addressing them and made the following Du's (prayer) to Allah Ta'ala: (Our Lord, decide between us and our people, with truth, and You are the best of all judges).

Sayyidna 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas radiallahu anhu has said that the word: (fath) means 'decide' at this place. That is how the word: (fatih) takes the sense of Qadi or judge. And in reality, through these words, Sayyidna Shu'aib alayhis salaam had prayed for the destruction of the disbelievers from among his people - which was answered by Allah Ta'ala when they were destroyed by an earthquake.

LESSONS

Notice the humility in the words of Shu'aib alayhis salaam.

Shu'aib alayhis salaam says, and it is not for us that we turn to it unless Allah, our Lord, so wills. Our Lord encompasses everything with His knowledge. In Allah we place our trust

This reminds us of our true state - we are insaan, we are weak, we are incapable of doing anything on our own.

We are slaves incapable seeking and treading the right path without the help of our Master.

So, what does this mean for us?

It's a reminder that yes there are certain things that are sinful, yes we will sin, no we are not perfect, and no we cannot become sinless without the help of Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala.

This is why we seek repentance from Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala when we sin, and we ask Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala to take us away from that which is wrong and displeasing to Him.

It is arrogance to assume that we can become perfect servants to Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala without His help.

At the same time, we are reminded to be hopeful, and place our trust in Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala. An urdu poem comes to mind:

وہ انسان ہی کیا جو خطا نہ کرے

I.e. He who makes no mistakes is not a human being

Shu'aib alayhis salaam, through his du'a, leaves the matter at hand to Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala.

From this we learn:

1. Anything that happens in our life, our first point of call should be Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala.
2. If we want to refrain from displeasing Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala, we CANNOT do so without His help.
3. Don't lose hope if one keeps falling into the same vicious cycle of committing sins and making mistakes - the key is to **KEEP** getting back up and starting again, no matter how many times we fall. We fail when we become despondent of Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala's mercy and refuse to get back up again.
4. Once we seek Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala's help in a certain matter, trust **HIM**. Do all that you can in your means, and leave the rest to Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala. Don't stress.

DAY 4

Moderation in religious and worldly pursuits

The people of Jahiliyyah had another habit during the Hajj. Normally, they would be engaged in acts of devotion to Allah, yet when it came to making a prayer, **they would focus all their attention to praying for worldly needs**, such as, comfort, wealth, honour and their likes, showing no concern for the life to come.

It was to correct this sort of approach in supplication that it was said that there are people who would use the great occasion of Hajj to pray for the insignificant gains of the present life and forget the Hereafter. For such people the Hereafter holds nothing because their conduct shows that they have gone through the obligation of Hajj merely in a formal manner, or have done it to earn prestige in their society.

To please Allah and to earn salvation in the Hereafter are objectives alien to them. It may be noted at this point that the verse mentions those who (**Our Lord, give to us in this world....**) which does not include the word, (good).

This indicates that they do not care to have what is really good even in this mortal world, on the contrary, they are so drunk with their craze for material things that nothing short of a constant fulfilment of their desires would satisfy them. They just do not bother to check if it is good or bad, procured rightly or wrongly or what people think about them.

This verse extends a serious warning to those Muslims as well who prefer to pray for their material ends only even at the unique time of Hajj and at places so sacred, **devoting most of their concerns towards that goal**. There are many rich people who themselves pray, or request others they hold in esteem to pray for them, not for deliverance from the accounting of the Akhirah, but for increase in their wealth, growth in business, and for other worldly concerns.

There are many who, by their profusion in waza'if and nawafil (voluntary acts of worship), come to believe that they are very devoted, pious and special. In reality, hidden behind this facade is the same love of the mundane life. Then, there are respected people who maintain relations with pious elders of their time, as well as show their regard for deceased saints and walls, but the prevailing aim of such relationships is the vague hope that their du'a and ta'widh (prayers and spiritual charms) will work for them, worldly hardships will stay away, and their belongings shall be blessed.

For such people too, this verse has special instructions. Stressed here is the fact that this whole affair rests in the hands of Allah who is All-Knowing and All-Aware. Everyone must assess his or her deeds, specially the intention behind whatever is done during the Hajj or Ziarah, which includes all waza'if, nawafil, du'a and salah.

The All-encompassing Du'a

Then, towards the later part of the verse, Allah Almighty refers to His virtuous and favoured servants - may be some of them are less prosperous in a material way - by saying:
And there is another among them who says: "O our Lord, give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter and save us from the punishment of Fire."

The word, (hasanah) used here is inclusive of all that is good, inwardly or outwardly. For instance, hasanah or 'good in this world' shall include personal and family health, increase and benedictory sufficiency (barakah) in lawful livelihood, the fulfilment of all needs, virtuous deeds, desirable morals, beneficial knowledge, honour and prestige, strength of faith, guidance into the straight path and perfect sincerity in

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‘ibadat.

Similarly, hasanah or ‘good in the Hereafter’ shall cover everything from the Paradise, with its countless and endless blessings to the pleasure of Allah Almighty and the privilege of seeing Him. In short, this du’a is a compendium of all prayers in as much as it encompasses the entire range of man’s wordly and other-worldly objectives.

Apart from enjoying peace in the world, and peace in the Hereafter, the verse, refers in the end to the safety from ‘the punishment of Fire’ as well.

It was for this reason that the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to pray with these words very frequently: Our Lord, give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter and save us from the punishment of Fire.

It is masnun to make this prayer particularly while making tawaf. This verse also corrects those ignorant dervishes (so called mystics) who think that real ‘ibadah lies in praying for the Hereafter alone and claim that they do not, on that count, care much about the mortal world.

In reality, such a claim is false, for man depends on fulfilling his worldly needs not only for his life and sustenance, but also for performing the acts of worship and obedience. Without these, serving the objectives of faith would become impossible. Therefore, the blessed practice of the prophets of Allah has been that they prayed to Allah for the good of both the worlds.

One who thinks that praying to Allah for the fulfillment of his worldly needs is against the norms of piety and spiritual dignity is unaware of the great station of prophethood, and ignorant of man’s own role in this mortal world.

So, what is required is that one should not focus all his attention on his material needs as if they were the very purpose of life, but he should, along with it, show far more concern for what would happen to him in the Hereafter, and pray for it.

LESSONS

This du'a is a masnun (Sunnah) du'a to make. It encompasses all things, good in this life, and good in the hereafter

One should not become so focused on the hereafter that they forget their responsibilities in this world, nor should they become so focused on this world that they forget their end.

We learn from the best of teachers, Nabi ﷺ, that the best path is the middle path. There is no self-righteousness in making du'a only for one's hereafter, as worship and ibadah takes place in this world, nor is there any wisdom in only making du'a for a temporary world in which the luxuries will soon come to an end.

This du'a is so encompassing of all that is good, that we should be in a habit of making it all the time.

Story of Sayyidna Ayyub alayhis salaam

The story of Sayyidna Ayyub is based mostly on Jewish legends. Those which are considered as historically reliable by scholars of hadith are being reproduced here. The Holy Qur'an tells us only that he suffered from some serious disease but he endured his suffering with fortitude. Ultimately he prayed to Allah for recovery which was granted. During his illness all his family members and friends disappeared. They either died or just abandoned him to his fate. Then Allah Ta'ala restored him to complete health and gave him back all his children and also an equal number in addition.

The remaining elements of this story have come down to us either through authentic sayings or by way of historical accounts. Hafiz Ibn Kathir has recorded the story as follows:

Allah Ta'ala had bestowed upon Sayyidna Ayyub alayhis salaam, in the early days of his life, all sorts of material comforts such as wealth, property, magnificent houses, children, servants and attendants. But later he faced a trial whereby the prophets are normally tested by Allah, and was deprived of all these comforts.

Moreover he suffered from a serious disease which was like leprosy and which affected his whole body except the heart and the tongue. In this miserable condition too he spent his time in prayers and in giving thanks to Allah Ta'ala with his heart and tongue.

Because of this serious illness all his relatives, friends and neighbours avoided him and placed him near a garbage-dump outside the city. Nobody went near him except his wife who used to take care of him. She was either the daughter or granddaughter of Sayyidna Yusuf alayhis salaam and her name was Layya daughter of Misha Ibn Yusuf . (Ibn Kathir)

All his wealth having been lost, she worked and earned a living for him and for herself and also nursed him in his illness. The ordeal of Sayyidna Ayyub was nothing new, nor something to be wondered at.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said, the prophets face the most severe tests, and then come the other believers according to their degree of piety.

In another tradition it is reported that every man is tested according to his adherence and devotion to religion. The stronger his beliefs, the harder is the test to which he is subjected, so that his rewards are in proportion to his sufferings.

Sayyidna Ayyub alayhis salaam occupies a distinctive position among all the prophets for firmness in his devotion and endurance in his sufferings in the same manner as Dawud alayhis salaam enjoyed distinction for offering thanks to Allah Ta'ala.

Sayyidna Ayyub alayhis salaam is a model of endurance and fortitude in the most trying circumstances.

Yazid Ibn Maisara reports that when Allah Ta'ala deprived him of all his worldly possessions and subjected him to a severe ordeal, he concentrated all his mind and efforts upon the sole purpose of remembering Allah Ta'ala and offering prayers to Him. While thanking Allah Ta'ala for all sorts of worldly comforts and children granted to him earlier and whose love had filled his heart completely, he also thanked Him for their total withdrawal because nothing remained to distract him from total devotion to Allah Ta'ala.

The invocation of Sayyidna Ayyub alayhis salaam is not counter to patience

The ordeal of Sayyidna Ayyub alayhis salaam was very severe indeed. He not only lost all his worldly

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possessions but was also afflicted by a terrible disease because of which people avoided his company. He spent seven years and some months lying near a dust heap outside the city, but never once did he lose his heart nor did he ever utter a word of complaint about his fate.

His wife, Layya once asked him to pray to Allah for His Mercy as his sufferings had become unbearable, to which he replied that having enjoyed for seventy years the best of health surrounded by all the luxuries that money could buy, it would be unworthy of him to complain because a mere seven years has been spent in pain and poverty. His firm prophetic resolve, self-discipline and fortitude prevented him from beseeching Allah Ta'ala's mercy on his condition, lest it should be construed as an act contrary to the unquestioning submission to the will of Allah Ta'ala (Although to invoke Allah's Mercy for relief from sufferings does not mean absence of fortitude).

Ultimately something happened which made him pray to Allah Ta'ala for His Mercy but as mentioned earlier this was just a prayer and did not express a sense of complaint. As such Allah Ta'ala has put His seal in acknowledgment of his extreme endurance in these words **Surely We found him a steadfast man - 38:44.**

There are numerous versions of this story which have been omitted for their length. Ibn Abi Hatim has reported on the authority of Sayyidna 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbas radiallahu anhu that when Sayyidna Ayyub alayhis salaam's supplication was granted, he was told to rub his heels on the ground and a stream of fresh and clear water would gush forth. He should then bathe himself in the water and also drink it, and the disease would disappear.

Sayyidna Ayyub alayhis salaam did as he was told and in no time his body, which was covered with boils and was reduced to skin and bones regained its original shape and health. Allah Ta'ala sent him garments from Paradise which he wore and sat down in a corner away from the dust heap.

His wife came to see him as usual and when she did not find him, she started crying. She did not recognize Ayyub alayhis salaam who was sitting nearby in a corner because his appearance had changed completely. Then she turned to him and asked him if he had any information about the sick man who was lying there, and whether he had gone somewhere or had been eaten up by dogs and wolves. She spoke to him for some time without realizing that the man was none other than her husband.

Then Sayyidna Ayyub alayhis salaam revealed himself, but even then she did not recognize him and asked him why he was making fun of her. Sayyidna Ayyub alayhis salaam then told her to look at him again and try to recognize him. He also informed her that Allah Ta'ala had healed his body after he invoked His Mercy.

Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas radiallahu anhu reports that after this, Allah Ta'ala restored to him all his wealth and children and gave him more children equal in number to the children which he had before (Ibn Kathir). Sayyidna Ibn Mas'ud radiallahu anhu says that Sayyidna Ayyub alayhis salaam had seven sons and seven daughters but they all died while he was undergoing the ordeal. When his days of hardship were over, his children were brought back to life by Allah Ta'ala and his wife also gave birth to as many more children, to which the Qur'an refers to as **and the like thereof alongwith them - 21:84**. According to Tha'labi this version is closer to the text of the Qur'an. (Qurtubi) Some scholars say that he was granted as many new children as he had before and the word (the like) refers to an equal number of grandchildren. (Only Allah knows best).

LESSONS

Look at how severely Sayyidina Ayyub alayhis salaam was tested. Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala had bestowed upon him extreme wealth and abundance of children. And then to test him, Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala took it all away.

In contemporary times, we would call this 'a riches to rags' story.

Yet, how many of us can say that in this same position, we would remain steadfast and be content? We would remain hopeful in Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala? We would call unto Him?

Maybe even not in such an extreme situation, but let's say of a lesser situation.

When an illness overtakes us, or things do not go our way, do we ever stand back and just think, maybe Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala is testing me? Maybe He wants to see my response, my reaction.

Everything that happens to us asks for a reaction. This reaction will determine our standing with Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala.

May Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala grant us sabr in difficulties and allow us to remember Him and call unto Him first before anyone and anything else, and may He allow us to never become dependant on anyone other than Him.

Aameen!

DAY 6

Brief History of Nuh alayhis salaam

Allah Ta'ala had blessed Sayyidna Nuh alayhis salaam with long years of life extending up to nearly one thousand years. Along with it, he was given a special status in terms of his prophetic mission to invite people to Allah and make their condition better whereby he devoted these long years to keep asking them to believe in the true Faith and in Allah as One. He had to face the harshest of pains in this mission.

His people would throw stones at him until he fell down and lost consciousness. But, as soon as he would regain it, he prayed to Allah for the forgiveness of his people for they did not know what they were doing.

A generation was followed by the other, and the other by yet another, in a chain and he kept giving his call in the hope that they might, at some stage, accept the truth.

When centuries passed over this exercise in patience, he complained about their deplorable condition before his Almighty Lord which has been mentioned in Surah Nuh: (My Lord, I did invite my people [to the truth] night and day. But, my invitation increased them in nothing but flight [in aversion] - 71:5,6) and, after all those long years of hardship, the prayer - that this great servant of Allah made was: (My Lord, help me because they have belied me - al-Mu'minin, 23: 26,39)

When the reign of terror let loose by the people of Sayyidna Nuh alayhis salaam became much too excessive, he was addressed by Allah Ta'ala in the words appearing in the verses cited above. (ayahs 36-40 of Surah Hud) (al-Baghawi, Mazhari)

Firstly, he was told that, out of his people, those who were to believe had already believed. No one was to believe after that. Their hearts were sealed with their own obstinacy and contumacy. Therefore, he should not grieve about his people anymore and feel free of any concern about their failure to believe.

Secondly, he was told that Allah was to send the punishment of flood against those people. Therefore, he should make an ark that could hold his family, as many believers as there were, and what they needed, so that they could embark it when the flood comes and be safe from it. Sayyidna Nuh alayhis salaam made the ark as he was ordered to.

When the initial signs of the flood came before them - that water started overflowing from the earth - Sayyidna Nuh alayhis salaam was commanded to embark the ark along with his family and the few believers who had believed in him, They were also asked to load a pair each of animals that serve human needs, such as, cow, ox, goat, horse, mule etc. Sayyidna Nuh alayhis salaam put everyone on the ark as ordered.

At the end it was said that the believers in Sayyidna Nuh alayhis salaam, who boarded the ark were only a few. The exact number of those who sailed on the ark has not been determined in the Qur'an and Hadith. It has been reported from Sayyidna 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas radiallahu anhu that their total number was eighty, which included three sons of Sayyidna Nuh alayhis salaam - Sam, Ham, Yafith - and the three of their wives. The fourth son had stayed with the disbelievers and was drowned with them.

As stated in the second (42) and third (43) verse, when the whole family of Sayyidna Nuh alayhis salaam had boarded the ark, a son whose name has been reported as Kin'an (Canaan) was left out. Out of his paternal compassion, Sayyidna Nuh alayhis salaam, called out to him asking him to come on board and warning him that he should not stay in the company of disbelievers otherwise he would be drowned with them.

This young man was already in league with those disbelieving enemies, in fact, was himself a disbeliever. But,

in all likelihood, Sayyidna Nuh alayhis salaam did not know that he was a disbeliever. And even if he did know that, the good counsel he gave to his son to board the boat and leave the company of the disbelievers was in the spirit of asking him to repent from disbelief and enter the fold of faith.

But, the unfortunate son still took the flood to be something that will pass away and told him not to worry about him for he would be safe from the flood by climbing a mountain. Sayyidna Nuh alayhis salaam warned him again that nothing was going to save anyone, not even a mountain, from the punishment of Allah on that day and that there was no way one could remain safe from it unless Allah Himself were to show mercy to him. This father-son dialogue was on from a distance when rose a wave of the flood and took him down and away. Historical reports say that the level of the Flood was fifteen yards above the highest mountain peak and according to some other reports, it was forty yards high.

The Du'a of Nuh alayhis salaam

When Can'aan, the son of Sayyidna Nuh alayhis salaam, did not board the ark despite the counsel and call of his esteemed father who was still concerned emotionally as he saw his son surrounded by the waves of the flood.

His filial love knocked at another door. He turned to his Lord and prayed to Him on the basis of His promise that He would save his family from the flood, and that His promise was true. But, conditions were alarming and his son who was part of his family was going to be swallowed by the flood. The only court of appeal he could now go to was the court of the most just of judges for everything was in His power and control and that He could still save him from the flood.

In the second verse (46), came a stern response from Allah Ta'ala whereby Sayyidna Nuh alayhis salaam, was told that this son was no more a part of his family because he was not good and right in what he did. Therefore, it was not proper for him to approach Him with some request while being unaware of the true state of affairs. Then came the mollifying remark that the good counsel was being given to him so that he too does not become one of the ignorant.

Mentioned in the third verse (47) is the apology tendered by Sayyidna Nuh alayhis salaam. In gist, it is a return to Allah in submission and entreaty, a prayer for the protection of Allah, His forgiveness for past omissions, and a request for His mercy.

From here we learn that, should one commit a mistake, let him not rely on his personal resolve to stay safe from it in the future. He should, rather, seek the protection of Allah Ta'ala and pray to Him that He is the One who can keep him safe from errors and sins.

LESSONS

We learn once again from the Du'a of Nuh alayhis salaam, that it is not solely up to us to change ourselves for the better, to let go of our bad habits and to gain new, good habits.

It is not solely up to us to establish our salah, and to increase in sincerity in our ibaadah, and become closer to Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala.

We need Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala. We always need him. We will keep needing Him. It is only He who can help us weak insaan become His.

It is a blessing from Him that we even seek to change ourselves. May Allah multiply this blessing by taking us from the mere intention to change, to becoming the change we wish to be and see in ourselves.

Further, success and failure is from Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala alone. Nuh alayhis salaam called upon his people for so many years. Can you imagine nearing 1000 and calling and advising someone for over 900 years and they don't listen? Yet, we lose patience within seconds, let alone minutes and years.

We must continue our efforts in all areas of life, but leave the result to Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala and be content in it.

May Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala allow us to recognise our mistakes, and help us in our resolve to never to return to them. Aameen!

DAY 7

The mistake committed

When Adam and Hawwa alayhimus salaam were sent to live in Paradise, they were allowed to eat whatever they liked 'at pleasure' - the Arabic word in the text being 'Raghadan', which signifies provision for which one does not have to work, and which is never exhausted nor falls short. Thus, their life was totally free from all care.

They were commanded not to go near a certain tree - which was an emphatic way of asking them not to eat its fruit. The tree has not been given a specific name either in the Holy Qur'an or in the Hadith. Some commentators say that it was wheat, others say that it was a fig-tree or a grape-vine. But it is not really necessary to make specific what the Holy Qur'an has left vague. (See Qurtubi)

NOTE: Even the Bible does not name the tree. As to the apple being the fruit concerned, it is only a popular misunderstanding arising from the fact that the Latin word "Malum" means an "apple" as well as a "sin, or evil."

According to the Holy Qur'an, it was Satan who 'caused them to slip'. It clearly shows that the error and disobedience of Adam and Hawwa alayhimus salaam was not of the kind which technically constitutes a sin, but arose out of a misunderstanding produced by Satan. They ate the forbidden fruit, because Satan had cleverly deceived them.

A question arises here as to how Satan got into Paradise for seducing Adam and Hawwa alayhimus salaam, when he had already been expelled from there for refusing to prostrate himself.

There are many possible ways in which he can have played his trick. Possibly he never met them, but planted the suggestion in their minds from afar - a thing which Satan can always do, and of which we have a specimen in the work of the hypnotists. It is equally possible that Satan, being one of the jinns whom Allah has given certain unusual powers denied to man, assumed the shape of a snake or of something else, and thus succeeded in entering Paradise. Perhaps it was because of this disguise that Adam alayhis salaam did not remember Allah's warning that Satan was his enemy.

According to the Holy Qur'an, Satan assured them on oath that he was one of their well-wishers (7:21). It apparently suggests that he did actually meet them, and speak to them face to face.

The Holy Qur'an says that Satan: "brought them out" of the state in which they had been living. In actual fact, they were 'brought out' under a divine command, but since Satan served as a means and as an intermediary, the action has been attributed to him.

NOTE: The words of the Holy Qur'an do not in the least imply that Satan had any power whatsoever to act on his own. So, any Manichean du'alism is totally out of the question

Allah did not want them to eat the fruits of a certain tree, but as a precautionary measure He commanded them not to approach it even. It is from here that the Fuqaha' have derived one of the basic principles of Islamic law, *which requires that the things or actions which are likely to serve as means to sin or as its instruments are equally forbidden.* That is to say, there are certain things which are not forbidden in themselves, but when there is a danger that in making use of them a man would become involved in an unlawful activity, they too have to be forbidden.

The Prophets are innocent of all sins

As we have seen here, Adam alayhis salaam had been forbidden to eat the fruit of a certain tree, and had also been warned against the machinations of his enemy, Satan, and yet he had eaten the forbidden fruit. It is seemingly a sin, while the Holy Qur'an, the Hadith and rational arguments too establish the innocence and sinlessness of all the prophets.

There is an absolute consensus of the four great Imams of Islamic law and of all the authentic scholars on the doctrine that each and every prophet is innocent of and protected against all sins, major or minor. Some people have suggested that prophets are not protected against minor sins, but the majority of authentic scholars does not agree with this opinion. (Qurtubi)

It is necessary for prophets to be thus protected, because they are sent down to be the guides of men - if a guide can go against the commandments of Allah and commit a sin, major or even minor, people would no longer be ready to trust his word or deed. If one cannot have trust and faith even in the prophets, how can the work of spiritual guidance be possible? Hence the necessity of prophets being sinless.

The Holy Qur'an does, however, relate certain incidents which tend to suggest that a certain prophet committed a sin, and drew upon himself the displeasure of Allah. The story about Adam alayhis salaam eating the forbidden fruit is one such instance. According to the consensus of the authentic scholars, in all cases a prophet comes to commit an error through a misunderstanding or just forgetfulness, and it is never a deliberate and wilful transgression of divine commandment.

As is well-known, a Mujtahid is one who possesses the necessary qualifications for finding out through analogical deduction the rule for a case regarding which no specific commandment is present in the Holy Qur'an or the Hadith; if he makes a mistake in determining the rule, he still receives a reward from Allah for having made the effort. The mistake made by a prophet is always of this nature, or is due to oversight and hence pardonable, and cannot be called a 'sin' in the technical sense. Moreover, a prophet, being under the protection of Allah, can never show oversight or forgetfulness in things which are directly concerned with his prophetic and legislative function, but only in personal matters. (see al-Bahr ul Muhit)

The station of the prophets, however, is so exalted, that even a little oversight on the part of a great man is considered to be a great error. That is why such slips on the parts of certain prophets have been described in the Holy Qur'an as 'sins', and Allah has shown his displeasure too, although they are not 'sins' in their nature.

As for the error committed by Adam alayhis salaam commentators have advanced several explanations:-

(a) A certain tree was pointed out to Adam alayhis salaam as being forbidden. But it was not this particular tree alone that was intended, but all the trees of this kind. The Hadith too relates a similar case. Holding a piece of silk and some gold in his hand, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that those two things were forbidden to the men in his Ummah. Obviously the ban does not apply to these very pieces of silk and gold alone, but to silk and gold as such. But it is quite possible for someone to imagine that only the particular pieces which the Holy Prophet ﷺ held in his hand were forbidden.

Similarly, Adam alayhis salaam thought that the prohibition applied only to the particular tree which had been pointed out to him. Satan exploited this misunderstanding, and assured him on oath that, being a well-wisher, he could never advise him to do something which was wrong or harmful, and that the forbidden tree was quite different, and not the one from which he was asking him to pluck a fruit.

(b) Satan may have suggested to Adam alayhis salaam that the prohibition was valid only up to a period after he had been created, just as infants are denied heavy food till they have grown up, and that since Adam alayhis salaam had now grown stronger, the ban too had been lifted.

(c) It is equally possible that, when Satan told him that if he ate this fruit, the eternal bliss of Paradise would be guaranteed for him, Adam forgot the prohibition. This verse of the Holy Qur'an seems to give credence to such a possibility: "Adam forgot and We did not find him steadfast." (20:115)

Anyhow, the essential point is that Adam alayhis salaam did not deliberately and wilfully disobey Allah; all that he did was an act of oversight or the kind of mistake which a Mujtahid can make. The error was not, properly speaking, a sin, but Adam alayhis salaam being so close to Allah, and in view of his station of a prophet, even this lapse was regarded as very serious, and described as a 'sin' in the Holy Qur'an. But the Holy Qur'an tells us that when he repented and prayed for pardon, Allah forgave him.

The repentance

In speaking of how Allah taught Adam alayhis salaam the words of a prayer so that he could offer his repentance properly, the Holy Qur'an uses the word Talaqqa, which means 'accepting and welcoming a person or thing eagerly', and thus indicates his attitude in receiving the phrases. (See Kashshaf and Ruh-al-Ma'ani)

As to what these phrases were, different things have been reported from different Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, but the generally accepted report is that of the blessed Companion Ibn 'Abbass, radiallahu anhu, according to which these phrases are just the ones which the Holy Qur'an cites in a different place, **"Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves, and if You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we will surely be among the losers."** (7:23)

The Arabic word for repentance is taubah which means 'a return'. So, taubah is not merely an emotional attitude as the English word, 'repentance' seems to suggest. The word taubah is used with reference to Allah as much to men. When the word taubah is employed in case of a man, it signifies a necessary combination of three things:

- (a) Acknowledging one's sin as a sin, being ashamed of it and feeling remorseful.
- (b) Giving up the sin altogether.
- (c) Making up one's mind firmly never to indulge in it again.

If any one of these three elements is missing, the taubah is not genuine. Thus, it is not enough for one's salvation merely to utter the words of repentance, unless the words are supported by remorse for the sins committed in the past, abstinence from them in the present and determination of not giving way to them in the future.

So much for the use of the word taubah with reference to man. In the present passage, the Holy Qur'an uses the word with reference to Allah, and the phrase concerned literally signifies 'Allah returned to Adam'. It means that Allah again turned to him with His mercy and grace, and accepted his taubah.

LESSONS

We have been advised by the ulama that if one of us is to commit a sin, we should do exactly as our parents Adam and Hawwa alayhimus salaam did. That is, we should be sincerely ashamed of our deed, make up our mind never to indulge in it again, and pray to Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala for forgiveness as they did **“Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves, and if You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we will surely be among the losers.”**

DAY 8

And when he, set out towards Madyan - 28:22

Madyan (the name of a city in Sham (a large territory now consisting of Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine) which was named after Madyan, the son of Ibrahim alayhis salaam. This area was outside the empire of the Pharaoh. It was eight days journey from Egypt. When Sayyidna Musa alayhis salaam was taken over by the natural fright of the pursuing army of the Pharaoh, which was not in conflict either with the prophethood or with trust in Allah, he resolved to leave Egypt. Perhaps he decided to proceed toward Madyan because it was a habitation of the descendants of Sayyidna Ibrahim alayhis salaam, and he was also his progeny.

When Sayyidna Musa alayhis salaam left Egypt, he was in a condition that he had neither any provisions for the journey nor any baggage, and also he did not know the route. In this state of helplessness he turned to Allah Ta'ala and asked, (I hope my Lord will guide me to the straight path - 28:22), Allah Ta'ala accepted this prayer. Scholars have observed that the only food Musa alayhis salaam had during this journey was the leaves of trees. Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas radiallahu has said that this was the first trial and test of Sayyidina Musa alayhis salaam.

(And when he arrived at the waters of Madyan, he found a large number of people watering (their animals) - 28:23)

(waters of Madyan) refers to the well from where people of that place used to make their animals 'drink water

(found, aloof from them, two women keeping back (their animals) - 23). That is he saw two girls stopping their goats from going to the water, so that they did not get mixed up with other goats

(He said, "What is the matter with you?" They said, "We cannot water (our animals) unless the shepherds bring (their animals) back and our father is very old man." - 28:23).

The word Khatb means "matter". The sense is that Sayyidna Musa alayhis salaam asked the two girls 'What was it that you are stopping your goats from coming to the well for drinking water like other goats? The two girls answered that, in order to avoid mixing with men-folk, they used to make their goats wait until men had left the place after watering their animals. The question arose here whether they did not have any male member in the family to do this job. The girls answered this question on their own by saying that their father was very old and could not perform this job. This is why they were doing the job.

Some very important points are learnt by this incident. One, that it was the practice of the prophets to help the weak. Sayyidna Musa alayhis salaam saw that two girls had brought their goats for drinking water, but they were unable to find room because of the rush of people. Therefore, he asked them about their problem. Two, that there is no harm to talk to stranger women, if no mischief is involved. Three, that although this incident had happened when hijab was not enjoined, a situation that continued even in the early days of Islam (hijab was enjoined in Madinah after the Hijrah), but the underlying spirit of hijab, i.e the natural instinct of modesty and bashfulness, was there even in those days. Because of this natural instinct the two girls preferred hardship rather than getting mixed with men-folk. Four, that it was not considered desirable for women even in those days to go out and perform such type of duties. It was for this reason that they put forward the justification that their father was very old and weak.

(So he (Musa) watered (their animal) for their sake - 28:24). That is Sayyidna Musa alayhis salaam took

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pity on the girls and drew out water from the well and satiated their goats. It is reported in some narrations that the shepherds after making their cattle drink water used to place a very heavy stone on the mouth of the well to make it unusable, and hence these girls would have only the left-over water for their herd. The stone was so heavy that ten men together could move it, but Sayyidna Musa alayhis salaam removed it all by himself, and drew water from the well. Perhaps for this reason one of the two girls reported to her father that Sayyidna Musa alayhis salaam was very strong. (Qurtubi)

Then he turned to a shade and said, “O my Lord, I am in need of whatever good you send down to me.” - 28:24). Sayyidna Musa alayhis salaam did not have any food for the last seven days. He came under the shade of a tree and prayed to Allah describing his condition and need in an exquisite manner. The word Khair is sometimes used for wealth. Sometimes it is used for strength and sometimes for food as in the verse under reference. (Qurtubi)

LESSONS

We recommend the following video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YvY6d8oj0QM>

Commentary of the Du'a

The word hamaza (the infinitive of Hamazat translated above as 'strokes') means "to push, to press" and sometimes is also used to mean "to make a call from behind".

This is a very comprehensive prayer often invoked for protection from the guile and mischief of Satan and the Holy Prophet ﷺ has urged upon the Muslims to recite it frequently in order to avoid sudden bursts of rage which are brought about by the promptings of Satan and which cause people to lose self-control. This prayer is also very effective in repelling other assaults of Satans and Jinns.

Sayyidna Khalid radiallahu anhu suffered from insomnia and the Holy Prophet ﷺ suggested that he should recite the following prayer before going to bed:

أَعُوذُ بِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ مِنْ غَضَبِ اللَّهِ وَ عِقَابِهِ وَ مِنْ شَرِّ عِبَادِهِ وَ مِنْ هَمَزَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ وَ أَنْ يَخْضُرُونِ

I seek refuge with Allah's Perfect Words from Allah's wrath and His punishment, and from the evils of His slaves, and from the strokes of the satans and from that they come to me.

Sayyidna Khalid radiallahu anhu did as advised and was soon cured of insomnia.

أَنْ يَخْضُرُونِ

(from that they come to me - (23:98) According to a hadith in Sahuh of Muslim the Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said that Satan meddles in all human affairs and tempts people to do evil deeds, and that this prayer is the best protection against his attempts. (Qurtubi)

رَبِّ ارْجِعُونِ

(My Lord, send me back - 23:99) When death approaches an infidel and he senses the punishment that awaits him on the Day of Judgment, he wishes for a return to this world, so that by performing good deeds he may escape the punishment which he has richly deserved.

Ibn Jarir has related a story on the authority of Ibn Juraij that the Holy Prophet ﷺ once said, "At the time of death when a good Muslim perceives the angels of mercy and all the luxuries of Paradise spread out before him, and the angels ask whether he wishes to be sent back to the world, his reply invariably is in the negative. He refuses to return to a place which is full of woes and suffering and misery, and only desires to be taken to Allah's presence. But when the same question is put to an infidel, his answer is رَبِّ ارْجِعُونِ i.e. he wishes to be sent back to the world."

LESSONS

Taken from Tafsir Ibn Kathir:

We are commanded to mention Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala at the beginning of any undertaking, in order to ward off the Shayatin at the time of eating, intercourse, slaughtering animals for food, etc.

Abu Dawud recorded that the Messenger of Allah used to say:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْهَرَمِ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْهَدْمِ وَمِنَ الْغَرَقِ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ أَنْ يَخْبَطَنِي الشَّيْطَانُ عِنْدَ الْمَوْتِ

“O Allah, I seek refuge with You from old age, I seek refuge with You from being crushed or drowned, and I seek refuge with you from being assaulted by the Shayatin at the time of death”.

The du'a mentioned in today's quiz is also a very good and comprehensive du'a to make.

A brief history

Al-Bukhari recorded that Ibn `Abbas radiallahu anhu said, “Prophet Ibrahim alayhis salaam took Isma`il alayhis salaam and his mother and went away with them until he reached the area of the House, where he left them next to a tree above Zamzam in the upper area of the Masjid. During that time, Isma`il alayhis salaam’s mother was still nursing him. Makkah was then uninhabited, and there was no water source in it. Ibrahim left them there with a bag containing some dates and a water-skin containing water. Ibrahim then started to leave, and Isma`il alayhis salaam’s mother followed him and said, ‘O Ibrahim! To whom are you leaving us in this barren valley that is not inhabited’ She repeated the question several times and Ibrahim did not reply. She asked, ‘Has Allah commanded you to do this’ He said, ‘Yes.’ She said, ‘I am satisfied that Allah will never abandon us.’ Ibrahim left, and when he was far enough away where they could not see him, close to Thaniyyah, he faced the House, raised his hands and supplicated,

رَبَّنَا إِنِّي أَسْكَنْتُ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي بِوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ عِنْدَ بَيْتِكَ الْمُحَرَّمِ

(O our Lord! I have made some of my offspring to dwell in an uncultivable valley by Your Sacred House (the Ka`bah at Makkah)) until,

يَشْكُرُونَ

(Give thanks) (14:37). Isma`il’ alayhis salaam’s mother then returned to her place, started drinking water from the water-skin and nursing Isma`il alayhis salaam. When the water was used up, she and her son became thirsty. She looked at him, and he was suffering from thirst; she left, because she disliked seeing his face in that condition. She found the nearest mountain to where she was, As-Safa, ascended it and looked, in vain, hoping to see somebody. When she came down to the valley, she raised her garment and ran, just as a tired person runs, until she reached the Al-Marwah mountain. In vain, she looked to see if there was someone there. She ran to and fro (between the two mountains) seven times.” Ibn `Abbas radiallahu anhu said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “This is why the people make the trip between As-Safa and Al-Marwah (during Hajj and Umrah).”

“When she reached Al-Marwah, she heard a voice and said, ‘Shush,’ to herself. She tried to hear the voice again and when she did, she said, ‘I have heard you. Do you have relief’ She found the angel digging with his heel (or his wing) where Zamzam now exists, and the water gushed out. Isma`il alayhis salaam’s mother was astonished and started digging, using her hand to transfer water to the water-skin.” Ibn `Abbas radiallahu anhu said that the Prophet ﷺ then said, “May Allah grant His mercy to the mother of Isma`il alayhis salaam, had she left the water, (flow naturally without her intervention), it would have been flowing on the surface of the earth.”

“Isma`il alayhis salaam’s mother started drinking the water and her milk increased for her child. The angel (Gabriel) said to her, ‘Do not fear abandonment. There shall be a House for Allah built here by this boy and his father. Allah does not abandon His people.’ During that time, the area of the House was raised above ground level and the floods used to reach its right and left sides.

Afterwards some people of the tribe of Jurhum, passing through Kada’, made camp at the bottom of the valley. They saw some birds, they were astonished, and said, ‘Birds can only be found at a place where there is water. We did not notice before that this valley had water.’ They sent a scout or two who searched the area, found the water, and returned to inform them about it. Then they all went to Isma`il alayhis salaam’s mother, next to the water, and said, ‘O Mother of Isma`il! Will you allow us to be with you (or dwell with you)’ She said, ‘Yes. But you will have no exclusive right to the water here.’ They said, ‘We agree.’” Ibn

‘Abbas radiallahu anhu said that the Prophet ﷺ said, “At that time, Isma‘il’s mother liked to have human company.”

“And thus they stayed there and sent for their relatives to join them. Later on, her boy reached the age of puberty and married a lady from them, for Isma‘il alayhis salaam learned Arabic from them, and they liked the way he was raised. Isma‘il alayhis salaam’s mother died after that.

Then an idea occurred to Ibrahim alayhis salaam to visit his dependents. So he left (to Makkah). When he arrived, he did not find Isma‘il alayhis salaam, so he asked his wife about him. She said, ‘He has gone out hunting.’ When he asked her about their living conditions, she complained to him that they live in misery and poverty. Ibrahim alayhis salaam said (to her), ‘When your husband comes, convey my greeting and tell him to change the threshold of his gate.’ When Isma‘il alayhis salaam came, he sensed that they had a visitor and asked his wife, ‘Did we have a visitor?’ She said, ‘Yes. An old man came to visit us and asked me about you, and I told him where you were. He also asked about our condition, and I told him that we live in hardship and poverty.’ Isma‘il alayhis salaam said, ‘Did he ask you to do anything?’ She said, ‘Yes. He asked me to convey his greeting and that you should change the threshold of your gate.’

Isma‘il alayhis salaam said to her, ‘He was my father and you are the threshold, so go to your family (i.e. you are divorced).’ So he divorced her and married another woman. Again Ibrahim alayhis salaam thought of visiting his dependents whom he had left (at Makkah). Ibrahim alayhis salaam came to Isma‘il alayhis salaam’s house, but did not find Isma‘il alayhis salaam and asked his wife, ‘Where is Isma‘il?’

Isma‘il alayhis salaam’s wife replied, ‘He has gone out hunting.’ He asked her about their condition, and she said that they have a good life and praised Allah. Ibrahim alayhis salaam asked, ‘What is your food and what is your drink?’ She replied, ‘Our food is meat and our drink is water.’ He said, ‘O Allah! Bless their meat and their drink.’” The Prophet (Muhammad) ﷺ said, “They did not have crops then, otherwise Ibrahim alayhis salaam would have invoked Allah to bless that too. Those who do not live in Makkah cannot bear eating a diet only containing meat and water.”

“Ibrahim alayhis salaam said, ‘When Isma‘il comes back, convey my greeting to him and ask him to keep the threshold of his gate.’ When Isma‘il alayhis salaam came back, he asked, ‘Has anyone visited us?’ She said, ‘Yes. A good looking old man,’ and she praised Ibrahim alayhis salaam, ‘And he asked me about our livelihood and I told him that we live in good conditions.’ He asked, ‘Did he ask you to convey any message?’ She said, ‘Yes. He conveyed his greeting to you and said that you should keep the threshold of your gate.’ Isma‘il alayhis salaam said, ‘That was my father, and you are the threshold; he commanded me to keep you.’

Ibrahim alayhis salaam then came back visiting and found Isma‘il alayhis salaam behind the Zamzam well, next to a tree, mending his arrows. When he saw Ibrahim alayhis salaam, he stood up and they greeted each other, just as the father and son greet each other. Ibrahim alayhis salaam said, ‘O Isma‘il, Your Lord has ordered me to do something.’ He said, ‘Obey your Lord.’ He asked Isma‘il, ‘Will you help me?’ He said, ‘Yes, I will help you.’ Ibrahim alayhis salaam said, ‘Allah has commanded me to build a house for Him there,’ and he pointed to an area that was above ground level.

So, both of them rose and started to raise the foundations of the House. Ibrahim alayhis salaam started building (the Ka‘bah), while Isma‘il alayhis salaam continued handing him the stones. Both of them were saying, ‘O our Lord! Accept (this service) from us, Verily, You are the Hearing, the Knowing.’ (2.127).”

Hence, they were building the House, part by part, going around it and saying,

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رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

(Our Lord! Accept (this service) from us. Verily, You are the Hearer, the Knower.)

The prayers of Ibrahim alayhis salaam

Sayyidna Ibrahim alayhis salaam always carried out the commandments of Allah without losing a moment, and was ready to make all kinds of sacrifices in His way, whether they involved worldly goods, or wife and children, or his own likes and dislikes. All the same, having affection and love for one's family is not only a natural urge in man, but also a divine commandment. This is what manifests itself in the present verses, where we find him praying for the well-being of his family in this world as much as in the other.

Verse 127 shows another essential quality of this great prophet. In obedience to Allah, he had left the fertile land of Syria and made his wife and child to settle in the barren desert, and now he was taking up the labour of building "the House of Allah." This was a moment when a man who had been bearing such hardships in the way of Allah could normally be expected to feel satisfied with himself and relax in a mood of self-congratulation.

But "the Friend of Allah" recognized the Majesty of Allah, and knew that no creature can possibly worship or obey his Creator as is His due, but within his own limited powers. Consequently, he also knew that in performing the hardest or the greatest tasks one should not be proud of one's attainment, but should, in all humility, pray to Allah to accept the little effort one has been capable of making - and that, too, with the grace of Allah Himself. That is exactly what Sayyidna Ibrahim alayhis salaam did when he started, along with his young son, to build the Ka'bah. That is to say, he prayed to Allah to accept this deed, for Allah hears all prayers, and knows the intentions of His creatures.

LESSONS

Tafsir Ibn Kathir: The Prophets Ibrahim and Isma`il alayhimus salaam were performing a good deed, yet they asked Allah to accept this good deed from them

Here, we learn that there are two parts to a good deed. One is the carrying out of the deed, and the second is the acceptance of it. We should praise and thank Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala for giving us the ability to carry out a good deed, and guiding us to fulfil it.

We should then ask Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala to accept this deed from us, showing our humility and sincerity.

May Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala grant us the sincerity of Ibrahim alayhis salaam, and albeit our deeds are not perfect, may He accept what little we do, and help us towards perfection.
Aameen!

The miracles of Musa alayhis salaam

Musa alayhis salaam declared before Pharaoh that he was a messenger of Allah, the Lord of all the worlds, and that his status of prophethood does not allow him to ascribe anything but truth to Allah because the message given to the prophets by Allah is a sacred trust and it is a great sin to tamper with it. All the prophets of Allah are free of all sins and cannot do so. The prophet Musa alayhis salaam tried to convince them that they should believe him because his truthfulness was beyond question and that he had never uttered a word of lie. In addition to this, his miracles are a clear proof to support his claim to prophethood.

In the light of these clear signs he must believe him and let the children of Isra'il go with him free of his illegitimate surveillance. The Pharaoh, out of his obstinacy, did not listen to anything, but demanded saying, "If you have come with a sign, bring it out, if you are among the truthful,"

The prophet Musa alayhis salaam in response to his demand, threw down his staff on the earth, instantly it turned into a serpent. The word *thu'ban* in Arabic signifies a huge serpent. The use of the word '*mubin*' as an adjective which means 'clear or prominent' is quite descriptive of the fact that this miraculous event took place manifestly before the eyes of the people of the Pharaoh, and it was not performed secretly in a hidden or secluded place as is usually done by magicians.

In some historical traditions it has been cited on the authority of the Companion Ibn 'Abbas radiallahu anhu that as the serpent moved towards Pharaoh, he jumped from his throne and sought shelter near the prophet Musa alayhis salaam and many of his courtiers died of extreme fear. (Tafsir Kabir)

Thereafter, the verse (7:108) said, 'and he drew out his hand, and it was white light to the onlookers.'

The Arabic word: *naza'a* signifies extracting something from another thing with force. Here this word indicates that the prophet Musa alayhis salaam applied some force while drawing out his hand. We know from a Tradition reported by the Companion 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas radiallahu anhu that this whiteness was not of ordinary kind. It had light that illuminated the whole surrounding. (Qurtubi)

The Arabic word '*nazirin*' signifying the 'onlookers or viewers' indicates that this light was so surprising for the people that they gathered to see it.

The prophet Musa alayhis salaam performed two miracles at this occasion on the demand of the Pharaoh. First, the transformation of his staff into a serpent, second, drawing his hand out from under his arm, emanating light from it. The first was to serve as warning for the unbelievers while the second aimed at inviting them to the truth. It also indicated that the message of the prophet Musa alayhis salaam was a light and to follow it would lead people to eternal success.

After seeing these miracles the chiefs of the people of the Pharaoh said to the people he was a great sorcerer. Being ignorant of divine powers of Allah they could say nothing else as they believed Pharaoh to be their god and had seen nothing but the magical charms of the sorcerers in their life. They, however, added the word '*alim*' signifying the one who knows, showing their impression that the miraculous acts of Musa alayhis salaam were of the kind that could not be performed by an ordinary magician. So, they said that he was a sorcerer of great knowledge.

The competition between Musa alayhis salaam and the Sorcerers

Seeing these wonders of staves turning into serpents and making his hand emitting strong white light, the Pharaoh should have been convinced and have believed in Musa alayhis salaam as the logic and sense

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demanding. But it is the common practice of the wrong-doers that they always seek false interpretations of the truth in order to conceal it, the Pharaoh and his people belied him instead, and said to the people that he was a great sorcerer and that he wanted to expel them from their homes and take over the rule of the country.

The people of the Pharaoh said that there were many expert sorcerers in their cities who were capable of defeating Musa alayhis salaam.

Some soldiers should be sent to collect and bring the sorcerers for this purpose. Sorcery and magic, being the custom of the day, the sorcerers enjoyed a high status among people. Allah sent Musa alayhis salaam with the miracles of the staff and white-lit hand so that people may clearly observe the misery of the sorcerers after entering into a contest with Musa alayhis salaam.

It is the usual practice of Allah that He sends His prophets with miracles that are appropriate to the demand of the time. For instance, in the time of the prophet 'Isa alayhis salaam, (the Jesus), Greek philosophy and medical sciences were at their zenith. He was, therefore, sent with the miraculous powers of restoring the sight of those who were born blind and cure the lepers instantly with a touch of his hand.

In the time of the Holy Prophet sallallahu alayhi wa salla, the Arabs were boastful of their oratory and linguistic capabilities. The Holy Qur'an was sent as the greatest of all miracles of the Holy prophet. Its diction and style so bewildered the Arabs that they instantly acknowledged a super human element in it.

The sorcerers came to Pharaoh and said: "There must be a reward for us, if we are the victors." (113)

He said, "Yes, and of course, you will be among the closer ones." (114)

The sorcerers were invited from all over the country. When they all came to Pharaoh they asked him of some reward if they gain victory over Musa alayhis salaam . He promised that in addition to their reward they shall be included among those close to him.

The historical reports about the number of these sorcerers give us different information. These give us a number from nine hundred to three hundred thousand. The quantity of the staves and strings used in this contest is reported to be as great as was loaded on three hundred camels. (Qurtubi)

It may be noted that the first thing the sorcerers did, was to have an assurance about the reward they will get in return of their performance. It is because worldly people are always after worldly gains. They do nothing unless they are sure of their gains, while on the contrary, the prophets and their disciples always declare: 'I do not ask you for a reward, as my reward is with the Lord of all the worlds.' (26:109)

That is, the prophets of Allah preach and convey the message of Allah only for the good and guidance of people and they seek no financial gain against it. They seek their reward from Allah alone.

After this discourse with Pharaoh the sorcerers got the place and date fixed for the great encounter. An open land was chosen for the purpose and the time was fixed after the sunrise on their festival Day.

Some reports say that the prophet Musa alayhis salaam had a short conversation with the chief of the sorcerers and asked him if they would accept the faith in case he defeated them? He said that there was no question of their being defeated as they possessed such great magical powers that could not be overcome

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by any one. And in case 'you bring defeat to us we shall declare our faith openly in the presence of the Pharaoh'. (Mazhari and Qurtubi)

They said, "O Musa either you throw (first) or shall we be the ones to throw."

The Arabic word: 'Ilqa' means to drop something down. On the day of encounter the sorcerers asked the prophet Musa alayhis salaam, if he would drop down his staff first or should they throw theirs first?

This question of the sorcerers was perhaps to show their complacency about their art, though the mode of their sentence indicated that they wanted to start first, but for giving an impression of power to their opponent they put that question. Since the prophet Musa alayhis salaam had nothing to fear about, he invited them saying 'you drop.'

Ibn Kathir has said that the prophet Musa alayhis salaam behaved with them politely by inviting them to have their turn first. The effect of this behaviour was that they accepted the faith after their defeat. Here we are faced with a question. The sorcery is an impermissible act, especially when it is used to oppose a prophet sent by Allah it becomes an act of infidelity. How then the prophet Musa alayhis salaam gave permission of magic to the sorcerers by saying 'you drop'? With a little thought we can find the answer. It was certain that the sorcerers will show their magic by all means. The point of conversation was to decide who should start the contest. The prophet Musa alayhis salaam allowed them to begin. Another advantage of this strategy was that the people could see their performance and the sorcerers had all the time to show their art and turn the staves into snakes. Then the staff of the prophet Musa alayhis salaam should turn into a serpent and eat up all the snakes, thus the open defeat of magic should be exhibited before the people. (Bayan- al- Qur'an)

This demonstration of their magic was just a bewitching of the eyes of the people which made them see the staffs and strings as snakes leaping on the ground, while the strings and the staffs did not change physically. It was a kind of mesmerism hypnotising the minds of the onlookers. This does not mean that sorcery is confined only in this kind and that it cannot change something into another, as we do not have any proof against it. On the contrary, many forms and kinds of magic have been taken as being reality. The terms magic and sorcery are usually applied for all the acts that seem to be happening in unusual way. Sleight of hand, telepathic influences and mesmerism are sometimes called magic. Transformation of one thing into another through magic may be a possibility but we have no valid reason or proof for or against it.

The next verse 117 said, "And We revealed to Musa 'Throw your staff.' Then, of a sudden it began to swallow all that they had concocted." We find it reported in history, when thousands of staffs and ropes were turned into snakes leaping all over the ground, Allah commanded Musa alayhis salaam to drop down his staff on the ground. It turned into a great snake and instantly began to eat up the snakes of the sorcerers. The crowd stood bewildered and stunned at this sight. Within no time all the snakes were eaten up by the great snake of the prophet Musa alayhis salaam.

Next the verse said: "So, the truth prevailed and what they were doing became a nullity. So there they were overcome and turned humiliated. And the sorcerers were constrained to fall in prostration. They said, "We believe in the Lord of the worlds, the Lord of Musa and Harun."

The sorcerers were so overawed by the miracle of the prophet Musa alayhis salaam that they fell in prostration. This may also imply that Allah blessed them with favour and put them in prostration. They added the phrase, the Lord of Musa and Harun alayhis salaam after saying, the Lord of the worlds, to make it clear that the Lord worshipped by Musa and Harun alayhis salaam is, in fact, the Lord of the Universe, and not the Pharaoh as he pretended to be.

The du'a of the magicians

The foregoing verses had a detailed account of the contest between the prophet Musa alayhis salaam and the sorcerers and that after their defeat the sorcerers declared their faith in Allah. Some historical reports say that subsequent to their declaration of faith in Allah, six hundred thousand more people followed suit and declared their belief in Allah.

Before this open contest there were only two individuals believing in Allah. Now a great army of people became Muslims. It was, obviously an embarrassing situation for the Pharaoh. Like a clever politician he managed to conceal his state of mind before the people, and changed the situation by putting the blame of conspiracy and rebellion on the sorcerers. He claimed that they had joined hands with Musa alayhis salaam and Harun in order to create disorder in the country. Then he said to the sorcerers, "You have believed in him before I permitted you." This was a threat to the sorcerers on the one hand, and on the other, he tried to convince his people that the sorcerers made a hasty decision in accepting their faith and fell prey to the trap of Musa and Harun alayhis salaam. Otherwise, he would have also believed in him in case Musa and Harun alayhis salaam proved truthful in their claim.

It was a clever design of Pharaoh. He tried to keep his people stay in their former ignorance and make people believe that the contest was pre-plotted between the prophet Musa alayhis salaam and the sorcerers. He cleverly twisted the fact that the miracle of Musa alayhis salaam and the open conversion of the sorcerers to the true Faith was purely to expose the ignorance and falsehood of the Pharaoh. He turned it into a political issue by saying, "So that you may expel it's people from there." He wanted to make his people believe that they planned the whole matter to gain power over the country and expel the people from there.

After making all these strategic statements he threatened the sorcerers, first, with an indefinite remark saying, "Now you shall know (your end)". Further specifying the threat, He said, "I shall surely, cut your hands and legs from the opposite sides. Then I shall crucify you all together." By cutting from the opposite sides he meant the right hand and the left foot so that they are made completely disabled and invalid.

The Pharaoh made all the efforts that he could to control his people. The belief in Allah, or "Iman" as it is called by the Qur'an, is a great power. When it finds its way into one's heart, one finds himself as powerful as to face the whole world and all the forces gathered together against him. This was a great change. Only a few hours ago, the sorcerers were the worshippers of Pharaoh, but having faith in Allah they demonstrated such a great power and courage that in response to all the threats to their lives by the Pharaoh, they only said with perfect satisfaction that, in that case, "To our Lord we are sure to return."

The sorcerers were fully aware of Pharaoh's power and authority over them. They did not say that Pharaoh will not be able to kill them because of their new faith. Their answer was to suggest that the whole life of this temporary world had no value in their eyes. Their satisfaction was due to the fact that they were sure of meeting the Lord of the worlds after passing away from this world. There they shall get an everlasting life of peace and comfort

Another interpretation of their answer is that though the Pharaoh had all the power to finish their life, but soon he will be presented before the Lord of the worlds where he shall be taken to account for his despotism. In another verse, the following statement is also included in the answer of the sorcerers "You may pass any judgement you can against us, but your judgement will be restricted to this worldly life." (72:20)

This also shows their total indifference towards the temporary life of this world. This great change in their thought and action was the result of their true faith in Allah. In addition to this, their faith opened the door

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of knowledge and wisdom upon them which is manifest from their invocation to Allah at this occasion.

They prayed, “O Allah! Shower upon us patience and let death take us while we are Muslims.” This prayer is not only a manifestation of knowledge and wisdom, but also the best means of getting out of the difficulty they were in. It is because perseverance and patience are the only keys to success over one’s enemy.

It Was A Miracle:

The instant perfect change of mind of the sorcerers was, in no way, a lesser miracle than the other miracles of the prophet Musa alayhis salaam. Those who led a life of infidelity and ignorance for their whole life were instantly changed into the most cognizant, knowledgeable and true Muslims, as faithful as to readily sacrifice their life for their faith.

It is a pity that the Muslims and the Muslim states are trying all other ways and means to make themselves powerful and strong, but have become neglectful of the real source of power and strength. That is faith, perseverance and patience.

LESSONS

Faith in Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala and the hereafter allows us to get through life. Reminder that this life is only temporary, the struggles are only temporary, help us in the darkest times of our life.

Ma'riful Qur'an: The report of the commission formed for investigating the causes and effects of the World War has remarked that the Muslims who observe faith in Allah and in the Hereafter are the most valiant and brave people in the battle field, and the most patient in the times of difficulty because they have faith in Allah and in the Hereafter. This is why the German military officials, expert in military sciences, emphatically suggested that they should create honesty and sense of accountability in the Hereafter among their soldiers, as they are the great source of strength and courage. (Tafsir al-manar)

May Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala give us strength in our darkest hours, and help us to see the light at the end of the tunnel and open up doors and ways for us, and grant us help from where we would never have imagined it coming from. Aameen!

The story of Maryam alayhas salaam

In the religious code of earlier prophets, there was a method of worship through which a child, out of one's children, could be freed from all worldly services and devoted exclusively for Allah. Following this practice, the mother of Sayyidah Maryam made a vow during her pregnancy that she would let the newborn serve Baitul-Maqdis in the way of Allah and that she would not put the child on worldly chores.

Sayyidah Maryam's mother thought that she will deliver a male child. But, when she delivered a girl, she was full of remorse thinking that a girl would not be able to do this duty. But Allah Almighty, out of His consideration for the sincerity of Sayyidah Maryam's mother, accepted that very girl and thereby made her status distinct from any other girl of the world.

From here we learn that a mother holds a certain measure of guardianship over her child in respect of his or her education and training, for Sayyidah Maryam's mother would have never vowed if the mother had no right of guardianship over her child. Similarly, it proves that a mother too has the right to give a name to her child. (al-Jassas)

In order to fulfil her vow, Sayyidah Maryam's mother took her to the Mosque of Baitul-Maqdis and talked to the care-takers and worshippers at the Mosque, Sayyidna Zakariyya alayhis salaam being one of them, and told them that she had vowed to dedicate the child in the service of God and therefore, she could not keep the child with her. She asked them to take her and keep her.

Sayyidna 'Imran was the Imam of this Mosque. He had died during the pregnancy of Maryam's mother, otherwise he would have been the most deserving person to have taken charge of the child, being the father and the Imam of the Mosque. Therefore, every keeper and worshipper of the Mosque wished to take her in his custody.

Sayyidna Zakariyya pleaded his bid for custody by saying that his wife was Maryam's aunt and she being next to her mother certainly deserved to keep her. But, people did not agree to prefer him over the others. Finally, everybody agreed to draw lots, which turned out to be fairly strange as it would appear later. Here too, it was Sayyidna Zakariyya alayhis salaam who turned out to be the winner.

So, he got custody of Maryam. According to some reports, he employed a wet-nurse to have her suckled. Other reports say that she just did not need to be suckled. She grew up able to sit and walk and Sayyidna Zakariyya alayhis salaam put her in a good house adjacent to the Mosque. When he went out, he locked the house and opened it on return.

Miracles of Isa alayhis salaam and his birth

One of the qualities of Sayyidna 'Isa alayhis salaam mentioned in this verse is that 'he shall speak in the cradle' which means that he will speak while still a child, although no child has the ability to do so.

When soon after the birth of infant Jesus, as mentioned in another verse, people chided Sayyidah Maryam on the basis of a false accusation, this new-born infant, Sayyidna 'Isa alayhis salaam spoke up, saying: (I am a servant of Allah).

Then following immediately, it was said that he will also talk to people when he will be in the later middle of his age (kahl). It is worth noting here that the incidence of speaking in infancy was certainly a sign and a miracle and it is quite appropriate to mention it at this point. But, speaking to people during one's middle

age is very normal, something everyone does no matter whether he is a Muslim, or a non-Muslim, learned or illiterate. Why has this been mentioned here as something special? What could it mean?

One answer to this question appears in Bayan al-Qur'an by Maulana Ashraf 'Ali Thanavi rahimahullah who says that the real purpose here is to particularly focus on the miraculous nature of meaningful infant speech. The reference to the speech in the middle age is there to indicate that his childhood speech too would not be the usual baby-talk, rather it would be rational, even learned and eloquent, as man does in his advanced years. If we were to look into the true historical background of Sayyidna 'Isa alayhis salaam, we would discover that this reference to him as speaking to people in his middle age provides a great standing argument in favour of the Islamic position which, according to the Qur'anic belief, is that Sayyidna 'Isa alayhis salaam has been raised alive onto the heavens.

Hadith narrations prove that Sayyidna 'Isa alayhis salaam, while so raised, was in the approximate age bracket of 30-35 years which is youth at its best. Middle age, kahl in Arabic, was something he never reached during his life in this world. So, his talking to people in his middle age can happen only when he were to grace this world once again with his presence. Therefore, the way his childhood speech was a miracle, his speech in the middle age could be nothing else but another miracle.

The glad tidings given by the angel (verse 46) regarding the birth of Sayyidna 'Isa alayhis salaam without a father surprised Sayyidah Maryam as she was a virgin. She wondered how would it happen. Would that be a Divine miracle or would she be asked to marry a man? The Divine answer eliminates the latter possibility. Not restricted by it, 'Allah creates what He wills', that is, His will is all sufficient to bring something into existence. He needs no medium or cause. It is only His command "be" which makes things come into existence.

1. Verse 48 recounts the august virtues of Sayyidna Isa alayhis salaam; who would be born blessed with the honour of learning from Allah: Scriptures, Wisdom and specially the Torah and the Injil; and that he will be sent as a Messenger of Allah to all of the Children of Isra'il.
2. The message he will carry to them will be his argument in favour of his prophethood. In order that they believe, enumerated in verse 49, there are four signs or miracles that he would perform, being enough for willing believers. 'I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, that is, I create for you from clay something in the shape of a bird, then I blow in it, and it becomes a living bird with the will of Allah; and I cure the born-blind and the leper and I cause the dead to become alive with the will of Allah; and I tell you of what you eat and what you store in your homes. In it there is surely a sign for you, if you are believers!' (Verse 49)
3. Verse 50 says that Sayyidna Isa alayhis salaam will declare that he has come to confirm Torah which was revealed before his coming and to make lawful what remained unlawful for them in the law of Moses. This means that the unlawfulness of some things in the earlier code would stand abrogated by the new one, (that of Sayyidna 'Isa) whose station of prophethood was the conclusive argument for that claim of abrogation. The proof of his truth were the signs from their Lord.
4. Once his prophethood is established, verse 51 states that Sayyidna Isa alayhis salaam will ask them to beware of any contravention of Divine commandments, fear Allah, and follow his teachings in matters of religion which, in a nutshell, are that 'Allah is my Lord and your Lord' (the ultimate in belief) and 'Worship Him' (the ultimate in deeds). This, then, is the straight path which helps perfect the ideal combination of beliefs and deeds, leads to the way of salvation and is the source of communion with

Allah.

The Du'a of Isa alayhis salaam's followers

Sayyidna Isa alayhis salaam was born with all promised signs. As a messenger sent to Bani Isra'il he presented his call to them supported by miracles to prove his prophethood. But, the Bani Isra'il were adamant and kept on rejecting him as a prophet, even going to the limit of being physically hostile to him.

The text now identifies the very first followers of Sayyidna 'Isa alayhis salaam, brings to light their real creed, expressed first before their prophet and then (in verse 53), reiterated it in the form of a prayer before their Lord.

The word, 'hawariyy (singular of 'al-hawariyyun') appearing in verse 52 (translated as 'the disciples'), is a derivation from hawar which lexically means whiteness. In the religious terminology, the title of 'hawariyy' has been given to the sincere disciples or companions of Sayyidna 'Isa alayhis salaam, either because of their sincerity or the purity of their heart, or because of their white dress. Likewise, the Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ have been called, sahabiyy (plural, sahabah).

Some commentators have given the number of the disciples as twelve. Incidentally, the word 'hawariyy' is also, at times, used in the absolute sense of 'helper' or 'supporter'. It is in this very sense that it was said in a hadith: "Every prophet has a hawariyy, that is, a sincere companion; Zubair is my harwariyy" (Tafsir al-Qurtubi)

An important note:

Verse 52 states that Sayyidna Isa alayhis salaam ; looked for helpers in the way of Allah only when he sensed hostility from disbelievers, and not at the initial stage of his call, As obvious, he had risen to the task all alone obeying the command of his Lord without worrying about setting up a 'party' in advance. When came the need, he found a group around him. A little thought here would show that every worthy mission demands such determination and courage.

The du'a of Musa alayhis salaam

This verse speaks of the period followed by the destruction of the Pharaoh and his people. Having a peaceful time after their deliverance from the Pharaoh and his people the Israelites requested the Prophet Musa alayhis salaam to have some religious system of law so that they may act upon it. The Prophet Musa alayhis salaam prayed Allah for a code of guidance for them. The Arabic word: 'wa'adana' is a derivative of 'wa'dah' which signifies a worded expression of offering something good to someone - a promise.

Allah made a promise to Musa alayhis salaam to send His word to him. It was stipulated that Musa alayhis salaam should go to the mount of Sinai and pass thirty nights there sitting in devotion for Allah. These thirty nights were later supplemented with ten more nights to make them forty.

This verse also implies that the number forty has some special effect in spiritual rectification of one's heart. It is reported in a Tradition of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that anyone who worships Allah for forty days with sincerity of his heart, his heart is made a source of wisdom. (Ruh al-Bayan)

The Prophet Musa alayhis salaam made it a point to appoint Sayyidna Harun as his deputy when he intended to leave for the mount of Sinai and said that he should take the responsibility of his people in his absence. This makes it imperative for those who hold some responsible office that they appoint someone to look after the work in their absence.

The next verses continue to narrate the remaining part of the story. When the prophet Musa alayhis salaam did not turn up after thirty days from the mount of Sinai where he was to be ordained by Allah after passing ten more nights on the mount, the Israelites who were a hasty and impatient people began to make fuss about it.

Among them there was a person named Samiri who was a prominent man, but at the same time, had beliefs in superstitions. He said to the people that the jewels and ornaments of the Egyptians possessed by them were not permissible for them. It may be noted that the plunder or booty taken from the enemy after their defeat was also not permissible for the Israelites. The Israelites gathered all their jewels and handed these over to him. He melted the ornaments and forged a golden calf from it. A peculiar thing reported about him is that he had collected some dust from under the hoofs of the horse of the Archangel Jibra'il (Gabriel) at some occasion. Allah had made this dust to have the effect of some kind of life. Samiri mixed this dust with the molten metal while preparing the calf. This made the calf to emit a sound like the mooing of a cow.

Having designed this satanic invention he invited the people to worship the calf and said that it was god. He said that the Prophet Musa alayhis salaam had gone to speak with God to the mount of Sinai; while god had come to them in the form of this calf. Samiri already enjoyed a place of respect among them, this unusual demonstration increased their trust in him and they started worshipping the calf, and took it as their god. The verse 148 has given a short description of this event while another verse of the Holy Qur'an has described it in detail.

The verse 149 speaks of their remorse on this guilt and their repentance, while the verse 150 describes the events followed by the arrival of the Prophet Musa alayhis salaam from the mount of Sinai. It described that the Prophet Musa alayhis salaam was extremely angry when he saw his people in this state of ignorance. It is reported that Allah had informed him of their perversion on the mount of Sinai. Now seeing them in this state with his own eyes filled him with indignation.

First, he turned to his people and said: "How bad is the thing you have done in my absence" "How did you act

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in haste against the command of your Lord?” That is, you must have waited until the book of Allah came to you. Some of the commentators have said that it meant that they hastily decided that the Prophet Musa alayhis salaam was dead. Then he turned to the Prophet Harun alayhis salaam whom he has left among them as his deputy. He wanted to free his hand in order to grab him. He quickly put down the tablets of the Torah and grabbed the head of his brother. This has been termed as having dropped. The Arabic word used here is ‘Ilqa which signifies dropping or throwing. This gives rise to a doubt that the Prophet Musa alayhis salaam showed disrespect to the tablets of the Torah by throwing or dropping them down. It is obvious that throwing the tablets of the Torah was great sin, and equally obvious is the fact that all the Prophets are innocent and free of all sins. The implication of the verse, therefore, is that he put away the Tablets as quickly in order to free his hands, as seemed like having been dropped. The Holy Qur’an has described it by using this word as a gesture of warning. (Bayan al-Qur’an)

Thereafter he turned to the Prophet Harun alayhis salaam and grasped the hair of his head. The Prophet Harun then gave him the true account of the events and said that it was not his fault, for he stopped them from this wicked act but they did not listen to him. They were so obstinate about it that they were about to kill him. He said that he should not count him among the ignorant people and should not let his enemies laugh at him by treating him in that way. This made the Prophet Musa alayhis salaam cool down.

At this occasion, he prayed to Allah, saying, “My Lord, forgive me and my brother, and admit us to Your mercy, and You are the most merciful of all those who show mercy.” He asked forgiveness for his brother for any of his shortcoming with regard to his duties. He asked forgiveness for himself either for his putting away the tablets of the Torah in a hurry which the Holy Qur’an had described as having been ‘dropped’ to make a gesture of warning, or perhaps, for educating people that they should include themselves while asking forgiveness for others to preclude the sense of complacency on their part.

The du'a of the angels

In verse 7, it was said: (Those who are bearing the Throne and those who are around it). The present count of angels who bear the Throne ('arsh) is four and, on the day of Qiyamah (the Day of Judgment), they will be eight, and only Allah knows the number of angels around the 'arsh. Some Hadith narrations give the number of their rows that reaches several hundred thousands. They are called: (karrubi, [Heb. Kerubh or kerub], plural: [Eng. Cherubin, or Cherubim, Heb. Cherubim]). They are angels close to Allah.

In this verse, it has been said that all these angels close to Allah pray for all believers, particularly those who repent from their sins and follow the Shari'ah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Either Allah Ta'ala has appointed them to perform this task, or their nature is such that they keep praying for the good servants of Allah. Therefore, Sayyidna Mutarrif Ibn 'Abdullah Ibn Shikhkhir said that out of all servants of Allah, the angels of Allah are the foremost among those who wish well for believers. Firstly, they pray for them. They implore Allah to forgive them, to save them from the punishment of Jahannam and to admit them to the everlasting gardens of Jannah. Along with it, they also pray for: (. . . those as well who did good from among their fathers and wives and children. - 40:8), that is, also admit anyone from among their fathers and forefathers, and their wives, and their children - who meet the criterion of goodness that makes them deserving of forgiveness, a criterion that requires that they should have departed from the mortal world while adhering to their 'iman or faith - yes, admit them too with the same believers into the Jannah.

This tells us that one's 'iman or faith is the basic condition of salvation (aajah). After 'iman come other good deeds. The relatives of Muslim believers - fathers, grandfathers or wives and children - even if they are ranked lower than them, such is the munificence of Allah Ta'ala that He would, in deference to them, also let the relatives of a lesser rank be along with them in Jannah, so that their happiness becomes total and complete as it has been said in another verse of the Qur'an appearing elsewhere: (We will join their children with them - At-Tur, 52:21).

Sa'id Ibn Jubayr has said, 'When a believer goes to Jannah, he will ask about his father, son, brother and others, and would want to know where they are. He will be told that their deeds were not like yours (therefore, they will not be there). He will say, 'whatever good I did (was not for me alone), in fact, it was for me and them both.' Then, the command will come, 'admit them too into the Jannah.' (Ibn Kathir)

After having reported this Hadith narration in Tafsir Mazhari, the author said, 'this 'mawquf (a Hadith mawquf or restricted tradition from a Companion who does not connect it to the Holy Prophet ﷺ) has the same authority and force as 'marfu' (a Hadith marfu' is a tradition attributed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ) and is explicit on the point that 'doing good' that is held as a pre-condition for having this privilege means 'Iman' or adhering to the true faith.

Du'a of Zakariyya alayhis salaam

Topic: Marriage and Children

This commentary is a sub-section from day 12 (the story of Maryam alayhis salaam, after we discussed Zakariyya alayhis salaam gained custody over Maryam alayhis salaam)

Thereupon, Zakariyya prayed to his Lord. He said: "O my Lord, grant me from Your own (power) a goodly progeny. Verily, You are the listener of the prayer!" [38]

COMMENTARY

1. While looking at the first sentence of this verse - (Thereupon, Zakariyya prayed to his Lord) - we should bear in mind that Sayyidna Zakariyya had no offspring up to that time. He had grown old and one usually does not have children in that age, although he firmly believed that Allah, in His ultimate power, could change the usual phenomenon and bless him with an offspring even at his advanced age. But he had not personally witnessed the unusual divine acts - such as he did when he saw unusual and out-of-season eatables provided for Sayyidah Maryam - and that was why he did not have the courage to extend his hand of prayer for an offspring. Now when he saw the miracle with his own eyes, he was persuaded for such prayer under the belief that Allah, who can provide a servant with out-of season fruits, would also bless him with an offspring, even in this late age, and so he prayed.
2. The second sentence of the verse: 'He said: "O my Lord, grant me from Your own (power) a goodly progeny."' - tells us that making prayers to have children is a blessed practice of the prophets and the righteous. In another verse Allah Almighty has said: "And We sent messengers before you and provided them with wives and children- (13:38). It means that children are among the blessings of Allah which were bestowed on the Holy Prophet ﷺ as well as on other prophets.

Now, should someone try to stop the birth of children, by any means, he will not only rebel against nature but will also deprive himself of having acted in harmony with the common and agreed practice of prophets alayhimus salaam . The Holy Prophet of Islam ﷺ has given great importance to the question of marriage and children, so much so that he did not allow anyone to avoid married life and children in spite of his capability, and refused to take such a person as a member of his community of followers. He said:

- (1) Marriage is my sunnah (way).
- (2) So, whoever turns away from my sunnah, he is not from me.
- (3) Therefore, marry a woman who is loving and fertile, for I shall compete with other communities on the basis of your numbers

In another verse, Allah Almighty praises those who pray before Him to have a wife in marriage, have children and have them grow good and righteous. He says: And those who say: "O our Lord, bless us with such among our wives and our children as be the delight of our eyes. (25:74)

Hasan al-Basri, rahimahullah says that the Qur'anic expression - 'qurrata a'yun' (literally: coolness or lustre of the eyes; meaning someone dearly loved and cherished) - here means that the maker of prayer sees his children and wife devoted in obedience to Allah.

It appears in a hadith that Umm Sulaym radiallahu anha requested the Holy Prophet ﷺ to pray for his attendant, Sayyidna Anas. He made the following prayer for him:

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“O Allah, increase his wealth and his children and make him prosper in what You have bestowed on him.”

It was the outcome of this very prayer that Sayyidna Anas radiallahu anhu had about a hundred children and was also blessed with an ample measure of wealth.



LESSONS

Children are a source of rizq from Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala. One should not shy away from having children, fearing amongst other things, that one may not be able to provide for them. Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala will provide, as He says (to the nearest meaning):

“And kill not your children for fear of poverty. We shall provide for them as well as for you. Surely, the killing of them is a great sin” [al-Israa’ 17:31]

And surely We gave knowledge to Dawud and Sulaiman. And they said, “Praise belongs to Allah who made us excel many of His believing slaves. [15] And Sulaiman inherited (the traits of) Dawud and said, “O people we have been taught the speech of birds and we have been given of everything. Indeed, this is the evident grace (of Allah).” [16]

Knowledge of Sulaiman and Dawud alayhimus salaam

And surely We gave knowledge to Dawud and Sulaiman. (27:15)

The knowledge given to Sayyidna Dawud and Sulaiman alayhimus salaam was obviously the special knowledge normally given to the prophets about their functions and obligations as prophets, but at the same time it may also include other sciences and arts, as Sayyidna Dawud alayhis salaam was given the art of making armors.

Sayyidna Dawud and Sulaiman alayhimus salaam enjoyed a special position among the prophets in that they were also bestowed with the empire along with the prophethood. The empire was of a very special nature in that they ruled over not only the humans but also the Jinns and animals. While relating all these graces, knowledge is mentioned first, which is a clear hint that knowledge is superior and paramount among them all. (Qurtubi)

There is no heritage of wealth among the prophets

(And Sulaiman inherited Dawud - 27:16).

The inheritance mentioned in this verse is not the inheritance of wealth and property, because the Holy Prophet ﷺ has clearly declared that the prophets do neither inherit the property of anyone nor does their property is inherited by anyone.

Tirmidhi and Abu Dawud have reported from Sayyidna Abuddarda' radiallahu anhu that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said, 'Ulama' (men of knowledge) are the inheritors of prophets, but the prophets did not leave dirhams or dintars (wealth) as their inheritance; instead, they have left knowledge as their heritage.

Al-Kulaini, the famous Shi'ite scholar, has reported from Sayyidna Ja'far As-sadiq that he said, “Sayyidna Sulaiman alayhis salaam was the inheritor of Sayyidna Dawud alayhis salaam, and the Holy Prophet ﷺ was the inheritor of Sayyidna Sulaiman alayhis salaam (Ruh from al-Kulaini).

This statement makes the issue very clear that the inheritance is used here in the sense of heritage of knowledge (because nobody can claim that the Holy Prophet ﷺ inherited the property of Sulaiman alayhis salaam. Rationally speaking also, here inheritance cannot mean wealth, because when Sayyidna Dawud alayhis salaam died he had 19 sons, hence if inheritance of wealth was meant to be distributed, then all these sons would have been entitled for the inheritance, and it cannot be exclusive to Sayyidna Sulaiman alayhis salaam alone.

It is, therefore, quite clear that the inheritance meant here is the one in which the brothers were not included and only Sayyidna Sulaiman alayhis salaam was the inheritor. This could only be the inheritance of knowledge and prophethood. Along with that inheritance, Allah Ta'ala also graced him with the empire of Sayyidna Dawud alayhis salaam and furthermore control over the Jinns, birds, animals and the wind. In the light of these proofs, the narration of Tabrasi is proved to be wrong in which he has regarded inheritance as that of wealth on authority of some Imams of Ahl-ul-Bait. (Ruh)

The period between the death of Sayyidna Sulaiman alayhis salaam and the birth of the last of the prophets the Holy Prophet ﷺ was seventeen hundred years, while Jews calculate this period as fourteen hundred

years. The life span of Sayyidna Sulaiman alayhis salaam was a little over fifty years. (Qurtubi)

Birds and animals also have sense and intelligence

There is sense and intelligence to some degree in all animals and birds. However, it is not developed to such an extent that they were made to follow any injunctions of the Sharlah. But the humans and jinns are bestowed with such perfected sense and intelligence that they are made the addressee and followers of the injunctions of Allah Ta'ala. Imam Shafi'i rahimahullah has said that dove is the cleverest of all the birds, and Ibn 'Atiyyah has said that ant is very intelligent animal; its smelling power is very strong. If it gets hold of a grain it breaks it into two, so that it does not germinate, and thus it stock its food for the winters. (Qurtubi)

(and we have been given of every thing -16). The word (every) applies to everything of a kind, but sometimes its application is not universal but pertains to a specific purpose . Here also it is used in that sense and “everything” refers to those things only which are needed by the government or an empire. Otherwise it is obvious that they did not have aeroplanes, motor cars or railways in those days.

The Du'a of Sulayman alayhis salaam

(My Lord, enable me - 27:19). It is derived from (waz'), which lexically means to stop or restrain. Here it means 'enable me with Divine help so that I should have the trait of gratitude with me all the time and do not part with it ever', which will result in restraint. In the earlier verse (27:17) (translated as “kept under control” it was also used in the same sense, that in order to save them from confusion because of their large number the armies were restrained.

(and that I do the good deeds You like - 27:19). Here (liking) means acceptance. Thus the meaning is 'Ya Allah! Grace me with Divine help for such righteous deeds which are acceptable to You'. From this it is argued in Ruh ul-Ma'ani that it is not necessary for the righteous deeds to be accepted, but their acceptance is dependent on certain conditions. It is further explained that there is no relation between righteousness and acceptance either rationally or in religious law. It is for this reason that the prophets used to pray for the acceptance of their righteous deeds. Sayyidna Ibrahim and Isma'il alayhimus salaam prayed while constructing the House of Allah (Our Lord accept from us - 2:127). It shows that after doing a good deed, one should not be complacent, but should pray to Allah for its acceptance.

Despite having done good deeds and their acceptance the entry into Paradise will not be possible without the grace of Allah (And admit me, by your mercy, among your righteous slaves - 27:19). Despite having performed good deeds and their acceptance, the entry into Paradise will depend on the grace and kindness of Allah Ta'ala.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said that no one will enter into Paradise relying only on his deeds. So the companions enquired from the Holy Prophet “Even you too?”, and he answered “Yes, me too, but I am surrounded by Allah's favour and grace”. (Ruh ul-Ma'ani)

Sayyidna Sulaiman alayhis salaam was also praying for the grace of Allah for the entry into Paradise in these words 'O Allah, grace me also with your favour so that I become entitled to enter Paradise'.

The Du'a of Lut alayhis salaam

Sayyidna Lut alayhis salaam was the nephew of Sayyidna Ibrahim alayhis salaam.

The story in the Qur'an:

And (We sent) Lut when he said to his people, Indeed you commit the shameful act that no one in the worlds has ever preceded you in it. [28] Is it (not) a fact that you go for men (to satisfy your lust) and rob the wayfarer and commit evil in your gathering?" So the answer of his people was none but that they said, "Bring us Allah's punishment, if you are one of the truthful." [29] He said, "*My Lord, help me against the people who make mischief!*" [30] And when Our messengers came to Ibrahim with the good news, they said, "We are going to destroy the people of this town. Surely its people have been transgressors." [31] He said, "There is Lut in it." They said, 'We know well who is in it. We will certainly save him and his family except his wife who will be among those remaining behind.' [32] And when Our messengers came to Lut, he grieved for them and his heart was straitened because of them, but they said, 'We are going to save you and your family, except your wife who will be among those remaining behind. We are going to bring down on the people of this town a punishment from the sky, because they used to act sinfully!! [34] And We left from it (the town) an evident sign for a people who understand. [35]

COMMENTARY

In verse 29, here Sayyidna Lut alayhis salaam has described three vicious sins of his people.

One, unnatural offence of man with man;
two, highway robbery against travelers;
and three, commitment of sin openly before others in their group meetings.

There is no specification of the third sin in the Holy Qur'an. Thus, it is deduced that every sin, which is a sin in its own right, if committed openly with indifference, it becomes a double sin, irrespective of the type of sin. At this point, some Imams of Tafsir (exegesis) have listed all such sins, which these wretched persons used to commit in their meetings. For instance, throwing stones on travelers and making fun of them, as Umm Hani' radiallahu anha reports it in a hadith. Other commentators have reported that these insolent people were in the habit of committing sins openly before all others.

Out of the three sins mentioned in this verse the first one is most disgusting, which was never committed before in the whole world, and even wild beasts abstain from it. The entire ummah is unanimous on that it is a worse sin than adultery. (Ruh)

LESSONS

As mentioned above, the main and worst sin out of the three sins committed by the people of Lut alayhis salaam, is the first one, which is also extremely prevalent today and is a sign of the day of judgement

I would, however, like to take our focus to the third sin also mentioned. The sin of sinning openly.

It is not for us to make apparent what Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala has hidden. Look at Allah's Mercy as He hides our sins and does not allow for even **us** to make them open, or commit them openly. Subhan'Allah!

From here we learn that committing a sin openly, which includes telling others that you did such a thing and feeling pride over the sin as if it is something to be celebrated, constitutes a double sin!

However, this does not mean that if one has a spiritual sickness, such as that they cannot stop lying, or stop stealing, or stop any other sin, and they need help with it, one should **definitely** consult a scholar and seek out a remedy.

The du'a of Asiyah radiallahu anha

Topic: Women

(Allah has cited for the disbelievers the example of the wife of Nuh and the wife of Lut ... 66:10).

Towards the end of this Surah (Surah Tahrim), Allah has set forth examples of four women.

The first example comprises two women who were the wives of two Holy Prophets alayhimus salaam. They, in matters of religion, opposed their husbands and secretly sided with the unbelievers and pagans. As a result, they ended up in the abyss of Hell, and their marital relation with the prophets could not save them from the punishment.

The name of the wife of Nuh alayhis salaam is said to be Waghilah, while the name of the wife of Lut alayhis salaam is said to be Walihah. [Qurtubi] Some scholars have attributed other names to them.

The third woman is the one who was the wife of the Pharaoh, the worst disbeliever and claimant of godhead, but she believed in Musa alayhis salaam. She was given such a high rank by Allah that she was shown her place in the Paradise, right here in this world, and the infidelity of her husband did not prove to be an impediment in her achieving this high rank.

The fourth woman is Maryam alayhas salaam. She was not wife of anyone, but her faith and virtuous deeds earned for her such a high degree that she was invested with perfections of the prophets, even though she was not a prophet according to the majority of scholars.

Verse [11] serves as a warning to the unbelievers who think that they will attain salvation merely by their companionship with believers, the good company will not rescue them in the Hereafter if they persist in their disbelief. So likewise, a disbeliever's disbelief will not harm a believing relative. Therefore, the auliyas' and ambiyas' wives should not carelessly take for granted that they will attain salvation on account of their husbands nor should the wife of a disbeliever think that his disbelief will harm her. Every person, man or woman, should be concerned about his her own faith and action.

(And Allah has cited for the believers the example of the wife of Fir'aun (the Pharaoh), when she said, "My Lord, build for me, near You, a house in the Paradise ... 66:11)

This is the example of the wife of Fir'aun (the Pharaoh) whose name was 'Asiyah bint Muzahim. When Musa alayhis salaam accomplished his task in defeating the sorcerers who embraced Mosaic faith, she too embraced the Mosaic faith and became a Muslim. Fir'aun ordered that she should be tortured severely and tormented harshly. According to some reports, her hands and feet were pegged with nails to the ground and a huge rock was placed on her chest, so that she might not be able to move. In this state she supplicated to Allah as mentioned in this verse. According to other reports, it was suggested that a huge rock be dropped on her. They had hardly dropped the rock and she prayed to Allah as quoted in the verse. Allah then showed Sayyidah Asiyah radiallahu anha her house in Paradise and while looking at this vision her soul departed. When the rock fell on her body, it was lifeless. [Mazhari].

(and she testified to the truth of the words of her Lord and His books, and she was one of the devout 66:12) The phrase 'Words of her Lord' refers to scriptures that were revealed to the Holy Prophets. The word kutub [Books] refers to the well-known celestial books - Injil, Zabur and Torah.

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The concluding statement (and she was one of the devout.. ..66:12) describes the quality of Sayyidah Maryam alayhas salaam. The word qanitin is the plural of qanit and signifies 'devout and obedient'.

Sayyidna Abu Musa radiallahu anhu narrates that the Messenger of Allah said: "Whilst many men have attained spiritual perfection, among women only Sayyidah 'Asiyah, wife of Fir'aun, and Sayyidah Maryam, daughter of 'Imran alayhimus salaam achieved this perfection." [Bukhari and Muslim as quoted by Mazhari].

Apparently, 'perfection' in this context refers to 'characteristics of Prophethood'. Despite being a woman, she achieved them. [Mazhari]. And Allah knows best!

LESSONS

Our deeds alone will not save us, nor will our status. Whether one is married to the best of men, or the worst of women, or one is a single mother, this has nothing to do with how Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala sees us, or how we will be raised (in terms of imaan).

One can be married to the best of men, an aalim, a haafidh, a wali, a man of exemplary character, but merely being known 'as the wife of...' will not be enough for us. It may grant one status in this world, but in the eyes of Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala, it is our **own** imaan, and our **own** good deeds which if accepted by Allah, will save us. Every individu'al has to work hard on themselves.

Similarly, one can be married to the worst of men, a drug addict, a time-waster, one who does not fear Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala, but this should not dishearten us thinking that we may be harmed by the man and his actions.

And finally, one can be unmarried, or married and divorced, or married and widowed, and once again, this has nothing to do with how Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala views us.

It is our own actions and 'reaction' in every state that Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala puts us in that will determine our end. May He always bestow His Mercy on us and keep us steadfast. Aameen!

The remedy against magic/evil eye/all physical and spiritual calamities

Preliminary remarks:

This and the next Surah (Surah Al-Falaq and Surah An-Nas) were revealed on the same occasion, and in the same event, as will be explained in the 'cause of revelation'. Hafiz Ibn-ul-Qayyim has, therefore, written their commentary together. He writes that their blessings and benefits are abundant. All of the people require them and no one can dispense with them. They are very efficacious remedy for sorcery or magical spell, evil eye, and for all of the physical and spiritual calamities. In fact, if its reality is grasped fully, people will understand that they require it more than their breath, food, water, clothing and everything else.

Cause of revelation

Musnad of Ahmad records that a Jewish person cast a magical spell on the Holy Prophet ﷺ, as a result of which he fell ill. Jibra'il alayhis salaam came to him and informed him that a particular Jew had cast a spell on him, that he had tied knots in his hair to accomplish this objective, and it is thrown into a particular well.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ sent some of his Companions to bring it from the well Jibra'il alayhis salaam had described. The Holy Prophet ﷺ untied the knots, and he was instantly cured. Jibra'il alayhis salaam informed him of the name of the Jew and the Holy Prophet ﷺ knew the culprit, but it was not in keeping with his compassionate disposition to avenge anyone in his personal matter.

Therefore, this was never brought to the attention of the Jew guilty of the black magic, nor did any sign of complaint ever appear on the blessed face of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Being a hypocrite, he regularly attended the Holy Prophet's ﷺ gatherings.

The details of this incident are recorded in Sahih of Bukhari on the authority of Sayyidah 'Aishah radiallahu anha that a Jewish man cast a magic spell on the Holy Prophet ﷺ, as a result of which he sometimes felt confused whether or not he had done something. One day the Holy Prophet ﷺ said to Sayyidah 'Aishah radiallahu anha that Allah has shown him what his illness was and added: "Two men came to me in my dream. One of them sat by my head side while the other sat by my feet, and the following conversation ensued:

Question: 'What is wrong with this man?'

Answer: 'He is bewitched.'

Question: 'Who has bewitched him?'

Answer: 'Labid Ibn A'sam. He is a member of the tribe of Banu Zuraiq who is an ally of the Jews, a hypocrite.'

Question: 'With what did he bewitch him?'

Answer: 'With a comb and hair from the comb.'

Question: 'Where is the comb?'

Answer: 'In the dried bark of a male date palm under a rock in a well called Dharwan.'

Sayyidah 'Aishah radiallahu anha says that the Holy Prophet ﷺ went to the well to remove the comb with the hair and said: "This is the well I was shown in my dream." He removed it from the well. Sayyidah 'Aishah radiallahu anha asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ: "Will you not make this public?" He replied: "Allah has cured me and I hate to cause harm to anyone." This implies that the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not want to be the cause anyone's molestation, death or destruction, because this is what would have exactly happened if the incident was publicised.

According to a narration in Musnad of Ahmad, this illness of the Holy Prophet ﷺ lasted for six months. According to other narratives, some of the Companions knew that this wicked act was performed by Labid Ibn Asam, and they courteously said to the Holy Prophet ﷺ “Why should we not kill this wicked person?” He made the same reply to them as he did to Sayyidah ‘Aishah radiallahu anha.

According to Imam Tha’labi’s narration, a Jewish boy was the attendant of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the hypocritical Jew flattered the boy and talked him into getting for him strands of the Prophet’s ﷺ hair from his comb, and a few of its teeth. Having obtained these items, he tied eleven knots on a string and a needle was stuck into each knot. Labid then placed this spell in the spathe of a male palm tree, and buried it under a stone in a well.

On this occasion, the two Surahs were revealed, comprising eleven verses. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ recited one verse at a time and untied one knot each time, until all the knots were untied, and he felt freed from the tension of the witchcraft. [All these narratives have been adapted from Ibn Kathir.]

Magic and its effect on the Holy Prophet ﷺ

Some people are surprised that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ should be affected by black magic. This is because some people do not have a complete grasp of how magic operates. It actually operates under physical causes, and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was not immune to the influence of physical causes, as for instance feeling the burning or heating sensation of fire, and feeling the cooling sensation of water; or certain natural factors causing fever or body temperature to rise; or other factors causing aches and pains, and other illnesses. The Holy Prophet ﷺ or any other prophet for that matter, was not immune to the effects of such natural or physical causes. They can be affected by the hidden operations of magic which are no less natural or physical. [Please see Surah Al-Baqarah, Ma’riful Qur’an, Vol. 11 pp 264-278 for fuller explanation, especially p. 276 on ‘Magic and Prophets’]

Mu’awwadhatain are Surahs that afford protection against physical and spiritual afflictions

It is a settled doctrine of every believer that Allah is the intrinsic cause of every gain and loss in this world as well as in the next world. Without the Divine will not a jot of gain or loss can be caused to anyone. The only way to fortify against all physical and spiritual injuries and harm is for man to place himself under the protection of Allah, and by his actions he should attempt to make himself capable of entering the Divine shelter.

Surah Al-Falaq directs how to seek the Divine protection against worldly calamities, and Surah An-Nas tells the way to seek Divine protection against the calamities of the Hereafter.

Virtues of Mu’awwadhatain

Sahih of Muslim records a Tradition on the authority of Sayyidna ‘Uqbah Ibn ‘Amir radiallahu anhu who reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “Do you not see that there have been revealed to me verses tonight the like of which has not been seen before? Those are Surah Al-Falaq and Surah An-Nas.” According to another narration, the like of Mu’awwadhatain has not revealed even in Torah, Injil, or Zabur or anywhere else in the Qur’an.

Another narration of Sayyidna ‘Uqbah Ibn - ‘Amir radiallahu anhu reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ taught him Mu’awwadhatain while they were on a journey. Then he recited them in the maghrib salah and said: “Recite these two Surahs whenever you go to sleep and whenever you get up.” [Nasa’i]

According to another report, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has advised people to recite these two Surahs after

every salah [Transmitted by Abu Dawud and Nasa'i].

Imam Malik recorded from Sayyidah 'Aishah radiallahu anha: “whenever the Messenger of Allah ﷺ suffered from an ailment, he would recite the Mu'awwadhatin, blow over his hands, and then wiped his whole body with those hands. When his pain became acute on his death-bed, I would recite the Mu'awwadhatin, blow over his hands, and then he wiped them over himself, because my hands could not be the fitting substitute for his blessed hands. [All these narratives have been adapted from Ibn Kathir].

Sayyidna 'Abdullah Ibn Khubayb radiallahu anhu reports that it was raining one night and the sky had become intensely dark. We went out looking for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and when he was found, he said: “Say” He asked: “What should I say?” He said: “Recite Qul huwallahu Ahad and Mu'awwadhatin. Reciting them thrice in the morning and thrice in the evening will fortify you against all kinds of perturbations.”

In sum, it was the practice of the Messenger of Allah and his Companions to recite these two Surahs to protect themselves against all types of privations, trials and tribulations of life in this world, as well as of life in the next world.

The Du'a of Isa alayhis salaam

Qur'an: (Remember) the day Allah will assemble the messengers and will say to them, "How were you responded to?" They will say, "we have no knowledge. Surely You alone have the full knowledge of all that is unseen." [109]

When Allah will say, "O 'Isa, son of Maryam, remember My blessing upon you and upon your mother, when I supported you with the Holy Spirit. You spoke to the people when in the cradle and while middle-aged. And when I taught you the Book and the Wisdom, and the Torah and the Injil. And when you created from the clay something in the shape of a bird, then you blew in it, and it became a bird with My will; and you cured the born-blind and the leper with My will; and when you raised the dead with My will. And when I kept the children of Isra'il away from you when you came to them with clear signs and the disbelievers among them said, "this is nothing but a clear magic." [110]

And when I enjoined upon the disciples, "Believe in Me and in My Messenger," they said, "We believed. And be witness that we are the submitting ones." [111]

When the disciples said, "O 'Isa son of Maryam, can your Lord send down to us spread stands of 'Ma'idah' (a sheet generally spread on the floor to serve food; also used to mean food so served) from the heavens?" He said, "Fear Allah if you are believers." [112] They said, 'We want that we eat from it, and our hearts be satisfied, and we may know for sure that you have told us the truth, and we may become witnesses to it.' [113] 'Isa son of Maryam said, "O Allah, our Lord, send down to us spread from heaven which may be a happy occasion for us for all our generations present and future, and a sign from you, and give us provisions. And You are the best Giver of provisions." [114] Allah said, "I am going to send it down to you; but whoever from you disbelieves after that, I shall give him a punishment I shall not give to anyone in the worlds." [115]

COMMENTARY

On the day of Judgement, the whole world will be assembled, but the first question asked will be from the prophets, may peace be upon them all - so that the whole creation of Allah may see that, on that day, no one is exempted from reckoning.

Then, the question asked of the prophets will be: (How were you responded to?). It means when you invited your communities towards Allah and His true religion, how did they react to your call. Did they act as they were commanded to? Or, did they say no to the call and opposed it?

The answer that the prophets will give will be: (We have no knowledge. Surely You have the full knowledge of all that is unseen).

The first verse (109) referred to prophets in general where a question was asked and its reply was given. In the second verse (100), and after that, in all the nine verses appearing through the end of the Surah (Surah Ma'idah), the text talks about Sayyidna 'Isa alayhis salaam, the last prophet of the Bani Isra'il, and mentions some blessings of Allah on him.

A particular question asked from him on the Day of Resurrection (Al-Mahshar) along with its answer has also been mentioned which follows in verses coming next.

The purpose of the question asked and the answer given is to show this disturbing sight to Bani Isra'il and to the entire creation. When on the plains of the Hashr, the one who is called, The Spirit of Allah (Ruhullah)

and The Word of Allah (Kalimatullah) is asked the question as to why did his people make him a partner of God, he would be upset despite his being a great prophet and would hasten to plead his being free from what his followers did, not in one way, but in more than one.

First he said: (Pure are You, it does not behove me to say what is not right for me - 116).

Then, he pleads his innocence from another angle when he makes Almighty Allah his witness and says: 'Had I said it, You would have known it. You know what is in my heart and I do not know what is in Yours. You alone have the full knowledge of what is unseen - 116.' After this overture, he answers the main question.

The Answer given by Sayyidna 'Isa before His Lord

His answer was that he had taught his people precisely what he was commanded to teach, that is: (Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord - 117). Then, after this teaching, as long as he lived among those people, he was a witness to what they said and did (upto that time, none of them said things like that about him). Then, after he was raised by his Lord towards Him, these people remained under His watch, and it is He who knew their words and deeds fully and truly.

The Better the Blessing, the Worse the Curse of Ingratitude

From the words of the verse 115: (I shall give him a punishment I shall not give to anyone in the worlds), we learn that 'in situations when the blessing of Allah is extra-ordinary and unique, the emphasis on the gratitude for it should be far above the Ordinary. As for the punishment of ingratitude, that too will be extra-ordinary and unique.

Whether or not the 'Ma'idah' (food-spread) came down from the heaven is something commentators differ in. The majority of them hold that it did. Accordingly, it has been reported from Sayyidna 'Ammar ibn Yasir as in a Hadith of Tirmidhi, that 'Ma'idah' did come from the heavens which included bread and meat. It also appears in this Hadith that some of those people committed a breach of trust, and put it off for the next day as well. As a result, they were transformed into monkeys and swines. (May Allah keep us protected from His wrath). This very hadith also tells us that they ate from it as they wanted to do as mentioned in the word, 'na'kulu' (we eat) - however, storing it for future use was prohibited. (Bayan al-Qur'an)

LESSONS

A True Believer Should Not Demand Miracles

When the disciples of Sayyidna Isa alayhis salaam asked him to make 'Ma'idah' (food spread) come down from the heavens, he replied by saying: (Fear Allah if you are believers). This tells us that it does not behove a faith-bearing servant of Allah that he should test Him by making such requests. Rather than demand what is supernatural, he should seek things, like sustenance, through sources naturally appointed for him.

The Du'a of Nabi ﷺ

رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا

COMMENTARY

(And do not hasten with (reciting) the Qur'an before its revelation' is concluded - 20: 114.)

It has been stated in Sahih Hadith on the authority of Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas radiallahu anhu that in the early days of revelation when angel Jibra'il alayhis salaam brought a Qur'anic verse and recited it to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the latter would try to repeat it after him, lest it escapes from his memory. He had, thus, to make a double effort, i.e. to listen to and understand the meaning of the Qur'anic verses while they were being recited by Jibra'il alayhis salaam and also to repeat them in order to commit them to memory.

In this verse as well as in the verse occurring in Surah Qiyamah (75:16) Allah lightened this burden from the Holy Prophet ﷺ by assuring him that he need not worry himself about memorizing the Qur'anic verses which were revealed to him because He (Allah) would make it possible for him to remember them without any effort on his part. All that he was directed to do was that he should keep praying, (My Lord, improve me in knowledge).

This comprehensive prayer includes a plea for memorizing that portion of the Qur'an which had already been revealed to him and a desire for what remained of it and for the ability to understand its true meaning.

In Surah Qiyamah, the following four verses are a special guidance for the Messenger of Allah to be followed by him at the time of revelation.

When Jibra'il alayhis salaam descended with a set of verses, the Holy Prophet ﷺ feared that there might be discrepancy in his listening and reciting it accordingly. His other fear was that he might forget some portion of it, or some word might escape his memory.

As a result, when Jibra'il alayhis salaam recited a verse, he would exert himself in repeating the words immediately upon hearing them. In this manner, the strain would be multiplied. Allah revealed four verses in which he is advised not to exert himself so strenuously, because the matter has been simplified for him. Allah has taken upon Himself the responsibility of collecting it in his heart, making him recite it and conveying it to the people, thus: [O Prophet] do not move your tongue [during revelation] for [reciting] it [the Qur'an] so as you receive it in hurry. It is surely undertaken by Us to store it [in your heart], and to let it be recited [by you after revelation is completed]. Therefore, when it is recited by Us [through the angel], follow its recitation [by concentration of your heart]. . . 75:16-18).

The word Qur'an here means 'recitation'. In other words, when Jibra'il alayhis salaam recites the Qur'an, you should not recite it along with him, but listen to it attentively. When its recitation is completed, follow its recitation. Here the words 'follow its recitation', by general consensus of the scholars, means 'when Jibra'il alayhis salaam recites, be silent and listen to it.'

In conclusion, the passage says: (Then, it is undertaken by Us to explain it.. 75:19). In other words, it is Allah's concern to explain the true message of the verses. In fact, the meaning of every single word of the Qur'an will be made plain to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He need not be concerned about it.

These four verses laid down the injunctions pertaining to Qur'an and its recitation.

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Allah is Omniscient; His knowledge is infinite and all-encompassing; and His preserving capacity is incomparable, unparalleled and unique. On the basis of these attributes, the four verses were revealed to console and comfort the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is told: 'You can forget, and it is possible that you could make a mistake in transmission. But Allah is beyond these things. Allah has taken upon Himself the responsibility of storing the words of the Qur'an in your heart or explaining the message to you. Do not worry about all this. It is Our concern.' After these four verses, the Surah resumes the description of the conditions of Resurrection.

LESSONS

One should recite this du'a when seeking knowledge.

One should also recite this du'a when trying to memorise something.

May Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala grant us beneficial knowledge, and allow us to practice upon that which He has taught us and will teach us. Aameen!

Du'a of the people of the cave

The cause of revelation of Surah Kahf

Imam ibn Jarir al-Tabari has reported from Sayyidna 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas radiallahu anhu that the Quraysh of Makkah (disturbed by the rising influence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ as a prophet) sent two of their men, Nadr ibn Harith and 'Uqbah ibn Abi Mu'ayt, to the Jewish scholars of Madinah. Their mission was to find out what they said about him as they were learned in past scriptures of the Torah and Injil.

The Jewish scholars told them, "put three questions before him. If he answers these correctly," you should know that he is a prophet and messenger of Allah, and if he fails to do that, you should know that he is a pretender and not a messenger. Firstly, ask him about the young men who had left their city in the distant past and what had happened to them, for this is a unique event.

Secondly, ask him about the person who had travelled through the East and West of the Earth and what had happened to him.

Thirdly, ask him about the Ruh (soul, spirit) as to what it was?"

The two Quraysh emissaries returned to Makkah al-Mukarramah, informed their tribesmen that they had come back with a decisive plan of action and told them all about their encounter with the Jewish scholars of Madinah. Then, these people took these questions to the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

He heard the questions and said that he will answer them tomorrow. But, he forgot to say 'insha'Allah' at that time. These people went back and the Holy Prophet ﷺ kept waiting for the Divine revelation in the hope that he will be told about answers to these questions through wahy. But, no wahy came until the next day as promised. In fact, fifteen days went by and things stood as they were, neither did Sayyidna Jibra'il alayhis salaam come nor did the revelation.

The Quraysh of Makkah started throwing taunts which caused real pain to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. After fifteen days, came angel Jibra'il alayhis salaam with Surah al-Kahf (wherein the delay caused has also been explained by saying that one should say 'insha'Allah' when promising to do something in the future. Since, this was not done in the event concerned, therefore, revelation was delayed as a measure of reminder. In this Surah, verses relating to this matter; (18:23,24) will be appearing later).

Also related in this Surah there was the event about the young men known as Ashab al-Kahf or the People of the Cave, and the event concerning the travel of Dhul-Qarnain from the East to the West. Also included therein was the answer to the question asked about 'Ruh' (Qurtubi and Mazhari with reference to Ibn Jarir). But, answering the question about Ruh (soul, spirit) briefly was as dictated by wisdom. This was taken up separately at the end of Surah Bani Isra'il (17:85) and this is the reason why Surah al-Kahf has been placed after Surah Bani Isra'il [al-Isra']- as mentioned by Al-Suyuti.

The story of the young men who fled to the cave

((Remember) when the young men fled for refuge to Al-Kahf. They said: "Our Lord! Bestow on us mercy from Yourself, and facilitate for us our affair in the right way!") [18:10]

Here Allah tells us about those young men who fled from their people for the sake of their religion, fearing persecution. So they fled taking refuge in the cave of a mountain, where they hid from their people. When they entered the cave, they asked Allah to show mercy and kindness towards them,

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(Our Lord! Bestow on us mercy from Yourself, and facilitate for us our affair in the right way.) meaning, 'give us Your mercy and conceal us from our people.' and direct our matter well, i.e., grant us a good end.

“The Ashab al-Kahf were the progeny of kings and chiefs among their people who were idol-worshippers. Once their people went out of the town to participate in some religious festival of theirs. This was a place where they met every year, worshipped their idols and sacrificed animals to please them. Their king was a tyrant. Called Daqyanus, he used to force his people to worship idols,

That year, when everyone had gathered together in this festival, these young men identified as the Ashab al-Kahf also reached there and saw their people taking rocks carved with their own hands as God, worshipping them and sacrificing for them. At that time, Allah Ta'ala blessed them with the good sense to shun this absurd practice of their people. Thus, when they used their reason, they arrived at the conclusion that this worship belongs to none but

that supreme Power who has created the heavens and the earth and everything therein. This thought crossed the minds of those few young men simultaneously and they started moving away from there to avoid the absurd practice of their people in the fair name of worship. The first young man who withdrew went far from the crowd and sat down under a tree. After that, came another and he too sat there. Similarly, came the third, and the fourth, and each one of them kept taking a seat under the tree. But, none of them were familiar with each other, nor did they know as to why they had come there. The truth of the matter is that they were brought together on that spot by the Power that lit the light of faith in their hearts.”

In short, these people got together at one place all right, but everyone was concealing his belief from the other lest this person reports him to the king and he gets arrested. After having remained there all together in silence, one of them spoke out, 'brothers, there must be some reason why all of us have broken away from our people and reached here. It seems appropriate that we all should get to know each other's thoughts.'

Thereupon, one person declared, 'the truth is that the faith and worship in which I found my people involved gave me the certitude that this whole thing is false. 'Ibadah or worship should be for One Allah who is most exalted in His majesty and who has no partner or associate in the act of the creation of this universe.'

This broke the ice. Others were prompted to speak out and they all declared that this was the thought, the belief that separated them from their people and brought them there. Now they were an ideologically unified group enjoying mutual fellowship and friendship. They set up a separate House of Worship for themselves where they would assemble and worship Allah who is One and who has no partner in His divinity.

But, by and by they became the talk of the town. Backbiters told on them before the king who ordered that they all should be brought to him. When they came into the royal court, the king asked them about their belief and its mores. Allah gave them the courage to state their belief in the Oneness of Allah. In fact, they invited the king himself to believe as they did. This is precisely what has been mentioned in the verses appearing next:

(And We 'made their hearts firm. and when they rose, they said, "Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth; and we shall never invoke any god other than Him, for then we would be saying something far from the truth. These are people of ours. They have taken to gods other than Him. Why do they not bring a proof in their favor? So, who is more unjust than the one who fabricates a lie against Allah?" - al-Kahf, 18:14,15)

When these young men acted bold before the king and invited him to believe, he turned the call down and

threatened them with drastic action. He had the princely robes they donned on their bodies taken off in reprisal so that they may think and change their behavior. In order that they actually do so, he gave them respite for a few days saying that they were young, therefore, he did not wish to kill them right away. In fact, he wanted them to have the time to think over it. Then, if they reverted to the faith of their people, they will be allowed to live as usual, otherwise they would be killed.

It must have been the mercy of Allah Ta'ala on His believing servants that this respite given to them opened an escape door for them. They ran from there and took refuge in a cave.

Ibn Kathir says that the course adopted by the People of Kahf was that they left the city in which it was not possible to worship Allah and took refuge in the Cave. This is the Sunnah, the way of all prophets. They migrate from such places and opt for a place where 'Ibadah could be done.

LESSONS

People who firmly resolve to do something for the sake of Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala, they receive the help from Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala.

Allah made the hearts of these people firm when the king who was cruel and worshipped idols summoned them in his court and questioned them. This was a matter of life and death. But, despite their apprehension for the worst, Allah Ta'ala made His love, awe and grandeur prevail over their hearts which empowered them to face any eventuality of death or distress. The outcome was that they proclaimed their belief clearly and courageously saying that they did not worship anyone or anything other than Allah and would not do that in future as well.

Note: In case anyone is interested, the period of sleep of the people of the cave was three hundred and nine years.

The Du'a of Yunus 'alayhis salaam

COMMENTARY

The story of Sayyidna Yunus Ibn Matta alayhis salaam appears in the Holy Qur'an in Surah Yunus, Surah Al-Anbiya', Surah As-Saffat and Surah Nun.

At some places he is mentioned by his real name and at others by the title as Dhunnun or Sahibul Hut. The meaning of Nun and Hut both is fish. Thus, Dhunnun and Sahibul Hut can be translated as man of the fish.

Sayyidna Yunus alayhis salaam remained inside the stomach of a fish for a few days in very odd circumstances by the will of Allah. It is because of this episode that he is sometimes referred to as Dhunnun or Sahib Al-Hut.

The Story of Yunus alayhis salaam

According to the commentary by Ibn Kathir, Sayyidna Yunus alayhis salaam was sent to preach Allah's message among the people of Nineveh which is a township in the region of Mousel. Sayyidna Yunus alayhis salaam invited them towards Islam and asked them to follow the true religion and perform good deeds, but they rejected his call and behaved in an arrogant and defiant manner. Being dejected and annoyed, Yunus alayhis salaam left the place after warning them that Allah's wrath would descend upon them within three days.

After he had departed from the township, the people realized that his warning might come true. (According to some versions they had actually seen the signs of the impending disaster). So they repented and asked pardon for their sins and the entire population retired to a forest with their cattle and animals. Then they started lamenting and bewailing and invoked Allah's forgiveness and protection.

Allah Ta'ala accepted their sincere contrition and wailing over their sins and released them from the fear of the impending disaster. While all these events were taking place, Sayyidna Yunus alayhis salaam waited expecting the news about the destruction of his people. But when he learnt that the storm had passed and his people were safe and sound, he worried that they would regard him as a liar. According to some versions, it was customary with his people to execute a person if he was proved a liar. (Mazhari).

Sayyidna Yunus alayhis salaam therefore, feared for his life and decided to go away to some other place rather than returning to his own people. He came across a river on his way and boarded a boat to cross it. While crossing the river it so happened that the boat was caught in a whirlpool and was in danger of sinking. The boatmen decided that if one of the passengers was off loaded from the boat the chances were that the rest of them would be saved from drowning. So they cast lots to decide as to who should be off-loaded.

As luck would have it they drew the name of Sayyidna Yunus alayhis salaam. It seems that the boatmen were aware of his exalted position and they refused to throw him in the river. The lot was drawn a second and then a third time and his name was drawn on both occasions. This episode has been mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Quran in the following words: (and cast lots, and was of the rebutted - 37:141).

Thereupon Sayyidna Yunus alayhis salaam got up, took off the extra clothes which he was wearing and threw himself in the river. Immediately a fish from the Caspian Sea arrived on the scene as commanded by Allah Ta'ala and swallowed Yunus alayhis salaam. (as reported by Ibn Mas'ud radiallahu anhu).

The fish was further commanded by Allah Ta'ala that he was not to be taken for food, that no harm was to

be done to his body (both flesh and bones) and that he was only to be held as a prisoner in its stomach for a few days. (Ibn Kathir)

There are references in the Qur'an that Sayyidna Yunus 'alayhis salaam earned Allah Ta'ala's displeasure when he left his people without His specific command and his stay for a few days in the stomach of the fish was a sign of Allah's displeasure for his lapse.

It is safe to assume that the warning of Sayyidna Yunus alayhis salaam to his people about their imminent destruction within three days was not the outcome of his own judgment but was based on Divine revelations.

Similarly, his dissociation from his people was nothing new and was in line with the practice of other prophets in similar situations and must, therefore, also have been done by the command and approval from Allah Ta'ala.

So, upto this point there seems nothing to be wrong in his conduct which would deserve Allah Ta'ala's displeasure. But later on when Allah Ta'ala accepted the genuine remorse and repentance of the people and released them from the fear of destruction, it was to be expected that Yunus alayhis salaam would return to his people. But his decision not to return to them and go away from them was based on his own judgment (ijtihad). He reasoned that if he returned to them, they would regard him as a liar and his teachings would be rendered ineffectual and fruitless.

There was also the danger that he might have been taken and executed. For these reasons he was hopeful that his parting with his people would not be a reprehensible act before Allah Ta'ala. Although his decision to migrate was based on his personal judgment (Ijtihad) without waiting for a clear direction from Allah Ta'ala, yet it did not constitute a sin.

Nevertheless for a prophet to take a decision on his own without waiting for the revelation from Allah Ta'ala was not liked by Him. This was not a crime but an act which was not desirable. The status of the prophets and His closed ones is highly exalted and it is expected of them not to indulge even in such undesirable acts. The slightest lapse on their part is subjected to Allah's displeasure and reproach from Him, and that is why he faced this hardship.

It is quoted in Tafsir al-Qurtubi from al-Qushairi that this had happened to Yunus alayhis salaam when the tempest was removed from his people, which was against his wish and that his stay in the stomach of the fish for a few days was more of a reformatory measure than punishment, as sometimes people warn their young children and take reformatory measures against them. (Qurtubi)

Awf Al-A`rabi said: "When Yunus found himself in the belly of the fish, he thought that he had died. Then he moved his legs. When he moved his legs, he prostrated where he was, then he called out: 'O Lord, I have taken a place of worship to You in a place which no other person has reached.'"

Virtues of this du'a (also known as Ayat-e-Karima)

The leader of the Prophets ﷺ encouraged us to call upon Allah with these words.

Imam Ahmad recorded that Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "I passed by `Uthman bin `Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, in the Masjid, and greeted him. He stared at me but did not return my Salam. I went to `Umar bin Al-Khattab and said: 'O Commander of the faithful, has something happened in Islam' I said that twice. He said, 'No, why do you ask' I said, 'I passed by `Uthman a

short while ago in the Masjid and greeted him, and he stared at me but he did not return my Salam.’`

Umar sent for `Uthman and asked him, `Why did you not return your brother's Salam' He said, `That is not true.' Sa`d said, `Yes it is.' It reached the point where they both swore oaths. Then `Uthman remembered and said, `Yes, you are right, I seek the forgiveness of Allah and I repent to Him. You passed by me a short while ago but I was preoccupied with thoughts of something I had heard from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, which I never think of but a veil comes down over my eyes and my heart.' Sa`d said: `And I will tell you what it was.

The Messenger of Allah told us the first part of the supplication then a bedouin came and kept him busy, then the Messenger of Allah got up and I followed him. When I felt worried that he would enter his house, I stamped my feet. I turned to the Messenger of Allah, who said, (Who is this Abu Ishaq) I said, “Yes, O Messenger of Allah.” He said, (What is the matter) I said, “Nothing, by Allah, except that you told us the first part of the supplication, then this bedouin came and kept you busy.” He said, Yes, the supplication of Dhun-Nun when he was in the belly of the fish: (There is no God but You, Glorified be You! Truly, I have been of the wrongdoers.)

No Muslim ever prays to his Lord with these words for anything, but He will answer his prayer.)”

It was also recorded by At-Tirmidhi, and by An-Nasa'i in Al-Yawm wal-Laylah. Ibn Abi Hatim recorded that Sa`d said that the Messenger of Allah said: (Whoever offers supplication in the words of the supplication of Yunus, will be answered.)

The Du'a of Musa 'alayhis salaam

The story of the murdered Israeli man and the cow

Allah said, 'O Children of Israel! Remember how I blessed you with miracle of the cow that was the means for discovering the identity of the murderer, when the murdered man was brought back to life.'

Ibn Abi Hatim recorded 'Ubaydah As-Salmani saying, "There was a man from among the Children of Israel who was impotent. He had substantial wealth, and only a nephew who would inherit from him. So his nephew killed him and moved his body at night, placing it at the doorstep of a certain man. The next morning, the nephew cried out for revenge, and the people took up their weapons and almost fought each other. The wise men among them said, 'Why would you kill each other, while the Messenger of Allah is still among you' So they went to Musa and mentioned the matter to him and Musa said,

"Verily, Allah commands you that you slaughter a cow." They said, "Do you make fun of us" He said, "I take Allah's refuge from being among Al-Jahilin (the ignorant or the foolish))."

Had they not disputed, it would have been sufficient for them to slaughter any cow. However, they disputed, and the matter was made more difficult for them, until they ended up looking for the specific cow that they were later ordered to slaughter. They found the designated cow with a man, only who owned that cow. He said, 'By Allah! I will only sell it for its skin's fill of gold.' So they paid the cow's fill of its skin in gold, slaughtered it and touched the dead man with a part of it. He stood up, and they asked him, 'Who killed you' He said, 'That man,' and pointed to his nephew. He died again, and his nephew was not allowed to inherit him. Thereafter, whoever committed murder for the purpose of gaining inheritance was not allowed to inherit." Ibn Jarir reported something similar to that. Allah knows best.

The murderer had his supporters who wanted to hide his crime, and hence began accusing different people. But Allah willed that the criminal should be brought to book, and appointed a miraculous way of identifying him -- that is, the dead body of the murdered man should be touched with a part of the flesh of the sacrificial cow. When this was done, the dead man came back to life, announced the name of his murderer, and died again.

This miraculous event is a manifestation of the omnipotence of Allah, and Holy Qur'an presents it as an argument against those who deny the Resurrection of the dead for the Last Judgment. Verse 73 says that this precedent should induce people to make use of their reason, and see that what has happened in a past instance can as easily happen in a future instance.

With regard to this event one may ask as to why Allah made the resurrection of the dead man depend upon his being touched with a part of flesh when he had the power to bring the man back to life without the intervention of any such device; or, one may ask as to why the dead man should have been brought back to life when the name of the murderer could have been revealed even otherwise.

In answer to this, we shall say that Allah is omnipotent, and does not act under any kind of compulsion, but that all His actions proceed from His all-embracing wisdom. Moreover, it is He alone who knows, and can know, the *raison d'être* (purpose) of what He does. The Shari'ah does not oblige us to discover the *raison d'être* (purpose) of each and every divine act, nor is it necessary or possible that we should be able to comprehend the *raison d'être* (purpose) in each case. The best way in such a case is to accept, what Allah or the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said, and to keep quiet.

The Du'a made by the early Muslims of Makkah

Answering the call of the oppressed

Left behind in Makkah were Muslims who were unable to migrate because of physical weakness and insufficiency of resources. Later on, the disbelievers themselves stopped them from going and started hurting and harassing them in all sorts of ways so that they turn away from their faith in Islam.

The names of some of these are preserved in exegetic works, for example, Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas and his mother, Sulyma ibn Hisham, Walid ibn Walid and Abu Jandal ibn Sahl, may Allah be pleased with them all (Qurtubi).

These blessed people kept facing tyranny and torture because of their unflinching faith showing no signs that they would ever surrender their firm stand on Islam. However, they did continue praying to Allah Almighty for deliverance from this hard life which was finally accepted by Him when He commanded Muslims to wage Jihad against the disbelievers and rescue the oppressed from their coercion and persecution.

According to this verse, Muslims had requested Allah Almighty the favour of two things - that they be rescued from that town (meaning Makkah) and that they be blessed with some supporter and helper.

The fact is that Allah Almighty granted both these prayers when He provided some of them with the opportunity to move out from there which was the fulfilment of their first wish. However, some of them remained staying right there until the Conquest of Makkah. At that time, the Holy Prophet ﷺ appointed Sayyidna 'Attab ibn Asid as their caretaker and who had the oppressed Muslims delivered from their oppressors. Thus, granted was their second wish as well.

The gifted ayahs

Virtues of the last two ayahs of Surah Al-Baqarah

The last two verses of Surah al-Baqarah: Great merits have been attributed to these two verses in authentic ahadith. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said that one who recites these two verses during the night, they will be sufficient for him.

As narrated by Sayyidna Ibn ‘Abbas radiallahu anhu , the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that Allah Almighty has sent forth these two verses out of the treasures of Paradise and the ‘Rahman’ had already written them by His own hand two thousand years earlier than the creation of all things and beings. One who is able to recite them after the Salah of ‘Isha’, they will stand for Tahajjud in his case.

As it appears in the Mustadrak of al-Hakim and in Bayhaqi, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that Allah Almighty has concluded Surah al-Baqarah with these two verses, which have been given to me in His grace from out of the special treasure that lies under the ‘Arsh’ (Divine Throne). Therefore, you should make special effort to learn these verses, and at the same time, teach your women and children how to recite them.

This is why Sayyidna ‘Umar and Sayyidna Ali radiallahu anhum ajma’een, said that they thought that anybody who has any sense in him would never go to sleep without having recited these two verses.

The last ayah of Surah Al-Baqarah

The noble Qur’an, towards the far end, teaches Muslims to make a special du’a or prayer in which forgiveness has been sought on commission of some act because of forgetfulness or neglect or mistake.

It was said: **Our Lord, do not hold us accountable, if we forget or make a mistake.**

Then it was further said: **Our Lord, do not place on us a burden such as You have placed on those before us. And our Lord, do not make us bear that for which we have no strength.**

The Du'a of the people of Paradise

For its People, a Paradise minus Malice

In the fourth verse (43), two particular states of the people of Jannah have been identified. The first one finds mention in: (And We remove whatever of malice they had in their hearts. Rivers will flow beneath them).

According to Sahih al-Bukhari, when believers would have crossed the Bridge of Sirat and their deliverance from Jahannam would have become certain, they would be stopped over a bridge between Jannah and Jahannam - to remove their malice first.

If someone had some grudge against someone, or ill-will or a heart-burn on the loss of a right, all that will be mutually settled and washed off for good right there. So, when they go to Jannah, they will be free of malice, hatred, animosity and other personality disorders of the kind.

It appears in Tafsir Mazhari that this bridge will obviously be the last part of the Bridge of Sirat which is close to Jannah. 'Allama Al Suyuti has also opted for this approach.

Then comes the issue of settling rights. It goes without saying that any loss of rights cannot be compensated by money for nobody would have it there. Instead of that, in accordance with a Hadith in al Bukhari and Muslim, this payment will be made in the currency of deeds. Lost rights will be compensated by giving the deeds of the usurper to the owner of the right. And should it be that no more deeds are left with this person and there remain other rights which still have to be settled, then, the sins of the owner of the unsettled right will be transferred to the account of the usurper of the right.

In a Hadith, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has called the person, who did good deeds in his worldly life but remained negligent of the rights of people, the greatest pauper - for as a result of this neglect he lost all good deeds and stood there empty-handed.

In this Hadith narration, what has been described is but a general rule governing the fulfillment of rights and avenging an injustice inflicted. But, it is not necessary that everyone has to face this situation.

In fact, according to the report of Ibn Kathir and Tafsir Mazhari, possible there would be the situation that no one settles scores and takes revenge, yet mutual malices get to be removed without anything like that. This is what appears in some narrations.

When people would have crossed the Bridge of Sirat, they would reach a stream of water and drink from it. The property of this water will be such as would remove all mutual malice from the hearts of all of them. While commenting on (And their Lord will give to them to drink a pure drink - 76:21- AYA), the Tafsir of this verse given by Imam al-Qurtubi is not any different when he says that washed away from this water of Jannah shall be all grudges in hearts.

After reciting this verse, Sayyidna 'Ali al-Murtada radiallahu anhu once said: I hope that we - 'Uthman and Talhah and Zubayr and me – shall be among those whose hearts will be cleansed of malice before the entry into Paradise. (Ibn Kathir)

These noble souls named here had their mutual disagreements during their life time in the world which had reached the limits of war.

The second state of the people of Jannah described in this verse is that on their arrival in Jannah, they will express their gratitude to Allah Ta'ala that He guided them towards Jannah and made it easy for them to reach there. They will say that, had the grace of Allah not been with them, they would have never dared reach there.

This tells us that no one can go to Jannah by personal effort alone - unless the grace of Allah Ta'ala makes it possible for the aspirant. The reason is that even this 'effort' itself is not within one's control. That too comes through the grace and mercy of Allah Ta'ala alone.

Guidance has Degrees, the Last being the Entry into Paradise

Imam Raghیب al-Isfahani, who has explained Hidayah or guidance in a comprehensive manner as it appears in the Holy Qur'an, has said that guidance is a popular term but it has different degrees. The truth of the matter is that guidance is another name of finding the way to reach Allah Ta'ala. Therefore, the degrees of achieving nearness to Allah are many and different and unending.

Similarly, the degrees of guidance too are extremely varied and different from each other. The lowest degree of guidance is deliverance from Kufr and Shirk, and having 'Iman. One on this degree of guidance has his or her orientation changed, away from the path of error - towards Allah.

Then, there is the distance between Allah Ta'ala and His servants. This distance takes a journey to cover - and every stage so covered has degrees, which is called Hidayah or guidance. Therefore, guidance is a need. At no time, can anyone claim not to need it, not even prophets and messengers of Allah. For this reason, the Holy Prophet ﷺ, not only taught his people the lesson of: (Guide us in the straight path), but he himself kept making this prayer - because there is no end to the stages and ranks of nearness to Allah, so much so, that entry into the Paradise mentioned in this verse has been identified as Hidayah or guidance, for this is the last station of Hidayah*.

*Those interested in reading more about the implications, meaning and degrees of guidance may see Ma'arif-ul-Qur'an, English Translation, Vol.1, pages 72-77.

The Du'a of Hud alayhis salaam

In the Qur'an:

And to 'Ad (We sent) their brother Hud. He said, "O my people, worship Allah. You have no god other than Him. You are nothing but fabricators. [50] O my people, I ask you no reward for it. My reward is only on the One who created me. Have you, then, no sense? [51] And O my people, seek forgiveness from your Lord, then turn to Him in repentance, so that He may release the heavens pouring upon you and may increase you in strength beside your strength, and do not turn away like sinners." [52]

They said, "O Hud, you did not bring to us any proof, and we are not to leave our gods on your statement, and we are not to believe in you. [53] We do not say except that some of our gods have subjected you to some evil." He said, "I make Allah my witness, and you be witness that I have nothing to do with what you take as gods besides Him. [54] So, try your plans against me, all of you together, then give me no respite. [55] I place my trust in Allah, my Lord and your Lord. There is no creature but He takes it by the forelock. Surely, my Lord is on a straight path, [56] Now, if you turn away, I have already conveyed to you what I was sent to you with. And my Lord will replace you with some other people, and you cannot do Him any harm. Surely, my Lord is guardian over every thing!" [57]

And when came Our command, We saved Hud and those who believed along with him, out of mercy from Us, and We did save them from a heavy punishment. [58] That was the tribe of 'Ad who rejected the signs of their Lord, disobeyed their Messengers and followed the dictates of every obstinate tyrant! [59] And a curse was made to pursue them in this world and on the Day of Doom. Lo! The people of 'Ad disbelieved their Lord. Lo! Curse be upon 'Ad, the people of Hud. [60]

COMMENTARY

Allah Ta'ala had sent Sayyidna Hud alayhis salaam as a prophet to the people of 'Ad. They were known for their physical build, strength and bravery. Sayyidna Hud alayhis salaam was also one of them - as indicated in: (their brother, Hud - 50). How regrettable that a people so strong and brave had lost their reason to the extent that they had taken to worshipping gods they had carved out of stones with their own hands.

Three basic principles of the call of faith Sayyidna Hud alayhis salaam presented before his people have been mentioned in the first three verses (50-52).

One: Belief in Tauhid (Oneness of Allah) and that taking someone or something else worthy of worship other than Allah is nothing but a lie and fabrication.

Two: He was a Messenger of Allah. He had come with the call of Tauhid for them. This was the mission of his life. He was working hard against heavy odds to convey the message to them. Why would he do that? If they thought about it, they would see that he was not asking them to pay for his services, nor did he receive any material benefits from them. If he did not honestly believe it to be the will and command of Allah, and right and true, why would he go to all that trouble of inviting them to believe and live a better life?

Three: Forgiveness and Repentance: He exhorted them to seek forgiveness from Allah Ta'ala for their disbelief and for sins they had committed in their past life. Then, for future, let them be ashamed of what they had done, repent and promise to themselves making a firm resolve and commitment that they would never go even near them. If they sincerely went through this process of seeking forgiveness from Allah and showing repentance before Him, the result will be that they shall, no doubt, be blessed with everlasting prosperity in the Hereafter, but in the mortal world too, they will themselves notice its many benefits coming

to them.

Firstly, the act of Istighfar and Taubah will remove the distress of famine from them. Heavy rains will come when due making their provisions sumptuous. Secondly, it would increase their strength and power.

The word: (quwwah) has been used here in a general sense which includes physical strength and power as well as the strength that comes from increases in wealth and children.

This tells that Taubah and Istighfar have a special property of their own - that their practitioner is blessed with extended means of sustenance and satisfying increase in wealth and children, even in this mortal world.

Captives of their ignorant ways, the people of Sayyidna Hud alayhis salaam brushed his call aside by saying, in effect, 'a miracle would have been something, which you did not show to us. You are simply saying what you have to say. Now, just because what you' are saying, we are not going to leave our gods we worship and, in you, we are not going to believe. In fact, we believe that you have lost your mind as a result of maligning our gods, otherwise you would not be saying all that.'

Demonstrating his prophetic courage, Sayyidna Hud alayhis salaam, said in response, 'If you would not listen to me, then, hear this - I make Allah my witness and you too bear witness that I am disgusted with all your gods other than Allah. Now, do, you and your gods, whatever you all can do against me and do not even give me the least respite.'

And he said, 'this I am telling you seriously for I have placed my trust in Allah who is my Lord and your Lord as well. He holds every creature that walks on the earth by the forelock. There is no one around who can dare cause harm or loss to anyone even to the measure of a tiny particle without His will and permission. Surely, my Lord is on the straight path, that is, one who takes the straight path finds Him and is helped by Him.'

Here was one man against a whole people making a claim so strong and loud and putting them to shame and no one from a people so strong and brave dared budge before him! This was a standing miracle of Sayyidna Hud alayhis salaam - which also provides an answer to their complaint that he did not show them a miracle. And it also provides yet another answer to their audacious comment that their gods had made him mentally deranged for, had their gods been exercising this kind of power, they would have never left him alive after what he had said against them.

After that, he said, 'If you continue to be so insanely opposed to truth, then, you must understand that I have already conveyed to you the message with which I have been sent. Now, its logical outcome could be no other but that the wrath and punishment of Allah falls on you and you are destroyed to the last man and my Lord brings another people to settle on this land. As for what you are doing against this matter of truth, you are simply hurting yourself, not Allah. Surely, my Lord oversees everything and He is aware of all your deeds and thoughts.'

They were the kind of people who would not listen to anything. They chose to stick to their contumacy. Then, the punishment of Allah descended upon them in the form of a stormy wind that uprooted their homes and trees. Living entities, human and animal, would be blown up high into the air and ricochet back on to the ground faces down. Human cries could be heard coming from the sky - until this whole set of people, unique in their size and strength, were annihilated to the last man.

DAY 28

When came the command to send Divine punishment on these people, Allah Ta'ala, in accordance with His customary practice, saved His prophet and his companions from this severe punishment as they were ordered to leave that area before the punishment came.

After having mentioned the event relating to the people of 'Ad and the punishment that came upon them, an exhortation was necessary so that others could learn their lesson from it. So, it was said: That was the tribe of 'Ad! They rejected the signs of their Lord, disobeyed their Messengers yet kept following the dictates of those who were tyrannical and obstinate

The outcome was that curse, that is, the state of being away from the mercy of Allah, kept pursuing them in the mortal world and will keep pursuing them similarly on the day of Qiyamah as well.

The Du'a of Nabi ﷺ

A prayer for important objectives

At the time of his migration to Madinah, Allah Ta'ala asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ to make this du'a which pleaded with Him that his exit from Makkah and then the arrival in Madinah should both be good and smooth in all possible ways. It was the outcome of this prayer that, though he was within the striking range of the pursuing disbelievers at the time of Hijrah, yet Allah Ta'ala shielded him at every step and finally made Madinah al-Tayyibah good and promising for him and for all Muslims, both outwardly and inwardly.

Therefore, some Ulama have said that every Muslim should remember to make this prayer at the beginning of all objectives they wish to pursue and that this prayer is beneficial for all objectives and purposes.

The sentence which complements this very prayer appears next: “and grant me from Your Own a power favoured (by You).” Qatadah, the great tabi'i says: the Holy Prophet ﷺ, knew that fulfilling his functional duties as a prophet and working while besieged by enemies were challenges he could not handle personally. Therefore, He prayed to Allah Ta'ala for help and the power to subdue. The prayer was answered and everyone saw its effects.