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Verse 6 of Surat Hud says:

وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا وَ عَلَى اللَّهِ رِزْقُهَا

“And there is no animal in the earth but on Allah (s.w.t.) s the sustenance of it.”

In view of the above verse, the question that comes to mind is: Why it is that in today's world and all throughout history there are some, who have died and continue to die of hunger? Have their livelihoods not been secured and safeguarded?

The answer to this questions demands attention towards the following points:

Firstly: Securing sustenance does not mean that it should be made ready for a person and sent to his house or a morsel prepared and put into his mouth; rather, it means that the groundwork has been prepared, but man's effort is a condition for transforming them into actuality. Even Maryam (s.a.), in that severe state of labour in that lonely desert wherein Allah (s.w.t.) ordained her sustenance to become manifest in the form of dates upon the date-palm, was ordered to move and addressed as follows:

وَهْزِي إِلَيْكَ بِجَذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ...

“And shake towards you the trunk of the palm tree, it will drop on you fresh ripe dates.”¹

Secondly: If, in the past and the present, men have usurped the rights of others and have taken their livelihoods from them unjustly, this does not prove that Allah (s.w.t.) has not secured their livelihoods. In other words, in addition to the issue of effort and striving, the existence of social justice is also a condition for a just distribution of sustenance.

And if it were to be said: Why does not Allah (s.w.t.) prevent the injustices perpetrated by the unjust ones? We state that the life of man is based on the freedom of will so that all are tested and examined, and not on force and compulsion – for in such a case the development and perfection (of man) would not take place.

Thirdly: In this very earth there exist numerous sources that can provide nutrition to mankind, but which need to be discovered and put to use. However, if man exhibits negligence in this regard, he is the one to be blamed.

We ought not to forget that some areas of Africa, the inhabitants of which die of hunger today, are amongst the most enriched regions of the world. However, destructive factors, which were mentioned above, have brought them to this miserable state of theirs.²

1. Surat Maryam (19), Verse 25

2. Tafsir Payam-e-Qur'an, vol. 2, pg. 357

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