

Section 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Surah Al-Kahf – Verses 1 – 3

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيَّ عَبْدِهِ الْكِتَابَ وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ عِوَجًا

قِيَمًا لِيُنذِرَ بَأْسًا شَدِيدًا مِمَّنْ لَدُنْهُ وَيُبَشِّرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا حَسَنًا

مَا كَثُرَ فِيهِ أَبْدًا

1. *“(All) praise is (only) Allah’s, Who sent down upon His servant the Book (the Qur’an) and did not make in it any crookedness.”*

2. *“(A Book which is, over other heavenly Books,) guardian, to give warning of a severe punishment from Him, and to give good tidings unto the believers who do righteous deeds, that there will be for them a goodly reward.”*

3. “Where in they will abide forever.”

At the beginning of this Surah, Allah, the Pure, has taught His servants how to praise Him for His greatest bounty. He has pointed out that His most important bounty is the very Qur’an which He has revealed to His Messenger, and it is the only cause of their salvation.

As well as some other Suras of the Qur’an, Surah Al-Kahf has begun with Allah’s praise; and since praise and thanksgiving is usually for an important quality and a praiseworthy thing, here, the holy verse has stated it for the revelation of the Qur’an which is far from any crookedness and obliquity.

The verse says:

“(All) praise is (only) Allah’s, Who sent down upon His servant the Book (the Qur’an) and did not make in it any crookedness.”

Then, the next verse adds, implying that it is fixed, straight, and guardian over other heavenly Books:

“(A Book which is, over other heavenly Books,) guardian...”

This word, /qayyiman/, which has been applied as an epithet for the Qur’an, is both an emphasis on the straightness and temperance of the Qur’an which is free from any contradiction, and a hint to the eternity of this great Book.

It is also an example for: the protection of authenticities, the improvement of obliquities, guarding the Divine ordinances and human beings’ justice and excellence.

This epithet, /qayyim/(guardian), is, in fact, a derivation of the guardianship of Allah by which He is the protector and guardian of all existing things of the world.

Then, the verse continues saying:

“...to give warning of a severe punishment from Him...”

Immediately after that meaning, the verse indicates that this Book gives glad tidings unto those true believers who always do praiseworthy and righteous deeds for which they will be recompensed a good reward.

It says:

“...and to give good tidings unto the believers who do righteous deeds, that there will be for them a goodly reward.”

This reward will be the eternal Paradise, wherein they will dwell forever.

Here is the statement of the verse:

“Wherein they will abide forever.”

Explanations

1. Among all the suras of the Qur’an only the following suras begin with the holy phrase:

“(All) praise is (only) Allah’s”;

in three of which the speech is upon the creation of the world of existence:

Al-Hamd, Al-’An’am, Saba, Fatir, and Al-Kahf. In Surah Al-Hamd, training is spoken of, while here, in this verse, the words are upon the heavenly Book. As if, existence and creation accompanied with ‘the Book of Law’ are two wings for training the human beings.

2. The Arabic word /i’wija/ in context means: ‘deviation, and crookedness’. In Arabic, the term /’awaja/ is used for physical phenomena while the term /iwaja/ is applied for non-physical phenomena. The author of Tibyan, a book of , has applied the term /’awaja/ for human beings and the term /iwaja/ for other than human beings.

In this course, the Qur’anic term /qayyim/has been used in the sense of: ‘an erector, and arranger’.

3. The previous Surah has begun with the holy phrase:

“Glory be to Him Who...”,

and this Surah with the holy phrase:

“(All) praise is (only) Allah’s...”.

Glorification and praise are usually mentioned beside each other.

4. Wherever the word /’abdahu/ is mentioned absolutely in the Qur’an, it means the holy Prophet (S).

Its example are such as: Surah Al-Furqan, No.25, verse one, where it says:

“... Who sent down the Furqan upon His servant...”;

Surah An-Najm, No. 53, verse 10, where it says:

“And He revealed to His servant...”;

Surah Al-Hadid, No.57, verse 9, which says:

“... Who sends upon His servant...”;

and Surah Az- Zumar, No.39, verse 36 says:

“Is not Allah sufficient for His servant?...”

5. The bounty of ‘the Book and Law’ is so important that Allah has praised Himself for it.

6. The Qur’an is the guardian of other heavenly Books and it contains all the necessary expedients of the servants. There is no contradiction, excess and defect, and deviation in it. It invites both to raising and has raised to invite, (qayyiman).

Surah Al-Kahf – Verses 4 – 5

وَيُنذِرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا

مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ وَلَا لِآبَائِهِمْ كَبُرَتْ كَلِمَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ إِنْ يَقُولُونَ إِلَّا كَذِبًا

4. “And to warn those who say: ‘Allah has taken (to Himself) a son’.”

5. “They have no knowledge of it, nor had their fathers, Grievous is the word that comes out of their mouths. They speak naught but a lie.”

There was mentioned a warning in the previous holy verse, yet because of the importance of the deviation of polytheists concerning the idea that ‘Allah has taken (to Himself) a son’, the warning has been repeated again in this verse.

Regarding other verses of the Qur’an, too, the accusation of taking son unto Allah had been counted a great slender which was spread about among polytheists. The Christians spoke of: ‘the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost’, too.

The Jews also considered Ezra as God’s son. Polytheists thought of the angels as the daughters of God, while this belief adapts neither with reality nor with logic and wisdom.

However, in this holy verse, the Qur’an has referred to one of the common deviations of the opponents of Islam, among these opponents are the Christians, the Jews and polytheists, where it says:

“And to warn those who say: ‘Allah has taken (to Himself) a son’.”

This verse warns both the Christians for the belief that Messiah is the son of God, and the Jews for having the belief that Ezra is God’s son, and polytheists for that they consider the angels as God’s daughters.

Then, in order to make futile such baseless and false claims, the Qur'an pays to a basic principle, and says:

“They have no knowledge of it, nor had their fathers...”

They say this meaning, while by which they utter a great vain thing without having any knowledge.

The verse continues saying:

“...Grievous is the word that comes out of their mouths...”

Allah, and being a body? Allah, and having a son? Allah and having material needs? Allah, and being limited? How terrible words they are!

Yes, it is such that:

“...They speak naught but a lie.”

Surah Al-Kahf – Verse 6

فَلَعَلَّكَ بَاخِعٌ نَّفْسَكَ عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِمْ إِن لَّمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَسَفًا

6. “Then maybe you will fret yourself to death with grief, following after them, if they do not believe in this Message (the Qur'an).”

The Arabic term /asaf/ indicates to a stage of sorrow more intensive than grief.

This verse refers to the utmost sympathy of the prophets. It seems that the Prophet (S) has been resembled to a person who observes that his most beloved members are separating from him and he is looking at them with sigh from behind their backs.

Sympathy and regret upon other's aberration is a value, and the Prophet (S) is always the most compassionate one among people.

A leader should be mindful of the improvement of the believes and deeds of people and he ought not to cease looking after them.

Therefore, the verse says:

“Then maybe you will fret yourself to death with grief, following after them, if they do not believe in this Message (the Qur'an).”

That is why, in the next verse, the Qur'an implies that he (S) must not be grievous, because the world is the place of trial for them.

Surah Al-Kahf – Verses 7 – 8

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ زِينَةً لَّهَا لِنَبْلُوهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا

وَإِنَّا لَجَاعِلُونَ مَا عَلَيْهَا صَعِيدًا جُرُزًا

7. “Verily We have appointed whatever is on the earth as an ornament for it, so that We may try them: which of them is best in conduct.”

8. “And (at the end) We will surely make whatever is on it (as) barren ground.”

The Arabic word /sa'id/ has been applied for soil and whatever absolutely is on the ground. The Qur'anic holy term /juruz/ means 'a land without any plant'.

Allah has settled the phrase /liyabluwakum/, which relates to the trial of people, between the term /ja'alna/ (We have appointed) and the term /ja'ilun/ (will surely make).

One of these two words relates to the prosperity of the earth and the other relates to its barrenness, to be a hint that people's trial is located amongst prosperity, freshness, barrenness and sorrows. But, what is important in this course is the deed of man and his success.

It is narrated in a tradition that the purpose of the phrase /'ahsanu 'amala/ (best in conduct) is a wisely action accompanied with piety which should have been reserved for Hereafter, too. 1

The apparent reason of disbelief of the infidels is often their neglectful entire attention to the beauties of the world.

The verse says:

“Verily We have appointed whatever is on the earth as an ornament for it...”

Whatever is found on the earth, such as: gardens, flowers, fruits, animals, water sources, mains, colours, and good smells are all ornaments for the earth. But, for the developed and pious people, Faith and piety are their main ornaments.

Ornaments are the means of trial in order to be determined who amongst people has been deluded and

sells himself, and who, by means of continence and piety, uses these ornaments as a preparation for his righteous deeds.

Thus, the holy verse continues saying:

“...so that We may try them: which of them is best in conduct.”

This part of the verse is a warning to all humankind and to all Muslims that, in the course of this trial, they should not be deceived by some dazzling glares and the abundance of their deeds, but they ought to try to be regardful of goodness of deeds.

The beauty of flowers and the nature itself is perishable, but a good deed is fixed and remaining. These different bounties, these ranks and social positions, and the like of them, are not perpetual either.

There will come a day when there will remain but a dry and silent graveyard from these societies. This fact is a great instructive lesson.

The verse says:

“And (at the end) We will surely make whatever is on it (as) barren ground.”

Surah Al-Kahf – Verses 9 – 10

أَمْ حَسِبْتَ أَنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْكَهْفِ وَالرَّقِيمِ كَانُوا مِنْ آيَاتِنَا عَجَبًا

إِذْ أَوْيَ الْفِتْيَةُ إِلَى الْكَهْفِ فَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا آتِنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً وَهَيِّئْ لَنَا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا رَشَدًا

9. “Or do you think that the people of the Cave and of the inscription were of Our wonderful signs?”

10. “When the youths sought refuge unto the Cave, then they said: ‘Our Lord! Grant us mercy from Your Presence, and provide for us in our affair a right course’.”

Occasion of Revelation

Several chiefs of Quraysh sent two friends of theirs toward the Jewish scholars in Medina in order to investigate about the invitation of the holy Prophet of Islam (S) and to know whether there had been anything recorded in the former Books concerning his advent.

The couple of men went to Medina and communicated with the Jewish scholars therein. Those scholars told them to go to Muhammad (S) and ask him three questions. If he could answer two of them, he was a true prophet from the side of the Lord, otherwise he was a liar and they could decide about him whatever they wished.

They were told to ask what the story of the youths was, who, in ancient times, separated from their tribe, because they had a wonderful adventure.

Also, they should ask him (S) who the man was who traveled round the world and reached the East and the West of the earth, and what his story was.

They would also ask about the reality of the soul.

Those two men went to the Prophet (S) and asked him their questions.

The Prophet (S) told them that he might answer them the next day, while he did not mention the holy phrase: *'If Allah wills'*. It passed fifteen days and nights that there revealed no revelation from the side of Allah unto the Prophet (S).

That circumstance was heavy upon him (S). But, finally, Gabriel appeared and brought Surah Al-Kahf from Allah, wherein there was the explanation of the story of those youths and also the story of that traveller around the world.

Besides that, Gabriel brought him (S) the verse saying:

“They ask you concerning the spirit; say ‘The spirit is of the command of my Lord...’”²

In the former verses, there was delivered an illustration of the life in this world and the circumstance of men's trial in the course of their lives.

In view of the fact that the Qur'an often illustrates the general sensitive matters with a similitude or parables, or some examples from the history of the past, here, too, at first it refers to the adventure of the Companions of the Cave, and mentions them as an example and as a goodly pattern.

A group of clever and faithful youths, who were living in a splendid, comfortable and welfare life with kinds of bounties and facilities, in order to protect their godly belief and to challenge with the illegitimate ruler of their time, left all of those merits and sought refuge to a cave of a mountain which was empty of every thing.

By this way, they proved their straightness and their steadfastness in the path of Faith.

The Qur'an says at first:

“Or do you think that the people of the Cave and of the inscription were of Our wonderful signs?”

Allah implies that He has some more wonderful signs in the heaven and the earth, each of which is a sample of the glory and greatness of creation. There are also so many wonderful signs in this great heavenly Book of yours, and certainly the story of the Companions of the Cave is not more wonderful than them.

Then the Qur'an says:

“When the youths sought refuge unto the Cave...”

They become helpless and could do nothing.

So, they called Allah:

“...then they said: ‘Our Lord! Grant us mercy from Your Presence, and provide for us in our affair a right course’.”

They asked their Lord to provide a way for them that they could deliver from that straitened circumstance and that it would lead them to goodness and happiness, so that they could perform their duties.

Explanations

1. The Qur'anic term /raqim/ here means: ‘an inscription or a tablet on which the story of the Companions of the Cave is written and their names figured in it’. The Arabic term /kahf/ means: ‘a large cave’.
2. The Arabic word /fityah/ is the plural form of /fata/ which means ‘youth’. Imam Sadiq (as) has said that a faithful person is called ‘youth’, because though they were aged, Allah has introduced them ‘youth’ because of their Faith. 3
3. The Qur'anic term /rušd/ has been rendered in the sense of: ‘growth, salvation, and Allah’s pleasure’.
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In this Surah, the term has been applied in three occurrences.

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1. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, the Commentary
 2. Surah Al-'Isra', No. 17, verse 85
 3. Al-Kafi, vol.8, p.398, and Nur-uth-Thaqalayn
 4. Majma'-ul-Bayan, the Commentary
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