

Section 6: Wealth and Children, Only Passing Shows

Surah Al-Kahf – Verse 45

وَاضْرِبْ لَهُم مَّثَلَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ فَأَصْبَحَ هَشِيمًا تَذْرُوهُ الرِّيَّاحُ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّقْتَدِرًا

45. “And coin for them the similitude of the life of the world as water which We send down from the sky, and the plants of the earth mingle with it, and then becomes dry twigs that the winds scatter; and Allah is omnipotent over everything.”

The containing words of this verse are upon the plants and pleasantness of the earth, and, then, the appearance of the Divine Wrath which caused them to be burnt into ashes. This statement has been said in order that it becomes a warning for haughty people who are neglectful of Allah.

Verily, the world is like a rootless plant which grows with a little rain and dries with a slight wind. In this course, whatever remains, of course, is the man's righteous deeds. Addressing human beings, in a tradition narrated from Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as), he says:

“O’ he who the world has made busy to itself! Beware that the long various wishes of the world have made you proud.”

Therefore, Allah commands His Messenger in this verse to set forth to the people a parable in order that he attracts their attention from the world to the Hereafter.

The verse says:

“And coin for them the similitude of the life of the world as water which We send down from the sky, and the plants of the earth mingle with it, and then becomes dry twigs that the winds scatter...”

The fine scenery of the green plants and their leaves and branches, which grow pleasantly, enamours man to itself and takes him out into the fields in order that he watches the beautiful nature in the spring. But the green plants and flowers of the spring do not last long. Finally they become pale and dry and winds scatter their dust and straws here and there. The world is also like that.

Then the Qur’an implies that Allah prevails over all things and no one is able to stand against His Power and His Will.

It says:

“...and Allah is omnipotent over everything.”

A similar meaning to this verse, with some more details, is recited in Sura Yunus, No. 10, verse 24, and Surah Al-Hadeed, No.57, verse 20, too.

Surah Al-Kahf – Verse 46

الْمَالُ وَالْبَنُونَ زِينَةُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْبَاقِيَاتُ الصَّالِحَاتُ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا
وَّخَيْرٌ أَمَلًا

46. “Wealth and children are an ornament of the life of the world, and the everlasting good works are better with your Lord in reward and better in expectation.”

In Islamic traditions recorded by both the Sunnite and the Shi‘it, it is narrated from the Messenger of Allah (S), and by the Shi‘it again narrated from the Imams of Ahlul-Bayt (as), that the purpose of ‘the everlasting good works’ is the four-hymns, i.e.:

“Glory be to Allah, and praise belongs to Allah, and there is no god save Allah, and Allah is the greatest.”

And, in some other traditions, it is said that the objective meaning of this holy phrase is ‘The five statutory prayers’, while some others denote that it is ‘the night prayer’, while some other traditions indicate that the purpose of it is ‘the love of Ahl-ul-Bayt’.¹

Therefore, in this holy verse, Allah has defined the position of the wealth and the power of man, which are two main pillars of the life in this world.

The verse says:

“Wealth and children are an ornament of the life of the world...”

These ornaments are as blossoms which appear over the branches of this tree. They are fleeting and do not last long. If they do not take to themselves the colour of eternity by being on the path of Allah, they are much invalid.

In this holy verse, in fact, two parts of the most important capitals of this world have been referred to, the rest of which are some dependants to these two. These two parts are the economical ability and human ability.

Then, it adds:

“...and the everlasting good works are better with your Lord in reward and better in expectation.”

The concept of the phrase ‘the everlasting good works’ is so vast that it envelops any thought, idea, speech, and deed which is righteous and praiseworthy.

And, naturally, this effort remains and its effects and favours reach the members of societies, such as science, industry, good children, the buildings of a mosque, hospital, and school, and also religious and useful publications like: the commentary of the Qur’an, the traditions of Ahl-ul-Bayt (as), and so on.

Surah Al-Kahf – Verses 47 – 48

وَيَوْمَ نُسَيِّرُ الْجِبَالَ وَتَرَى الْأَرْضَ بَارِزَةً وَحَشَرْنَاَهُمْ فَلَمْ نُغَادِرْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا

وَعُرِضُوا عَلَي رَبِّكَ صَفًّا لَقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا كَمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ بَلْ زَعَمْتُمْ أَلَّنْ
نَجْعَلَ لَكُمْ مَوْعِدًا

47. “And (remember) the day We shall set the mountains in motion, and you will see the earth a leveled plain and We muster them nor shall We leave out any one of them.”

48. “And they shall be presented before your Lord in ranks, (and Allah says:) ‘You have come to Us, as We created you upon the first time. But you thought that We should not appoint a tryst for you.’”

In order that the life of the world would not be loved, the remembrance of the Day of Judgment is necessary. This Day is forevery body and there is no exception for any one.

The words in the previous holy verses were upon a selfish proud man who, because of his haughtiness and pride, denied Resurrection. Here, following that subject, the Qur'an explains three stages concerning Hereafter. The first stage is before the resurrection of human beings. The second stage is the Resurrection itself. And the third stage is related to some events after Resurrection.

At first, the holy Qur'an implies that we should remember the Day when the system of the world of existence, as a preparation for a new system, will be disturbed and the mountains will be set in motion so that all the barriers of the surface of the earth will be removed and the land will be leveled in a shape that every thing can clearly be seen.

The verse says:

“And (remember) the day We shall set the mountains in motion, and you will see the earth a leveled plain...”

These current verses of the Qur'an point to the events which will happen at the threshold of Resurrection. Such events are a lot, and some of them are particularly pointed out in the short suras at the end of the Qur'an. These events are called as 'the signs of Hereafter' /'ašrat us sa'ah/.

After that, the verse finally implies that at this time Allah will gather them all, so that even a single person will not be left out.

The verse continues saying:

“...and We muster them nor shall We leave out any one of them.”

The abovementioned sentence is an emphasis upon this fact that Resurrection is a general commandment and none will be exception from it.

In the second verse, the Qur'an refers to the circumstances of the resurrection and humankind. It says:

“And they shall be presented before your Lord in ranks...”

This expression may be an indication to the case that every group of people, who have the same belief or similar deeds, will be categorized in one row. Or, all of them, without any difference or privilege, will be set in a single row; like the mass of soldiers in front of the commander-in-chief of the army, where they are wholly seen.

However, standing in a row is a sign of order and tidiness. It is the secret of discipline and modesty. In the Qur'an, for the statement of the qualifications of the strugglers, and also angels, the expression of 'row and rank' has been used. Two suras of the Qur'an are also entitled 'As-Saff' (the Ranks, the Row) and 'As-Saffat' (the Rangers).

In the world, sometimes, the military army are presented to the chiefs in a particular order, while, in

Hereafter, all human beings will automatically and regularly be presented to the Lord.

There, they will be told:

“...‘You have come to Us, as We created you upon the first time. But you thought that We should not appoint a tryst for you’.”

In Hereafter, there will be for them, no property, nor privileges and material ranks, nor any helpers. They will be in the same state that they were created at first.

But, they imagined that Allah would never appoint a time for them. This status was at the time when the pride of material facilities deluded them, and the love of the world, which they imagined to be eternal, caused them to be neglectful of the thought of the Hereafter, which is inside the nature of everybody.

But it is certain that the faithful persons, who are seekers of the truth and have enough capacity, will never fall in such ugly epithet when they reach to a social rank or some wealth. They not only will not be proud, but also no change will appear in their daily programs from this point of view.

It is narrated from the Prophet (S) and Imam Sadiq (as) that in Hereafter there will arrange one hundred and twenty thousand rows. Eighty thousand of them will be the Prophet’s community, from the beginning of his embassy until the end of resurrection, and the former communities will be only forty thousand rows. 2

Surah Al-Kahf – Verse 49

وَوُضِعَ الْكِتَابُ فَتَرَى الْمُجْرِمِينَ مُشْفِقِينَ مِمَّا فِيهِ وَيَقُولُونَ يَا وَيْلَتَنَا مَا لَ هَذَا
الْكِتَابِ لَا يُغَادِرُ صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً إِلَّا أَحْصَاهَا وَوَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا وَلَا
يُظْلَمُ رُبُّكَ أَحَدًا

49. “And the Book (of deeds) is placed, and you see the guilty fearful at what is in it, and saying: ‘Alas for us! What a Book is this, that it leaves out nothing, small or great, but it has numbered it?’ And they will find all that they did confronting them; and your Lord does not treat anyone with injustice.”

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

“On the Day of Hereafter, when the man’s record of deeds will be given to him, he looks at it and sees that all his moments, words, movements and deeds are recorded in it; then he remembers them wholly such that as if he has done them just one hour before.”³

Therefore, the holy verse implies that on Hereafter, there is the Book of deeds of all human beings which will be placed before them. When the sinners are informed of its content, they will be so frightened that the signs of fear will clearly be seen in their faces.

The verse says:

“And the Book (of deeds) is placed, and you see the guilty fearful at what is in it..”

At this moment, the guilty will astonishingly cry loudly for what they see, and, as the verse states:

“...and saying: ‘Alas for us! What a Book is this, that it leaves out nothing, small or great, but it has numbered it?’...”

They will say that it is a Book that every thing has been minutely recorded and reckoned in it so that nothing has been left out.

Verily, what a terrible circumstance it is! They say that they have forgotten all those deeds of theirs in a manner that sometimes they thought they had committed no wrong, but today they see that their responsibility is heavier than what they considered and their fate is very dark.

Besides that recorded document, principally they will see all their deeds present before them. They will find the embodiment of their all good and evil actions, injustices and justices, vices and treacheries, all in all, in front of them.

The verse continues saying:

“...And they will find all that they did confronting them...”

In fact, they are entangled with the fruit of their own actions and the Lord is just to every one. Whatever they will be involved in Hereafter is the deeds they have done in this world. Thus, whom can they complain of, save of themselves?

The verse concludes:

“...and your Lord does not treat anyone with injustice.”

At the end, it is understood from the verses of the Qur’an that there will be three kinds of Book for human beings in the Hereafter. The first is a single Book which will be placed there for the reckoning of the deeds of all.

The second is the Book that every community has, in which the deeds of every community are recorded, as it is recited in Surah Al-Jathiyah, No.45, verse 28:

“...every nation shall be called to its book...”

The third is the Book which exists for every person separately, as Surah Al-'Isra', No. 17, verse 13 says:

“And We have made every man’s actions to cling to his neck, and We will bring forth to him on the Resurrection Day a book which will be found wide open.”

It is evident that there is no inconsistency between the content of these verses, because it does not matter that the man’s deeds may be recorded in different books.

The similar form of it can also be seen in programs of the present world where, for proper systematizing organizations of a country, there will be formed a regulation and calculation for every unit, and then those units will have a new situation in the greater units.

But, this fact should be noted that the men’s book of deeds in Hereafter is not like the ordinary notebook or book in this world. It is an expressive and undeniable collection, which, perhaps, is the natural consequence of the man’s deeds themselves.

However, the verses under discussion indicate that, besides the man’s deeds being recorded in a special book, the deeds themselves will also incarnate and attend there,⁴ as the verse points out:

(...And they will find all that they confronting them...)

The deeds which have disappeared in the form of scattered energy from the sights in this world, in fact, have not been annihilated. (The modern science has proved that no material and energy will vanish, but it always changes into another form.)

On That Day, these energies, which have been lost, will be changed into matter, by the command of Allah, and will incarnate in some suitable shapes. The righteous deeds will appear in some beautiful and interesting forms, while the evil actions will appear in some ugly and hateful features, and they will remain with us.

It is for this reason that, at the end of the verse, the Qur’an says:

“...and your Lord does not treat anyone with injustice”,

because the rewards and the retributions are the fruit of the deeds of themselves.

Some of commentators, of course, have considered the holy phrase:

“...and they will find all that they did confronting them”

as an emphasis on the subject of ‘the Book (of deeds)’. They have said that the meaning of the sentence is that they will find all their own deeds present and recorded in that Book. ⁵

However, in the commentary of ‘Ayyashi, under the holy verse:

“...Alas for us! What a Book is this, that it leaves out nothing, small or great, but it has numbered it?’ And they will find all that they did confronting them; and your Lord does not treat anyone with injustice.”

There is a tradition narrated from Khalid-ibn-Najib who has narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) who said:

“When the Day of Justice occurs, the man’s book will be given to him and he will be ordered to read it.”

Khalid says that he asked Imam (as):

“Will he recognize what he reads?”

Imam (as) answered:

“He will remember all. There will be no moment, no glance, no word, no step, and no other actions that he has fulfilled but he will remember entirely by reading that book, in a manner as if he has performed it at that very moment. Therefore, he will say: ‘Alas for us! What a Book is this, that it leaves out nothing, small or great, but it has numbered it?’”⁶

Some Traditions

1. Amir-ul-Mu’mineen Ali (as) said:

“...What will then be your position when your affairs reach their end and graves are turned upside down (to throw out the deed)? There shall every soul realize what it has sent before, and they shall be brought back to Allah, their true Lord, and what they did fabricate (the false deities) will vanish (away) from them.”⁷

2. Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as) said:

“Did you not see those who engaged in long-reaching desires, built strong buildings, amassed much wealth but their houses turned to graves and their collections turned into ruin? Their property devolved on the successors and their spouses on those who came after them.

They cannot (now) add to their good acts nor invoke (Allah’s) mercy in respect to evil acts. Therefore, whoever makes his heart habituated to fear Allah achieves a forward position and his action is successful.”⁸

1. Tafsir-ul-Burhan, Safi, Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Majma’-ul-Bayan

2. Kafi, Bihar-ul-Anwar, Tafsir-us-Safi, and Atyab-ul-Bayan

3. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol.3, p.267

4. Like what is seen in televisions and satellites today. Thus, Allah Who is the creator of man is powerful to make present his deeds and show them in Hereafter.

5. Tafsir-ul-Kabir, by Fakhr-i-Razi, and Tafsir-ul-Jami', by Qurtubi
 6. Tafsir-ul-Burhan, and As-Safi. The content meaning of this tradition has also been narrated by men of tradition and community.
 7. Nahjul-Balaqah, Sermon 226
 8. Nahjul-Balaqah, Sermon 132
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