

Section 2: The Bounties Awaiting the Apostle

Sura Al-Furqan – Verses 9–10

انظُرْ كَيْفَ ضَرَبُوا لَكَ الْأَمْثَالَ فَضَلُّوا فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَبِيلًا

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي إِنْ شَاءَ جَعَلَ لَكَ خَيْرًا مِّنْ ذَلِكَ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
وَيَجْعَلُ لَكَ قُصُورًا

9. ***“Behold, how they strike similitudes for you, but they have gone astray, so they shall not be able to find a way (to the truth).”***

10. ***“Blessed is He Who, if that were His will, could give you better (things) than all that, gardens beneath which rivers flow, and He will give you palaces.”***

One will get misled, if logic, miracle, and accomplishments of the Prophet (S) are not paid attention to and wealth, posts, and seeking pretext get to be the aim.

(*‘...but they have gone astray, ...’*)

Therefore in a short sentence, the Qur'an in this noble verse says:

“Behold, how they strike similitudes for you, but they have gone astray, so they shall not be able to find a way (to the truth).”

This sentence clearly illustrates this fact that against the call of Allah and the Qur'an, whose content is an expressive proof of its relationship with Allali, they fell back on some illusive words and they wanted to cover the face of the truth by these groundless words.

This is just like a person who resorts to some seeking pretext, being clearly baseless, in order to stand against our logical arguments and we do not answer what he has said separately, but we simply say you may see with what illusive words does he want to stand against the logical reason?

And verily all of their words in all of their parts were so, because:

First: Why must a prophet be one of angels? But intellect and knowledge say that a human must lead human beings, so that he knows and perceives all their pains, needs, problems, and life issues, so, he will be a paragon in all aspects and people can be inspired in all programs.

If an angel were sent down, certainly this aim would not be fulfilled and people would say:

“If he speaks about piety and paying no attention to the world, it is because he is an angel and needs nothing. If he speaks about modesty and calls to chastity, it is because he knows nothing of sexual desire.”

And there are also many other matters.

Second: Is it necessary to send an angel to be the company of man for the sake of confirming him? Are not miracles, specially a great miracle such as the holy Qur’an, enough for understanding this reality?

Third: Eating food like other men and going to markets cause him to associate with people more and to know their life more deeply. It helps him to carry out his mission better. There is not only loss or harm in this, but it is a kind of help for him.

Forth: Eminence and personality of the Prophet (S) does not depend on treasure, wealth, and huge gardens full of fruits. This is the pagan’s deviating conception of personality and even nearness to Allah as being depended on wealth and money, while prophets have come to say that the value of man depends on his knowledge, faith and piety.

Fifth: According to what criterion did they call him insane and bewitched? According to history, his great revolution and his foundation of Islamic civilization were extraordinary, how can he be accused and given such ridiculous labels? Unless we say that breaking idols and not blindly following the ancestors is a reason of insanity!

According to what was said, it gets clear that the word /’amal/ (similitudes), here, especially with regard of the context, means groundless and meaningless words. Using this word is perhaps because of the matter that they uttered their words in the form of truth, similitude and like a logical reason, while it was not really so.

Another matter that we must pay attention to is that the foes of the Prophet (S) used to accuse him of being sorcerer and sometimes being bewitched, though some of the commentators say that ‘being bewitched’ perhaps means ‘being sorcerer’ (because in Arabic sometime past participle is used as

subject), but apparently these two words are different.

If they called him sorcerer, it was because his words extraordinarily influenced hearts and they did not want to accept this fact and, therefore, they resorted to the accusation of being sorcerer.

Being bewitched means to be mentally and intellectually influenced by sorcerers and to have distorted senses. This accusation originated from this fact that he broke the tradition and swam against the stream ideologically and was against personal interests, superstitious habits and customs. But all these accusations are answered by the above words.

A question now arises that why it is said:

“...but they have gone astray, so they shall not be able to find a way (to the truth).”

Its answer is that man can find the path of the truth if he wills and wants the truth. But the one, who has already made decision by wrong and deviating prejudgments that originate from ignorance and stubbornness, not only does not find the truth but also stands against it.

The next verse, similar to the previous one, addresses the Prophet (S) and says, with the intention of scorning their words and saying that they are unanswerable.

It says:

“Blessed is He Who, if that were His will, could give you better (things) than all that, gardens beneath which rivers flow, and He will give you palaces.”

Except Allah, who is it that has given gardens and palaces to them? Basically, except Allah, who is it that has created all of these beauties and blessings? Cannot such a powerful and mighty Allah provide better than these for you?

But He does not want people to think that the personality of the Prophet (S) depends on wealth, money, garden, and palace. He wants the life of the Prophet (S) to be like the life of common people, the oppressed and the poor, so that he will be a sanctuary for all of them.

But, why it is said that gardens and palaces are better than what they wanted, for treasure by itself does not resolve all the problems and difficulties, but it must be changed to gardens and palaces by a lot of troubles.

Moreover, they said that the Prophet (S) must have a garden to sustain him, but the holy Qur'an says:

“...He Who, if that were His will, could give you better (things) than all that, gardens beneath which rivers flow, and He will give you palaces.”,

(but the aim of the Prophet's mission is something else).

In a sermon called Qasi'ah, No. 192, by Imam Ali (as), we find this matter expressed very explicitly:

“When Musa, the son of 'Imran, went to Pharaoh along with his brother Harun (Aaron) wearing (coarse) shirts of wool and holding sticks in their hands, they guaranteed him retention of his country and continuity of his honour if he submitted; but he said:

‘Do you not wonder at these two men who guaranteed me the continuity of my honour and the retention of my country although you see their poverty and lowliness. Otherwise, why do they not have gold bangels on their wrists?’

He said so feeling proud of his gold and collected possessions, and belittled wool and wearing woolen garment.

When Allah, the Glorified, deputed His prophets, if He had wished to open for them the doors of treasures and mines of gold and (surround them with) planted gardens and to collect around them birds of the skies and beasts of the earth, He would have done so.

If he had done so then there would have been no trial, nor recompense and no tidings (about the affairs of the next world). Those who accepted (His message) could not be given the recompense falling due after trial and the believers could not deserve the reward for good acts, and all these words would not have retained their meanings.

But Allah, the Glorified, makes His Prophets firm in their determinations and gives them weakness of appearance as seen from the eyes, along with contentment that fills the hearts and eyes resulting from care-freeness, and with the want that pains the ordinary eyes and ears.

If the prophets had possessed such authority that could not be assaulted, or honour that could not be damaged or domain towards which the necks of people would turn and the saddles of mounts could be set, it would have been very easy for people to seek lessons and quite difficult to feel vanity.

They would have then accepted belief out of fear felt by them or inclination attracting them, and the intention of them all would have been the same, although their actions would have been different.

Therefore, Allah, the Glorified decided that people should follow His prophets, acknowledge His books, remain humble before His face, obey His command and accept His obedience with sincerity in which there should not be an iota of anything else; and as the trial and tribulation would be stiffer the reward and recompense too should be larger. ¹

Some say that the purpose of palace and garden is that of the other world, but this commentary is not in line with the appearance of the verse.

However, the Arabic word/tabaraka/ is derived either from /baraka/ with the sense of ‘fix’ and ‘ever lasting’, or from /barakat/ which means ‘abundant goodness’.

Sura Al-Furqan - Verse 11

بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِالسَّاعَةِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِمَنْ كَذَّبَ بِالسَّاعَةِ سَعِيرًا

11. “But they deny the Hour (of Resurrection), and We have prepared a Blazing Fire for him who denies the Hour.”

The Arabic word /sa‘ir/ (blaze) means a burning and ablaze fire. The source of pagans’ pretexts is often disbelief in the Hereafter.

To continue the Qur’anic discussion of pagans’ deviation from monotheism and prophethood which was in the previous verses, this noble verse talks about another part of their deviations from the view of the issue of the resurrection.

In fact, with the statement of this part, it gets clear that they were utterly shaky and deviated in all principles of religion, both monotheism, and prophethood, and resurrection. Two of them have been mentioned in the former verses and now we turn to the third one.

The verse says:

“But they deny the Hour (of Resurrection)...”

By mentioning the Arabic word /bal/, the verse implies that what they say about monotheism and prophethood is just some pretexts that originate from denial of resurrection, because if one believes in such a great court and the divine reward and punishment, one neither boldly ridicules the truths nor rejects a prophet’s call for illusive reasons, nor bows down before idols that he has made by himself.

But, here, the holy Qur’an has not given them any argumentative answers, for they were not men of reason and argument, but the Qur’an warns and threatens them severely and harshly and illustrates their gloomy and painful future for them. Sometimes this logic is more effective for such people.

It continues saying:

“...and We have prepared a Blazing Fire for him who denies the Hour.”

Sura Al-Furqan - Verses 12-13

إِذَا رَأَتْهُم مِّن مَّكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ سَمِعُوا لَهَا تَغِيْظًا وَزَفِيرًا

وَإِذَا أُلْقُوا مِنْهَا مَكَانًا ضَيِّقًا مُقَرَّنِينَ دَعَوْا هُنَالِكَ ثُبُورًا

12. “When it sees them from a far place, they will hear its raging and roaring.”

13. “And when they are cast, coupled in fetters, into a narrow place of that Fire, they will call out there for destruction.”

The Qur’anic word /taqayyuz/ means declaring one’s anger and intensity of wrath which is sometimes along with sound and voice. The Arabic word /zafir/ means the sound of breathing when the chest is constricted because of abundance of sorrow. The Qur’anic word /muqarranin/ means to fasten with fetter and chain. The word /ubur/ means to express woe and regret.

In this verse, a strange description is provided for this blazing fire. It says:

“When it sees them from a far place, they will hear its raging and roaring.”

In this statement there are several clear meanings which show how severe the divine punishment is:

1. The verse does not say that they see the Fire from afar, but it says that Fire sees them, as if it has eye and ear and looks forward them and expects these wrongdoers!
2. It does not need that they come near it in order to be fermented, but it cries out of anger from a long distance. Some narrations say that the distance is as long as one year of walking.
3. The word /taqayyuz/ is used to describe this Fire, which is a status in which man expresses his fury by means of cry and clamour.
4. The word /zafir/ is used to describe the Fire. It is like the situation in which man inhales and the ribs come up, and this is usually when man is very angry.

All of the above explanations show that the blazing Fire is like a brutal beast that awaits its prey. This waiting drags this group, (we take refuge in Allah!)

That is the condition of Fire when it sees them from a long distance, but the next verse describes their condition when they are in the Hell Fire, by saying:

“And when they are cast, coupled in fetters, into a narrow place of that Fire, they will call out there for destruction.”

This is not because the Hell is small, since, according to the 30th verse of Sura Qaf, No. 50, the Qur’an says:

“On the Day (when) We say unto Hell: ‘Are you filled up?’ And it says: ‘Are there any more?’”

Thus, Hell is a very vast place but they are so confined in it that, in some narration we read that their entrance into the Hell is like entering a nail into a wall.²

Meanwhile, the Qur'anic word /ubur/ originally means 'decay and destruction'. When a man fears from something terrible or horrific, he cries: /wa abura/ which means: 'woe to me.'

Sura Al-Furqan – Verse 14

لَا تَدْعُوا الْيَوْمَ ثُبُوراً وَاحِداً وَادْعُوا ثُبُوراً كَثِيراً

14. “ (It will be said to them:) ‘Call not this day for one destruction, but call for many destructions!’”

This verse implies that they must not say /wa abura/ for one time, but they must say it many times. The verse says:

“ (It will be said to them:) ‘Call not this day for one destruction, but call for many destructions!’”

Anyway, their cry and moaning does not have any result and there will be no death or destruction, but they must remain alive and experience painful chastisements.

This verse is in fact like the 16th verse of Sura At-Tur, No. 52, which says:

“Endure the heat thereof, and whether you are patient of it or impatient of it is all one for you. You are only being paid for what you used to do.”

That who tells such words to pagans, the context shows that angels of chastisement do this, because they deal with pagans.

But why they are told that they must not say /wa ubura/ for one time, but they must say it many times, perhaps it is because their painful chastisement is not temporal that it ends with saying this phrase one time, but they must always repeat it during this period.

Moreover the divine punishment that is for these criminals is so miscellaneous that they face their death by experiencing each of these punishments and they cry /wa ubura/ each time. It seems that they die and become alive successively.

The Prophet (S) in a tradition says:

“The people of the Hell are under pressure like nail in wall.”³

Its reason is that: ignoring Allah leads to desperate straits in this world and the other world. Concerning what they have in this world:

“...He makes his breast narrow and straitened...”⁴,

and:

“And whoever turns away from My remembrance, verily for him is a life straitened...”⁵,

and in the other world:

“And when they are cast, coupled in fetters, into a narrow place of that Fire...”⁶

On the contrary, paying attention to Allah and having faith in Him, is the cause of calmness and peacefulness both in this world:

“We would have certainly opened up for them blessings from the heaven and the earth...”⁷

and the other world:

“...when they reach it, the gates thereof are opened...”⁸

In another occurrence, the Qur'an says:

“Is one who follows the pleasure of Allah like him who incurs wrath from Allah, and whose abode will be Hell? And an evil destination it is!”⁹

There has been narrated from Imam Sadiq, the sixth Imam (as), who said:

“The Hell has got 7 gates. From one of them our enemies and those who fight and belittle us enter. Certainly this gate is the greatest and the most blazing one.”¹⁰

The Prophet (S) says:

“The fire of this world is one part of the seventy parts of the Hell Fire. Each of those parts has got its own heat.”¹¹

Imam Ali (as) once says:

“One who enters the Hell is miserable for ever.”¹²

The Prophet (S) says:

“The least punishment of the people of the Hell is wearing a blazing pair of shoes on the Day of Hereafter that are so hot that their brain begins to boil from them.”¹³

Imam Ali (as) says:

*“Fear the Fire the heat of which is too much, and its bottom is very deep and its ornament is iron, and its beverage is boiling fetid water (blood mixed with filth).”*¹⁴

Sura Al-Furqan – Verses 15-16

قُلْ أَذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ أَمْ جَنَّةُ الْخُلْدِ الَّتِي وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ كَانَتْ لَهُمْ جَزَاءً وَمَصِيرًا

لَهُمْ فِيهَا مَا يَشَاءُونَ خَالِدِينَ كَانَ عَلَى رَبِّكَ وَعْدًا مَسْئُولًا

15. “Say: ‘Is that better or the eternal garden which has been promised to the pious ones? That shall be a reward and a resort for them’.”

16. “For them there will be therein whatever they desire: they will dwell (there) for aye. It is for your Lord a promise that must be fulfilled.”

The promise of Paradise is to be fulfilled certainly. The demands of the people of the Paradise are logical and wise as the demands of Allah are so.

It means that as:

“...Allah does what He will”¹⁵,

and He does it wisely, the believers have also got wise demands:

“For them there will be therein whatever they desire...”

It will not be in a way that they want the people of the Hell to be freed or they want to have the rank of prophets, because such demands are not wise. Therefore, in this verse, the Prophet is addressed to call people to judge.

It says:

“Say: ‘Is that better or the eternal garden which has been promised to the pious ones? That shall be a reward and a resort for them’.”

This is the promised Paradise where they will abide for ever, (khalidin).

And the next verse says:

“For them there will be therein whatever they desire: they will dwell (there) for aye. It is for your Lord a promise that must be fulfilled.”

This question and asking for judgment is for the sake that about which no one has doubt. It is not for the matter that those painful and terrible punishments can be compared with those matchless blessings and favours, but these kinds of questions are for striking sleeping consciences and wakening people, so that they may be faced with a dilemma.

If they say that these blessings are better and superior (and certainly they must say so), they have condemned themselves since their worldly deeds are against it. If they say that those punishments are better than these blessings, they have proved that they are insane.

This is like giving warning to a truant young man who has left school or university saying that those who escape from intellect and knowledge will go finally to jail, and asking them:

“Which is better, going to jail or gaining the high ranks?”

Some Points

1. In the above verses, one time it is said that Paradise is perpetual (khuld) as a quality for it, and one time it is said that the people of the Paradise are perpetual (khalidun). This is for stating this fact that both Paradise and its inhabitants are everlasting.

2. The sentence:

“For them there will be therein whatever they desire...”

is the opposite point of what is said about the people of the Hell in the 54th verse of Sura Saba, which says:

“And a gulf is set between them and that which they desire...”

3. Using the Qur’anic word /masir/ (the place of return) occurring after the word /jaza/ (reward), concerning the Paradise is an emphasis on what is found in the concept of /jaza’/ (reward) and all of them are the opposite point of the people of the Hell that have been mentioned in the verses before it:

“...they are cast, coupled in fetters, into a narrow place of that Fire...”

4. The sentence:

“...It is for your Lord a promise that must be fulfilled.”

refers to this matter that the believers have prayed Allah for Paradise with all its blessings.

They are seekers and Allah is sought of to provide, as we read in verse 194 of Sura ‘Al-i-‘Imran, No. 3:

“Our Lord! And give us what You have promised us through Your messengers...”

All believers ask Allah such a thing mutely, for everyone who obeys His commandment has such a mute appeal.

The angels also ask Allah such a thing for the believers; as we read in Sura Al-Mu'min, No. 40, that they say about the believers:

“Our Lord! And make them enter the Gardens of Eden which you have promised them...”¹⁶

There is another commentary here indicating that the Qur'anic word /mas'ulan/ is an emphasis on certainty of Allah's promise. It implies that this promise is so bound to be fulfilled that believers can demand it from Allah. It is like the time that we promise a person and we also know his right to have a claim.

But there is no problem that the word /mas'ulan/ includes all these meanings.

5. With the regard to the Qur'anic sentence

“For them there will be therein whatever they desire...”

some persons ask this question that if we consider the extensive meaning of this sentence, its result is that if the people of the Paradise ask the rank of prophets and Allah's friends, they will be given what they have asked; or if they want that their sinful friends and relatives to be freed from the Hell (which they deserve), they will be freed. And there are things the like of them.

Regarding a matter its answer will be made clear there will be no curtains before the eyes of the Paradise inhabitants, they (curtains) will be put away.

They perceive the truths very well and see all proportions well. Such a thought that is to ask Allah such demands does never come to their mind. This is just like the time that in this life we ask a school boy to become a professor of university, or a criminal thief to become judge of court.

Do such thoughts come to the mind of a wise person here? In the Paradise it is so. Moreover, all their demands are overshadowed by Allah's will, and they desire what Allah desires.

Some Traditions About the Paradise

1. The Prophet (S) says:

*“Everyone who dies while he believes that Allah is true, he enters Paradise.”*¹⁷

2. The Prophet (S) says;

“In the Paradise there are blessings (and favours) which no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard,

and no mind has ever imagined.”¹⁸

3. Imam Ali (as) says:

“Your price and value is nothing but the Paradise. Do not sell yourself but for the Paradise.”¹⁹

4. The Prophet (S) says:

“Only Muslim will enter the Paradise.”²⁰

Sura Al-Furqan – Verses 17-18

وَيَوْمَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَيَقُولُ أَأَنْتُمْ أَضَلَلْتُمْ عِبَادِي هَؤُلَاءِ أَمْ هُمْ
ضَلُّوا السَّبِيلَ

قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ مَا كَانَ يَنْبَغِي لَنَا أَنْ نَتَّخِذَ مِنْ دُونِكَ مِنْ أَوْلِيَاءَ وَلَكِنْ مَتَّعْتَهُمْ
وَعِبَاءَهُمْ حَتَّى نَسُوا الذِّكْرَ وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا بُورًا

17. “And (remember) the Day He will muster them and that which they worship instead of Allah, and He shall say: ‘Was it you who misled these My servants or did they themselves go astray from the way?’”

18. “They will say: ‘Glory be to You! It did not behoove us that we take any guardians besides you; but You did provide them and their fathers to enjoy until they forgot the Message and they were a people in perdition.’ ”

Pagans and their deities will be put to question in the resurrection.

Since the previous verses have talked about the fate of believers and pagans in the Hereafter and their reward and punishment, the concerned verses continue this subject in another way. The question that Allah asks pagans’ deities in the resurrection and their answer are mentioned as warning.

It says:

“And (remember) the Day He will muster them and that which they worship instead of Allah, and He shall say: ‘Was it you who misled these My servants or did they themselves go astray from the way?’”

But their answer will be as follows:

“They will say: ‘Glory be to You! It did not behoove us that we take any guardians besides you...”

Not only did we not call them to come to us, but also we confessed to Your guardianship and servitude and we did not take other man You as our deity for ourselves and for others.

The reason of their deviation was that, instead of thanking Allah for His blessings, they turned to low desires and their gratifications till they forgot the warning and, consequently they became lost folk.

The verse continues saying:

“...but You did provide them and their fathers to enjoy until they forgot the Message and they were a people in perdition’.”

Sura Al-Furqan – Verse 19

فَقَدْ كَذَّبْتُمْ بِمَا تَقُولُونَ فَمَا تَسْتَطِيعُونَ صَرْفًا وَلَا نَصْرًا وَمَنْ يَظْلِمِ مِنْكُمْ نُذِقْهُ
عَذَابًا كَبِيرًا

19. “ (Allah will say to the idolaters:) ‘So they shall indeed belie you of what you say, so you shall not be able to avert (your penalty) nor (get) help, and whoever of you be unjust, We will cause him taste a great torment.’ ”

A polytheist will be supported by no one in the Resurrection and cannot do any thing to rescue him.

Thus, in this noble verse Allah addresses polytheists:

“ (Allah will say): to the idolaters:) ‘So they shall indeed belie you of what you say...”

You said that they deviated you from the right path, but they count what you say as a lie.

And since the fact is such and they themselves committed their own deviation, therefore the verse says:

“...so you shall not be able to avert (your penalty) nor (get) help, and whoever of you be unjust, We will cause him taste a great torment.”

Undoubtedly the Qur’anic word /zulm/ (oppression) has got an extensive concept. Though the subject of the verse is polytheism, which is one of the clear extensions of oppression, yet it does not abolish the generality of the concept of the verse.

Meanwhile the purpose of ‘deities’ is whether humane deities such as Christ, or devil deities such as jinn or angels, each of which had been selected by a group of pagans for worshipping. Since they have

common sense and intellect, they can be questioned.

So, in order to complete the argument and to prove the falsehood of the statement of the polytheists, saying that these invited us to worship them, they are asked whether this speech is right, and they explicitly reject the polytheists' statement.

Some Points

1. The Motivation of Deviation from Monotheism:

Deities counted the main factor of this group of pagans' deviation as luxurious life.

They say:

".. but you did provide them and their fathers to enjoy until they forgot the Message and they were a people in perdition",

(instead of knowing blessings and thanking You for them, they have forgotten You).

Verily comfortable life is, on one hand, causing those who can not take welfare, and also their faith is weak, to feel conceited, for when they are given a lot of blessings, they get too big for their boots and forget Allah.

Even sometimes, like Pharaoh, they cry:

"I am the Lord".

On the other hand, such persons want to be as much as possible free and to face no boundary in gratification of their desires. They want that limitations and restrictions such as lawfulness, unlawfulness, legality and illegality do not prevent them from achieving their aims, thus they do not want to obey any rule or law and to accept the Resurrection and Reckoning Day.

Also now there are not many adherents of Allah's religion and prophets' teachings among rich people, this is the poor people who are willful supporters and faithful friends of religion.

Of course, there are some exceptions in each group, but the majority members of each group are as we said.

Meanwhile the above verse does not only put emphasis on their own prosperity, but also it emphasizes their ancestors' prosperity, for when a child grows up in affluence and wealth, it is natural that he mostly discriminates against others and he will not easily get rid of his interest and comfortable life.

While sticking with Allah's commands and religion programs need sacrificing, sometimes migration, even holy war and martyrdom and sometimes accepting kinds of deprivations and refusing to surrender

themselves to the enemy, which goes with temperament of rich people less, unless their personality is superior to their material life.

If one day everything is good, they thank Allah, and if it is not good, they do not get upset and unsteady. In other words, they dominate their material life and they are not its servant and slave.

2. The Qur'anic word /bur/ is derived from the word /bawar/, which originally means severity of stagnation of something. Since severity of stagnation causes corruption, this word is also applied to mean corruption and then to mean destruction. Since a land, which has no tree, flower, and plant, is in fact corrupted and dead, it is called /ba'ir/ (fallow).

Therefore, the sentence:

“...and they were a people in perdition”

refers to this matter that, because of luxurious life and forgetting Allah and Resurrection, this group has been corrupted and destructed. And, like a dried and fallow desert, the land of their heart gets empty of flowers of humane values and fruits of virtues and spiritual life.

Studying nations that are blessed with this world's goods and know nothing of Allah and other nations makes the vast meaning of this verse more clear that how they are wallowing in moral corruption, and humane virtues can no longer be found in weathered land of their entity.

Sura Al-Furqan – Verse 20

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا إِنَّهُمْ لَيَأْكُلُونَ الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشُونَ فِي الْأَسْوَاقِ
وَجَعَلْنَا بَعْضَكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ فِتْنَةً أَتَصْبِرُونَ وَكَانَ رَبُّكَ بَصِيرًا

20. “And We never sent any messengers before you but they certainly ate food and walked in the markets; and We have made some of you a trial for the others: will you bear patiently? And your Lord is Ever-Seeing.”

Occasion of Revelation

A group of commentators have said that some chiefs of polytheists came to the Prophet (S) and said:

“Oh Muhammad (S)! What do you want us to do for you? If you want to be a chief, we make you our chief, if you like money and wealth, we will give you some of our wealth.”

But when they saw that the Prophet (S) did not give up against their propositions, they started to cook up

some pretexts and said:

“What a messenger of Lord are you that eat food and walk in the market?”

They rebuked the holy Prophet (S) for eating food, because they wanted him to be an angel. They criticized him for walking in markets, for they had seen Caesars and tyrannical kings who had never gone to market, while the Prophet (S) associated with and joined people and, at the same time, he declared divine bans and orders. The pretext-seekers criticized and said:

“He wants to be our ruler, while his custom and approach is different from kings’ traditions.”

The above verse was sent down and made clear that the method of the Prophet of Islam (S) has been the same as that of the former prophets.

In the past several holy verses, one of the pretexts of the polytheists that why the Prophet of Islam (S) eats food and walks in the market was mentioned and it was answered concisely. The concerned verse turns to that matter again and answers it more explicitly and in detail. It says:

“And We never sent any messengers before you but they certainly ate food and walked in the markets; and We ave made some of you a trial for the others...”

This trail may be in this way that prophets are to be human and selected from oppressed people and this is a great test, for some people refuse to obey and take order from their fellow creature, especially one who is financially at a low level, and they are from this viewpoint at high level or older or more famous in society.

Another possibility is that its purpose is to test people generally by each other, for disabled people, the sick, and orphans are a test for those who are rich and healthy, and, on the contrary, healthy and rich people are a test for the poor and the sick. Are the members of the second group contented by Allah’s will? Do the first group shoulder the responsibility for caring the second group?

Since these two commentaries are in line with each other, it is possible that both of them are included in the extensive concept of the verse.

Then, next to this statement, all people are addressed and are asked:

“...will you bear patiently?...”

The most important pillar of victory and success in these trials is patience and resistance. Resisting unrestrained desires that prevent accepting the Truth, enduring difficulties that are faced at the time of doing duties and performing missions, and being patient with calamities and painful events, for man's life will not be empty of them.

In brief, in almost all cases it is only with the power of patience and endurance that one can succeed in

passing this great test.

In the end of the verse under discussion, as a warning, the Qur'an says:

"...And your Lord is Ever-Seeing."

Never imagine that Allah sees none of your behaviors and deeds. His knowledge operates in minute detail and nothing is hidden from Him. He sees and knows everything precisely.

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1. Nahj-ul-Balaqah, sermon 192
 2. Majma'ul-Bayan, following the verse
 3. Majma'ul-Bayan, the commentary, following the verse
 4. Sura Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 125
 5. Sura Ta-Ha, No. 20, verse 124
 6. Sura Furqan, No. 25, verse 13
 7. Sura Al-'Abraham'raf, No. 7, verse 96
 8. Sura Az-Zumar, No. 39, verse 73
 9. Sura 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, verse 162
 10. Bihar, Vol. 8, p. 261
 11. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, 39477
 12. Qurar-ul-Hikam, 10892
 13. Muhajjat-ul-Bayza, Vol. 8, p. 356
 14. Bihar, Vol. 8, p. 208, taken from Nahj-ul-Balaqah
 15. Sura 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, verse 40
 16. Sura Al-Mu'min, No. 40, verse 8
 17. Tauhid by Saduq, p. 29
 18. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, Vol. 14, p. 455
 19. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, Vol. 14, p. 645
 20. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, Vol. 1, p. 79

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