

## Prophet Ibrahim Sura An'am, verses 80-81

وَحَاجَّهُ قَوْمُهُ ۚ قَالَ أَتُحَاجُّونِي فِي اللَّهِ وَقَدْ هَدَانِ ۗ وَلَا أَخَافُ مَا تُشْرِكُونَ بِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ رَبِّي شَيْئًا ۗ وَسِعَ رَبِّي كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا ۗ أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ ۗ

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His people argued with him. He said, 'Do you argue with me about Allah, while He has guided me indeed? I do not fear what you associate Him as partners, except anything that my Lord may wish. My Lord comprehends all things in knowledge. Will you not then take heed?

وَكَيْفَ أَخَافُ مَا أَشْرَكْتُمْ وَلَا تَخَافُونَ أَنَّكُمْ أَشْرَكْتُمْ بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ عَلَيْكُمْ سُلْطَانًا ۚ فَأَيُّ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ أَحَقُّ بِالْأَمْنِ ۗ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ۗ

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How could I fear what you set up as [His] partners, when you do not fear setting up for Allah partners for which He has not sent down any authority to you? So which of the two sides has a greater right to safety, if you know?

### Commentary

The people of Prophet Ibrahim argue with him about the belief in God. They want to convince him that he is wrong to reject the idols and believe in only One God. They have always believed in that and cannot accept anything else. They are not open to reflection and change. They tell him that he is wrong to reject the idols and warn him of the anger of their gods. They try to instil fear into him and hope that their arguments will weaken his faith.

Prophet Ibrahim shows surprise that they would argue with him about something that is so clear. He starts with a question. How can they argue with him about Allah? The Prophet shows determination and firmness. He is steadfast on his belief. He has been guided by God who has granted him the Tawfiq to know Him and believe in Him. He is not intimidated by the group that is against him, despite their numbers and strength. He stands alone but stands strong against them.

Prophet Ibrahim tells them that he is not afraid of what they have associated with God. Note that he does not even say he is not afraid of their gods, rather what they have associated with God. The partners they have set up with God can be destroyed and cannot save themselves. They are not constant, rather they set and leave such as in the

case of the sun and moon. They have no control of their own and are controlled by others. Such beings cannot be God.

Prophet Ibrahim says that no-one can hurt him except with the permission of Allah. This statement tells the people that even if they plan to harm him – as they will in the near future – nothing will happen to him except what God wishes. It would have nothing to do with the idols. They cannot benefit or harm themselves, leave alone benefitting or harming others.

Knowledge of what will happen belongs only to God. His knowledge encompasses all things.

At the end of verse 80 he concludes with a question, asking them why they will not take heed. It is to stir up some thought and reason in them.

In verse 81 Prophet Ibrahim (a) continues to argue logically. He asks them another question. How do they expect him to fear their god, when they don't fear the anger of Allah (whom they did believe as the all-knowing Creator?). They are associating with Him partners for whom He has not sent any authority. The idol worshippers did believe in Allah, but believed in their gods as partners of Allah, who had authority of their own. So tell me, he says, which of the two – he or them – should be more safe?

Prophet Ibrahim uses the tactic of questioning, so the people can think and answer themselves. He does not condemn their gods. He reasons with them and wants them to think deeply about who really is right.

#### Cross reference verses

Steadfastness – 11:112, 8:45, 3:200. Du'a for steadfastness – 3:8

Questioning as a tactic of getting people to think about God – 27:60-64

Not being afraid of anyone but God – 33:39

#### Lessons:

- 1) Stay firm on your faith
- 2) Do not be intimidated into believing or doing what you know is wrong.
- 3) Argue reasonably with people
- 4) Know that nobody can harm you, except if God wills. All control belongs to God.
- 5) True Tawhid is not to be afraid of anyone but Allah.

#### Hadith on Steadfastness

In his final hours, my father embraced me to the chest and said, 'son, stand the right even if it is bitter, for if you do it you will be granted your rewards without interrogation. Imam al-Baqir (a).

<https://www.al-islam.org/ahlul-bayt-ethical-role-models-sayyid-mahdi-sadr/patience>

#### Du'a for steadfastness during the Ghaybah

<https://www.al-islam.org/mikyalul-makarim-fee-fawaaid-ad-duaa-lil-qaim-vol-2/19-steadfastness-praying-imam>

### Steadfastness of the past people

Think about the condition of people from among the believers who passed before you. What distresses and trials they were in! Were they not the most over-burdened among all the people and in the most straitened circumstances in the whole world? The Pharaohs took them as slaves. They inflicted on them the worst punishments and bitter sufferings. They continuously remained in this state of ruinous disgrace and severe subjugation. They found no method for escape and no way for protection. Till when Allah, the Glorified, noticed that they were enduring troubles in His love and bearing distresses out of fear for Him, He provided escape from the distress of trials. So, He changed their disgrace into honour and fear into safety. Consequently, they became ruling kings and conspicuous leaders and Allah's favours over them reached limits to which their own wishes had not reached.

Nahjul Balagha, Khutba#192

### Etiquettes of Arguments

A healthy argument is a good way of resolving conflict. The following are some etiquettes of arguing with others:

1) The aim of the argument is not to overpower the other person but affect his thinking. When the Almighty tells the Prophet (s) to argue with the polytheists, he mentions things they should think about.

*He who created the heavens and the earth, and sent down water from the cloud, then we cause to grow thereby beautiful gardens; it is not possible for you that you should make the trees thereof to grow. Is there a god with Allah? . . . Or who made the earth a resting place, and made in it rivers, and raised on it mountains, and placed between the two seas a barrier. Is there a god with Allah? (27:60-61)*

2) Don't say things that would offend the other party. Says the holy Qur'an:

*And do not abuse those whom they call upon besides Allah, lest exceeding the limits they should abuse Allah out of ignorance. (6:109)*

3) Acknowledge what is right so the other party does not think you are hiding and covering the truth. The Holy Qur'an says; *They ask you about intoxicants and games of chance. Say, in both of them there is a great sin and means of profit for men, and their sin is greater than their profit. (2:21)*

4) Do not return evil with evil. To be able to return evil with good shows great strength of character and can often yield surprising results. Allah says; *And not alike are the good and the evil. Repel (evil) with what is best, when lo! He between whom and you was enmity, would be as if he were a close friend. (41:34)*