



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Deriving Lessons from Qur'anic Stories

AlI 209, 2/6: April 2012/Jumadi I, 1433

Objective: The course will cover selected passages from the Holy Qur'an that discuss brief historical events which have moral and ethical lessons for believers.

Note: If there is enough interest we can continue the to more levels of this subject.

Pre-session Questions

- What does the Qur'an instructs us to do after reading about a Qur'anic story? (Ref 7:176)
- Narrate the story contained in verse 7:175
- Give 2 lessons that you learn from the above story?
- Give 2 lessons you learnt from the story of the People of the Ditch? (85: 1- 11)

Story of Bal'am Baoor (7:175 – 176)

○ Tx: -وَاتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ الَّذِي آتَيْنَاهُ آيَاتِنَا فَانْسَلَخَ مِنْهَا فَاتَّبَعَهُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْغَاوِينَ* وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنَاهُ بِهَا وَلَكِنَّهُ أَخْلَدَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ ۖ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ الْكَلْبِ إِنْ تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثْ أَوْ تَتْرُكْهُ يَلْهَثْ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا ۚ فَاقْصُصِ الْقَصَصَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

- 7:175 Relate to them an account of him to whom We gave Our signs, but he cast them off. Thereupon Satan pursued him, and he became one of the perverse. 7:176 Had We wished, We would have surely raised him by their means, but he clung to the earth and followed his [base] desires. So his parable is that of a dog: if you make for it, it lolls out its tongue, and if you let it alone, it lolls out its tongue. Such is the parable of the people who deny Our signs. So recount these narratives, so that they may reflect

From tafseer <http://quran.al-islam.org/>

- It is said that, *the account of him to whom We gave Our signs* refers to Bal'am, in the days of Fir'awn, who knew the *ism al-'azam*. Pharaoh asked him to pray for Musa's arrest. He agreed and sat on his donkey to go to a particular place to recite the Great Name for Musa's arrest, but the donkey did not move. He beat the animal to its death. Consequently he forgot the *ism*. He died as an infidel.
- It may also refer to others during the Prophet's time.
- Imam al-Baqir (a): Though it relates to Bal'am, but Allah intends to set an example for those who receive true guidance from Allah, yet prefer to act according to their own desires (مثلا لكل مؤثر هواه على هدى الله)

People of the Garden – 1: verses 68: 17 -20

○ إِنَّا بَلَوْنَاهُمْ كَمَا بَلَوْنَا أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ إِذْ أَقْسَمُوا لَيَصْرِمُنَّهَا
مُصْبِحِينَ * وَلَا يَسْتَشْنُونَ * فَطَافَ عَلَيْهَا طَائِفٌ مِّن رَّبِّكَ
وَهُمْ نَائِمُونَ * فَأَصْبَحَتْ كَالصَّرِيمِ *

- 68:17 Indeed We have tested them just as We tested the People of the Garden when they vowed they would gather its fruit at dawn, 68:18 and they did not make any exception. 68:19 Then a visitation from your Lord visited it while they were asleep. 68:20 So by the dawn it was like a harvested field.

Reflections on verses 68: 17 -20

- Story well-known at the time (*as we treated . . .*)
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- Background to the event & its location
 - Allah tested/tried them (*indeed we have tested*)
 - How often we plan with certainty, but . . .
 - Saying of *inshaa Allah* (ref verse 18: 23 -24)
 - Proverb: Man proposes, God disposes!
 - The visitation/affliction from your Lord
 - Function of *rabb* – provide but also deprive
 - Garden was destroyed *while they were sleep*
 - By dawn/morning it was like *sareem*
 - Meanings of صَرِيم = fruitless, black ashes, etc.

People of the Garden -2: verses 68: 21- 25

○ فَتَنَادَوْا مُصْبِحِينَ * أَنْ اغْدُوا عَلَى حَرْثِكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَارِمِينَ
* فَانْطَلَقُوا وَهُمْ يَتَخَفَتُونَ * أَنْ لَا يَدْخُلَنَّهَا الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكُمْ
مِسْكِينَ * وَغَدُوا عَلَى حَرْدٍ قَادِرِينَ *

- 68:21 At dawn they called out to one another,
68:22 ‘Get off early to your field if you have to
gather [the fruits].’ 68:23 So off they went,
murmuring to one another: 68:24 ‘Today no
needy man shall come to you in it.’ 68:25 They
set out early morning, [considering themselves]
able to grudge.

Reflections on verses 68: 21- 25

- Syndication: *they called out to one another*
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- Its good to unite in doing good, but not evil
 - They began the day in evil: *Get off early*
 - Imam al-Sajjad on how to begin a day: O Allah!
Make the first part of this day of mine righteousness, the middle of it prosperity, and its end success (اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْ أَوَّلَ يَوْمِي
هَذَا صَلاَحًا، وَأَوْسَطَهُ فَلَاحًا، وَآخِرَهُ نَجَاحًا)
 - Continued with the plan: *murmuring to one another*
 - At all expense no poor shall enter the garden!
 - The needy had expectations, like past.
 - How sure they were of their ability: *qadirin*

People of the Garden -3: verses 68: 26 - 30

○ فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهَا قَالُوا إِنَّا لَضَالُّونَ * بَلْ نَحْنُ مَحْرُومُونَ * قَالَ
أَوْسَطُهُمْ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكُمْ لَوْلَا تُسَبِّحُونَ * قَالُوا سُبْحَانَ رَبِّنَا إِنَّا
كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ * فَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ يَتَلَوْمُونَ

- 68:26 But when they saw it, they said, ‘We have indeed lost our way!’ 68:27 ‘No, we are deprived!’ 68:28 The most moderate among them said, ‘Did I not tell you, “Why do you not glorify [God]?” ’ 68:29 They said, ‘Immaculate is our Lord! We have indeed been wrongdoers!’ 68:30 Then they turned to one another, blaming each other.

Reflections verses 68:26 -30

- First reaction to affliction: It's impossible!
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- When realization sets in: deprivation is real
 - The *most moderate* is the one who balances life
 - Muslims are a Moderation Nation (2:143)
 - Hadith: Best path is the path of moderation
 - Listen to a dissenting voice, do not stifle it.
 - Role of *tasbeeh* in our life
 - People of Garden were believers in Allah
 - Human nature of blaming others, not self
 - Story: Abu Sufyan in a masjid, blaming his slave

People of the Garden – 4 verses 68:31-33

○ :قَالُوا يَا وَيْلَنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا طَاغِينَ * عَسَىٰ رَبُّنَا أَنْ يُبَدِّلَنَا خَيْرًا
مِنْهَا إِنَّا إِلَىٰ رَبِّنَا رَاغِبُونَ * كَذَلِكَ الْعَذَابُ ۖ وَلَعَذَابُ
الْآخِرَةِ أَكْبَرُ ۖ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ *

- 68:31 They said, ‘Woe to us! Indeed we have been rebellious. 68:32 Maybe our Lord will give us a better one in its place. Indeed we turn earnestly to our Lord.’ 68:33 Such was the punishment; and the punishment of the Hereafter is surely greater, had they known.

Reflections verses 68: 31 -33

- Realization sets in: self rapprochement!
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- Let us learn from Islamic wisdom instead thru bitter experience, or Try & Error process.
 - Despite affliction, never despair from Allah
 - Allah's blessing is proportional to belief & piety
 - Refer to verse 7:96
 - Al-Baqir (a): **إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيَذْنِبُ الذَّنْبَ فَيَذَرُ عَنْهُ الرِّزْقَ** – Man at times commits sins, so he is deprived of provision
 - Ibn 'Abbas: cutting off provision is directly related to committing sins, for Allah mentions this in surat Qalam.

Related Ayat & Hadiths on the story

- *Eats of its fruits when it fructifies, and give its due on the day of harvest, and do not be wasteful (6:141)*
- *The prayerful . . . in whose wealth there is share for the beggar and the deprived (70: 22, 24, 25).*
- *And whoever is stingy is stingy only to himself (47:38)*
- *Imam Ali: Miserliness is [a source of] shame (البخل عار)*
- *Al-Hadi (a): Miserliness is most blameworthy trait.*
- *Imam Ali: the greedy is far from Allah, far from people and close to Hellfire*
- *Holy Prophet (s): Generosity is the greatest of Divine characteristics.*

References for this other sessions

- *Enlightening Commentary on the Light of the Qur'an*, Isfahan; www.maaref-foundation.com
- Brief commentary of the Qur'an by Agha M Mahdi Puya www.al-islam.org/quran
- S M Suhufi, *Stories from the Qur'an*
- *Atlas of the Quran* (Sunni source that contains good maps where the events took place) at www.kalamullah.com/atlas-of-the-quran.html