

Sura Sad, Verse 26

يَا دَاوُودُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكَ خَلِيفَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوَىٰ فَيُضِلَّكَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَظِلُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ بِمَا نَسُوا يَوْمَ الْحِسَابِ

O Dawood ! Surely We have made you a ruler in the land; so judge between people with justice and do not follow the desire lest it leads you astray from the path of Allah; those who go astray from the path of Allah shall surely have a severe punishment because they forgot the day of accounting.

Reflections

- What is an important duty of the ruler according to this verse?
- Following desires stops one from being just. It also leads a person away from the path of Allah.
- Remembering the day of accounting or the day of judgement prevents a person from going astray. What are some simple and practical ways to remember that day often? (Duas of wudhu . . .)
- what type of punishment awaits such people? Physical punishment and spiritual punishment (regret, not gaining the pleasure of Allah, not being with His loved ones . . .)

Tafsir

At the end of the story of Nabi Dawood and the two brothers, Allah addresses Nabi Dawood and tells him of the high position he has and the responsibility that comes with such a position. Every status and position carries with it some responsibilities. In fact, any blessing that comes from Allah also has responsibilities in the way the blessing should be utilized.

This verse can be broken down into five parts;

- a) Nabi Dawood is being told he has been made a Khalifa on earth. This is similar to verse 2:30 where the human being is introduced to the angels as a Khalifa of God on earth. Nabi Dawood is a special Khalifa - a representative who will rule and establish a government on earth

that will function according to God's laws. The verse shows that kingship or leadership is for the sake of God and has to be done according to His way.

- b) Then Nabi Dawood is told to judge fairly between people. Fairness or Justice is the foundation of leadership, and is an essential quality of the representative of Allah. Fairness should be practised even if it against the self, or against family or friends. Favouring one person over the other is wrong and cannot be part of good judgement.
- c) The third part of the verse brings up the biggest danger to fairness. The desires of a human being, selfish desires, desire to please others, etc. form a veil over the eyes and prevent correct perception. They are a barrier between the person and good judgement. Unless a person is able to control desires and have self discipline, it can be difficult to be fair.
- d) Following the desire leads a person away from the path of God. Whenever people go astray it is because of following desires rather than doing what God wants.
- e) When people are astray they forget that they are accountable to God and that there will be a day when they will have to answer for their deeds. They lose all sense of responsibility and do only what their desires tell them to do.

Relevant Verses

Following desires 6:56, 20:16, 23:71

Hadith

O people, the two things I fear most for you is following of desires and extended hopes. Following desires will keep you away from the truth and extended hopes will make you forget the Hereafter.

Holy Prophet (s)

Important Lessons

- 1) Human beings are the representatives of Allah and must work on earth for Him.
- 2) Any position carries with it responsibilities.
- 3) Justice and fairness to others is the foundation of good leadership.
- 4) Following desires makes a person go astray. (Practical for daily life - do not listen to your desire which tells you to do wrong)
- 5) A result of going astray is forgetting the Hereafter. It is not enough to believe in the Hereafter, we must remember it often.

Story

The Story of Umar Ibn Sa'ad - desire for governorship leads him astray

Umar Ibn Sa'ad was among the pillars of Yazid's kingdom and was the commander of the army against Imam Husayn in Karbala. He was prompted by the greed of Kingdom of Raiy, preferred worldly gains over the hereafter. Ibne Ziyad told him that if he would go against Imam Husayn he will be made a ruler of Raiy.

Ubaidullah Bin Ziyad gifted Raiy to Umar Ibn Sa'ad Bin Abi Waqqas and instructed him to begin preparations for fighting Imam Husayn. Ibne Sa'ad wrote back apologizing and asking him to absolve him. When Ibne Ziyad was not convinced, Umar Ibne Sa'ad asked for at least a day's respite. He was given respite. For the whole night he pondered over the proposition. At the outset of dawn he went to Ibne Ziyad and expressed his agreement and left to fight Husain Ibne Ali. It was the greed for the governorship of the city of Raiy that made him agree to such an action. He knew it was wrong but his desires got the better of him.

Possible Ideas for activities

- 1) Who is a Khalifa? Discuss or act out how people represent someone. What do they do, how do they act? What are the expectations from a Khalifa? List down the good and bad qualities of one who is a Khalifa.
- 2) Explore the idea of following desires and how it prevents from the truth. Make up scenes - write them on poster paper for kids to complete, or act them out, or make a small booklet, cards etc. - to show occasions when desires stop a person from following what is right. Use simple everyday examples; eating outside with friends, an invitation to watch an inappropriate film, waking up for namaz, not making time for Quran recitation duas etc. What is the desire that becomes a barrier? How can a believer counter such desires?
- 3) Remembering the Day of Judgement - go over the dual of wudhu. Even just understanding and thinking about the philosophy behind each action of wudhu is enough to remind of the day of Judgement. The sentence 'Maliki Yawmid din' in Sura al Fatiha is also a constant daily reminder. The remembrance is not to scare us but remind us that we will answer for our deeds so we remain on track.

Sources:

Āytaullāh Nāsir Makārim Shirāzī (ed), *Tafsīr-e Namūneh*;

Aghae Muhsin Qaraati, *Tafsire Nur*

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