

Sura Sad, Verse 17

إصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَاذْكُرْ عَبْدَنَا دَاوُودَ ذَا الْأَيْدِ صَلَّىٰ إِنَّهُ أَوَّابٌ

Be patient at what they say, and remember Our servant Dawood, the man of strength; surely he often turned to Allah

Reflections

- Why is the Holy Prophet being told to be patient at what they say? What were they saying?
- The remembrance of Nabi Dawood is a source of inspiration to be patient.
- How was Nabi Dawood the man of strength?

Tafsir

Nabi Dawood was one of the great Prophets of the Banu Israel and has been praised in many verses of the Quran. After mentioning the accusations against the Holy Prophet (s) (see verses 4-8 of Sura Sad), Almighty Allah comforts the Prophet and the early Muslims by telling them to remember Nabi Dawood. All the strength and abilities that Nabi Dawood possessed were given to him by God. The enemies of Islam should know that when God supports someone the enemies can do nothing to harm him.

Note that Allah starts the story of Nabi Dawood by calling him ‘Our servant’. To be a true servant of Allah is a matter of pride and honor. He is a Prophet of God but before that he is a servant of God. When a person becomes a servant of God he has freed himself of servitude to anybody or anything else. He is then a free man in its truest sense. People are sometimes slaves to others, to their whims and desires, to fashion trends, etc. They follow others without thinking for themselves or even wanting to do it, but they do it to just fit in. This is a form of slavery. A truly free person obeys only Allah who created him.

The words *zal ayd* means a person who possesses strength or blessings. Nabi Dawood had both, a lot of strength and many blessings. His physical strength was such that as a young boy he was able to destroy Jalut, a mighty King. His spiritual strength made him a devoted worshipper of God who spent many hours of the night in worship and whose days were filled with obedience and praise of the Almighty. He had also political strength with which he ruled over his Kingdom. Thus his strength encompassed many aspects of his life.

Nabi Dawood was also blessed with many bounties. Allah made the iron soft for him. He ruled over a mighty Kingdom and had humans and Jinn serving him.

Awwab is a superlative form from the word *awaba*, meaning to turn voluntarily towards something. Nabi Dawood always turned to God, was continuously connected to Him. This was the source of his strength and success.

Relevant Verses

God made iron soft for Nabi Dawood – 34:10

God taught him to make armor used for protection – 21:78

Hadith

Imam Ali (a) talks about Nabi Dawood (a)

It is related by Nawf al-Bikali that: I saw that one night Amir al-mu'minin, peace be upon him, came out from his bed and looked at the stars, then he said to me: "O Nawf, are you awake or sleeping?" I said: "I am awake, O Amir al-mu'minin."

Then he said: O Nawf! Blessed be those who abstain from this world and are eager for the next world. They are the people who regard this earth as a floor; its dust as their bed-cloth; and its water as their perfume; they recite the Qur'an in low tones and supplicate in high tones and then they are cut off from the world like 'Isa (Jesus).

O Nawf! The prophet Dawud (David), peace be upon him, rose up at a similar hour one night and said, "This is the hour when whatever a person prays for is granted to him unless he is a tax-collector, an intelligence man, a police officer, a lute player or a drummer.

From Nahjul Balagha, Hadith no.104

Important Lessons

- 1) Leadership or even just following the right path often brings down condemnation from others.
- 2) It is necessary to be patient at the hurtful words of others.
- 3) Patience comes through being inspired by the examples of others.
- 4) To be an *abd* (servant) of Allah is a source of honor
- 5) Turning to Allah is the source of strength and success.

Story

Before Dawood (alayhis salam) became king, Talut (Saul) was the king of Israel. When he set out with his army to fight Jalut (Goliath) and his forces, he tested his soldiers by telling them not to drink from a river which they were crossing. Only a small sip of water out of the hand was

allowed. But only a very few men passed the test. With that small band of obedient soldiers, Talut prepared to meet the larger and stronger army of Jalut. The men put their faith in Allah, knowing that size and numbers were no match for a steadfast faith in the power of Allah. Dawood , who was a very young man in Talut's army, killed Jalut. After that, Jalut's army fell apart, and the small band of Israelites was victorious.

Possible Ideas for activities

- make a chart showing some of the major Prophets in the order they came. Check: <http://islamickids.tripod.com/id105.htm>

<http://www.qul.org.au/library/our-messengers/1-25-prophets-of-islam>

<http://www.rahmahmuslimhomeschool.co.uk/index/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/25-prophets.pdf>

Sources:

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

Aghae Muhsin Qaraati, *Tafsire Nur*