

Quran Appreciation - Winter Term (Jan-Mar 2018)

The Story of Nabi Isa (a)

Du'a of Nabi Isa

Verses for the session

قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَا أَنْزِلْ عَلَيْنَا مَائِدَةً مِنَ السَّمَاءِ تَكُونُ لَنَا عِيدًا لِأَوَّلِنَا
وَأَخْرِنَا وَآيَةً مِنْكَ ۖ وَارْزُقْنَا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ

Isa the son of Maryam said: O Allah, our Lord! send down to us food from heaven which would be a cause of celebration for us, for the first from us and the last from us, and a sign from You, and provide for us for You are the best of the Providers.

قَالَ اللَّهُ إِنِّي مُنَزِّلُهَا عَلَيْكُمْ ۖ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بَعْدُ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنِّي أُعَذِّبُهُ عَذَابًا لَا أُعَذِّبُهُ
أَحَدًا مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ

Allah said: Surely I will send it down to you but whoever disbelieves after that from among you I will punish him with a penalty with which I will not punish anyone among the nations.

(Sura Maidah, verse 114-115)

Reflections

- Nabi Isa starts the du'a with 'Alahumma rabbana'. Usually du'as start with only one of these words (using both addresses shows the seriousness of what he was going to ask for)
- What does Nabi Isa ask for?
- What reasons does he give for his du'a?
- Why does he say it would be an 'Eid' for them?

Cross Reference verses

Du'a of Nabi Ibrahim - 2:128 (similar etiquette of du'a, asking for spiritual benefits)

Du'a of Nabi Shuayb - 7:89

Tafsir

Nabi Isa conveys the request of his people to Allah but he does it in an appropriate manner. He uses good language and gives reasons why his people would benefit from it. He does not talk about the food as physical eating but as spiritual food that will feed the souls of the people.

Allah accepts the du'a but says that after it the responsibility of the people would increase. They would have received a clear miracle and that would be a proof for them. There could be no excuse after that to disbelieve. Aynul Yaqin - seeing something with your own eyes has a very different responsibility from Ilmul Yaqin (see previous notes). This new stage of faith has no place for any doubts or whisperings of Shaytan (waswas). Any disobedience or heedlessness would be very serious. Thus we see that the higher the level of faith and knowledge the more the responsibility in the eyes of Allah.

There is no mention in the Quran regarding what is meant by the table that was sent down. But according to a Hadith of Imam Baqir (a) it was bread and fish that was sent down from Heaven for the people.

The word Eid comes from the word 'awd' (عود) meaning to return. When a difficult time is averted from a people and they return to their original state of comfort and peace it is known as an Eid for them. The Islamic Eids such as Eid ul Fitr and Eid ul Adha are occasions when people return to purity and spiritual cleanliness which was their original state. They remove the dirt from the heart and soul that had accumulated. Because witnessing the table from Heaven would make the Hawariyyun return to their original state of conviction, faith, purity . . . etc. Nabi Isa says it would be an Eid for them.

Note the beginning and ending of the du'a. Both show recognition of the greatness of Allah and address Him with respect and submission.

Hadith

Everyday in which you do not disobey Allah in it is an Eid for you.

Imam Ali (a)

Nahjul Balagha, H#428

Important Lessons

1) Talk to Allah in an appropriate manner.

- 2) What Allah sends down (revelation, Divine leaders to guide us . . .) is food for the soul and a cause of return to purity. That is to be celebrated.
- 3) Eid is a time for happiness because it signifies a return to purity.
- 4) Knowledge and faith carry responsibility.

Ideas

- 1) Discuss in detail one concept from this lesson ; Etiquette of Du'a, Eid, Responsibility . . . and do an activity around that.
- 2) Let children write about the possible reaction of the Hawariyyun to the food from Heaven. They could illustrate their writing and/or act it out.

Sources:

Tafsir Namune, Ayt. Nasir Makarim Shirazi

Tafsire Nur, Aghae Muhsin Qara'ati