

Quran Appreciation - Spring Term (Apr-May 2018) The Disciples of Nabi Isa (a)

Helpers of Allah

Verse for the session

فَلَمَّا أَحَسَّ عِيسَىٰ مِنْهُمُ الْكُفْرَ قَالَ مَنْ أَنْصَارِي إِلَى اللَّهِ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ نَحْنُ
أَنْصَارُ اللَّهِ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَأَشْهَدُ بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ

But when Isa sensed unbelief on their part, he said Who will be my helpers in Allah's way? The Disciples said, 'We will be helpers of Allah. We have faith in Allah, and you be witness that we have submitted to Him.

(Sura Aale Imran, no.3, verse 52)

Reflections

- Who are the people having the disbelief mentioned here?
- What does this verse tell us about the Hawariyyun?
- How can a person be a helper of Allah?

Cross reference verses

Nabi Isa and the Hawariyyun, 61:14

Tafsir

The people after Nabi Musa had been waiting for a Messenger to come. They knew that God would send a Messenger for the people. But when Nabi Isa came and preached against some of the things they were doing, many people rejected him. Those who had thought following a new Messenger would bring status and position now realized that it would not, and they did not want to follow him. Only a small group of people accepted his message and followed his path.

When Nabi Isa saw that most of the people disbelieved, he wanted to distinguish between them and those who believed. He asked them who from among them would be his helpers. Only a small group of people answered positively and accepted to be from his helpers in the way of Allah. These were a special and pure group of people who the Quran calls Hawariyyun.

The Hawariyyun accepted being helpers of Allah. They also reaffirmed their belief and asked Nabi Isa to bear witness that they were from those who submit. It is interesting to note that the hawariyyun did not say they were Nabi Isa's helpers, but rather Allah's helpers. This is to show that their intention was purely the pleasure of Allah. It is to negate any form of polytheism and attribution of Divinity to Nabi Isa that would come up later.

They declared their submission. They were Muslims in a sense for the word Islam means submission to Allah and anyone who submits to the true path of Allah is a Muslim. At that time the true path was the one taught by Nabi Isa.

Being Helpers of Allah

Does Allah need helpers? Allah does not need helpers, but to be His helpers means to help His religion. It means to spread His word and make people aware of Him. It is a great honor for a believer to be the helper of Allah. In the present time, when the Imam of our time, Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi (a) is in ghaybat (occultation) believers should prepare themselves to be his helpers. In duas we often ask Allah to make us from the helpers of the Imam. For example in the daily Ziyarat of the Imam found in Mafatihul Jinan, after sending salaams on the Imam, we say; *O Allah . . . place me among his helpers, his followers, and his defenders.*

To be a helper of Imam does not mean that we wait until he reappears in this world. It means we start working from now, and prepare ourselves and the world around us to receive him. We need to instil certain qualities within us, live lives based on those qualities and encourage others to do so too. This is true Intidhar (waiting for the Imam). The helpers of Allah help make the world ready to welcome the Imam when he comes. This is done by spreading the word of God. But it really starts with the individual. When a believer improves himself, and acquires certain good qualities, it is the beginning step of changing the world. You start with yourself, and then others. If all believers did this the world be ready for the Imam.

Important Lessons

- 1) A leader distinguishes between those who support him and those who don't. The group that does is then nurtured specifically.
- 2) True faith in Allah makes you want to help His religion.
- 3) Faith and submission go together. You cannot have true faith in Allah and then reject His laws.

Hadith

Once the Hawariyyun asked Nabi Isa ‘O Messenger of Allah, whose company should we keep?’ He replied; ‘The one whose outward aspect reminds you of Allah, whose speech increases your knowledge and actions make you desirous of the Hereafter.’

Ideas

- 1) Brainstorm the qualities of the Hawariyyun. Children can make a drawing or poster of the necessary qualities of a helper of Allah.
- 2) Choose a theme - 12th Imam’s helpers, or friendship (in the Hadith above), submission . . . Have a discussion and activity on that theme.

Sources

Ayt. Nasir Makarim Shirazi, *Tafsir Namune*,

Shaykh Rizwan Arastu, *God’s Emissaries: From Adam to Jesus*