

Sūrat al-Qalam
Verses 30-32

فَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ يَتَلَامُونَ

Q68:30 - Then they turned to one another, blaming each other.

قَالُوا يَا وَيْلَنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا طَاغِينَ

Q68:31 - They said, ‘Woe to us! Indeed, we have been rebellious

عَسَىٰ رَبُّنَا أَنْ يُبَدِّلَنَا خَيْرًا مِّنْهَا إِنَّا إِلَىٰ رَبِّنَا رَاغِبُونَ

Q68:32- Maybe our Lord will give us a better one in its place. Indeed, we earnestly beseech our Lord.

Questions for Reflection

- 1) Why did the brothers blame one another? What could they have said to each other?
- 2) What are the steps of realization seen in these verses? (acceptance of wrong done, hope in Allah)

Commentary

When the brothers realized what had happened they each felt guilty but did not want to accept the fault as theirs. They turned to each other and blamed one another, shifting the wrong that was done to others’ shoulders. There was anger, frustration, shame etc. and they tried to hide or cope with these feelings by blaming others. This is often the case with wrongdoers. When they are faced with the consequence of their actions, they quickly move away and find someone else to blame. A pure heart and clear conscience would accept the wrong done and repent. But when the heart is hardened and covered with veils, it does not get the tawfiq to acknowledge the mistake and make amends for it.

It is possible that in this group, one of the brothers may have initially suggested how they could deprive the poor. Other brothers may have agreed to it. Maybe some planned it. Maybe one or two were not in favor but did not say anything. Or perhaps they protested but did not insist, and still went along with what was decided. All this is co-operating in wrong, and everyone is guilty.

Then as they thought more about it, their dejection increased. Now they knew everything was gone, and it was their own fault. They call themselves ‘Taghin’ – rebellious. Note that in verse 29 they referred to themselves as ‘Zalimin’ – unjust. Taghin is a higher stage of wrong doing and oppression, both to the self and to others. A zalim is one who understands and accepts the rules but is overcome with his desires. A Taghi is one who completely rejects the rules, does not even

accept them in the first place. A Taghi has gone to extremes in doing wrong. The words ‘woe be to us’ was a cultural phrase that the Arabs used when they were faced with tragedies.

Then the brothers turned back to Allah, placing their hope in Him although they had displeased Him. They had faith that He would give them even better than what they had. Tafsir asks if these people were truly repentant and would not repeat what they had done before, or was it just shallow repentance because they had lost their garden? There are some hadith that say the brothers did get another garden later on which was even better than the one they had lost. God forgave them and accepted their repentance.

Connecting verses

- 1) Co-operation in actions – 5:2 (last part of the verse)
- 2) Hope in Allah – the magicians in the court of Fir‘awn – 26:51

Connecting Topics

- 1) Blaming others

<https://www.academyofislam.com/reflection-no-710-on-q-1422-blaming-others/>

- 2) Co-operation

<https://www.academyofislam.com/reflection-no-416-on-q-52-co-operation-in-goodness/>

- 3) Hope in Allah

<https://www.al-islam.org/ahlul-bayt-ethical-role-models-sayyid-mahdi-sadr/hope-god>