

66) Turning to Allah ﷻ

أَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ يَقْبَلُ التَّوْبَةَ عَنْ عِبَادِهِ

Alam ya'lamū anna'l-lāha huwa
yaqbalu'ttawbata 'an 'ibādih
*Do they not know that it is Allah who accepts
repentance of His servants?*
(Sūrat al-Tawba, No.9, Āyat 104)

Almighty Allah asks a question to human beings in this verse. Do they not know that it is He alone who accepts the repentance of His creatures? They do not need to go to anyone else. This verse is an encouragement to turn back to Allah ﷻ after being away from Him because of disobedience, negligence, or distractions.

The word tawba means return or turning back to Allah. It can be described as a return to purity of the soul after it has become polluted through sin and distancing itself from the Mercy of Allah. It is also a return from the domain of the physical to the domain of spiritual and primordial nature (*fitrah*).

Every turning back of the human being to Allah is wrapped up in two other turnings: the turning of Allah towards the human being to enable him/her to turn to Him, and then the turning of Allah towards the human being again after he turns to Him to accept him. You could formulate the process in the following way:

- 1) Allah ﷻ turns towards a human being and gives *tafīq* for *tawba*. This is the turning of Allah to His mercy and grace for the human being.
- 2) The human being does tawba. This is the turning of the human being away from sin towards Allah ﷻ.
- 3) Allah ﷻ turns towards him to accept the *tawba*. This is the turning of Allah to acceptance.

68) Awe of Allah ﷻ

مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَرْجُونَ لِلَّهِ وَقَارًا

mā lakum lā tarjūna lillāhi waqāra
*What is the matter with you that you are not in awe of
the Majesty of Allah?*
(Sūrat Nūh No.71, Āyat 13)

Prophet Nūh عليه السلام draws the attention of his people to the reason for their polytheism by asking them a question - why do they not look upon Allah ﷻ with veneration and have hope in His greatness? If they realized that Allah is all-Powerful and was in charge of the affairs of the world, they would not turn to other gods. They accepted that Allah ﷻ is the Creator but believed that other forces looked after them after the act of creation. This was the foundation of their polytheism.

In understanding this verse two words are important:

Tarjūna comes from the word *rajā*, to hope. It is the opposite of *khawf*, to fear. *Rajā* means to have hope about something that will be pleasing to the self while *khawf* is the fear about something that will be painful for the self. Hope is most necessary for a human being to move forward. Without hope it is very difficult to act. Imam Ali عليه السلام says: *The most severe of afflictions is the cutting of hopes*. A believer has strong hope in Allah, balanced with fear. This hope is not just an assumption, but a conviction based on an understanding of His power. There is hope that one who has such power will look after us.

Waqāra means dignity and grandeur. Here it denotes the realization of the Omnipotent greatness and power of Allah. This understanding leads the human being to worship and submit to Allah ﷻ.

According to *Tafsīr al-Mizān* the question asked here is what has made you unaware of the greatness of Allah and His Lordship

73) The Prophet ﷺ – An excellent Example

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ

Laqad kāna lakum fī rashūlillāhi uswatun hasanah

Surely in the Messenger of Allah there is an excellent example for you

(Sūrat al-Ahzāb, No. 33, Āyat 21)

This verse tells believers that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is a role model for them. His way of doing things, or his Sunnah, should be followed by those who wish to please God and attain success in the world and the Hereafter.

The Sunnah of the Prophet are his word, his actions, and even his silence when something took place in his presence. According to the *Kalimah* that we recite, we believe there is no god but Allah and that the Prophet Muhammad is His messenger through whom God revealed His message and guidance for human beings. Believing in the message the Prophet brought is part of the creed of a believer. Following the Sunnah of the Prophet is obedience to that creed.

Imam Ali عليه السلام says in *Nahjul Balāgha*: *Tread the course of the Prophet for it is the most distinguished course. Follow the Sunnah of the Prophet for it is the most right of all behaviors.* The Sunnah of the Prophet is a practical example for believers on how to lead life. All his actions are examples for us, exemplary ways to attain nobility and perfection on earth. That is why Allah says in the Quran, *whoever follows Allah and His Messenger has won a mighty victory* (Q 33:71).

In one Hadith the Holy Prophet ﷺ tells us how much he likes some actions and he would prefer them to be a Sunnah for all times to come. He says: *Five [habits] I will*

79) Night of Hijrah

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ

وَاللَّهُ رَءُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ

Wa-minan-nāsi man yashrī nafsahub-tighā'a mardhātil-llāhi; wallāhu ra'ūfun bil'ibād

And among the people is he who sells his soul seeking the pleasure of Allah, and Allah is most kind to [His] servants.

(Sūrat al-Baqarah, No.2, Āyat 207)

In this verse Almighty God talks about a people who trade with Him. They are ready to sell all they have – even their life – in return for the pleasure of Allah ﷻ. To them, that is the most precious commodity worth all they must give in exchange.

All Shi'ī Mufasssirūn and some Sunni exegetes (e.g. Tha'labī in *al-Kash walbayān*) narrate the cause of revelation of this verse as the night of Hijrah. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ decided to leave for Makkah he asked Imam Ali عليه السلام to sleep on his bed and use the cloak of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to cover himself. Thus, the enemies who were waiting outside would not notice anything amiss. The night is called *Laylah al-Mabūt* (night of the sleeping). According to *Bihar al-Anwār* of 'Allāmah Majlisī, Imam Ali عليه السلام said: will you be safe by my sleeping there? The Prophet ﷺ said: yes. Imam Ali عليه السلام smiled and bowed down to perform *sajda* of *shukr* (gratitude) out of happiness, then said: Go as you are ordered, may my ears, eyes, and my very heart be sacrificed for you, order me as you wish, I am like your assistant, I will do it as you want, and my success is only by Allah.

The verse also refers generally to those who trade with Allah ﷻ. Note that in this trade the seller is man and the buyer is God. The goods being sold is the life of the human being which actually belongs to God Himself. Yet He buys it from the human being granting him His pleasure in return.