

Sūrat al-Baqarah Verse 251

فَهَزَمُوهُمْ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَقَتَلَ دَاوُودُ جَالُوتَ وَآتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَهُ مِمَّا
يَشَاءُ ۗ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَفَسَدَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى
الْعَالَمِينَ

2:251 - Thus they put them to flight with Allah's will, and Dawood killed Jalut, and Allah gave him kingdom and wisdom and taught him whatever He liked. Were it not for Allah's repelling the people by means of one another, the earth would surely have been corrupted; but Allah is gracious to the worlds.

Questions for Reflection

- 1) How is the victory described? (by the permission of Allah)
- 2) What were the blessings given to Prophet Dawood (a)?
- 3) How does Allah repel people through each other? Why would the earth get corrupted otherwise? (it would spread widely and become the norm in society)

Commentary

When a group puts their trust in Allah, He sees them through difficulty and grants them victory. Almighty Allah was with the people who persevered and stayed with Talut to face the army of Jalut. It was through His help and will for them to succeed that they became victorious. Believers always know that when they succeed in any way, it is Allah who allows it to happen. They are grateful for that grace bestowed upon them.

The word 'hazamuhum' refers to defeating them and causing them to retreat. Some translators have translated it as 'routed them'.

Dawood was a young man in the army of Talut who was small in size but very brave. He killed Jalut, the man everyone was afraid of. The verse does not give details of how he killed him. The following is a description extracted (adapted) from the story in Hayat al-Qulub by Allama Majlisi:

'Dawood was short in stature. . . his soul was quite pure and his character clean. Dawood reached when both armies had come face to face and everyone had taken up his position. Dawood picked up a stone on the way and put it in the bag in which he was putting other stones to be flung with his sling while grazing his sheep.

When he entered the army of the Israelites he came to know that Jalut was a big challenge for them. So he said, "Why do you consider him so great? By Allah, if I see him I will kill him at once." His word reached the army until Jalut too heard it. He called Dawood and told him, "O Young man! How much strength have you and how much experience of war do you have that you dare fight with Jalut?" Dawood replied, "Once a tiger pounced upon my herd of sheep and began to walk away with one of my sheep. I followed that tiger and made him release my sheep from his mouth." Allah had informed Talut through revelation that the man on whose body your armor will fit exactly will kill Jalut. Talut called for his armor and gave it to Dawood to wear. He wore it and despite being quite thin physically it fitted him perfectly. Then Talut and the Israelites realized his status. Talut said, I hope this young

man will kill Jalut. Next day when both the armies prepared for confrontation Dawood asked Talut to show him who was Jalut. People showed him Jalut. Dawud took out from his bag the stone that he had picked up from the path, put it in his sling and flung it toward Jalut. It hit him on the forehead. He fell down from his horse and a word spread in the army that Dawood killed Jalut. People made him (Dawood) their king.’

The army fled when they saw their leader had fallen. This is how Allah granted victory to the army of Talut. Then Allah gave Dawood (a) kingdom and prophethood and taught him what he would need to rule and guide the people. This includes skills such as making armor, reciting beautifully, judging wisely etc. These were the outstanding characteristics of Prophet Dawood (a).

The verse then makes an important statement – people spread corruption on earth. But Allah selects a group of people who will counter that corruption. There will always be Allah’s group on earth that will fight – in different ways – the corruption that others spread. He will help them to do it, and that is from the grace of Allah on His servants. Thus, the light of good and virtue will never be completely eliminated.

The Prophet (s) once said; Due to the presence of one virtuous servant of Allah, Allah repels calamity from thousands of his neighbouring homes. He then recited this part of the verse - Were it not for Allah’s repelling the people by means of one another, the earth would surely have been corrupted; but Allah is gracious to the worlds. (source of hadith – Tafsir Durrul Manthur, as quoted in Tafsir Nur)

Some Lessons

- 1) Size or numbers do not matter when Allah wants to give victory.
- 2) When Allah gives you a position or role He grants you the skills you need to perform well.
- 3) Corruption on earth is repelled by virtuous people. (Brainstorm ways in which we can repel corruption)

Connecting verses

- 1) God’s help and grace for the believers; 61:13
- 2) Destruction of falsehood; 17:81
- 3) Wisdom as a reward; 4:54, 38:20

Connecting Topics

- 1) Importance of wisdom
- <https://en.shafaqna.com/10971/the-importance-of-wisdom/>
- <https://www.al-islam.org/imam-ali-s-first-treatise-islamic-ethics-education-qorbani-lahiji/8-illuminate-your-heart-wisdom>

An interesting story from the life of Prophet Dawood (a), as quoted in the book *God’s Emissaries; Adam to Jesus*, by Sh. R. Arastu

A frog teaches him

Once when Prophet Dawood had finished reciting the psalms, Allah sent a small frog to him to remind him to be humble despite his beautiful voice and his accompaniment by the chorus of birds and mountains. The frog asked the Prophet if he was pleased with his worship that day. The Prophet said he was. The frog then said; ‘Do not be too pleased for each night I and my kind exalt God a thousand times, and each exaltation is followed by three praises. [could be that exalting is

subhanallah and praise is al hamdulillah]. We do this from our watery abode. Then when we hear the screech of a bird flying overhead, and we perceive the hunger in his voice, we jump and display ourselves in full view of the bird, so it may eat us.' The frog wanted to show the Prophet that his exaltations were fewer in number than theirs and required no great sacrifice the way theirs did.