

Sūrat al-Hud Verse 88

قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِن كُنتُ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّي وَرَزَقَنِي مِنْهُ رِزْقًا حَسَنًا ۖ وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ أُخَالِفَكُمْ إِلَىٰ مَا أَنهَآكُمْ عَنْهُ ۖ إِن أُرِيدُ إِلَّا الْإِصْلَاحَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ ۖ وَمَا تَوْفِيقِي إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ ۗ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أَنِيبُ

11:88 - He said, ‘O my people! Have you considered, if I stand on a manifest proof from my Lord who has provided me a good provision from Himself? I do not wish to oppose you by what I forbid you. I only desire to put things in order, as far as I can. My success lies only with Allah, in Him I rely and to Him I turn.

Questions for Reflection

- 1) In this verse the Prophet asks the people to think about one thing, reassures them about two things, and proclaims his relationship with Allah through three things. What are these? (1-what if he is correct and has proof from Allah? 2- he does not oppose them and then do what he tells them not to, he only wants order and correct way of doing things. 3- his success is from Allah, he relies on Him, and he turns to Him).
- 2) What are some good leadership attitudes that these words reflect?
- 3) What do these words ‘as far as I can’ tell you about the Prophet?

Commentary

The Prophet answers the people’s objections at what they felt he was doing to curb their freedom. He explains what the objective of his mission is. He was not doing it out of personal desire, enmity, jealousy, narrow mindedness etc. He is very clear that his only motive is to improve things in their lives to take them towards Allah. His success in the mission will also come from Allah, as He is in charge of the outcome of things.

He asks them to think if they would still reject him knowing that he has proof from Allah. He is referring to miracles, a proof and hujjah that all Prophets are given. A miracle is described as an act which people are unable to do and Allah shows it on the hands of a prophet or Imam to prove the prophethood of that Nabi or Imam of that Imam. An interpretation of the rizq in this verse is that it refers to the revelation that was sent to him, spiritual provision that was given to him, so he could pass it on to the people. He was asking them to think about that and ask themselves if they would still think he was wrong to try and guide them. Was it just that he was trying to establish authority over them? Such conclusions would be illogical if they accepted that he had proof he was sent by Allah.

I do not wish to oppose you by what I forbid you – this part of the verse means he would not oppose them by doing what he was telling them not to. He would also refrain from it, being in the group that he was telling them to join – the group of obedient servants of Allah. He would be with them, not against them. This was in answer to one of their accusations against him. They said he wished to take away their freedom and establish authority over them, so he would be free to do whatever he wished to do. The Prophet explained that that was not the case.

The Prophet then tells them he has only one aim – to bring about changes that would lead to their true success, closeness to Allah and His pleasure. People don't like change and oppose it in many ways. But sometimes change is necessary, even good. Change that is directed by an authority from Allah who has all the necessary conditions of one who is Divinely guided is good. All Prophets came to change their societies and take them to Allah, to purify them of wrong doing and show them how to be obedient servants of Allah.

He then tells how he is a true servant of Allah and knows that all his success is from Him. He relies on Him and turns to Him. Prophet Shu'ayb, through these words, tells us of how Tawhid is embedded in his inner self. Whatever he is able to do is from tawfiq given to him by Allah. This is a sentence often repeated when believers achieve anything. They know that the success is only given to them by Allah. This brings humility, gratitude, and an eagerness to use the success given in His way.

Lessons

- 1) When someone guides you towards Allah, consider if they have some proof and signs that what they are saying is truly from Allah.
- 2) Change is not always pleasant but can be necessary for progress.
- 3) Success is from Allah alone.

Cross reference verses

All Prophets brought clear proofs from Allah – 7:101, 9:70

Rislatul Huquq

Right of the Self

The right of your self (*nafs*) on you is that you employ it in obeying God; then you deliver to your tongue its right, to your hearing its right, to your sight its right, to your hand its right, to your leg its right, to your stomach its right, to your private part its right, and you seek help from God in all that.

Connecting topics

- 1) Goals and characteristics of Prophets - <https://en.wikishia.net/view/Prophethood>
- 2) Resistance to change - <https://www.torbenrick.eu/blog/change-management/12-reasons-why-people-resist-change/>
- 3) Success is only from Allah - <https://www.islamicteachings.org/forum/topic/23921-my-success-is-only-by-allah/>

(Please note –these sites are not all based on Shia teachings so use with discretion)