

Sūrat al-Hud Verses 85-86

وَيَا قَوْمِ أَوْفُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ ۖ وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ وَلَا تَعْتُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ

11:85 - O my people! Observe fully the measure and the balance, with justice, and do not cheat the people of their goods, and do not act wickedly on the earth, causing corruption

بَقِيَّتُ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ۗ وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِحَفِيظٍ

11:86 - What remains of Allah's provision is better for you, should you be faithful, and I am not a keeper over you.

Questions for Reflection

- 1) How many injunctions does Prophet Shu'ayb tell his people about dealing with others?
- 2) How are injustice and corruption related?
- 3) What does the last part of verse 86 convey to the people? (He can't watch over them all the time, but Allah does).

Commentary

Prophet Shu'ayb tells his people about the need to be just when trading with the people. He asks them to give the people their due. In verse 85, the following principles of financial transactions are outlined;

- a) Give in full measure
- b) Weigh goods fairly.
- c) Do not cheat the people by finding fault in their goods and giving them less for it.
- d) Do not take on evil and wicked behaviour

This verse is an invitation to fulfill the rights of others - individuals as well as societies - and give them their rights. A secure and righteous financial system is important for progress in society. After having the right beliefs, it is important for believers to establish a just financial system in society. This fulfills people's needs and spreads peace and harmony. Corruption in the financial system has wide repercussions for generations in society.

History has seen many instances of people who are affluent or powerful being unjust to those who are not so privileged. They would trade with them, giving them very little in exchange for what they took from them. Colonialists have done that to the countries they ruled over. Governments have liaised with foreign companies to cheat their people and rob them of resources. In the West, this form of unjust trading has greatly harmed the Indigenous people. It was done through illegal exploitation of their lands, their natural resources, and even their labor.

Prophet Shu'ayb tells his people not to cause corruption on earth. *Fasad* is used to refer to that which is wrong, evil, unjust, and generally against God's laws. Corruption has harmful effects on the people in many different ways. It harms their physical life, upsets their emotional and mental

attitudes, and ruins their souls. The whole system for harmony and peace on earth is nullified by corruption.

In verse 86 the Prophet tells the people that when they give away what rightfully belongs to others, what remains with them is theirs according to God's laws. That is better for them if they believe in Allah *subhānahu wata'ālā*. They can only understand the truth of this if they have faith in Allah. Without faith they cannot comprehend how the little profit that remains with them is better for them than the much profit they can get by cheating others. Faith changes the worldview and perspective of people.

The word 'Baqiyatullāh' could mean:

- The little profit that remains is halal according to God's laws and is better than a lot that is not halal
- Being firm on acquiring halal profit results in blessings from God that will last for long.
- Obedience to God is better than all that the world has to offer.
- What is for God remains forever while what is for the world only will perish and disappear. This is also mentioned in Sūrat al-Nahl, verse 96: *That which is with you will be spent [and gone], but what is with Allah shall last.*

Many Hadīths link Baqiyatullāh to Imam Mahdi '*ajjal-lāhu farjab*'. A Hadīth from Imam al-Bāqir '*alayhis-salām*' quoted in Ikmāludin says: The first thing that al-Mahdi will say after his reappearance is this verse *What remains of Allah's provision is better for you, should you be faithful*. Then he will say: *I am Baqiyatullāh and His Hujjat and His representative among you*. Then no-one will greet him except that they will say, 'Peace be on you O Baqiyatullāh on His earth'. Although the verse originally referred to what was left among the people of Madyan after they traded lawfully, the verse also refers to that which remains on earth which is useful and a source of blessings. The Prophets and Imams are Baqiyatullāh as the effect of their efforts remain on earth. Imam al-Mahdi (a) is the most apparent manifestation of Baqiyatullāh.

Lessons

- 1) A corrupt financial system has many repercussions in society.
- 2) The little halal profit that a believer might have is better than the large profit gained by disobeying Allah.
- 3) The Imam of our time is Baqiyatullāh, meaning that which remains on earth as a useful source of blessings.

Cross reference verses

- 1) Corruption on earth – 2:11-12
- 2) Similar verse on Prophet Shu'ayb's message to his people – 7:85
- 2) Prophet Musa tells his people not to spread corruption – 2:205

Rislatul Huquq

- a) Right of the Associate- The right of the associate (*kehalit*) is that you neither mislead him, nor act dishonestly toward him, nor deceive him, and you fear God in his affair.

b) Right of the people of your nation - The right of the people of your nation (*milla*) is harbouring safety for them, compassion toward them, kindness toward their evildoer, treating them with friendliness, seeking their well-being, thanking their good-doer, and keeping harm away from them. You should love for them what you love for yourself and dislike for them what you dislike for yourself. Their old men stand in the place of your father, their youths in the place of your brothers, their old women in the place of your mother, and their young ones in the place of your children.

Connecting topic

1) Corruption and conflict

An interesting podcast on why countries rich in resources are often poor and immersed in conflict.

<https://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/news-and-analysis/post/703-why-is-corruption-and-injustice>

2) Financial theft from the Indigenous communities

<https://www.ryerson.ca/news-events/news/2021/05/how-much-does-canada-owe-indigenous-communities-for-stolen-land/>