

Sūrat al-Hud Verse 27

فَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ مَا نَرَاكَ إِلَّا بَشَرًا مِثْلَنَا وَمَا نَرَاكَ اتَّبَعَكَ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ هُمْ أَرَادُوا بِآدَائِنَا بَادِيَ الرَّأْيِ وَمَا نَرَىٰ
لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ فَضْلٍ بَلْ نَظُنُّكُمْ كَاذِبِينَ

11:27 - But the elite of the disbelievers from among his people said, ‘We do not see you to be anything but a human being like ourselves, and we do not see anyone following you except those who are simpleminded lowly ones from our midst. Nor do we see that you have any merit over us. Indeed, we consider you to be liars.

Questions for Reflection

- 1) What were the main points raised by the elite?
- 2) Why do the elite always oppose those who wish to bring about reform in society? (Greed, arrogance, envy, status quo . . .) What other examples of similar behaviour from the elite can you think of?

Commentary

The first response of the people to the preaching of Prophet Nuh (a) was from the elite – those who had wealth and power in the society. They raised objections which are normally what the elite of a society do – assumptions, baseless and unreasonable protests – all because they feel threatened by the new message.

The elite of a society are often the roots of evil and corruption in that society. They aim to demoralize and weaken the truth through their objections. They hold a lot of sway over the people as the rest of society follows their trend, considering them superior. The power of the elite comes from the privileged position they hold in society. Even in today’s society many groups of people have privilege and influence the opinions of others.

The elite of the people of Prophet Nuh (a) raised the following objections;

1) **You are just a human being like us.** They did not want to believe that God would send His message through an ordinary human being. They wanted an angel to come down with the message. What they did not understand was that a human being is higher in rank than an angel. Also, an angel would not be able to practically understand and demonstrate the life style of a human being. The angel can thus not be a good example for the people.

2) **We can only see the lowly ones from society following you.** What they were referring to were young people, poor people and those who did not have much standing in society. To the elite the opinions of these people were not worth much. Their only criteria of ‘respectability’ was wealth and worldly possessions. The fact that such ‘lowly’ people were accepting the new message made it unacceptable to the elite. They did not want to be part of the same group as them.

The people who accepted the message of Prophet Nuh (a) were not lowly or inferior people. Because the Prophet preached equality and justice, those who were immediately attracted to him were the ones suffering from injustice in society. They were oppressed and could see the truth in the message. The elite were not able to see that and dismissed their acceptance of the message.

These people also had pure hearts which saw the truth of the message quickly. Their youth, poverty, lack of worldly indulgences all made it possible for them to be more receptive to the message of the Prophet. The elite had become hard hearted and suborn, due to years of indulgence.

3) **We do not see any merit in you.** The elite could not see anything in the Prophet which would make him an authority over them. Criteria for merit and superiority was wealth, power, lineage, etc. To them Taqwa and righteousness were not criteria for superiority.

They conclude their objections by saying they thought he was a liar. Based on all their previous objections they could not believe his message was the truth. The only conclusion they could come up with was that he was a liar.

Note how the word 'we do not see' comes up three times in this verse. That was their proof that the message was not the truth – what they could see. These people can only see with their outer eyes, not comprehending and seeing with their inner eyes. Outer appearances can be deceptive, and judgments based solely on that are often faulty.

Lessons

- 1) The elite of society are always threatened by the truth.
- 2) Objections must be analyzed to understand the roots behind them.
- 3) Hearts that have not become hardened are more receptive to the truth.

Cross reference verses

Objections of the elite; 6:8, 11:12, 25:7, 43:31-32

Connecting topic

Privilege and Power

<https://www.kqed.org/mindshift/54150/teaching-6-year-olds-about-privilege-and-power>

(Disclaimer - This is not a religiously authentic site, just some thoughts on teaching about the privilege of certain groups in society)