

Sūrat al-Hud Verses 28-29

قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِن كُنتُ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّي وَآتَانِي رَحْمَةً مِّنْ عِنْدِهِ فَعُمِّيَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنُلْزِمُكُمْوهَا وَأَنْتُمْ لَهَا
كَارِهُونَ

11:28 - He said, ‘O my people! Tell me, if I have clear manifest proof from my Lord, and He has granted me mercy from Himself—though it should be invisible to you—shall we force it upon you while you dislike it?’

يَا قَوْمِ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مَالًا ۖ إِنِ اجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ ۖ وَمَا أَنَا بِطَارِدِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ۚ إِنَّهُمْ مُلَاقُوا رَبِّهِمْ وَلَكِنِّي
أَرَأَيْتُمْ قَوْمًا تَجْهَلُونَ

11:29 - O my people! I do not ask you any material reward for it. My reward lies only with Allah. But I will not drive away those who have faith: they will indeed encounter their Lord. But I see that you are an ignorant lot.

Questions for Reflection

- 1) How does the Prophet answer the objections in the previous verse? (He has merit and is not an ordinary human being – he has clear proofs (miracles) and mercy (guidance) from God. He will not force them to believe, but will not turn away those who have accepted him).
- 2) Why are the people not able to see the truth of the message? (they are blinded by their sins and stubbornness)

Commentary

The Prophet answers the objections raised by the people. He does not respond with anger or accusations. He argues with them with reason and logic, pointing out the flaws in their objections. That is how a Muballigh – one who spread God’s word – responds. The Quran tells us not to accuse those who oppose God or His religion and to argue with them in a good manner (see cross reference verses). Of course, when it comes to those who not only oppose belief in God but work actively to destroy it, there must be strong counter action taken.

The Prophet tells his people the following;

- 1) Although he is a human being and not an angel, he is a special and chosen human being. He has been given proofs that show he has been made a Messenger. He also has been granted the mercy of guidance for humanity. Being a human being does not prevent him from being granted that mission. In fact, he is better suited to receiving it than an angel would be.
- 2) They may look down upon the people who followed him as they came from poor backgrounds. But the Prophet tells them that they themselves are blind. They have come under the curtains of pride and greed. Such blindness is a disability that is worthy of contempt. It prevents them from seeing the truth.

Telling them they dislike the truth and he is not going to force them to accept it is a way of saying they have not reached the level where they can recognize and pay heed to the truth. It requires a higher capacity, an understanding that is beyond them.

At the end of verse 29 the Prophet says it is their ignorance that has made them consider certain people lowly. To think that greatness lies in wealth and lineage etc. – worldly glitter that soon disappears - is ignorance. Greatness is in that which lasts longer, what is consistent and stable. The ignorance could also be a reference to all the objections they had. They lacked the wisdom and knowledge that would help them see the flaws in their objections.

Note how the Prophet stresses his connection with Allah. The clear proofs he has, the mercy given to him, and the reward he expects are all from Allah. He has a God-centred vision. It shows perfect servitude, where a servant of Allah knows that everything is from Allah and is under His control.

Lessons

- 1) Divine leaders are special human beings chosen to convey the mercy of Allah to others.
- 2) People who do not have certain inner abilities fail to recognize the truth.
- 3) A true servant of Allah knows that everything he has is from Allah and he has hope only in Allah.

Cross reference verses

- 1) Do not condemn the gods of others – 6:108
- 2) Invite to the path of Allah in a good way – 16:125
- 3) Human beings are poor, and own nothing from themselves – 35:15

Connecting topic

Servitude to Allah - <https://www.islamquest.net/en/archive/fa2208>

Spiritual Connection

Imam Sajjad (a)'s dua to show servitude and humility

<https://www.al-islam.org/sahifa-al-kamilah-al-sajjadiyya-imam-ali-zayn-al-abidin/addenda-these-seven-additional-supplications#61-his-supplication-abasing-himself>