

## Sūrat al-Hud Verses 45-46

وَنَادَى نُوحٌ رَبَّهُ فَقَالَ رَبِّ إِنَّ ابْنِي مِنْ أَهْلِي وَإِنَّ وَعْدَكَ الْحَقُّ وَأَنْتَ أَحْكَمُ الْحَاكِمِينَ

11:45 - Nuh called out to his Lord, and said, ‘My Lord! My son is indeed from my family. Your promise is indeed true, and You are the fairest of all judges.

قَالَ يَا نُوحُ إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ ۖ إِنَّهُ عَمَلٌ غَيْرُ صَالِحٍ ۖ فَلَا تَسْأَلْنِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ ۗ إِنِّي أَعِظُكَ أَنْ تَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ

11:46 He said, ‘O Nuh! Indeed, He is not of your family. Surely, he is [personification of] unrighteous conduct. So, do not ask Me of that which you have no knowledge. I advise you lest you should be among the ignorant.’

### Questions for Reflection

- 1) Which promise is Prophet Nuh talking about in verse 45? (That his family will be saved)
- 2) How do the words of Prophet Nuh show respect and awe of God, even at a time when he is emotional? (Your promise is true, You are the most fair of Judges)
- 3) When is a child not really part of the family? (when they are not on the same spiritual journey, their souls are on different paths)
- 4) What does Allah tell the Prophet to refrain from? (asking about that which he has no knowledge)

### Commentary

When Prophet Nuh sees his son drowning in the flood waters his emotions as a father come up and he talks to God about it. It is hard for him to see his son perish. He asks God why He had not saved him as He had promised earlier that his family would be saved from the punishment. This is a reference to verse 40 - *We said, ‘Carry in it a pair of every kind [of animal], along with your family—except those against whom the edict has already been given.* According to Tafsir Namune, the Prophet had probably thought that the exception was only his wife, who was an unbeliever. He had not known that it also applied to his son.

Allah answers him with an astounding statement. Family relations are assumed to be biological and through marriage. But the real family relationship is that of the souls. When they are on the same beliefs and travel together on the path towards Allah then that is a true family. The Prophet is told four things;

- a) His son is not really from his family.
- b) That is because his conduct is not good. As an unbeliever, he is not worthy to be part of the Prophet’s family.
- c) He should not ask about that which he has no knowledge (understanding).
- d) Asking without understanding is a quality of the ignorant.

It is interesting to note that Allah refers to the son as unrighteous conduct, not that he does unrighteous deeds. This could be because when a person does a certain deed consistently, it becomes part of his essence. He becomes that action. When a quality becomes rooted in someone it is not seen as separate from him. This is true for good deeds as well as evil ones. For example, when a person is regularly generous he becomes a generous person. Generosity is within him, not just an outward action. Or if someone acts unjustly all the time he becomes unjust. He is unjust, not just that he does unjust deeds. In the same way, Prophet Nuh's son had personified wrong conduct and Allah refers to him as unrighteous conduct. His wrong conduct was keeping company with the unbelievers, thinking wrong thoughts about Allah and His Prophet, rejecting faith, and depending on physical and material means to save himself. His whole essence and the core of who he was as a person had become unrighteous.

If a person does not perform the wrong consistently but only does it occasionally, his essence does not become wrong. For such a person there is hope. He can be forgiven or get intercession. The son of Prophet Nuh could not get intercession of his father to save him as he had already gone beyond the boundary. He was essentially un-savable.

Why did Prophet Nuh plead for his son? The answer to this question is that he was not fully aware that his son was a disbeliever. Kanaan used to sometimes be with the believers and sometimes with the disbelievers. Although internally he had rejected faith and harbored wrong beliefs and thoughts about God, he did not openly reveal it. This type of changing colors and hypocrisy led the Prophet to not realize the depths of his son's disbelief. The Prophet also felt a deep sense of responsibility for his son, as well as the emotional attachment that a parent has for a child. All of these reasons led him to plead for his son.

In the worldview of Islam, relationships are real when there is a spiritual bond. This applies to family relationships as well as those with friends. The true lasting relationships are those of faith. All others are apparent and worldly, but do not last. Thus, we see that the Prophet (s) says about Salman al-Farsi – *Salman is from us, the Ahlul Bayt*. Salman was not biologically related. But he was spiritually close. Imam al-Rida (a) was once talking to his companions and they discussed this verse – *Surely he is unrighteous conduct*. The Imam said that it was because of his disobedience to God that Kanaan was not considered the Prophet's son. Then the Imam continued to explain that when a Shia of the Imam disobeys God and is regular in disobedience such that it becomes his essence, he also is not considered a Shia or follower of the Imam.

### Lessons

- 1) Concern for loved ones is natural to the human being.
- 2) Real relationships are those based on belief.
- 3) There are things beyond our understanding. Asking about them leads to ignorance.

### Cross reference verses

- 1) Only friendships based on belief will remain in the Hereafter - 43:67

### Connecting Topics

Being a True Shia

<https://www.islamicinsights.com/religion/clergy-corner/the-true-followers-of-ali-ibn-abi-talib.html>

<https://www.al-islam.org/bundle-flowers-garden-traditions-prophet-ahlul-bayt/real-followers-ahlul-bayt-and-their-qualities>