

DAILY QUR'ANIC REFLECTIONS

From Juz' 29: Had we listened or applied reason!

كَلَّمَا أَلْقَى فِيهَا فَوْجٌ سَأَلَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ نَذِيرٌ - قَالُوا بَلَى قَدْ جَاءَنَا نَذِيرٌ فَكَذَّبْنَا وَقُلْنَا مَا نَزَّلَ اللَّهُ مِن شَيْءٍ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ كَبِيرٍ - وَقَالُوا لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِي أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ

Whenever a group is thrown in it, its keepers will ask them, 'Did not any warner come to you?' They will say, 'Yes, a warner did come to us, but we impugned [him] and said, 'Allah did not send anything; you are only in great error.' And they will say, 'Had we listened or applied reason, we would not have been among inmates of the Blaze.' (al-Mulk:8-10)

Reflections:

The description of a horrendous end in Hellfire is enough to raise our hair on end—boiling water, bitter bites, burning flesh, and convective movement through its layers. This scene is surely unfathomable to imagine, let alone to behold; but groups of people will be brought to its brim to be tossed in, and will be asked the defining question: Were you not warned about this?! What made you so wretched that despite receiving a warner and guidance to build a befitting end, you (out of your own will) made the choice of entering this eternal anguish?! It is at that time that they will realize the two gifts they did not use.

Outer and inner argument: According to a hadith from Imam al-Kādim (‘a)¹ the Almighty has granted the human with two forms of guidance, each holding an argument against him on the Day of Judgement: an outer guide (the Prophets and the Imams (‘a)) and an inner guide (the ‘aql). The verse above reminds us that even though the outer guidance was available for the inhabitants of Hellfire, they chose to disregard it and reject it completely, instead using their intellects unwisely they claimed the ‘unreal’ – that the Almighty has not revealed anything! The distancing from the truth is clear in their approach to life when they attribute error to the guided.

Inner faculties – listening and reasoning: The human being connects his inner faculties with the outer faculties through his senses. Out of the five, the two most prominent senses when seeking eternal guidance and touching the heart, are the sight and the hearing capacities². No wonder most of the human’s wretchedness stems from the inappropriate use of these two, whereas the Almighty defines true vision and hearing as the one where the outer senses become a source of activation for the inner to function in a way to ensure the human’s eternal felicity. Listening at first for the purposes of obedience, and submission, is necessary but not without reason as Luqman said to his son: “Be humble before the Truth, you will be the most reasonable of people”³. The emphasis by the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) on the intellectual capacity cannot be understated or underestimated. From the same hadith above: “O Hishām! Whoever wants needlessness without riches, and tranquility of the soul from jealousy, and safety of his Dīn, he should beseech Allāh (swt) in asking for the perfection of his Intellect (‘aql)”⁴.

Outer and inner guides in-sync, symbiotically nurturing: “Indeed We have revealed an Arabic Qur’ān so you may use your intellect (‘aql)”⁵. The *naql* (the revelation – outer guides) are totally in sync with the ‘aql, as they both are arguments together. Rather they are in the active state of nurturing our capacities to accept and enhance the other capacity. A person who has no reason and intellect, has no *dīn*. Meanwhile, numerous narrations raise the prospects of reward a person receives based on their level of intellect. May this month of nurturing Taqwa, leave with us with a stronger ‘Aql, as it bonds and binds us strongly to the Holy Qur’ān.

References: ‘Allāmah Ṭabaṭabei, *Tafsīr al-Mīzān*. Āyatullāh Makārim Shirāzī, *Tafsīr Nimuneh*.

¹ al-Kāfī v.1 p.16

³ al-Kāfī v.1 p.16

⁵ 12:2

² 7:179

⁴ *Ibid* p.18