

## DAILY QUR'ANIC REFLECTIONS

## From Juz' 7: Love of the Permanent

فَلَمَّا جَنَّ عَلَيْهِ اللَّيْلُ رَأَى كَوْكَبًا ۖ قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي ۖ فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ قَالَ لَا أُحِبُّ الْآفِلِينَ ... فَلَمَّا رَأَى الشَّمْسَ بَازِعَةً  
قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي ۖ هَذَا أَكْبَرُ ۖ فَلَمَّا أَفَلَتْ قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ

When night darkened over him, he saw a star and said, 'This is my Lord!' But when it set, he said, 'I do not love those who set.' ... Then, when he saw the sun rising, he said, 'This is my Lord! This is bigger!' But when it set, he said, 'O my people, indeed I disown what you take as [His] partners.' (An'ām 6:76-78)

**Reflections:**

As believers, we often take for granted the fact that we can reach out to our Lord whenever and wherever we want. The Name al-Qayyūm captures the idea that Allah is Perpetually Subsisting and Sustaining all things: "Allah—there is no god except Him—He is the Living One, the Ever Subsisting. Neither drowsiness befalls Him nor sleep."<sup>1</sup> The idea of Allah being present at some times and not others is not only a philosophical impossibility, but a psychological nightmare. It would imply that at certain points in our lives—such as when we need Him the most—we may not be able to call Him or find Him.

One of the greatest *muwahhids* (monotheists) in our history was undoubtedly P. Ibrāhīm (ؑ), whose efforts were so sincere and full of wisdom that Allah praises him in the Qur'ān: "There is certainly a good exemplar for you in Ibrāhīm and those who were with him"<sup>2</sup> One of the groups of people he tried to bring towards monotheism was a group that worshipped celestial bodies, considering them to be managing various aspects of the world. With the help of an ingenious *jidāl aḥsan* (goodly exhortation), P. Ibrāhīm showed them that no celestial body can truly be a lord because of two reasons: (1) they are transient—i.e., they are not always present; and (2) only a Lord that is always present is one that is truly loved.

The idea that celestial bodies are not always present is both an experiential phenomena and a scientific fact. It is experiential in the sense that we visibly see them rising and setting everyday. It is a scientific fact in the sense that stars and planets are formed (or born) in time and also disintegrate (or die) after a period of time. Each one of the three celestial bodies (the star, the moon, and the sun) that P. Ibrāhīm (ؑ) pointed to as a candidate for being a lord (due to their luminous nature, differing only in the intensity of their luminosity) exhibits some type of decline or setting everyday. In fact, in a world of constant change and conflict, there is not a single *created* entity which is lasting. Hence, if we were to take any of them as a lord, we would have to resign ourselves to a lord that will not always be there.

The second reason provided by P. Ibrāhīm (ؑ) is the crux of his exhortation. Deep down, not only can we conceive of a lord that is constantly present, but it is only such a lord that could truly be the target of our love. When P. Ibrāhīm (ؑ) says, "I do not love those who set," he is not only saying, "I love those who are everlasting," but more importantly, "my lord should be one that I love." The link between Lordship and love is one of the great gifts left to us by this wise prophet.

In Du'ā al-Iftitāh, we read, "All praise belongs to Allah who answers me *whenever* I call Him." It is this awareness of God's constant presence which allows us to not only nurture our love for Him, but to also realize that we have *always loved Him* at the core of our being, whether we knew it or not.

**To ponder:** If God was not always present, how would that affect our understanding of and relationship with Him?

**References:** Āyatullāh Jawādī Āmulī, *Tawḥīd dar Qur'ān*.

<sup>1</sup> 2:255

<sup>2</sup> 60:40