

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Among the plethora of events and miracles in the life of Rasulallah ﷺ, there is one that strikes as particularly unique. Around a year before the Muslim community's migration to Medina, the Prophet ﷺ was taken by a heavenly steed from Makkah to Jerusalem, and from there lifted to the seven heavens. At the end of this journey, he was brought to the direct presence of Allah, closer than anyone before or after him.

One of the many fruits of this stunning occasion is the revelation of the last two verses of Baqarah. Because they were revealed to the Prophet ﷺ from Allah without any intermediary, they are considered to hold a unique degree of importance compared to the rest of the Qur'an. Just these two verses hold enough meaning for one to write volumes on, nevertheless, if we wanted to summarize their contents, we could say that they contain a summary of the true nature of a believer.

Within these descriptions is one that conveys a concept oft-mentioned in the whole Book: submission and obedience. As it announces succinctly: "And the believers say: We hear and We obey."(2:285)

وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا

This proclamation perfectly encapsulates the psycho-spiritual state of the believer. When the Divine Command comes, he accepts it unconditionally and applies it entirely. The reality of Allah's Lordship is that He has the unqualified right to command his property as He wills; and the reality of our servanthood is that we must obey the Divine Injunction with complete deference.

It is an accepted certainty that defiance to a command is the sign of rebellion, and its acceptance a mark of submission. In our mundane lives, we naturally exhibit this understanding, from the orders of a supervisor to the commands of a national leader. This principle applies just as well to our relationship with Allah. In whatever we do, failing to meet the standards of morality and obedience to the Divine Law is a reflection of our inner nature; one that does not manifest perfection, but is twisted and disfigured into pure monstrousness.

It is for this reason that the prophets, blessings upon them all, are necessarily free of sin or disobedience. Their role as guides and role models for the believers entails that they must themselves be pure examples of what Allah wants us to be like. The life of every single prophet is

filled with examples of their utmost submission to the Divine Command. This is seldom more obvious than in the explication of a particular event in the life of Ibrahim (AS).

Ibrahim (AS) had already gone through many trials throughout his life. In trying to guide his father, he was disowned and hated. In trying to guide his people away from misguidance and idol worship, he was persecuted and thrown into a raging fire. Throughout all of these, his resilience and strength in belief had stayed strong. However, his greatest test would only be made clear at a later time.

There are many things that a person values, forming a hierarchy within their mind and heart. Be it money, family, or a loved one, there are a plethora of things that our faith in Allah can be tested with. Undoubtedly however, the most terrifying trial that a parent can experience is that of being put to the test with their beloved child. And this is exactly what lay in wait for Ibrahim (AS).

One night, he saw a dream, a true source of revelation for prophets; in it he was commanded to sacrifice the life of his precious son Ismail (AS). When he wakes from his dream, he does so with a heavy task on his shoulders. This is the first part of the formula as mentioned in the verse above, to hear of the command and accept its significance. Right after, Ibrahim (AS) goes to his son and informs him of what the Lord of the Worlds has ordered him to do.

What we see next is a reinforcement of the proper response to Allah's mandates. Though Ismail was just a young boy with a full life ahead, his response was even more immediate and enthusiastic than his fathers, hoping to console by reminding him of the proper path. His words are beautifully expressed in the Qur'an: "Ibrahim said: 'O my dear son! I have seen in a dream that I must sacrifice you. So tell me what you think.' He replied, 'O my dear father! Do as you are commanded. If Allah wishes, you will find me steadfast.'"(37:102)

قَالَ يَبْنِي إِنِّي أَرَى فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي أَذْبَحُكَ فَانظُرْ مَاذَا تَرَى قَالَ يَا بَتِ افْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمَرُ

سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّابِرِينَ

Here we see the second and most important part of the formula in Baqarah, to obey the command that one has heard, without reference to deception or treachery. And this is precisely what Ibrahim (AS) and his son displayed, by laying the young man down and attempting to follow through on the act.

It is in that very moment when Ibrahim (AS) shows his formidable resolve in submitting to the Divine Command that Allah calls down to him, declaring that He has rescinded his order,

and that the whole occasion was a trial with the sole purpose of revealing their true characters, that of true believers in complete submission.

In reward, Allah sends down a ram from the heavens, instructing that they sacrifice it instead. This entire trial was without a doubt the most harrowing decision Ibrahim (AS) had to undertake, and one that represents his obedience greater than none other. It is for this reason that we commemorate this story with our own animal sacrifices every year on Eid Al-Adha, to celebrate and raise the flag of submission that Khalilullah (AS) first did millenia ago.

The ending of his ordeal is, also, a perfect reflection of the ending state of the true submitting believer, one that is blessed and exalted by Allah. In being saved from having to fully carry out the sacrifice of his precious child, the story perfectly encapsulates the ending of Surah Baqarah, a plea sent to the Lord of the Worlds that He bestow on us his Mercy and Grace: “Allah does not burden any soul more than it can bear. All good will be for its own benefit, and all evil will be to its own loss. The believers pray: ‘Our Lord! Do not punish us if we forget or make a mistake. Our Lord! Do not place a burden on us like the one you placed on those before us. Our Lord! Do not burden us with what we cannot bear. Pardon us, forgive us, and have mercy on us.’” [2:286]

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنْ
نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إِيصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحْمِلْنَا مَا لَا
طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَارْحَمْنَا

الباقى هو الباقى

Serdar Kilic