

**"Those are they who have traded guidance for errancy, and forgiveness for torment; so, how patiently will they (endure) the Fire! " (TMQ<sup>1</sup>, 2:175).**

Here, in this verse, is the reason for Allah's above-mentioned torment. The heinous sins mentioned above make it acceptable in one's mind that the sinful be punished in this manner. When people think of the criminal's punishment apart from his committed crime, they sympathize with the criminal. They forget the crime and see only the criminal. Thus, one should recall the grievousness of the wrong deed in order not to consider the punishment atrocious. Therefore, it is incumbent not to prolong the legal procedures needed for a criminal to be promptly tried and punished. Otherwise, the crime will be forgotten and people might tend to sympathize with the criminal.

Allah (SWT<sup>2</sup>) says, **"so, how patiently will they (endure) the Fire!"** This is meant to make the punishment repelling for people. Is there any hope for those sinners who traded forgiveness with torment to endure the Fire? Do they have such strength and endurance that would make them willing to commit sins that cause them to be cast in hell? Allah (SWT) makes it clear that they do not realize the extent of the recompense awaiting them. They are unaware of their doom in hell fire and persist in their transgression and misguidance. Hell fire is something that no one can ever tolerate.

**"That (is) because Allah has been sending down the Book with the Truth, and surely the ones who have differed about the Book are indeed in far- (reaching) opposition. " (TMQ, 2:176).**

There are three elements mentioned here: Torment, misguidance and fire. Misguidance is the main cause of the torment. Allah (SWT) said that fire would be deservedly the abode of the misguided. Torment, fire and misguidance are referred to in the verse with the word **"That"**. Allah (SWT) has sent down the book with the truth and those who interpolate or keep back what is in the book resent the truth. Those who have differed about the book are in far-reaching opposition and it is not in the capacity of people to have such differences. As the nature of this differences pertains to matters of

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**1** TMQ=Translation of the Meaning of the Qur'an. This translation is for the realized meaning, so far, of the stated (Surah:Ayah) of the Qur'an. Reading the translated meaning of the Qur'an can never replace reading it in Arabic, the language in which it was revealed.

**2** *Subhanahu wa ta'alah* (glorified and exalted be he)

principles and values that mankind cannot resolve. Hence, only Allah (SWT) is able to resolve such issues " ...**Surely Allah will judge between them concerning that wherein they differ among themselves...**" (TMQ, 39:3)

**“It is not benignancy that you turn your faces around in the direction of East and West; but benignancy is (in him) who believes in Allah, and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book, and the Prophets, and brings wealth in spite of his love for it (Or: offers out of love for Him) to near kinsmen, and the orphans, and the indigent, and the wayfarer, and the beggars, and (to ransom) necks, (i.e. captives “slaves”) and keeps up the prayer, and bring the *Zakat*, (i.e. pay the poor-dues) and they who fulfill their covenant when they have covenanted, and the patient (ones) in misery and tribulation, and while in violence; (i.e. during fighting) those are (they) who act sincerely, and those are they who are the pious” (TMQ, 2: 177).**

When the order came from Allah (SWT) to change the *qiblah* (direction of prayer for the Muslims) to al-Ka'bah after it was to Jerusalem, this gave rise to some confusion and each followers of a creed had their own *qiblah*. The Muslims turn their faces to al-Ka'bah and the Jews turn to Jerusalem and the Christians to the east. The verse above confirms that changing the *qiblah* is not hard but complying with the order of this change is the crux of the matter. Allah (SWT) manifested that confining benignancy to turning to the new *qiblah* of al-Ka'bah is not what really matters, but the most important thing is obeying the command.

Benignancy is a broad concept that includes faith, piety, truthfulness, obedience, beneficence, and all the facets of righteousness. Each aspect of these needs efforts and endeavor. It entails the testing of the sincerity of one's faith and giving precedence to Allah's orders to one's quest for rest. A believer who is benign is keen on observing the acts of worship even if they are difficult for him. Moreover, he abstains from sins knowing that they offer a transient gratification, yet they bring about a grievous penalty.

Allah says, "**but benignancy is (in him) who believes**". In this phrase, Allah (SWT) has made benignancy -a concept- embodied in he who has believed. In Arabic we can say, 'person A is fair'

and we can say that 'he is fairness'. Namely, he is the essence of fairness. Thus, we can understand that the one who enjoys benignancy is he who has believed in Allah, or we may understand that benignancy is that of he who has believed in Allah. Thus, mentioning that (the attribute of) benignancy is of he who has believed in Allah indicates that it is part and parcel of its owner. It is as if such person is benignancy incarnate. All the above interpretations can be deduced from the quranic text.

Allah says, "**benignancy is (in him) who believes in Allah**" which is the first part of faith "**and the Last Day**" which is the other end. Faith is within the two brackets of belief in Allah and belief in the Last Day. Yet, how can belief in the Last Day can be achieved? First, faith should start with the belief in Allah then in all what Allah has informed us. He (SWT) has told us that there will be a Last Day, so I should believe in this. Following this, is the belief in the angels who are unseen to us. Nevertheless, we believe in their existence because Allah, Whom we believe in, told us that they exist.

'Belief' cannot be in the tangible things seen for us, rather we 'believe' in the unseen that our senses cannot realize. This becomes '*aqeedah* (creed) an Arabic term which denotes something intertwined and difficult to be undone. Because it is unseen, we are at times heedless of it. Had it been witnessed, man would have never been heedless and will always be conscious of it. The uppermost top of creed is to believe in Allah (SWT), then in what He (SWT) tells you about the unseen matters which you have no evidence of their existence. The angels and the Last Day are both unseen, then the Book and the Prophets will be mentioned and they are both of the witnessed world. If you happen to see that some of the unseen matters are of the seen world, then bear in mind that part of your faith is defective. We were not alive when Allah (SWT) revealed the book or sent the prophets, yet we believe that Allah has revealed the Book to our Master Muhammad (SAWS)<sup>3</sup> and that He has chosen him to be the messenger of this revelation.

All of the preceding is of the unseen that constitute the grounds of faith. Then, the verse discusses acts of worship that are the core of the creed. Allah (SWT) is not concerned about belief in Him or in his angels, books and messengers. What Allah wants for us is to have our life on earth reformed

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3 *Salla Allah alayhe Wa Salam* [All Prayers and Peace of Allah be upon him]

If Salat is mentioned with reference to Allah, it denotes "**Allah's Grace with Mercy**;" if it is mentioned with reference to the angels, it denotes "**to pray for forgiveness**;" and if it is mentioned with reference to other creatures - men, animals, etc., - then it means prayer and supplication. Thus, Allah graces that person with His Mercy who teaches people the beneficial knowledge, i.e., the knowledge of Islam; angels pray to Allah to forgive his (or her) sins; and other creatures pray for his (or her) well-being.

with the methodology set by Him (SWT). Therefore, the verse tackles a material matter, "**and brings wealth in spite of his love for it (Or: offers out of love for Him)**". It indicates that a person has possession of wealth, then he offers it to others. *Al-mal* (money) buys everything, but did man have any wealth when he came out of his mothers womb? Actually, the wealth that one enjoys either comes from the endeavor of one's ancestors or from one's own endeavor. The owner of a wealth is one who has perused this wealth to suffice himself or extend its benefit to his children and, in a broader concept, to his grandchildren.

Allah (SWT) says, "**and brings wealth in spite of his love for it (Or: offers out of love for Him)**". It yields different interpretations. It is possible that the benign person gives wealth in spite of his love to this wealth, or love of the charitable things which he gives away as in the verse, "**You will never attain benignancy until you expend of whatever you love...**" (TMQ, 3:92) Moreover, it could mean that he loves the act of giving itself and he finds relief in doing so. In the following verse in another chapter He (SWT) says, "**And they give food (Literally: feed with food) for the love of Him, (Or: love of it) to the indigent, (and) the orphan, and the captive**" (76:8).

The above-mentioned verses highlight having wealth and the love of it. One could own many things but not all that one owns one loves. It is possible that you might give away things that you do not cherish, hence you have merely offered them without necessarily loving them. On the other hand, one might expend of his wealth things that he loves, thus he takes these things out of his possession and rids himself of loving them. Allah (SWT) denounces those who expend of what they hate in charity. They only offer what they dislike, for the sake of Allah! In this regard, a poet once said,

*I care less about saving my wealth for my life enjoyment,  
Spending it in times of prosperity and adversity.  
It is in my hand, not in my heart.  
I own it and it does not own me.*

Think of a very wealthy man who has poor relatives! How his relatives' attitude will be? They will feel uneasy about it. A good believer should always consider all people his kins. In this context we mention the story of Mu<sup>c</sup>aawiyah, the *Emir* of the believers (Caliph). His chamberlain told him that someone claiming to be Mu<sup>c</sup>aawiyah's brother asked to meet him. Mu<sup>c</sup>aawiyah said, 'How could you not have recognized my brothers? Let him in'. When the man came in, Mu<sup>c</sup>aawiyah asked, 'Which one of my brothers are you?' The man replied, 'I'm your brother from Adam'. Mu<sup>c</sup>aawiyah said, 'A severed tie with a kin, by Allah I shall be the first to maintain it!'. And he treated him hospitably. So if one cannot maintain good kinship ties with all people at least he can show

kindness to his close relatives. How can a believer enjoy the pleasures of life, while his relatives are in need ? Apart from religion and humanitarianism, kins deserve to be given from one's bounty.

In the orbit of faith, where Allah wants social solidarity to continue in different orbits, He (SWT) wants the good of the society to be disseminate among its members. Take for example the marriage relationship, it has to be contracted with the presence of two witnesses, publicly. That is because the fruit of this marriage-the children- who are the future generation have to be taken care of by their father. If he fails to heed Allah's right in assuming his responsibility towards them, people will blame him because after all he is the children's parent.

Thus, if someone conceals his marriage by contracting an unregistered marriage, by that he intends to produce children then deny their filiation. It is a surety that every homeless on earth is a result of a sin that is either revealed or cannot be exposed by someone who cannot shoulder his responsibility for an involvement with a woman. A man would not neglect a son who is attributed to him unless he is doubtful of his filiation . Hence, the sacred relationship between a husband and wife is meant to make and provide for the future generation who have the prerogative to be on solid grounds. Moreover, Allah (SWT) has exhorted the children to be dutiful to their parents.

Then the circle of benevolence expands to include close relatives. If we make a statistics for the able and define their family circles, we will find that every person is the center of a similar circle. Any shortcoming is a result of the fact that the center of a circle has let down the 'circumference' of his own circle. The first people to be recommended for deserving benevolence, in the Qur'an, are one's relatives as they have a special standing. Allah (SWT) said, "**and brings wealth in spite of his love for it (Or: offers out of love for Him) to near kinsmen**". Once every one of us gives of his surplus wealth, no one will be in need. In case there existed needy people, they will be few and *zakat*<sup>4</sup> (mandatory alms-giving) will provide for them.

Some scholars said that what is meant by '**near kinship**' is the relatives of the Prophet (SAWS) based on the verse that says, "**Say, 'I do not ask of you a reward for it, except amity for kinship.'**"

The relatives of the Prophet of Allah have no right to the *zakat*, so that the messenger of Allah might set himself and his family apart from all benefits. Allah has honored the Prophet's kins and prohibited them from benefiting from the *zakat* from which any poor person might take. We may

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4 A proportion of 2.5 % of the wealth of Muslim people to be paid for the needy provided that this wealth reaches the equivalent of 85g. of gold.

infer that Allah meant to tell us that it is not correct to deprive the Prophet's (SAWS) kins of all benefits, hence they should be regarded as one's own relatives and not be made subject to need. Verily, the Prophet (SAWS) and his relatives are given priority more than our relatives and kins.