

Points to Ponder

Excerpts from the 23rd Juz

Ayah 20: And there came from the farthest end of the city a man, running. He said, "O my people, follow the messengers.

As part of historical narrations, Ibn Ishaq has reported from Sayyidna Ibn ‘Abbas, Ka’b al-Ahbar And Wahb Ibn Munabbih that the name of this person was Habib. There are different sayings about his profession. The most famous is the one that says that he was a carpenter. (Ibn Kathir)

Other historical narrations reported by commentators at this stage tell us that this person too was initially an idolater. He happened to meet the two messengers who came to this town the first time. It was either as a result of their teachings or, as it appears in some narrations, by seeing extraordinary working of wonders at their hands, his heart was lit with faith. He repented from past idolatry, embraced Islam and retired to a cave devoting to worship. When he got the news that the people of the city have rejected the teachings of these messengers, have become hostile to them and were threatening to kill them, he came to his people prompted by the mixed objectives of his concern for their good as well as the safety of the messengers. He advised them to follow these messengers and declared that he himself had become a believer: *إِنِّي آمَنْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ فَاسْمِعُونِ* (I have believed in your Lord; so listen to me. – 25). The addressee here could be his own people where calling Allah Ta’ala their Lord was to express a reality – though, they did not accept it. Then, it could also be that this address is to the messengers and the purpose of saying: *فَاسْمِعُونِ* (listen to me) may be that they should hear what he was saying and bear witness before Allah that he was a believer.

Verse 26 states: *قِيلَ ادْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ قَالَ يَا لَيْتَ قَوْمِي يَعْلَمُونَ بِمَا غَفَرَ لِي رَبِّي وَجَعَلَنِي مِنَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ* (it was said to him, “Enter the Paradise”. He said, “Would that my people knew how my Lord has forgiven me and placed me among the honoured ones!” – 26, 27), that is, it was said to the person who had come from the farthest part of the city to prompt people to believe in the messengers, “Enter Paradise.”

It is obvious that this address was communicated through some angel who told him to go into the Paradise. In fact, the essential sense of asking him to enter Paradise is to give him the good news that his place in Paradise is a settled matter which would

translate into reality at its appointed time after going through the process of Resurrection. (Qurtubi)

And the possibility that he was shown his place in Paradise at that very point of time is not so remote. In addition to that, there is the post-death and pre-resurrection state known as *barzakh*. In this state of *Barzakh* too, people bound to go to Paradise are treated well with provision of comfort from Paradise. Therefore, the arrival of such people in the state of *Barzakh* is, in a way, virtual entry into Paradise.

By the words, “Enter Paradise” a hint is released to suggest that this person was martyred – because, entering Paradise or being enabled to perceive the traces of Paradise can come about only after death.

In historical narratives, it has been reported from Sayyidna Ibn ‘Abbas (Radhiallahu Anho) and early Tafsir authorities, Muqatil and Mujahid that this person was Habib Ibn Isma’il an-Najjar and he is among people who had believed in our noble Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) six hundred years before he actually appeared – as it has been reported about the great *tubba’* (line of kings in Yemen) that he had come to believe in him much before he was born by reading the prophesies of his coming given in past scriptures. The third respected elder who believed in him before he was ordained and gave his call as prophet is Waraqah Ibn Nawfal who has been mentioned in the Hadith of the Sahih al-Bukhari as part of the events that relate to the initial descent of Wahy (revelation). This too is a singularity of the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) that these three persons had believed in him before his birth and ordainment. This did not come to pass in the case of any other messenger or prophet.

According to the report of Wahb Ibn Munabbih, this person was a leper. He lived in a house at the farthest gate of the city. For seventy years, he kept praying to his assumed gods that he be delivered from his ailment. By chance, these messengers entered the city of Antakiyah from that very gate. When he met them the first time, they advised him to shun idolatry and invited him to turn to the worship of Allah Ta’ala for all his needs. He asked them if they had any proof for the correctness of their assertion. When they answered in affirmative, he told them about the disease of leprosy he suffered from and asked them if they could remove it from him. They said, ‘We shall pray to our Lord. He will make you healthy.’ He said, ‘How strange of you to say that. Here I am, praying to my gods for the past seventy years, yet nothing has happened. How can your Lord change my condition in a single day?’ They said,

‘Our Lord is powerful over everything, while those you have taken as gods have no reality. They can neither bring benefit to anyone nor can they cause loss.’ After hearing what they said, this person believed and those blessed souls prayed for him. Allah Ta’ala blessed him with perfect health, leaving no traces of the disease he suffered from. Now, his faith became firm, and he promised to himself that he would spend the half of what he will earn in a day in the way of Allah. When he heard that people of the city were mobbing the messengers, he came running, tried to explain that the messengers were true, and that he himself was a believer. The result was that his people charged at them in fury. It appears in the narration of Sayyidna ‘Abdullah Ibn Mas’ud (Radhiallahu Anho) that with their kicks and blows they martyred them. According to some other narrations, they threw rocks at them. As for him, even at a time such as this, when he was being beaten mercilessly, he kept saying: رَبِّ اهْدِ قَوْمِي (My Lord, show my people the right way).

It is mentioned in some narrations that these people martyred the three messengers as well. But, no authentic narration mentions specifically as to what happened to them. Probably, they were not killed. (Qurtubi)

Since this man of piety laid down his life valiantly in the way of Allah, he was blessed with honour as said in Verses 26 and 27: قَالَ يَلَيْتَ قَوْمِي يَعْلَمُونَ بِمَا غَفَرَ لِي رَبِّي وَجَعَلَنِي مِنَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ (“He said, ‘Would that my people knew how my Lord has forgiven me and placed me among the honoured ones!’”). He was asked to enter Paradise. When he saw the supreme rewards and blessings of Paradise, he remembered his people and wished that if his people could know how generously he was rewarded and what honours were bestowed on him in return for believing in the messengers, perhaps, they too would have believed. This is the wish expressed in this verse.

[*"Ma'ariful Qur'an" English, vol. 7, pg. 375-378*]

Rasulullah Sallallahu alaihi wasallam said that *Habeeb* was a well-wisher in his life as well as after death. [Qurtubi]

Today we all wish that the world becomes Muslim. Why? is it **only** so that we can have more on *our side*?. or So that we could become a majority? so that we can say ‘*Islam is the fastest growing religion*’??? So that we could become a force to be reckoned with??

In Surah Yaseen , *Habeeb* teaches us the real spirit that should be present in us when wanting others to become Muslim.....

Ayah 27 /28: **It was said, "Enter Paradise." He said, "How I wish my people could know**

Of how my Lord has forgiven me and placed me among the honored."

The spirit of being a well wisher. We invite people to Islam so that they can be saved from utter doom, from the fire of *Jahannum*, which if we saw , we would never wish it for our worst enemy too. We invite people to Islam so that they could experience the mercy of Allah Ta'ala. **"How I wish my people could know Of how my Lord has forgiven me and placed me among the honored."**

Surah Saad

This surah discusses the Ambiyaa A.S. such as a Nabi Dawood , Nabi Sulayman, Nabi Ayoob, Nabi Ibrahim Alaihimus salaam . In this Surah after mentioning any of the Ambiyaa Allah Ta'ala states ***"How excellent a slave!"***

This is the common theme. This tells us alot.

1. The status of Being a slave of Allah Ta'ala is the highest accolade and tribute that can be accorded to anyone since HE (Allah Ta'ala) has called his Prophets "Excellent Slaves".
2. Mention is made of Nabi Dawood, Nabi Sulaiman and Nabi Ayoob alaihimusalaam in detail, leaving us with the message that all these Prophets were placed in certain circumstances and within those conditions they still showed how one can still remain a perfect slave. Dawood A.S had power, the mountains were under his command, yet he remained as a good slave. So no person would be able to present this excuse to Allah on the day of judgement that *"O Allah, I had a very high post, I was in charge of many people that's why I didn't have the time to be a good slave of yours...."* or consider Nabi Ayoob A.S he had wealth and children and then lost everything, yes everything, His wealth,health and all his children.... everything. Despite that he remained **"the best slave"** Allah says about him:

"Truly! We found him patient. How excellent (a) slave! Verily, he was ever oft-returning in repentance"

Yes , Allah the Almighty says that. SubhanAllah.

So that leaves no excuse for someone whose afflicted with illness, or calamity to say
“O Allah , I couldn't do it because I was too ill” or “I lost my job”