

Tafseer Al-Baqarah (2: 261-262)

From the Book, Introduction to the Tafseer of the Quran,

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﴿مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنْبَتَتْ سَبْعَ سَنَابِلٍ فِي كُلِّ سُنْبُلَةٍ مِائَةٌ حَبَّةٌ وَاللَّهُ يُضَعِفُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ (٢٦١) الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ لَا يُتَّبِعُونَ مَا أَنْفَقُوا مَنًّا وَلَا أَذَى لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ (٢٦٢)﴾

“The example of those who spend their wealth in the Path of Allah (swt) is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah (swt) multiplies [His reward] for whom He (swt) wills. And Allah (swt) is all-Encompassing and Knowing. (261) Those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah (swt) and then do not follow up what they have spent with reminders [of it] or [other] harm, they will have their reward with their Lord, and there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve”. (262)

We mentioned that this part of the Noble Quran begins with the topic of Iman and Kufr. ﴿وَلَكِنْ اٰخْتَلَفُوْا فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ ءَامَنَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ كَفَرَ﴾ “But they differed, and some of them believed and some of them disbelieved” [TMQ Al-Baqarah 2:253]. Then after that, Allah (swt) mentioned the obligation of spending from the Rizq provided by Allah (swt).

After that, the verses began thereafter by mentioning Iman and believers. They mention that Allah (swt) is their Guardian and that the Kuffar are allies of Taghut (طاغوت). Then follows the mention of the signs of Iman and the resurrection of the dead.

And after that, in these two noble verses, Allah (swt) mentions about spending, which is the second topic with which this part of the noble Quran starts:

1. Allah (swt) explains the status of those who spend in the Path of Allah (swt), meaning in Jihad, just as spending in the Path of Allah (swt) mentioned in the Noble Quran means the Jihad like we mentioned earlier. Then Allah (swt) explains the status of those who spend, whose status is great. What they spend is multiplied manifolds, from seven hundred times, to much more, the limit of which is known only by Allah (swt) only. ﴿وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾ “And Allah (swt) is all-Encompassing and Knowing”.

﴿اَنْبَتَتْ سَبْعَ سَنَابِلٍ فِي كُلِّ سُنْبُلَةٍ مِائَةٌ حَبَّةٌ﴾ “which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains”, is an example of visualizing multiplication as if it is present before the eyes of the observer. This is a form of analogy of the conceivable through the tangible: multiplying the reward like the multiplication of the crop.

The word "سنبلة" in dictionary is like this: “with dhamma, a single ear of grain which has sprouted”. This means that the Noon (النون) is original. The verb is "سنبِلَ" which is four lettered, on the pattern of فَعَّلَلَ. Like that, the pattern of سنبلة is فُعَّلَلَة.

Attributing the growth to the seed is metaphorical because it is the cause of germination, while the real source of growth is Allah (swt). Therefore, attributing it to the seed is metaphorical attribution.

The meaning of spending mentioned earlier in the context of Jihad is reinforced by a Hadith of Messenger of Allah (saw) narrated by several Companions (ra) that Messenger of Allah (saw) said: «مَنْ أَرْسَلَ بِنَفَقَةٍ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَأَقَامَ فِي بَيْتِهِ فَلَهُ بِكُلِّ دِرْهَمٍ سَبْعُ مِائَةِ دِرْهَمٍ وَمَنْ عَزَا بِنَفْسِهِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

«Whoever sent from his spendings, in the way of Allah (swt) and stayed in his house, for him, there are seven hundred dirhams (as reward) for each of one dirham (spent). And whosoever fought by himself in the way of Allah (swt) and spent on that, for him, there are seven hundred thousand dirhams (as reward) for each of one dirham (spent). Then he (saw) recited this verse: ﴿وَاللَّهُ يُضَاعِفُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ﴾ ‘And Allah (swt) multiplies for whom He wills’” (Ibn Majah).

2. In the previous verse, Allah (swt) explains the reward of spending in the Path of Allah (swt). The text came as general regarding every spender in the Path of Allah (swt). ﴿مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ﴾ “The example of those who spend their wealth in the Path of Allah (swt)”. In this noble verse, there is a specification of the preceding verse, that the reward is for specific spenders in the Path of Allah (swt). They are those who do not follow up their spending with reminders of their generosity or harm, meaning their spending is purely for the sake of Allah (swt). For them is a great reward, and they do not fear for their future, nor grieve over what they have missed. They have complete security: a good life in this world and in the Hereafter, and forgiveness for what has passed, ﴿أَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ﴾ “they will have their reward with their Lord, and there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve”.

﴿الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ﴾ “those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah (swt)” meaning in Jihad. ﴿ثُمَّ لَا يَتَّبِعُونَ مَا أَنْفَقُوا مَنًّا وَلَا أَذًى﴾ “then do not follow up what they have spent with reminders [of it] or [other] harm”, the root meaning of "من" is cutting off, as in "حبل منين" meaning weak, as if it's on the verge of being cut. Here, it points to showing off and boasting about one's spending.

As for ﴿أَذًى﴾ “harm,” It refers to the reaction of the spender when they do not achieve the intended benefit, for which they spent. For example, if someone prepares equipment or gear for combat to be showcased by the state, just like a fighter shows off in front of people, but it does not happen and it is not shown. Then, he might react with anger, corruption, and misconduct.

What came in the noble verse as a specification of the understood attribute, ﴿ثُمَّ لَا يَتَّبِعُونَ مَا﴾ “then do not follow up what they have spent with reminders [of it] or [other] harm,” the intended meaning is to highlight complete sincerity in spending in the Path of Allah (swt), until it is accepted by Allah (swt). It will receive the fullest reward which Allah (swt) mentioned. Thus, the spending becomes purely for the Path of Allah (swt), devoid of any expectation of praise or harm.

At that point, they will have the great reward that Allah (swt) has prepared for His allies. ﴿أَلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ﴾ “Unquestionably, [for] the allies of Allah there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve” [TMQ Surah Yunus 10:62].