

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Tafseer Al-Baqarah (2: 204-207)

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

by the Ameer of Hizb ut Tahrir, the eminent jurist and statesman, Ata Bin Khalil Abu Al-Rashtah:

﴿وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يُعْجِبُكَ قَوْلُهُ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيُشْهَدُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ مَا فِي قَلْبِهِ وَهُوَ أَلَدُّ الْخِصَامِ * وَإِذَا تَوَلَّىٰ سَعَىٰ فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُفْسِدَ فِيهَا وَيُهْلِكَ الْحَرْثَ وَالنَّسْلَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفُسَادَ * وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ أَخَذَتْهُ الْعِزَّةُ بِالْإِثْمِ فَحَسْبُهُ جَهَنَّمُ وَلَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ * وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ رَؤُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ﴾

“And of the people is he whose speech amazes you in worldly life, and he calls Allah to witness as to what is in his heart, yet he is severely argumentative. (204) And when he goes away, he strives throughout the land to cause corruption therein and destroy crops and animals. And Allah does not like corruption. (205) And when it is said to him, "Fear Allah," pride in the sin takes hold of him. Sufficient for him is Hellfire, and how wretched is the resting place (206). And of the people is he who sells himself, seeking the pleasure of Allah. And Allah is kind to [His] servants. (207)” [Surah al-Baqarah 2:204-207]

These verses are joined in conjunction (معطوفة) to the previous verses: ﴿وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا ﴿فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ * أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا وَاللَّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ﴾ “But among them is he who says, “Our Lord, give us in this world [that which is] good and in the Hereafter [that which is] good and protect us from the punishment of the Fire (201). Those will have a share of what they have earned, and Allah is swift in account. (202).”

After mentioning the verses of Hajj, Allah (swt) clarifies that people who completed their rites are in two categories. The first category is the one who asks Allah (swt) for this world and he will not have a share in the Hereafter. And the other category is the one who asks Allah (swt) the reward of this world and the best reward of Hereafter. And the reward is in the Hajj.

Also, Allah (swt) clarifies that the aspiration for this world and the aspiration for the Hereafter exist amongst the categories of people, both during Hajj and outside of Hajj.

Allah (swt) has separated between the two Conjunctions (the categories of people during Hajj and outside of Hajj) by mentioning the hastening of two days (to depart from Hajj) or delaying to three days. The Separation (الفصل) between the two Conjunctions (المعطوفين) is with the Command (أمر), the intention of doing so, according to the classical linguists, is highlighting this command. And it is emphasized so that people do not underestimate it. It is in the Quran there as such. Hence after mentioning in the previous verse, ﴿فَإِذَا قُضِيَتْ مَنَاسِكُكُمْ...﴾ “And when you have completed your rites...” [Surah al-Baqarah 2:200], after the Onrush (الإفاضة) from Arafat to Mashar Al-Haram (Muzdalifah), Allah (swt) emphasized the obligation of staying at least two nights during the nights of *Tahsreek*, so that people do not underestimate the Overnight Stay (المبيت) by sufficing themselves with the Onrush (الإفاضة) from Arafat to Muzdalifah and then the slaughtering without staying. Thus the mentioning of Al-Mubit between the two conjunctions is more emphatic than mentioning it without that.

After that Allah (swt) clarified the two other categories of people in this context:

1- One group who amazes you by his speech about worldly life. He is well spoken, with flowery words, strong style, shows you the sweetness of tongue and assures you by witnessing before Allah (swt) that what he conceals is same as what he reveals, whilst at the same time, he is very argumentative and malicious to Islam and Muslims.

And when he leaves you, he would rush to cause more corruption and chaos, bringing evil widely from all gates, by destroying the crops and udders, shedding the blood of men, animals and every living soul.

When you see and expose his bad actions, reminding him of Allah (swt) and fearing Him (swt), pride and zeal would take hold of him. Then, he would go too far in his misguidance, instead of abandoning his oppression and bad action. So his fate will be in Hellfire and it is the worst of final destinations.

﴿فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا﴾ **“in the worldly life”** i.e. in the worldly affairs and the means of livelihood. What is intended from the word (الحياة) “life” is what constitutes life and living.

﴿أَلَدُّ الْخِصَامِ﴾ **“Severely argumentative”** i.e. severe (شديد) argument in Falsehood as stated by Ibn Abbas (ra). The word (أَلَدُّ) is an adjective (صفة), like the word (أحمر) 'Red.' Its plural is (لُدَّة) (Ludda) and its feminine is (لُدَّة) Ladda. It is not in the pattern of أَفْعَل as in the superlative noun. This is because the superlative noun (أَفْعَلُ التَّفْضِيلِ) is added to some of it, as in the saying, (زيد أفضل القوم) “Zaid is the best of people.” Also this is because the word (الخصام) comes with the meaning of الخصومة i.e. argument and not with the meaning of the argumentative person, as some say, i.e. he is very argumentative. Then there are those who consider الخصام as a plural of (خصم) with the meaning of (الخصومة) “argument.” Thus it becomes "he is the severest of those who argue" with the meaning "he is the severest in argument".

However, the Tafsir of Ibn Abbas (ra) gives preponderance to the meaning which we have mentioned initially i.e. severe argument in falsehood. The word (أَلَدُّ) appears as an adjective (صفة) and not as superlative noun (أَفْعَلُ التَّفْضِيلِ). This is the دلالة إشارة “Evidencing of Indication” that severe argument is blameworthy, as mentioned in the hadith, «أَبْغَضُ الرِّجَالِ إِلَيَّ» **“The most despicable amongst people in the sight of Allah is the severely argumentative.”** (Bukhari 2277, Muslim 4821, Tirmidhi 2902). This is amongst the traits of hypocrites as they love worldly life and so they are more argumentative over it.

﴿وَيُهْلِكُ الْحَرْثَ وَالنَّسْلَ﴾ **“(He goes away) to destroy crops and animals”** i.e. the cultivation and every soul.

The word al-Harath (الحرث) means crops and the word an-Nasl (النسل) means “all that possesses a soul.” It is said: the morphology of the word (نسل ينسل نسولاً) refers to the emergence of (progeny) from the loin of its father and the womb of its mother.

﴿أَخَذْتَهُ الْعِزَّةَ بِالْإِثْمِ﴾ **“pride in the sin takes hold of him.”** The word glory (العزة) is opposite to humiliation (الذل). However it comes with the meaning of “pride” (الأئفة) and “zeal” (الحمية) metaphorically (مجازاً) i.e. he would rush to take hold of pride accompanied by sin. And this is a metonym (كناية) for obstinacy, stubbornness and persistence in falsehood.

﴿وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ أَخَذَتْهُ الْعِزَّةُ بِالْإِثْمِ﴾ **“And when it is said to him, “Fear Allah” pride in the sin takes hold of him”**. It indicates the magnitude of the sin into which he falls. When you remind him to fear Allah (swt) and advise him, he would neither fear (Allah) nor take advice. Instead, he would be annoyed for reminding him to fear (Allah) and presenting him the advice.

﴿وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يُعْجِبُكَ قَوْلُهُ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيُشْهَدُ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا فِي قَلْبِهِ وَهُوَ أَلَدُّ الْخِصَامِ * وَإِذَا تَوَلَّىٰ سَعَىٰ فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُفْسِدَ فِيهَا وَيُهْلِكَ الْحَرْثَ وَالنَّسْلَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفُسَادَ * وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ أَخَذَتْهُ الْعِزَّةُ بِالْإِثْمِ فَحَسْبُهُ جَهَنَّمُ﴾ **“And of the people is he whose speech amazes you in worldly life, and he calls Allah to witness as to what is in his heart, yet he is severely argumentative. (204). And when he goes away, he strives throughout the land to cause corruption therein and destroy crops and animals. And Allah does not like corruption. (205). And when it is said to him, “Fear Allah,” pride in the sin takes hold of him. Sufficient for him is Hellfire, and how wretched is the resting place (206). And of the people is he who sells himself, seeking pleasure of Allah. And Allah is kind to [His] servants. (207)”**, they were revealed about Al-Aknas bin Shuraiq, an

ally of Banu Zahrah: "He came to the Prophet (saw) in Medina and exhibited Islam to the Prophet (saw). The Prophet (saw) was surprised by this. Aknas said: "I only came for Islam and Allah knows that I am truthful." He then left the Messenger of Allah (saw) and passed by the cultivation and donkeys that belonged to Muslims, and burnt the cultivation and hamstrung the donkeys." (Durul Manthoor 2/572, Tafsir Tabari 2/312)

The wordings (of the verses) are general and so it includes Al-Aknas and all those who have these traits and they will be included in the threat.

﴿فَحَسْبُهُ جَهَنَّمُ وَلَيْسَ الْمِهَادُ﴾ **“Sufficient for him is Hellfire, and how wretched is the bed”** (مهَاد)"i.e. the bed (الفراش). It is used sarcastically, since hell is the flaming fire. It is not the bed in which to get comfort, by taking rest or sleeping.

2- Another group of people are those who sell their souls and sacrifice them in the Path of Allah. And they only want the pleasure of Allah for that. So they will be in the gardens of delight in the Hereafter. They are not concerned with the world, as in case of the first group. Instead, the pleasure of Allah is their ultimate objective.

Then Allah (swt) concludes the verse by saying ﴿وَاللَّهُ رَؤُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ﴾ **“And Allah is kind to [His] servants.”** i.e. to the believers. Allah (swt) is kind to them, loves them and guides them to what pleases Him, so that they will attain higher degree in the highest paradise, Al-Firdaus.

﴿يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ﴾ **“He who sells his soul”** i.e. he who sells and sacrifices it in Jihad and Dawah to Islam, same as the saying of Allah (swt), ﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَى مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنْ لَهُمْ﴾ **“Surely Allah has bought of the believers their souls and their property for this, that they shall have the garden;”** (Surah at-Tawba 9:111). This verse was revealed about the prominent Companion of the Prophet, Suhayb bin Sinan Al-Rumi, as stated by ibn Abbas, Anas bin Maalik and others (ra). When Suhayb (ra) became Muslim in Makkah and wanted to do Hijra to Madinah, people prevented him to do Hijra, unless he left his wealth behind. He did so and got rid of them by giving them his wealth or guiding them to it, as came in the narration, and then he made Hijrah. So Allah (swt) revealed this verse. Umar bin Khattab (sa) and several other Companions (ra) met Suhayb (ra) at Al-Harrah, close to the outskirts of Al-Madinah. They said to him, “The trade has indeed been successful.” He answered them, “You too, may Allah never allow your trade to fail. What is the matter?” They told him that Allah (swt) has revealed this Ayah (2:207) about him and that the Messenger of Allah (swt) informed them so.

Haris bin Abu Usama reported in his Musnad and also by Ibn Abi Hathim from Saed bin Musaib who said: Suhayb (ra) set forth for Hijrah to the Prophet (saw) and he was followed by some Quraish men and so he descended from his camel and drew the arrows from his quiver and said: “O people of Quraish, you know that I am the best archer amongst you. By Allah, you will not reach me until I fire all the arrows of my quiver and then I will strike with my sword until it remains in my hand. So do whatever you wish. What would you say to leave me on my way if I guide you to my wealth which I left on Makkah.” They said: “Yes.” When he reached RasulAllah (saw). He (saw) said, ﴿رَبِّحَ الْبَيْعَ أبا يحيى﴾ **“Successful is your trade O Abu Yahya.”** And the verse was revealed, ﴿وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ رَؤُوفٌ﴾ **“And of the people is he who sells himself, seeking means the pleasure of Allah. And Allah is kind to [His] servants”.** This was reported by Al-hakim in Mustadrik in a same way related to the narration of Saed bin Musaib.

Though this verse was revealed about Suhayb (ra), the words are general and so it is a glad tiding to all those who perform Jihad in the Path of Allah (swt) or call to Islam where he says the word of truth, faces harm either in this path or that for the sake of Allah and sacrifices himself seeking the pleasure of Allah (swt). He will have the glad tidings which Allah (swt) made for Suhayb (ra). ﴿وَاللَّهُ رَؤُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ﴾ **“And Allah is kind to the servants.”**