



Ayat Reflection: “Do not incline towards the oppressors!”

﴿وَلَا تَرْكَبُوا إِلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا فَتَمَسَّكُمُ النَّارُ وَمَا لَكُم مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ أَوْلِيَاءَ ثُمَّ لَا تُنصَرُونَ﴾

“And incline not towards those who do wrong, lest the Fire touches you, and you will not have any protectors, apart from Allah. And you will not be helped.” [Hud, 11:113]

The word ‘*rukun*’ in Arabic means inclination which has been forbidden. It means to approve the transgressions of the tyrants, show consent to their ways, express approval before them or others, and to co-operate with them in their affairs of wrongdoing, befriending them, visiting them, and putting on appearances like them (Zamakhshari, Razi, Shawkani).

Who exactly are the wrongdoers? Does it apply to Non-Muslims and Muslims?

Ibn Abbas said that it applies generally without any difference between a Muslim or non-Muslim, because the consideration is for the generality of the words and not the specificity of the cause - *الاعتبارُ بعموم اللفظ لا بخصوص السبب* - (Al - Sahwkani)

Zamakhshari adds: *“Mere inclination is disapproved!”* He also writes that once Khaleef Muwaffaq was praying behind an Imam who recited this verse. He fainted. When asked, he said, *“Allah threatened those who incline towards those who do wrong. Then what about the wrong doers?”*

Visiting the Rulers

Zamakhshari gives this verse some serious attention. He reports Sufyan Thawri as saying,

“There is a valley in Hell where none will live but the scholars who visited the rulers.”

Awza’i has said, *“There is nothing more hateful to Allah than a scholar visiting the rulers.”*

Muhammad b. Maslamah has said, *“A fly sitting on excrement is better than one knocking at the doors of these people.”*

Sufyan Thawri was once asked about a tyrant who was close to death in a desert. Could he be given water? He replied, *“No.”* He was told, *“He might die.”* He answered, *“Let him die.”*

Zamakhshari also reports that when Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri began to visit the rulers, one of his well-wishers wrote to him:

“May Allah protect us and you, O al-Zuhri. You have entered a state in which it is right that those who know you should pray for Allah's mercy for you. You have grown into old age in a state that Allah has made you weighty with the knowledge of the

Qur'an and Sunnah. But what you are doing now is not what Allah has taken the pact for, from the scholars. Allah (swt) has said, ﴿ثَبِّتْنَا لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَكْتُمُونَهُ﴾ **“So that you may make it plain to the people and not conceal it.”** [Al-'Imran, 3:187]

You should know that the least you have done, and the least you have borne the burden of. You have lessened the uneasiness of the transgressors making it easier for them to continue in their wrongful ways.

This is because you are getting close to one of them was not for the sake of administering justice or giving up a wrong when he took you close to himself. They have taken you as a pole to use you as the axis of their wrongs and as a bridge to go over you to their iniquities, and a ladder to climb over you to their errors. Through you they will now place a question mark on other scholars and misguide the commoners by you. Whatever they gave you is much less than what they destroyed in you. They took away from you more of your religion than they gave you. Be not then in peace from the verse which said: ﴿فَخَلَفَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ أَضَاعُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَاتَّبَعُوا الشَّهَوَاتِ فَسَوْفَ يَلْقَوْنَ غِيًّا﴾ **“Then came after them future generations who missed the Prayers and followed their lusts. So soon they will meet with destruction.”** [Maryam, 19:59]

Indeed you are dealing with One who is not ignorant, and One who is not neglectful and watches over you. So look for a cure, for disease has entered your religion and prepare your provision, for the long journey is about to begin **“and not hidden from Allah is anything in the earth or the heavens”** wassalam.”

Hasan al Basri has said: جَعَلَ اللَّهُ الدِّينَ بَيْنَ لَاءَيْنِ: وَلَا تَطْعَمُوا وَلَا تَزَكُّوا “Allah made the religion between the two prohibitions of لا تَطْعَمُوا وَلَا تَزَكُّوا - don't transgress and don't incline” - (Zamakhshari)

That is, do not exceed the limits of the lawful and incline not towards the wrong and the wrongdoers.

It is also reported of him that a tailor asked him, *“I stitch the clothes of the ruling class. Will I be counted as ‘those inclined towards them?’”* Hasan replied, *“No. You will not be counted among those who inclined towards them. Rather, you are one of them!”*

O Muslims! O Scholars and People of knowledge!

Take note. Do not incline towards the oppressors by showing sympathy through your words and actions. Speak a just word to them and take lessons from your pious predecessors.

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