



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Nahj al-Balagha

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Lesson: 11

Topic: Sermon #1: God Choosing Prophets ﷺ

Text: « وَاصْطَفَىٰ سُبْحَانَهُ مِنْ وَلَدِهِ أَنْبِيَاءَ أَخَذَ عَلَى الْوَحْيِ مِيثَاقَهُمْ، وَ عَلَى تَبْلِيغِ الرِّسَالَةِ أَمَانَتَهُمْ. »

Why is there a need for prophets?

Because people started to deviate in two ways:

- Moral corruption (such as jealousy of Cain [قابيل])
- In their beliefs, they began to worship idols.

What is the meaning of اصطفى?

It comes from صفا (safa): purify. اصطفى means to take something and make it pure or take the pure one out of a large selection. Allah chose prophets ﷺ from the progeny of Adam.

« أَخَذَ عَلَى الْوَحْيِ مِيثَاقَهُمْ »

Allah took an oath from them that He would send down the message, and they should protect that message.

« لَمَّا بَدَّلَ أَكْثَرُ خَلْقِهِ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ إِلَيْهِمْ فَجَهِلُوا حَقَّهُ... »

When most human beings at that time didn't remain true to their oath with Allah SWT and ignored His position...

« ... وَ اتَّخَذُوا الْأَنْدَادَ مَعَهُ، وَ اجْتَبَأَتْهُمْ الشَّيَاطِينُ عَنْ مَعْرِفَتِهِ، وَ افْتَتَعَتْهُمْ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ »

They started worshipping idols along with Him, and Demons stopped people from knowing Him and kept them aloof from worshipping Him.

Why is it that historically human beings insisted on worshipping idols?

- Idols don't see one's sins.
- They resorted to worshipping idols to make it easy for them to sin.
- Idols are a form of self-worship and escape from obligations.



Why is it that Islam rejects idolatry so vehemently?

- Allah is the source of all goodness in the universe. If someone doesn't connect to Him, he will be doomed for eternity because he has lost the opportunity to connect with Allah, who is infinite.
- The difference between the one who worships *Isa* and idolaters: both are *shirk*; the level of *shirk* in idolatry is much more severe because Islam considers it the greatest insult to human intellect.

What is that covenant (ميثاق) that Allah made with the prophets?

- It is a reference to *عالم الذرّ* (the World of Particles) (about 200 hadiths about this oath exist.)

Objection: We don't remember the World of Particles, so what's its point? How do we remember what that oath was?

- The Imam (as) has answered that yes, you all forgot that World and the actual event, but that *ma'rifa* remained in you, and if it weren't for that, no one would recognize his Lord.
- Gathering all of these hadiths, scholars say that the incident serves as a basis for our *fitra*. The *fitra* is that when you are endangered (in a plane, for example), you feel clinging to something more powerful.

«فَبَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولَهُ وَوَاتَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ أَنْبِيَاءَهُ لَيْسْتَادُوهُمْ مِيثَاقَ فِطْرَتِهِ، وَ يُذَكِّرُوهُمْ مَنْسِي نِعْمَتِهِ وَ يَحْتَجُّوْا عَلَيْهِمْ بِالتَّبْلِيغِ...»

“Allah sent messengers and sent the prophets ﷺ one after another that o people!

You have a covenant with God; fulfill it.”

«وَ يُثِيرُوا لَهُمْ دَفَائِنَ الْعُقُولِ وَ يُزَوِّهِمُ آيَاتِ الْمُقَدَّرَةِ»

- The Imam (as) beautifully describes the role of the prophets ﷺ: To provoke what's buried in your intellect.
- Psychologically, the subconscious is greater than the conscious. Most of our decisions are based on the subconscious rather than the conscious mind. Our belief is stored in our subconscious.
- What happened in the World of Particles has been embedded in our subconscious minds. The role of the prophets ﷺ: to uncover that (as a reminder: مُذَكِّر)

«It is He who sent to the unlettered [people] an apostle from among themselves, to recite to them His signs, to purify them, and to teach them the Book and wisdom, and earlier they had indeed been in manifest error.» (62:2)

Purify them from what? Sometimes the *fitra* is blocked; however, the prophet reclaims that *fitra* for you then he teaches you.



- Analyzing how the prophets ﷺ preach and interact, we understand they have worked on our *fitra*, and that's why it's understandable and light, while philosophy seems very heavy.

The prophets ﷺ interact with people and remind them constantly.

Objection: Why do we have so many repetitions in our acts of worship? Praying five times a day, repeating *dhikrs*, etc.

Answer: The objector hasn't understood the subconscious mind of a human being and its role. Repeating something makes it engrained in our minds. The *fitra* is easily exposed to corruption, and this repetition is a way to save it.

Not only does Islam insist on repeating, but it also encourages contemplating. Repetition and constant reminders help wake those in a deep sleep in this life.

« وَيُزَوِّهِم آيَاتِ الْمَقْدَرَةِ »

One of the roles of the prophets ﷺ is to show people the signs of God's power.

« مِنْ سَفَافٍ فَوْقَهُمْ مَرْفُوعٍ »

Look at the ceiling that is above you that has been lifted.

The Quranic verse this excerpt refers to:

« اللَّهُ الَّذِي رَفَعَ السَّمَاوَاتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ تَرَوْنَهَا »

"It is Allah who raised the heavens without any pillars that you see." (13:2)

« وَ مِهَادٍ تَحْتَهُمْ مَوْضُوعٍ »

"and the cradles (expanse of the earth) laid down for them."

This sentence is rhythmic and has *saj'a* (موضوع و مرفوع as rhymes), and no word is extra.

« وَ مَعَايِشٍ تُحْيِيهِمْ وَ آجَالٍ تُفْنِيهِمْ »

"Allah SWT has given us the means for our livelihood (to keep us alive), and He also has given you deadlines that cause your death."

« وَ أَوْصَابٍ تُهْرِمُهُمْ وَ أَحْدَاثٍ [تَتَّبَعُ] تَتَّبَعُ عَلَيْهِمْ »

"The difficulties and fatigue make them old."

أوصاب (*awsab*): anything that causes fatigue and stress.

To summarize:

- People started to deviate;
- Their evil nafs, as well as *Iblis*'s whispers, contribute
- Allah (swt) chose the prophets ﷺ
- He made an oath with them as He made with us
- God chose prophets because He knew that if I gave my revelation and Amanah to X, he will be faithful. So, Allah designated them as prophets. Allah didn't force them, but He knew that they will use their free will to protect His revelation.



- The prophets ﷺ came to remind us of that oath we made with Allah. They accessed our subconscious mind to do this.

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