

Hazrat Saleh (Alaihis Salam)

“Saleh is the most beloved of our community. He is a role model for us in terms of his good moral characters and habits. The whole community will benefit from his sound intellect. We will leave behind other nations thanks to his planning and understanding. He will be the hero of our community in future. We have great expectations from him” These were the feelings of elders and leaders of the people of Hazrat Saleh (Alaihis Salam). Allah (Ta'ala) mentions their expectations from Hazrat Saleh (Alaihis Salam) in the Holy Quran in these words:

﴿ قَالُوا يَصْلِحْ قَدْ كُنْتَ فِينَا مَرْجُوًّا قَبْلَ هَذَا ﴾ هود: ٦٢

Translation of Meaning: “They said: O Saleh ! You have been amidst us hitherto as one in whom we had placed great hopes.” (Hud: 62).

This was one side of the picture. The other side was that when Allah (Ta'ala) made Hazrat Saleh, (Alaihis Salam) a messenger to his people and he started preaching them against ascribing partners to Allah (Ta'ala), worshipping idols and advised them to believe in monotheism and spend pious life, their attitude changed. He was taken to be an insane and a bewitched person. According to Quran, they said to him:

﴿ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مِنَ الْمُسَحَّرِينَ ﴾ الشعراء: ١٥٣

Translation of Meaning: "You are but a bewitched man" (Ash-Sho'ra: 153).

The people of Thamud were made up of those whose predecessors had embraced faith at the hands of Hazrat Hud, (Alaihis Salam) who had been saved from the retribution inflicted on Hud's tribe 'Aad. Because of this the tribe of 'Aad was also known as "Second 'Aad". It was a pure Arabian tribe of ancient Arabia. Their habitat was a place called Hijr which was located between Tabuk and Hijaz. It was also known as " Madaen Saleh ". The Arabs were quite familiar with them. During the Battle of Tabuk [Ghazwah Tabuk] when the Messenger of Allah, Hazrat Muhammad, passed through it along with his companions they drew water from that well which supplied water to the symbolic she camel of Hazrat Saleh (Alaihis Salam). As for other wells of this site, the Prophet forbade his companions from drawing water from them. When the companions spread out to visit the sites of this place the Prophet assembled

them and advised them that this is not a place for site-seeing. It is a place whose people were destroyed by Allah's wrath. So one should take a lesson from such places.

Just as the earlier tribe of 'Aad was famous for building structures with high pillars similarly the tribe of Thamud was adept in building their dwellings and caves by carving out the mountains. Their remains have survived till this day. They also built big palaces in the plains. They were rich and prosperous people. While preaching to them to fear Allah, Hazrat Saleh had reminded them that if they do so they may live secure in their carved dwellings, enjoy themselves amidst their gardens and water springs, and tilled fields and date palm trees laden with fruits.

Allah (Ta'ala) mentions them in these words:

﴿إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ أَخُوهُمْ صَالِحٌ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ﴾ (١٤٢) ﴿إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ﴾ (١٤٣) ﴿فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا﴾ (١٤٤) ﴿وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾ (١٤٥) ﴿أَتُزَكُّونَ فِي مَا هَلْهَنَّا ءَامِنِينَ﴾ (١٤٦) ﴿فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ﴾ (١٤٧) ﴿وَزُرُوعٍ وَنَخْلٍ طَلْعُهَا هَضِيمٌ﴾ (١٤٨) ﴿وَتَنْحِتُونَ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا فَرِهِينَ﴾ (١٤٩) ﴿الشعراء: ١٤٢ - ١٤٩﴾

Translation of Meaning: "When their brother Sâlih said to them: "Will you not fear Allâh and obey Him? (142) "I am a trustworthy Messenger to you. (143) "So fear Allâh, keep your duty to Him, and obey me. (144) "No reward do I ask of you for it (my Message of Islâmic Monotheism), my reward is only from the Lord of the 'Alamîn (mankind, jinn and all that exists). (145) "Will you be left secure in that which you have here? (146) "In gardens and springs. (147) And green crops (fields) and date-palms with soft spadix. (148) "And you hew out in the mountains, houses, with great skill. (Ash-Sho'ra: 142-149).

These abundant favors of Allah deserved that they worship only Allah and thanked Him. But on the contrary, they fell prey to devil who taught them to follow the way of their forefathers and continue to worship false Allahs. They stick further to worship of idols and the way of polytheism due to Allah's respite to them. The quest of leisure with no obligations at all made them to love the worldly life and they became completely unmindful of the account on the day of judgment. As a result, the whole society filled with enjoyment and jest, immorality, lewdness, wrongdoing and transgression. They had dead hearts in their breasts, eyes without sight, ears without ability to hear the preaching. They were like humans in their external look but even worse than beasts in their moral character.

Teaching of Hazrat Saleh (Alaihis Salam): In such a status of affair, Hazrat Saleh (Alaihis Salam) tried to wake them up from their slumber, taught them to realize their mistake saying "How do you justify your action that while it is Allah (Ta'ala) Who has conferred His favors upon you, you give thanks to others? While only Allah has showered upon you all these blessings for your enjoyment, you obey other than Allah? This is an act of shirk "polytheism". He advised them to desist from this and asked them not ascribe partners to Allah in His lordship. He advised them to fear the consequences of this wrongdoing, lest Allah take back these favors, to be mindful of the fact that one day they will have to appear before Allah (Ta'ala) for the account of their deeds, requesting them to tread the path of Allah-fearing and piety.

In response of the preaching of Hazrat Saleh, (Alaihis Salam) some people of his community became believers and joined Hazrat Saleh (Alaihis Salam). These were the weak people of the community both financially as well as in terms of position in the community. The leaders and people of high position of the community continued the way of rejection of the mission of Hazrat Saleh (Alaihis Salam). They ridiculed the believers and followers of Hazrat Saleh (Alaihis Salam). They would ask the weak believers "Do you really believe in what Saleh says?" The believers would reply "Yes we believe in what he says whole heartedly" then the disbeliever would say " As for us, we do not believe in what he says; how can a person be a messenger of Allah while he is one of us; we know him from his childhood; he had sound mind previously, but as a result of magic he has now lost his mind; he is a liar and haughty; he aspires to be a big personality.

Hazrat Saleh (Alaihis Salam) continued his preaching for a long time with utmost sincerity and love. He called them to the way of Allah despite all their sinful acts and their deeds. They then started to say "O Saleh, We feel ill-omen in you and your followers; you all are ominous for our community". Hazrat Saleh (Alaihis Salam) would respond them saying "You all are tested by Allah (Ta'ala), please seek His forgiveness from sin, repent to Him, otherwise, I fear for you bad consequences". This call to Allah (Ta'ala), preaching with kindness, was reaching its climax. When their sealed heart did not heed to any proof and evidence and they failed to recognize their interest, the natural course of action led them to demand for a miracle. They demanded him to bring a miracle in support of his mission. This has been the tradition of Allah that whenever a people ask for bringing a miracle, then this miracle prove to be the last curtain

in the emergence of the judgment of Allah (Ta'ala). If the community believes upon seeing the miracle, then there is no problem, otherwise Allah takes revenge from them by His punishment.

At this point, it should be understood that a human being, in principle is a creature with intellect having ability to reason and understand. If he fails to distinguish the right from the wrong despite existence of proof based on sound intellect and thinking, then it means he lacks the very characteristics that distinguishes him from other creatures. As for as understanding something based on material observation, both human and animals are equal in this aspect. Accordingly the creation of a human being as a distinguished creature has become meaningless. Following right path is in fact a high status of sound intellect. This human being who was once prostrated by angels when slides from this status, he slides even further to the extent that he becomes in a position to prostrate to a creature which is inferior to him.

Emergence of a Miracle: The people of Thamoud in their quest to put an end to the call of Hazrat Saleh (Alaikhis Salam) demanded to bring a miracle out of their foolishness. This proved to be the last drop in their already filled cup of sins and transgression. Hazrat Saleh (Alaihis Salam) requested Allah (Ta'ala) to support him saying "O Allah support me to prove the soundness of my mission, by granting me a miracle". Allah, the almighty caused a she camel to emerge from a rock. Allah (Ta'ala) says in the Holy Quran.

﴿ مَا أَنْتَ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُنَا فَأْتِ بِآيَةٍ إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِیْنَ ﴿١٥٤﴾ قَالَ هٰذِهِ نَاقَةٌ لَهَا شِرْبٌ وَلَكُمْ شِرْبٌ يَوْمٍ مَّعْلُومٍ ﴿١٥٥﴾ وَلَا تَمْسُوْهَا سَوْءٍ فَيَأْخُذَكُمْ عَذَابٌ یَّوْمٍ عَظِیْمٍ ﴿١٥٦﴾ ﴾ الشعراء: ١٥٤ – ١٥٦

Translation of Meaning : “You are but a human being like us. Then bring us a sign if you are of the truthful.” (154) He said: “Here is a she-camel; it has a right to drink (water), and you have a right to drink (water) (each) on a day, known (155) “And touch her not with harm, lest the torment of a Great Day should seize you.” (156) (Al-Shuara : 154-156)

Allah (Ta'ala) produced a sign at the request of the people of Hazrat Saleh (Alaihis Salam), provided that it has a right to drink water and they have a right to drink (water) (each) on a day, known. According to the books of tafseer (Meaning and Explanation of the Holy Quran) the she camel would drink all the water at its turn. The second condition was that the she came would be left grazing in the pastures of the people without any objection and nobody would

be allowed to stop her or cause any harm to her, otherwise Allah's punishment would befall on the people. Following the emergence of the she camel a big group of the people believed in the prophet-hood of Hazrat Saleh (Alaihis Salam), however, the majority remained in disbelief.

Nine wicked Persons: People respected the right of the she camel, out of their fear of Allah's sign and fulfilled the conditions. However, with the passage of time, their disbelief and stubbornness incited them to commit transgression and rebellion. They started to hatch a plan to kill the she camel. The Holy Quran has mentioned nine wicked people who were leading this campaign and they were heads of the wicked people. It was they who hatched the plan to kill the she camel and the most wicked person was the one who executed this plan.

﴿وَكَاٰنَ فِي الْمَدِيْنَةِ تِسْعَةٌ رَهْطٍ يُفْسِدُوْنَ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَلَا يَصْلِحُوْنَ﴾ النمل: ٤٨

Translation of Meaning : And there were in the city nine men (from the sons of their chiefs), who made mischief in the land, and would not reform. (Al-Naml: 48)

They slowly prepared the whole community to slaughter the she camel.

The society has such a system that there is always a group of people who lead them, and others followed them. Though the judgments are passed by the leaders, the general public submits to them. Thereby the whole community becomes a participant in the judgment. That is why the judgment is attributed to the whole people, and they all share the reward and punishment.

The nine leaders of the tribe of Thamoud were such a group of people whom the whole community had accepted as their leaders. Therefore when they committed this crime they did so with the support of the whole community. That is why the Holy Quran has mentioned this story in these words:

﴿فَعَقَرُوْا التَّائِقَةَ وَعَتَوْا عَنْ اَمْرِ رَبِّهِمْ وَقَالُوْا يَصْلِحْ اِثْنَا يَمًا تَعِدُنَا اِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ﴾ الاعراف: ٧٧

Translation of Meaning : So they killed the she-camel and insolently defied the Commandment of their Lord, and said: "O Sâlih! Bring about your threats if you are indeed one of the Messengers (of Allâh)." (Al-Araf: 77)

At another place Allah (Ta'ala) says :

﴿كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ بِطَغْوَنِهَا ۖ (١١) إِذِ انْبَعَثَ أَشْقَاهَا ۖ (١٢) فَقَالَ لَهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ نَاقَةَ اللَّهِ وَسُقْيَاهَا ۖ (١٣) فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَعَقَرُوهَا فَدَمْدَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ فَحَسَّوْنَهَا ۖ (١٤) وَلَا يَخَافُ عُقْبَاهَا ۖ (١٥)﴾ الشمس: ١١ - ١٥

Translation of Meaning : Thamûd (people) denied (their Prophet) through their transgression (by rejecting the true Faith of Islâmic Monotheism, and by following polytheism, and by committing every kind of sin). (11) When the most wicked man among them went forth (to kill the she-camel). (12) But the Messenger of Allâh [Sâlih (Saleh) A.S.] said to them: "Be cautious! (Fear the evil end). That is the she-camel of Allâh! (Do not harm it) and bar it not from having its drink!" (13) Then they denied him and they killed it. So their Lord destroyed them because of their sin, and made them equal in destruction (i.e. all grades of people, rich and poor, strong and weak)! (14) And He (Allâh) feared not the consequences thereof. (15) (Al-Shams: 11-15)

Slaughter of the She-Camel and Allah's Punishment:

Consequently, the tribe of Thamoud slaughtered the sign of Allah, the she camel, despite the condition set forth. Since their life was dependent upon the life of the she camel, the punishment of Allah befell them. Hazrat Saleh (Alaihis Salam) following this event announced the judgment of Allah among the people saying "You have a period of three days as a respite, following which you will all taste the punishment of Allah". Allah (Ta'ala) says :

﴿فَعَقَرُوهَا فَقَالَ تَمَتَّعُوا فِي دَارِكُمْ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ ۖ (٦٥)﴾ هود: ٦٥

Translation of Meaning : But they killed her. So he said: "Enjoy yourselves in your homes for three days." (Hud: 65)

The disobedient did not only killed the she camel, but they also incited the people to kill even the prophet and hatched a plan for this purpose. The Holy Quran mentions this in these words:

﴿قَالُوا تَقَاسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ لَنُبَيِّتَنَّهُ وَأَهْلَهُ ثُمَّ لَنَقُولَنَّ لِوَلِيِّهِ مَا شَهِدْنَا مَهْلِكَ أَهْلِهِ وَإِنَّا لَصَادِقُونَ ۖ (٤٩)﴾ النمل: ٤٩

Translation of Meaning: They said: "Swear one to another by Allâh that we shall make a secret night attack on him and his household, and thereafter we will surely say to his near relatives: 'We witnessed not the destruction of his household, and verily, we are telling the truth.'" (Al-Naml: 49)

The plan was that they would kill Hazrat Saleh (Alaihis Salam) and his family and then they would say they had not been there. They planned for themselves, but Allah planned another thing. As soon as the appointed time expired, a awful cry was heard and all of a sudden they all transformed into corpses. The Holy Quran says:

﴿ فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّيْحَةُ مُصْبِحِينَ ﴾ الحجر: ٨٣

Translation of meaning : But As-Saîhah (torment - awful cry) overtook them in the early morning (of the fourth day of their promised punishment days) (Al-Hijr:83)

At another place, Allah says in these words:

﴿ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً فَكَانُوا كَهَشِيرِ الْحُمْطَرِ ﴾ القمر: ٣١

Translation of Meaning : Verily, We sent against them a single Saîhah (torment - awful cry), and they became like the stubble of a fold-builder. (Al-Qamar: 31)

We conclude by seeing the historical site of the tribe of Thamoud that a might earthquake gripped them and they all were killed while in their homes. The mountains which were their dwellings seemed as though somebody had cut them into pieces. A thunder, or a violent cry stroke them and they all perished within a moment. The Holy Quran has depicted them saying if one sees their dwellings he can hardly imagine a population therein. Desolation and silence prevails everywhere. Allah (Ta'ala) saved Hazrat Saleh and his followers out of His favor. Thus the tribe of Thamoud perished.

Facts :

- Those who do not take lessons from the previous nations they themselves become an object of lesson.
- The people of Thamoud excelled in engineering and they were favored with a lot of blessings, but they instead of giving thanks to Allah (Ta'ala) denied Allah (Ta'ala)
- Allah's messenger is representative of Allah (Ta'ala) in his nation. Therefore going against the messenger is like going against Allah (Ta'ala).
- Allah (Ta'ala) has decided that He and His messengers shall be victorious. Anyone who clashes with them is ultimately destroyed. If any

individual or group commits mistake and the whole community keeps silent on this mistake, it is believed to be equally a partner to this mistake.

- **The** historical sites of the communities punished by Allah (Ta'ala), have been preserved by Allah (Ta'ala) not for our site seeing and enjoyment but to take lessons from them. One should think about his consequence by seeing their consequence, and one should continuously pray to Allah and seek His forgiveness.
- **A** caller to the way of Allah (Ta'ala) does not become hopeless. He takes strength from Allah the almighty.

* * *

www.uzairfalahi.com