

Sura Taha, verses 90 - 91

وَلَقَدْ قَالَ لَهُمْ هَارُونُ مِنْ قَبْلُ يَا قَوْمِ إِنَّمَا فُتِنْتُمْ بِهِ وَإِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ
الرَّحْمَنُ فَاتَّبِعُونِي وَأَطِيعُوا أَمْرِي

And Harun had told them before this: 'O my people! you are being tested through this, surely your Lord is the Most Gracious, so follow me, and obey my command.'

قَالُوا لَنْ نَبْرَحَ عَلَيْهِ عَاكِفِينَ حَتَّىٰ يَرْجِعَ إِلَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ

They said: We will by no means stop worshipping it until Musa returns to us

Reflections

- Nabi Harun had told them *before this* - what is the Quran referring to, before what? (answer - before Nabi Musa came back)
- The words of Nabi Harun show concern as a leader. He even addresses them as 'O my people . . .'
- What four things does Nabi Harun tell them?
- He used the name Rahman instead of Allah, or another name. Why?
- Were the people saying they would stop worshipping it once Nabi Musa comes back?

Tafsir

During this entire incident of Samiri leading the people astray, Nabi Harun did not remain silent. He was the representative of Nabi Musa and tried his best to stop the people from worshipping the calf.

He tells them the golden calf is a test for them. Have they truly believed in God or deep down do they still have traces of idol worship? People are always being tested by God, because a test reveals the truth about people. Under normal circumstances people are able to hide what is present inside them. A test brings it out and makes it visible.

Nabi Harun tells them their Lord is only 'the Beneficent'. It is a positive way of reminding them about their real God. He uses that particular name of Allah to remind the people of the mercy and

favours of God over them. They had been slaves and God had freed them. They were prisoners and God had rescued them. They had been afraid and God gave them safety and security. They were lost and God guided them. They were scattered and disunited and God united them under one leader. The blessings of God on them were innumerable. It is also possible that Nabi Harun used this name of God to tell them that even though they had done wrong, the doors were not closed for them. God would accept them if they repented. He wanted to give them hope and appeal to them. A statue of a calf could not have the qualities of kindness and beneficence.

He tells them to follow him and obey what he was telling them. He had authority over them, granted to him by their leader and Prophet, Nabi Musa. He had been appointed and declared as the ruler in the absence of Nabi Musa. The people had promised to obey him. They were duty bound to follow him.

But the people insisted on continuing what they were doing. They did not listen to Nabi Harun. Instead they said they would continue until Nabi Musa came and he would judge between them. It is almost as if they hoped he would understand them and let them continue what they were doing. They did not say they would stop once he comes.

A small group of people listened to Nabi Harun and distanced themselves from the rest of the people. They stayed away from them as they did not want themselves to be considered as party to the evil deed being committed. About 12,00 people from the group of more than 500,000 remained steadfast and obeyed Nabi Harun.

Relevant Verses

Invite people towards God in a good way - 16:125

Don't condemn the gods of others - 6:108

Nabi Musa's words to his people

After crossing the Red sea, this is what Nabi Musa told his people:

'I know of no people whom God has made to inherit a land as vast as the land He has made you inherit. I know of no people whom God has given of the world's blessings as much as He has given you. You have been given more blessings than can be counted by any other than God. God will find a way for us, so remember Him and turn your affairs over to Him. For He is more merciful to you than you are to yourselves.'

Story

Check: <http://www.ezsoftech.com/stories/reward.and.responsibility.asp>

Important Lessons

- 1) A leader always guides his people even if they don't listen to him. He does it positively, to make people think about what they are doing.
- 2) Nabi Harun carried out the duty given to him by his brother. Carrying out your duty, in whatever role you play, is an important quality of a believer.
- 3) When trying to change people appeal to their mind, their heart, and their conscience. Nabi Harun tells them this is a test (think, with your mind), God is Rahman - has favoured them (feel, with the heart) and asked them to obey him (decide, with your conscience).

Practical Implementation

Whatever your duty is, carry it out. Even if you face opposition.

Do not keep quiet when people are doing something that is obviously wrong.

Guide people positively and make them think about what they are doing.

Possible Ideas for activities

- discuss ways of inviting people towards the truth. Let students act out how it feels when someone guides them positively versus when someone is negative and rude. Help them see how they can apply it in everyday life. Use verse 16:125 to emphasize this point.
- build a word web on words associated with duty - responsibility, conscience, values, truth, strong, positive, success Students could do an activity with the words - write sentences, a paragraph, a letter
- create different scenarios on cards or posters etc. For example, a student's possession is stolen, a child is bullied by others, someone is made fun of What would the duty be in each situation? This could be a game between two teams, or students go around the room in teams writing their response under the scenario . . . a chance to move around and have fun while learning.

Sources:

Āytaullāh Nāsir Makārim Shirāzī (ed), *Tafsīr-e Namūneh*;

Aghae Muhsin Qaraati, *Tafsire Nur*

Sh. Rizwan Arastu, *God's Emissaries*

<http://www.alketab.org/>