

Ahle Zikr - I

- By Syed Nadeem Ahmed Jafri.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

The history of this world has seen many great people achieving greater heights in their respective fields. Their work and commitment has made them experts and legends of the field which they represent. **Their association becomes so deeply rooted that it becomes impossible to disassociate them from their fields and hence whenever a subject is discussed their contribution to the specific subject is discussed alongwith.**

In order to understand the above point let us see a few examples. If we wish to discuss the field of **Western Philosophy the name of Aristotle** would be discussed inevitably in any part of the world. Similarly **Albert Einstein is associated with Physics**. If we talk about sports then **Sir Donald Bradman would be discussed along with Cricket, Bruce Lee along with Martial Arts and Pele with Football**. They have become legends in their own fields and without mentioning their achievements and contribution the discussion of their respective fields remains incomplete. **In fact they have reached such heights that they have become the field they represent. The subsequent generations have followed their work and have taken inspiration from them.**

→ In the same way Islam has been bestowed by some great contributors who are inseparable from its philosophy. Allah (SWT) sent **His flawless message of Islam** through these **Infallible personalities** who remained **committed and dedicated for the cause**. Their contribution towards Islam is such that **without their discussion every discussion on Islam remains incomplete.** They are Islam personified and have become synonymous to it. The generations of saints after them have followed their teachings and have been inspired by them. In this article we will discuss them in the light of Quran.

The holy Quran mentions the presence of them in the following ayahs from *Surah-e-Anam*:

- “Paighamber woh log the jinko Humne (Aasmani) kitab aur hukumat aur Nabuwwat ata farmayee pas agar yeh log usse bhi na maane to (kuch parwah nahin) **Humne to uss per aise logon ko muqarrar kar diya hai jo (ununki tarah) inkaar karnewale nahin. Yeh woh the jinki Khuda ne hidayat ki pas tum bhi unki hidayat ki pairvi karo.**

(Ae Rasool (SAW) unse) kaho ki **main tum se iss (Risalat) ki mazdoori kuch nahin chahta ye to saare jahan ke liye sirf ek zikr hai (Zikraa lil Aalamin)** – (Surah-e-Anam, ayah 89-90)

These (Prophets) are they to whom We gave the book and the wisdom and the prophecy; therefore if these disbelieve in it We have already entrusted with it **a people who are not disbelievers in it. These are they whom Allah guided, therefore follow their guidance.**

Say: **I do not ask you for any reward for it; it is nothing but a reminder to the nations (Zikraa lil Aalamin).**

The above ayahs have three separate references. The ayahs start with a discussion on the Prophets and how Allah (SWT) had rewarded them with a book, wisdom and prophecies. Then the reference moves on to discuss the presence of disbelievers during the time of the holy Prophet (SAW). Here Allah (SWT) comforts the holy Prophet (SAW) by saying that if disbelievers did not believe in him; he should not worry as Allah (SWT) has **guided some people who would never disbelieve**. They have been created **so that Muslims can follow them and be guided**. This reference to the guided people is the third reference in the above ayah. Then at the end Allah (SWT) further instructs the holy Prophet (SAW) to ask the *Ummah* to remember this message of taking guidance from them as a reward of his hardwork of Prophethood. **This is in fact a reminder to the nations (Zikraa lil Aalamin)**.

→ It is established from the above ayahs that Allah (SWT) has created a few chosen ones who have represented Islam the way it should be represented. Their commitment for the cause has inspired the coming generations and no discussion of Islam is complete without discussing their conduct for the Islamic cause. Thus they are examples to be followed by the *Ummah* to remain guided.

Here, the Quran is further praising them in the following manner:

- *Aur Shaitaan ne apne khayal ko jo unke baare main kiya tha sach kar dikhaya to un logon ne usski pairvi ki **magar imaandaron ka ek giroh na bhatka**.” – (Surah-e-Saba, ayah 20)*

*“(And certainly the Shaitan found true his conjecture concerning them, so they follow him, **except a group of true believers.**)”*

As per the ayah they are so firmly guided that the Satan could not misguide them. **Against their faith and love for the Almighty Allah even the Satan remained helpless.** And Allah (SWT) has endorsed their steadfastness in the following manner:

- *“Khuda ne farmaya ke yehi raah sidhi hai ke mujh tak pahonchti hai. Jo mere mukhlis bande hain un per tujhe kissi tarah ki hukumat na hogi magar haan gumraahon main se jo teri pairvi kare usper tera zor chal jaaega aur haan ye bhi yaad rahe ke un sab ke waste aakhri wada buss Jahannum hai.” – (Surah-e-Hijr, ayah 41-43)*

*“(Lord said: **This is a right way with Me: Surely, as regards My servants, you have no authority, over them** except those who follow you of the deviators. And surely Hell is the promised place of them all”)*

→ These true believers are beyond Satan’s reach. He does not **have any authority** over them. They are **purified souls who love Allah (SWT) and His cause** and are **steadfast on the straight path that reaches Him**. Thus if we wish to remain guided **we need to seek guidance from them**. That is why Allah (SWT) has referred to them as **Zikraa lil Aalamin**.

Normally in our day-to-day life whenever we are not sure of anybody's identity we try to search his lineage or his family tree; by doing this we get enough information of his pedigree and we are then sure of his identity. In this case let us follow the same procedure to establish the true identity of these steadfast believers:

- “*Aur (wo waqt yaad dilao) jab Ibrahim wa Ismail Khana-e-Ka’aba ki buniyadein buland kar rahe the (aur dua) maangte jaate the ke Ae Hamare Parwardigar hamari (yeh khidmat) qubool kar beshak Tu hi (dua ka) sunne wala (aur usska) jaanne wala hai. (Aur) ae hamare paalne wale Tu hamein apna farmabardaar banda bana aur hamari aulaad se ek giroh paida kar jo Tera farmabardar ho.*” – (Surah-e-Baqra, ayah 127-128)

“(And when Abraham was raising the plinth of the House with Ishmael, (he prayed): “Accept this from us, O Lord, for You hear and know everything; And make us submit, O Lord, to Your will, and our progeny a group submissive to You. Teach us the way of worship and forgive our trespasses, for You are compassionate and merciful)”

The above ayahs refer to the incidence when Ibrahim (A.S) and Ismail (A.S) were raising the plinth of *Ka’aba* and praying simultaneously to Allah (SWT) to accept their services. They also prayed that **their progeny should include a group of people who are submissive to Allah (SWT) and thus are His true believers.** Thus we may conclude that this group of steadfast believers is from the progeny of Ibrahim (A.S).

In order to further substantiate our inference, let us see one more ayah from *Surah-e-Aale Imran*:

- “*Tum kya achhe giroh ho ke logon ki hidayat ke waaste paida kiye gaye ho. Tum logon ko achhe kaam ka to hukm karte ho aur bure kaamon se rokne ho aur Khuda per Imaan rakhte ho aur agar ahl-e-kitab bhi isi tarah imaan laate to unke haq main bahot achha hota un main se kuch to imaandar hain aur aksar badkaar”. – (Surah-e-Aale Imran, ayah 110)*

“(You are the best of the nations raised up for (the benefit of) men; you enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong and believe in Allah; and if the followers of the Book had believed it would have been better for them; of them (some) are believers and most of them are transgressors.)”

As per the above ayah **these believers are the best of the groups** which have been **raised for the benefit of mankind.** They enjoin right and forbid the wrong and remain true to the cause of Allah (SWT). Hence they are the best guides who need to be followed to accrue benefits.

In the *Tafseer-e-Suyuti* a tradition of Ibn-e-Abi Hakim is mentioned which quotes Hazrat Abu Jafar that the best of the nations mentioned in the above ayah are **the Ahl-u-bait (A.S) of the holy Prophet (SAW).** (Ref: *Tafseer-e-Suyuti, Vol 2, P 64*)

The *Ahl-ul-bait* are the best creations of Allah (SWT) and they have been created for the benefit of mankind and thus they are to be followed to seek guidance. In the prominent books like *Sahih Muslim* and *Sahih Tirmizi* there is a tradition from Saad bin Abi Waqas; according to this tradition during the revelation of Ayah-e-Mubahila, the holy Prophet (SAW) called **Imam Ali (A.S), lady Fatema (S.A), Imam Hassan (A.S) and Imam Hussain (A.S)** and said **‘O Allah, these are my Ahl-ul-bait.** (Ref: *Sahih Muslim, Vol. 2. P 287, Sahih Tirmizi*).

→ We can thus infer from the above contemplations that **the holy Prophet (SAW) and the people of his household (Ahl-ul-bait)** are the best of the creations. They are steadfast on the straight path and are true believers of Allah (SWT)’s cause. They have been created for the benefits of the mankind and hence they **are the reminder to the nations (Zikraa lil Aalamin)** which the above mentioned ayahs of *Surah-e-Anam* (ayah 89-90) refer to.

Now let us contemplate on the ayah from *Surah-e-Sa’afat* that refers to the trial of Ibrahim (as):

- *“Us main shak nahin ke ye yaqeeni bada sakht aur sarihi imtihaan tha aur Hum ne Ismaeel ka fidya ek zibhe azeem (badi qurbani) qaraar diya. Aur Hum ne unka achha churha baad ke aanewalon main baaki rakkha hai ” – (Surah-e-Sa’afat, ayah 106-107-108)*

“(Most surely this is a manifest trial. And We ransomed him with a Feat sacrifice. And We perpetuated (praise) to him among the later generations)”

As per the above ayah it was a manifest trial for Ibrahim (A.S) to sacrifice his son Ismail (as). Allah (SWT) thus tested the willingness of Ibrahim (as) in following this Command and then Allah postponed the event and **exchanged it with a much Greater Sacrifice (Zibhe Azeem)** for some other time.

This ayah always makes me think that **why only Ibrahim (as) had to undergo such a trial? Why Allah (SWT) did not test any of His other Prophets in a similar manner?** There is no explanation for this anywhere but we will try to address the query in the light of contemplations on a few ayahs.

And for this let us now see one more ayah which is a proof, a Quranic endorsement of the piety and purity of the *Ahl-ul-bait*. We might get answers to our above queries of trial of Ibrahim (as) when we see the following ayah on *Ahl-ul-bait* (as) and relate the same with the above ayah.

- *“Ae Paighambar ki Ahl-ul-bait Khuda to buss yeh chahta hai ke tum ko har tarah ki burai se door rakkhe aur itna paak rakkhe jitna paak rakhne ka haq hai” - (Surah-e-Ahzab, Ayah 33)*

“(Verily, Verily Allah intendeth but to keep off from you (every kind of) uncleanness, O ye people of the House, and purify you with a thorough purification.”)

Allah (SWT) has promised the *Ahl-ul-bait* that He wishes to keep them clean and pure from all kinds of filth. They are purified with a thorough purification such that they are the **peak of piety**. Now before we relate this with the trial of Ibrahim (as), let us go back to the ayah of *Surah-e-Baqra (ayah 127)* - which we have already referred to in the earlier section. As per this ayah Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) were raising the plinth of *Ka'aba* with the prayers that **Allah (SWT) should include a group of true believers in their progeny who are submissive to Allah**. Allah (SWT) accepted their prayers and **the holy Prophet (SAW) and his holy Progeny (as) were born in the lineage of Ibrahim (as)**. But before doing this Allah (SWT) made Ibrahim (as) undergo a manifest trial to test his faith and willingness since **Allah (SWT) wanted to ensure that the pious Mohammed (SAW) and Aale Mohammed (SAW) should have an equally flawless lineage.** This is how in my opinion the trial of Ibrahim (as) can be explained.

Also the great sacrifice which is mentioned in the ayah of *Surah-e-Sa'afat (ayah no. 106-108)*, which got postponed for later generation is indeed the greatest sacrifice of our beloved Imam Hussain (as) and his household at the battlefield of Karbala. (Ref: *Meraj-un-Nabuwat, P 35*)

Again if we relate this with the trial of Ibrahim (as), we can further infer that since the Greatest Trial of Karbala was to happen in the history of Islam and there was nobody who could have faced this trial the way Imam Hussain (as) and his holy household did by sacrificing their children, brothers and everything which they had for the sake of Allah (SWT) and Islam; Allah (SWT) made Ibrahim (as) undergo the trial and when Allah was thoroughly convinced about Ibrahim (as)'s willingness in sacrificing his child - Ismail (as), He assigned Imam Hussain (as) in his lineage and granted his prayers of having true believers in his progeny, a prayer which he made while raising the plinth of *Ka'aba*.

➔ In the light of Holy Quran we have understood the prominence of the holy Prophet (SAW) and his holy Progeny (as) in our lives. Let us see few other references now:

The holy Prophet (SAW) has said that:

- “No one shall be able to move from his place of reckoning on the Day of Judgment until he has stated four things: how he spent his life and his wealth, and where he got it from -- **- and he shall also be asked about the love of the *Ahl-ul-bait*.**”

(Ref: *This tradition has been recorded by Tabrani from Ibn-e-Abbas and from him Allama Suyuti and Nabahani in their Ehya-ul-Maiyyit and Arba'een and many other Ullema have also recorded it.*)

Abu Abdellah Al-Sadiq (PBUH) said to Fadil:

- “Do you sit and talk about us?” Fadil said: “Yes, may my soul be yours!” Imam said: “Indeed, I love those gatherings so commemorate our matter; **Allah has mercy on those who commemorate our matter.** O Fadil! Whoever mentions us or hears someone

mention us and then a tear as small as a fly's wing comes out of his eyes, **Allah will forgive his sins even if they were as much as the foam of the sea."**

(Ref: Al-Bihar vol.44 p.282, Thawab Al-Aamal p.187, Al-Awalim p.527)

Allah (SWT) has created the *Ahl-ul-bait (as)* so perfect that they are *Zikraa lil Aalamin* as we have proved through various Quranic ayahs. Our inference of them being the best guide is further vindicated by prominent Islamic researchers as they have said that:

- “Whatever did the **Progeny of Mohammad (SAW)**, they did it in the best way” – *(Ref: Saheeh Muslim Vol 1 P 266)*

When anyone reaches the peak of perfection in the area which he represents he becomes synonymous to his field, this is what we discussed in the introductory section of this article. The holy Prophet (SAW) and his holy Progeny (as) represented Islam with such perfection that they became synonymous to the faith and religion. The great saint and an ardent lover of *Ahl-ul-bait (as)* - **Khwaja Moynuddin Chisti (R.A)** got inspired by **Imam Hussain (as)** and wrote the following eulogy in praise of the great Imam:

“Shah ast Husain, Badshah ast Husain – (King is Husain, Emperor is Husain)

Deen ast Husain, Deen Panah ast Husain - (Faith is Husain, Guardian of faith is Husain)

Sardad na daad dast dar dast-e-Yazeed – (Offered is Head, against his hand to Yazid)

Haqqa key binaey La ilaah ast Husain.” - (Indeed Husain is the foundation of La ilaha)

➔ Finally we can conclude that the holy Prophet (SAW) and his holy Progeny (as) are the best of Allah (SWT)’s creation and hence they are as important as the holy Quran in our lives. While Quran is the Commandment of Allah (SWT) the *Ahl-ul-bait (as)* are the guides to be followed to understand Allah’s Commandments. The way Quran needs to be recited on daily basis we need to remember them on daily basis in our gatherings and ponder upon their lives and teachings. So let us pray to the Almighty Allah:

“O our Lord, after showing us the light of guidance don’t let us go astray and provide us with firm resolve so that we may remain steadfast on the straight path. Shower us with immense love of the Ahl-ul-bait so that we may be rightly guided and become capable of understanding Your Commandments. Amin.”