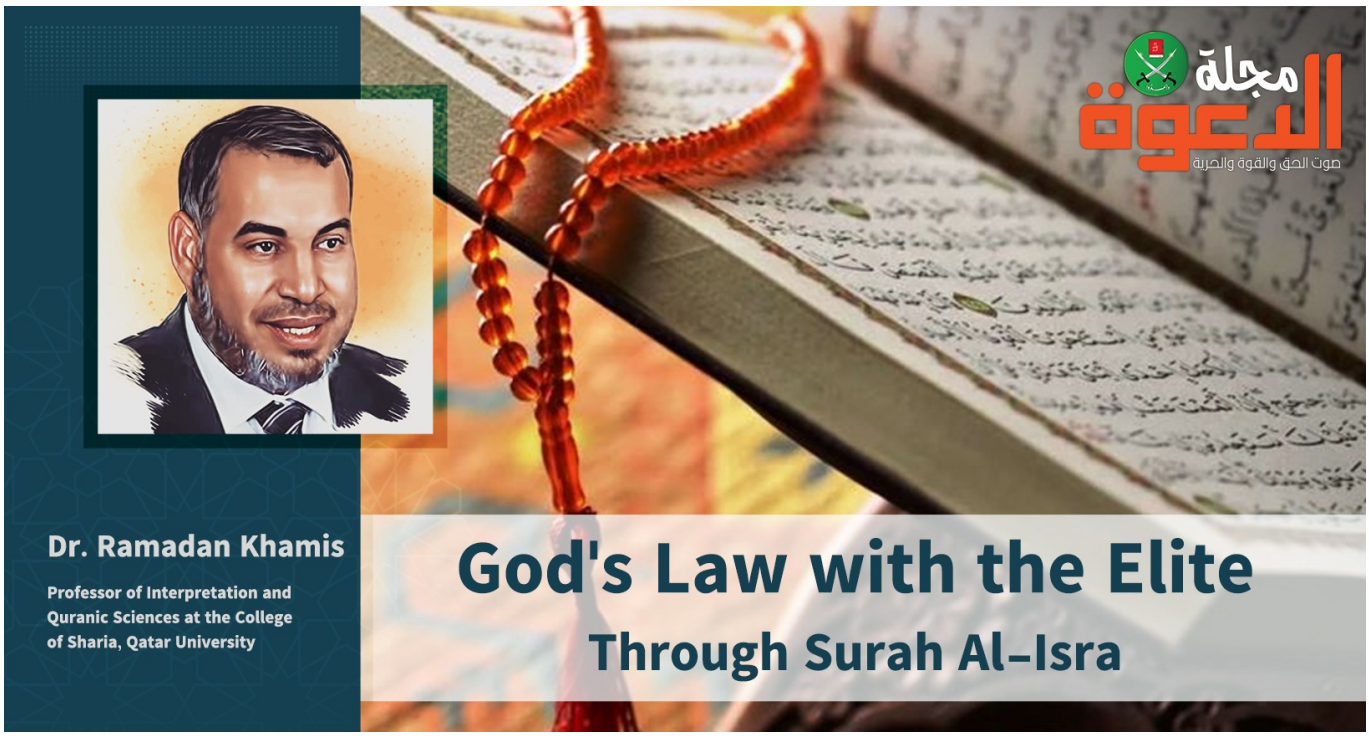
God's Law with the Elite Through Surah Al-Isra



Among the laws of God Almighty is His law for the elite. This law is mentioned in a noble verse of Surah Al-Isra and is intricately connected to the cause of liberating Al-Aqsa and fostering an independent generation capable of taking control of its own affairs and guiding humanity to safety.

What is notable about Surah Al-Isra is that it first mentions the story of the Night Journey in the opening verse, then describes the revelation of the Book to Moses as guidance for the Children of Israel. It then directly addresses the believers, saying (Do not take anyone besides Me as a guardian). It is as if the entire discussion about the Night Journey and the Children of Israel is meant to prepare the nation for the succession to humanity and world leadership instead of the Children of Israel. It warns them about the flaws of these people so they do not fall into them, thus enforcing the ongoing laws of God, which show no favoritism. I often say that these laws are like a wild horse; if you do not ride it, its hooves will trample you.

It is also noteworthy that this noble surah contains a hadith that is independent of the Qur'an. It is mentioned eleven times, as if to remind believers that the secret of their rise and leadership is the Qur'an, then the Qur'an, then the Qur'an...

The Sunnah is mentioned in the Almighty's saying: "Whenever We intend to destroy a society, We command its elite to obey Allah but they act rebelliously in it. So the decree of punishment is justified, and We destroy it utterly." (16)

The form of the Sunnah: The form of the Sunnah is the conditional form "And when We intend to destroy a society" and the penalty form "We command its elite to obey Allah but they act rebelliously in it. So the decree of

punishment is justified, and We destroy it utterly."

First, the Sunnah guidance:

This noble verse establishes a divine law that is unchanging and eternal. It explains to all people the causes, effects, and consequences of this law, as well as how to escape its effects and, indeed, how to avoid its occurrence. It links it to a cosmic law, namely, God Almighty's law of making night and day a sign. Just as this cosmic law or life phenomenon is fixed, clear, and constant, so too is God Almighty's law regarding the affluent. "So God's law of destroying towns and seizing their inhabitants in this world proceeds, linked to that cosmic law that directs night and day."

The meaning of will here and its relationship to God's laws

The meaning of "will" here is not its literal sense. Imam al-Jassas offers a unique interpretation, emphasizing transcendence and the absence of hasty punishment, instead referring to past laws whose causes have been fulfilled and whose consequences have been realized. He believes that the meaning of the "will" here is: "If it is known that a village will be destroyed, we will increase its elite people." The implication is not that he willed it before the sin, because destruction is a punishment, and God Almighty cannot punish those who have not sinned.

The Meaning of Destruction Here

Exegetes have identified several interpretations of what is meant by destruction here, limiting them to three opinions: "The first: its meaning is if we want to decree the destruction of a village. The second: its meaning is, 'And if we destroy a village...' The third: that he intended by the destruction of the village the annihilation of its best and the survival of its wicked."

The Causes of Destruction as Explained by the Current Sunnah

The causes of destruction are explained by the noble verse in this Sunnah, which points to the abundance of the wealthy. When their numbers grow and become overwhelming, corruption spreads widely and becomes a societal problem. This corruption manifests in many forms due to the influence and power of these elite individuals. "The affluent in every nation are the class of the wealthy and the soft who find wealth and find servants find comfort, so they enjoy ease, comfort and sovereignty, until their souls become flabby and rotten, and they indulge in immorality and licentiousness, and they disregard values, sanctities and dignities, and they violate honor and sanctity. And if they do not find someone to strike their hands, they will spread corruption in the land, and spread and disseminate immorality in the nation, and they will cheapen the supreme values that people cannot live without and for. And then the nation will disintegrate and become relaxed, and lose its vitality, elements of strength and reasons for its survival, and it will perish, and its page will be turned."

One cause of destruction, as explained by the Noble Sunnah, is society abandoning the elite to their corrupt and sleazy ways. "When the corrupt increase in number and prevail, and the righteous decrease and are lost, then God will engulf mankind with His affliction. People will have no refuge among His friends to speak out against them, nor will there be anyone among them who can supplicate to God and have their supplications heard. Thus, He will destroy His friends and leave the masters of corruption. At that point, the affliction intensifies and the trials become greater until God Almighty looks upon mankind with a look of mercy and favor."

This is a subtle insight from the author of "Al-Lata'if" and a significant indication from the author of "Al-Isharat" (The Signs), the distinguished scholar Al-Qushayri. He believes that the lack of forbidding evil, combined with the absence of a righteous minority and the dominance of a wealthy majority, leads to destruction. This insight merges the social aspect of enjoining good and forbidding evil with the spiritual and behavioral aspects, highlighting the importance of the active minority who guide, forbid, instruct, and command. Otherwise, their absence results in destruction. The current reality in which Muslims live clearly proves this point.

This verse affirms Allah's law. If Allah has decreed that a village will perish because it has taken the causes of destruction, and the wealthy have multiplied there without restraint or defense, Allah will empower these wealthy people, allowing them to commit sins within the village. Sin will spread, and the village will become lax and careless. As a result, Allah's law will be enforced, bringing destruction and ruin. The village is responsible for what happens because it did not restrain the greedy and failed to reform the system that allowed their presence. The very existence of the wealthy is the reason Allah granted them power over the village, so they would sin. If the village had stopped them from gaining control and not let them succeed, it would not have deserved to perish. Allah would not have granted power to those who lead it to corruption and destruction.

The prevalence of elite reflects these reasons contained in the Sunnah, and in their spread, the characteristics of laxity and softness become prominent. Over time, these traits become part of a society's culture, leading to its disintegration and decline according to the laws of God Almighty. This process accelerates especially when the voice of sound advice is absent—advice that guides, directs, and provides refuge for people in times of calamity and hardship. This aligns with the laws of God Almighty, both past and present.

God's will has established for human life unchanging laws and norms. When causes exist, results follow, fulfilling God's will and His word. God does not command immorality because He does not command indecency. However, the presence of the wealthy is evidence that the nation's structure has weakened and is on the verge of collapse, and God's judgment will come as just punishment. It is this nation that has been exposed to God's law by allowing the wealthy to exist and thrive.

The will here is not a will of coercive direction that creates the cause, but rather one that aligns the result with the cause. This is inevitable because the law has been established. The command is not a command to direct immorality, but rather to create the natural consequence of the existence of the affluent, which is immorality.

Here, the community's responsibility is emphasized in allowing corrupt systems to produce their inevitable effects. It is also important to avoid restraining the hands of the wealthy within these systems, or else they may commit immorality and become entirely destructive.

One of the causes of destruction is that these wealthy people did not use their blessings properly. Instead, they diverted them from their intended purpose and strayed from the right path. God Almighty bestowed His blessings upon them, but they turned these blessings into an excuse for sin and pursuing worldly desires. It was as if they were encouraged to do so because of the blessings they received. He only gave them blessings so they would be grateful, do good deeds, and remain righteous. He also created them healthy and strong, empowering them for both good and evil, and asked them to choose obedience over disobedience. However, they chose immorality. When they committed immoral acts, the prophecy came true for them—the punishment that led to their destruction.

This reason is one of the most powerful causes of destruction and the loss of blessings because the purpose of every blessing is to dedicate it to the worship of God Almighty. If it is diverted from its intended purpose, it becomes a

tragedy for the recipient. The situation worsens if this diversion becomes widespread and covers any society like a cloud. It turns into a widespread affliction and a societal disease, and therefore the punishment is collective.

The Secret of the Specialty of the Elite Here

Perhaps the reason behind the specific influence of the wealthy here, despite the overall rule, is that they are the first to engage in corruption, thus influencing others. "Even though it includes both the wealthy and others, the wealthy are specifically mentioned because their immorality is the main factor driving the corruption of the village, and they are the greatest source of misguidance, while others are subordinate."

Abu al-Su'ud elaborates on the meaning of the elite, viewing them as its rich, its tyrants, and its kings. He "specified them for mention, even though the command is directed to all, because they are the origins of the discourse, and the rest are their followers, and because the command is directed to them, it is more urgent."

This destruction, as clarified by the noble Sunnah, is rooted in specific causes. It is not limited to the collapse of villages alone but is an established principle regarding causes and effects. Everything ultimately comes to an end, and its end is brought about by the occurrence of its causes.

Al-Qashani stated: "Everything in this world is destined to perish. Its perishing is due to the presence of a predisposition that makes it inevitable. Just as the body perishes from loss of balance and the emergence of deviations that detach it from health and stability, so too does the destruction and demise of a city result from its deviation from the straight path— the path of God and the law that maintains order. When the time for a village's destruction arrives, it is inherently deserving of that fate. This is due to immorality and disobedience to God. When God's will aligns with its destruction, the immoral and disobedient wealthy—those proud and wicked despite God's blessings and who misuse them—are the first to be implicated. This occurs by God's command and decree, due to the misery their inherent dispositions cause. At that moment, their destruction becomes inevitable.

Al-Tahir ibn Ashur (may God have mercy on him) explains the clear harmony between this current tradition and the previous verse, saying that it "is a detail of the previous ruling, intended to threaten the leaders of the polytheists and hold them responsible for the misguidance of those who led them astray. It is a branching off of the reasons for the punishment that came after the mission of the Messenger, incorporating the threat of those who led astray."

The Secret of Combining with "and" Here

Among the insightful rhetorical explanations is the reason for using 'and,' even though the apparent meaning calls for 'then,' because it branches from the reasons for destruction. "The coupling with 'and' is to emphasize that it stands as a statement on its own, considering the warning it contains about falling into a similar situation." The meaning of the coupling is clear from the overall context of the speech. The use of 'and' here is a derivation that contradicts the apparent separation and connection. This verse serves as a warning to the polytheists of Mecca and as a lesson to Muslims.

Therefore, this deviation from the apparent meaning was "to include the allusion to threatening the people of Mecca that they are exposed to something like what happened to the people of the villages that denied the messengers of God."

The goal is to clarify that "the mission of the Messenger includes a command to follow a law, and that the reason for

the destruction of those to whom he was sent after the Messenger was sent to them was their failure to obey what God commanded them through that Messenger."

This is the core of the Sunnah: the destruction that happened to those who came before will also happen to those who come after if the same causes exist. Therefore, what happened to their ancestors will happen to them.

The Readings of "Amarna" and Their Sunnah Relationship

The following readings are found in the noble phrase "Amarna":

1. "Amarna" with a light pronunciation, which is from the word "Amr" (command), the opposite of "Prohibition."

2. "Ammarna" with a heavy pronunciation, which is from "Imara" (emirate), meaning "rule," meaning We made its rulers luxurious." This affirms sovereignty for these people, and they will be followed by the subjects or "the common folk," as Yahya ibn Salam said.

3. "Ammarna" with a light pronunciation, which is from "abundance," meaning abundant in offspring.

4- "Amirana," which is a weak reading.

Ibn Abbas used to read it as {Ammarna}, with strong emphasis due to authority. ...Al-Hasan used to read it as {Amarna}, also because of abundance. Some of them read it as {Amarna}, meaning: We commanded them to believe, but they sinned in that, i.e., they committed polytheism and did not believe.

Imam al-Tabari, may God have mercy on him, preferred the reading of {Amarna} with a light emphasis. The basis for his statement is that the meaning is: We commanded them to obey, but they sinned in that. He supported this choice by citing the consensus of jurists among Qur'an reciters on its correctness, rather than others. He also referenced the most common interpretation of "Amarna" as a command, which is the opposite of a prohibition, because "directing the meanings of the words of God, may He be glorified, to the most well-known and familiar of its meanings is more appropriate than anything else."

Abu Ubaid also preferred this reading: "Because the three meanings come together in it, meaning: command, authority, and abundance."

The Sunni interpretation of these readings:

1. According to the reading (amarna), which denotes abundance, if this abundance becomes widespread, its effects will also be widespread, leading to luxury and the consequences associated with luxury, including the causes of destruction. God Almighty "did not destroy past nations except after their numbers had increased and He had made the world abundant for them. He did not destroy them in a state of scarcity and hardship."

2. According to the reading (ammarna), which refers to making them leaders, it includes the Sunni interpretation of these leaders who control and dominate their followers. They are influential elites with a strong voice and an elevated level of knowledge. This aligns with Ibn Abbas's interpretation: "We gave authority to its leaders, but they committed wickedness therein."

3. According to the reading (Amarna), the meaning is: We commanded them to obey, but they committed wickedness. This was the cause of destruction, because if the premise of every tradition is fulfilled, the result will occur without change or transformation.

This is an ongoing tradition established by God Almighty in this noble surah, guiding believers on the path to progress and growth. For those who wish to succeed the Children of Israel, must abandon their faults and follow the guidance, order, and spirit of the Quran. May Muslims remember these directives so they can lead in a world filled with competing initiatives.