

The call of Prophet Hud (as)



Allah has sent messengers to communicate His divine message to all the human societies that have ever lived. As is emphasized in the Qur'an, these messengers, with all their behavior and fine moral attributes, are role models for believers. Prophet Hud (as), sent by Allah as an envoy to the people of 'Ad, is one such holy individual, honored by Allah with the role and responsibility of being a prophet.

To direct their lives, people choose very different "teachers" or guides. Some select an ideology such as Communism or Capitalism as their guide, imagining that the thinker who first came up with these ideologies was a "superior" individual and that they can attain the truth by following in that person's footsteps. The greatest guide for many people is the society they live in. They determine their value judgments, their sense of right and wrong, of what is true and what is false, according to the general thinking that prevails in society in general. Others recognize none of these standards, and instead claim to use their own reason and intuition as their only guides.

However, all of these ideas are founded on one common misconception. People who harbor such ideas reject—or else ignore—one most important fact: Any human being is a created entity and owes all he has to Allah. Anyone who carefully examines his own body, his environment, the skies above or anything else in existence can clearly see that all these have been created by Almighty Allah.

The sole true reason for any person's creation is to serve Allah; and human beings are created in such a way as to take pleasure from serving Him. In so doing, they are acting in accord with the purpose of their own creation. But although the Qur'an tells us that it is human nature to serve Allah alone, it also informs us that most people are unaware of this great basic truth.

Some of the unaware do not possess the ability to be aware of Allah and to see the truth by themselves. Yet our Lord, the infinitely compassionate and loving, sends them messengers who will warn them and tell them of the existence of Allah and of the Hereafter, and of the true meaning of life. It is revealed in the Qur'an that every society has been warned by an envoy:

We sent a Messenger among every people saying: "Worship Allah and keep clear of all false gods." Among them were some whom Allah guided but others received the misguidance they deserved. Travel about the Earth and see the final fate of the deniers. (Surat an-Nahl: 36)

Prophet Hud (as) is one of those messengers who is described, along with his message, in the Qur'an. Sent a messenger to the people of 'Ad, Prophet Hud (as) announced to the people that he was a trustworthy emissary dispatched by Allah and called on them to fear Him. The message of Prophet Hud (as) is reported in these words:

And to 'Ad We sent their brother Hud, who said, "My people, worship Allah! You have no other god than Him. So will you not guard against evil?" (Surat al-A'raf: 65)



Prophet Hud Expected No Recompense

As can be seen from the lives of all the prophets related in the Qur'an, spending one's life preaching the message to others and expectating no reward from them is an important feature of a believer. No matter where or among whom a believer may live, he is responsible for calling on people to adhere to the moral values that Allah approves of and for reminding them of the Day of Judgment that is fast approaching them.

Therefore, the believer expects no recompense from anyone, and seeks merely to fulfill his obligations in the best manner possible so as to obtain the approval of Allah. Prophet Hud (as) exhibited just such a moral virtue, emphasizing that he expected no recompense for having called his tribe to adhere to religious obedience. This fact is revealed in the Qur'an in these words:

"My people! I do not ask you for any wage for it. My wage is the responsibility of Him Who brought me into being. So will you not use your intellect?" (Surah Hud: 51)

He Warned His People of Retribution

Prophet Hud (as) warned his people to serve only Allah, or else He would inflict retribution upon them. This warning issued by Prophet Hud (as) is reported thus in one verse:

Remember the brother of 'Ad when he warned his people by the sand-dunes—and warners passed away before and after him— "Worship no one but Allah. I fear for you the punishment of a terrible Day." (Surat al-Ahqaf: 21)

Along with warning his people of coming retribution, Prophet Hud (as) also reminded them that the material things they valued in the life of this world were only transitory. His message on this subject to his people, preoccupied as they were with the attractions of this world, is reported as follows:

"Do you build a tower on every hilltop, just to amuse yourselves, and construct great fortresses, hoping to live forever?" (Surat ash-Shu'ara': 128-129)

After this, he reminded his people to fear Allah, to abide by His stipulations, and not treat others tyrannically. Otherwise, as he warned them, torment might be inflicted

upon them. This warning by Prophet Hud (as) is reported thus in verses:

“And when you attack, attack as tyrants do? So have fear of Allah and obey me. Have fear of Him who has supplied you with what you know, supplied you with livestock and children and gardens and clear springs. I fear for you the punishment of a terrible Day.” (Surat ash-Shu'ara': 130-135)



Prophet Hud (as) Reminded His People of Allah's Blessings

It is impossible even to count the number of blessings bestowed by Allah on human beings. (Surat an-Nahl: 18) Yet most people never consider that Almighty Allah bestows all these blessings upon them and that they should therefore give thanks to Him. Neither do they ever think that Allah can take back these blessings at any moment He so chooses. For that reason, the prophets reminded those peoples to whom they were sent to turn to Allah, that everything they possessed was a blessing from Him and that they should give thanks to Him. The Qur'an reveals how Prophet Hud (as) reminded his people of the many blessings imparted by Allah and how they should fear Him and avoid His wrath:

“Or are you astonished that a reminder should come to you from your Lord by way of a man among you in order to warn you? Remember when He appointed you successors to the people of Nuh, and increased you greatly in stature. Remember Allah's blessings, so that hopefully you will be successful.” (Surat al-A'raf: 69)

Prophet Hud (as) also called on his people to seek Allah's forgiveness. He told them that if they repented and sought shelter in Allah, He would in turn increase their blessings. This wise message of Prophet Hud (as) is reported as follows in one verse:

“My people! Ask forgiveness of your Lord and then repent to Him. He will send heaven down to you in abundant rain, and increase you with strength upon strength. Do not turn away as evildoers.” (Surah Hud: 52)

The Submission of Prophet Hud (as)

Despite all the warnings, his people still opposed Prophet Hud (as) and refused to follow the path to which he had called them. Also, like all deniers throughout the course of history, they asked their prophet to perform miracles, saying that otherwise they would not believe:

They said, “Hud, you have not brought us any clear sign. We will not forsake our gods for what you say. We do not believe you.” (Surah Hud: 53)

At this, verses tell us that Prophet Hud (as) had nothing to do with their ascription of partners to Allah, stating that he had no fear of the traps they would set for him:

. . . He said, "I call on Allah to be my witness, and you also bear witness, that I am free of all the gods you have apart from Him. So scheme against me, all of you together, and then grant me no respite." (Surah Hud: 54-55)

As a holy prophet, Prophet Hud (as) stated that Allah had created all things, that He would protect His genuine servants, and that for that reason, he submitted to Him. With a great determination of faith, therefore, he expressed the feeling of confidence that he felt in Allah, that all the slanders against him and the snares laid for him would come to nothing. The words of Prophet Hud (as) are reported in the Qur'an:

"I have put my trust in Allah, my Lord and your Lord. There is no creature He does not hold by the forelock. My Lord is on a Straight Path." (Surah Hud: 56)



The Fate of the People of 'Ad

Despite this message that Prophet Hud (as) communicated to his people with such great effort, they refused to abide by religious moral values and persisted in their denials.

As revealed in verses, like every people that failed to abide by religious values, Allah inflicted retribution on the people of 'Ad for failing to heed the call of Prophet Hud (as), and inflicted losses on them both in this world and in the Hereafter. The fate that met the people of 'Ad is revealed thus in the Qur'an:

That was 'Ad. They denied the Signs of their Lord and disobeyed His Messengers and followed the command of every obdurate tyrant. They were pursued by a curse in this world and on the Day of Resurrection. Yes indeed! 'Ad rejected their Lord, so away with 'Ad, the people of Hud! (Surah Hud: 59-60)

'Ad were destroyed by a savage howling wind. (Surat al-Haqqa: 6)

This retribution visited upon the people of 'Ad is one of the instances wisely cited in the Qur'an so that readers and listeners may appreciate the severity of Allah's judgments. Like Prophet Hud (as), all the blessed prophets have called on people to abide by religious moral values.

That call applies as much to people today as it did to those peoples of bygone times to whom it was made. The fundamental truths of faith and morals communicated by Allah's prophets must constitute the basic elements of our lives today.

They are the ones to whom We gave the Book, Judgment and Prophethood. If these people reject it, We have already entrusted it to a people who did not. They are the ones Allah has guided, so be guided by their guidance. . . . (Surat al-An`am: 89-90)

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