301677 - All goodness is in complying with and submitting to the command of Allah

the question

Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“He said, ‘It is my staff; I lean upon it, and I bring down leaves for my sheep and I have therein other uses.’

[Allah] said, ‘Throw it down, O Moses.’

So he threw it down, and thereupon it was a snake, moving swiftly”

[Taa-Haa 20:18-20].

My question is about the interpretation of this verse. I think that after Moosa explained how important his staff was to him, when Allah commanded him to throw it down and he threw it down straightaway, this is indicative of his blind trust in the Creator, and that it is possible for a person to do without something that he loves and that is extremely important to him, because of the trust that the one who commanded you to do this is Allah, may He be exalted, and thus it will bring you much good and more benefits when you trust in and give up something important by way of obedience to Allah. Is this understanding correct or not?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

We would like to draw the questioner’s attention to the importance of choosing the right words, for words are the vessels of meaning.

It would have been more appropriate for the questioner to say trust or reliance (tawakkul), submission or thinking positively of Allah, or other such Islamic phrases which reflect sound meanings, instead of using phrases such as “blind trust”, which carries a shade of meaning that is not appropriate when speaking of submitting to Allah, believing in Him and putting one’s trust in Him (tawakkul).

Yes it is trust, but it is not blind; rather it stems from deeply-rooted certainty that all good is in His hands, and that nothing bad comes from Him, may He be glorified and praised, and that adhering to His laws, obeying His commands, and avoiding what He prohibits is the key to all goodness.

Secondly:

Imam at-Tahhaawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: One’s commitment to Islam cannot be steadfast unless it is based on submission and surrender.

End quote from Sharh at-Tahhaawiyyah (1/231).

Shaykh al-Barraak said in his commentary on at-Tahhaawiyyah (128): A person’s commitment to Islam cannot be established and he cannot develop reassurance and peace of mind unless it is built on the foundation of submission.

The ideas of surrender and submission are close in meaning. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And whoever submits his face to Allah while he is a doer of good…”

[Luqmaan 31:22].

Islam means surrender and submission, which implies not disputing, because the one who disputes has not submitted.

Submission is an important principle and is to be based on belief in Allah, His Messenger and His Book.

Belief in Allah means believing that He, may He be exalted, is the true God and no other is deserving of worship except Him; that He, may He be exalted, is the Lord and Sovereign of all things; that He, may He be glorified and exalted, possesses all the attributes of perfection and is far above any shortcomings, so there is no injustice or folly in His creation, laws and decree, rather He, may He be exalted, is wise in all that He creates, prescribes and decrees.

Once you understand this properly, then whatever you learn about what Allah, may He be exalted, and His Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said and prescribed, you must submit, because objections and disputes only stem from weakness of faith in divine justice, and from weakness of faith in divine wisdom.

Everything that is contrary to truth is false, but sometimes the opposition may be blunt and clear, as in the case of the disbelievers and those whose faith is shaky or has almost vanished altogether. Such people speak of objections to the laws and will of Allah, and sometimes they do not speak of them but they are in their hearts.

The Muslim must ward off all objections that cross his mind, or that he hears on the lips of the devils or of ignorant people. He can ward that off by believing that Allah, may He be exalted, is Most Just, Most Wise and All-Knowing.

This does not mean that Islamic teachings are contrary to reason; rather sound reasoning is never contrary to the soundly-narrated texts. But reason has certain limits when it comes to understanding the religious texts. It is not possible for human reason to encompass everything; rather human reason has its limits beyond which it cannot go, because man is imperfect. Not every question can be answered; rather you should say: Allah knows best, and Allah is Most Wise and All-Knowing.

When a person submits, he will find comfort and will be able to give reassurance to people around him.

With regard to the objections that came to your mind:

either you can ward them off with evidence and proof that will dispel these doubts,

or if you are not able to do that because of lack of knowledge, then you may ward them off with this principle [submission] and say: I believe in Allah and His Messenger, for the Shaytaan casts waswaas [whispers; intrusive thoughts] into people's hearts.

Thirdly:

With regard to the meaning that you understood for this verse, it is correct and was stated by a number of commentators, namely that Moosa (peace be upon him) thought that Allah was commanding him to reject his staff. It was narrated from Wahb: The Lord said to him: "Throw it down, O Moses", and Moosa thought that He was telling him to reject it, so he threw it down by way of rejecting it.

End quote from at-Tafseer al-Baseet (14/382); Tafseer al-Baghawi (5/269).

And whoever gives up something for the sake of Allah, will not feel its loss.

End quote from Tafseer al-Qurtubi (18/26).

Shaykh as-Sa'di (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Ash-Shaakir and ash-Shakoor (the Appreciative) are among the names of Allah, may He be exalted, Who accepts a small deed from His slave and grants him an immense reward for it. If His slave adheres to His commands and obeys Him, He helps him to do that and praises him for it, and rewards him with light, faith and comfort in his heart, and with physical strength and energy, and grants him increased blessing and growth in all his affairs, and increased success in his deeds.

Then after that, He will grant him reward in full with his Lord in the hereafter, and nothing will be detracted from that.

Part of Allah's appreciation of His slave is that if he gives up something for the sake of Allah, Allah will compensate him with something better than it; whoever draws near to Him a handspan, Allah will draw near to him an arm's length; whoever draws near to Him an arm's length, He will draw

near to him a fathom’s length; whoever comes to Him walking, He will come to him at speed; whoever enters into a deal with Him, He will grant him abundant profit. Although He is Appreciative, He knows best who is deserving of reward in full, commensurate with his intention, faith and piety, and who is not like that. He knows best about the deeds of His slaves, so He will not cause them to be lost; rather they will find them complete and abundant, according to their intentions, of which the All-Knowing, the Most Wise is well aware.

End quote from Tafseer as-Sa‘di (76).

Fourthly:

This verse contains an important, practical meaning, which is very helpful to the Muslim in the way he responds to the commands of the Lord of the Worlds and of His noble Messenger that are addressed to him. That is: to quickly respond to them, and not be lazy or slow or hesitant, or procrastinate.

Where we see that in the verse is when Allah, may He be exalted, says, “So he threw it down”. The particle fa (translated here as “so”) indicates that this happened straightaway. In other words, Moosa (peace be upon him) hastened to comply with the command of his Lord and to obey Him. So he threw down his staff that was so useful and necessary to him, as soon as he heard the words of the Lord of the Worlds.

This is how the Muslim should be with his Lord. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“It is not for a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter, that they should [thereafter] have any choice about their affair. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger has certainly strayed into clear error”

[al-Ahzaab 33:36].

We also advise you to measure the ideas that come to your mind concerning the meaning against what the scholars say about the interpretation of this verse, and to frequently consult readily

available tafseers such as Mukhtasar at-Tafseer (Markaz Tafseer edition) or at-Tafseer al-Muyassar (Ministry of Awqaaf edition). After that, one of the most important tafseers is that of Shaykh as-Sa‘di (may Allah have mercy on him) [available in English under the title Tafseer as-Sa‘di, published in ten volumes by International Islamic Publishing House (IIPH), Riyadh]. That will be a great help to you in reflecting upon the meanings of the verses and understanding the subtle concepts derived from them.

And Allah knows best.