

## Fast 21

### Holy Prophet's concern for the most ordinary of people

The Holy Prophet is told by Allah:

“And do not drive away those who call upon their Lord, morning and evening, desiring only His pleasure. Neither are you accountable for them at all, nor are they accountable for you at all, that you should drive them away and thus be one of the wrongdoers.” — 6:52

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*Notes:* This verse was revealed when some leading Quraish expressed their willingness to accept the Prophet if the poorer Muslims were not allowed to remain in his company at the time. The poor and the rich are here brought to the same level; they have equal claims to learn and practise the truth. Truth is equally accessible to all. Before the Great Master the differences of rank, wealth and colour sink into insignificance, and therefore before Allah's Messenger, as before Allah Himself, they must all stand upon one level. *Everyone is answerable for what he does* is the golden principle preached by Islam in this verse.

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“<sup>111</sup>They said: Shall we believe in you when the lowest (people) follow you? <sup>112</sup>He said: And what knowledge do I have of what they did? <sup>113</sup>Their reckoning is only with my Lord, if you could perceive. <sup>114</sup>And I am not going to drive away the believers; <sup>115</sup>I am only a plain warner.” — 26:111–115

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*Notes:* Although this incident is narrated as an exchange between Noah and those of his people who rejected him, the same happened in case of the Holy Prophet. The important and higher up people refuse to accept the prophet, objecting that his followers are from the lowest classes. The prophet replies: How can I judge them merely on the basis that they are “low”? They can only be judged on account of their deeds, and only God can judge them thereby. He refuses to drive them away, just to accommodate the important ones.

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“<sup>1</sup>He frowned and turned away, <sup>2</sup>because the blind man came to him. <sup>3</sup>And what would make you know that he might purify himself, <sup>4</sup>or be mindful, so the Reminder should benefit him? <sup>5</sup>As for him who considers himself free from need, <sup>6</sup>to him you do attend. <sup>7</sup>And no blame is on you, if he does not purify himself. <sup>8</sup>And as to him who comes to you striving hard, <sup>9</sup>and he fears — <sup>10</sup>to him you pay no regard. <sup>11</sup>No! surely it is a Reminder. <sup>12</sup>So whoever wishes, let him be mindful of it.” — Ch. 80

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*Notes:* This chapter is entitled *He Frowned*, from its opening words. It speaks of an incident early in the Holy Prophet's mission at Makkah, when a blind man came to the Holy Prophet while he was explaining the doctrines of Islam to an assembly of the leaders of the Quraish

and, interrupting, he asked to be taught what Allah had revealed to him. The Holy Prophet took this untimely interruption ill — *he frowned* and did not pay any attention to his question. God then sent this revelation to the Prophet. It tells him that he should not have frowned and turned away from the blind man because it could have been that he would have benefitted from his teaching. The Prophet is told that the leaders he was attending to, don't consider themselves as needing his teaching, although their attitude is not his responsibility. But the blind man had struggled to come to him to learn what he was teaching, because he feared the consequences of not accepting the Prophet's teaching.

Thus God revealed to the Holy Prophet, very early on, that while preaching his message he must regard even the most ordinary of people to be as important, and as deserving of his time and attention, as those persons who occupy the highest positions in the community.

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It is reported in Sahih Bukhari:

A black woman used to sweep the Prophet's mosque in Madinah, and she died. The Prophet, not seeing her the next day, asked about her. He was told that she had died, and they had buried her. He said: "Why did you not inform me? Show me her grave". So he went to her grave and offered her funeral prayer.