



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL

“Verily, Allaah will not change the (good) condition of a people as long as they do not change their state (of goodness) themselves (by committing sins and by being ungrateful and disobedient to Allaah)” [al-Ra’d 13:11]?

INTRODUCTION

Everyone one of us is complaining about the state of the Ummah, the conditions in Palestine, Syria, Yemen, etc. Many people are blaming America and the west for their interference, and some would go for demonstrations to protest against the injustice. We blame the rich for not distributing the wealth to the poor, so much so that many people in the world are starving. The world’s climate is changing, and we blame others like China and America for their failure to control the carbon dioxide emissions.

However, many of us fail to look into ourselves and understand the verse which Allah has made clear in surah ar Ra’d (13), verse 11:

“...Verily, Allaah will not change the (good) condition of a people as long as they do not change their state (of goodness) themselves (by committing sins and by being ungrateful and disobedient to Allaah)...”

We become now obsessed with social media, making comments and criticisms through twitter, facebook, etc...but we seldom look at ourselves in the mirror. Various historical events reminded us that it is NOT the number that matters, but the quality of those who remain obedient and steadfast to Allah and His Commands:

1. The People of the Elephant could only gather and invoke Allah’s Help when Abrahah decided to send his army to attack the ka’bah. Allah defeated the army using His own “armies” - birds with stones which destroyed the enemies of Allah.
2. In the battle of Badr - 300 Muslims were able to defeat 1,000 Quraish with the Help of Allah and His angels

3. In the battle of Uhud, the 700 Muslims were winning the war against 3,000 enemies of Islam, only to be defeated because of their disobedience to the prophet's order.
4. In the battle of khandaq (The battle of the Trench_ the Muslims were besieged for a long time. Allah Destroyed the enemies without any of the Muslims lifting the sword.

These were just a few examples among many which were described in the Qur'an.

Tafsir Ibn Káthir

Explanation of Sura 13:11

Ibn Abi Hatim narrated that Ibrahim said: "Allah revealed to a Prophet from among the Children of Israel, 'Say to your nation: every people of the village or a house who used to obey Allah but changed their behaviour to disobeying Him, then he would take away from them what they like and exchange it for what they dislike.'" Ibrahim next said that this statement has proof in Allah's Book:

{ Verily, ALLAH does not change the condition of people until they change what is within themselves.} Sura ar-Ra`d 13:11

Tafsir Muhammed K Bernström

{What is within themselves (or what is within their souls.)

"This explanation has both a positive and negative meaning: Allah does not withhold His blessings (*barakah*) from people if they haven't become corrupted in their inner (compare Sura 8-53 here below), in the same way as He does not bestow His blessings (*barakah*) on those who intentionally sin until they change their attitude and so deserve His mercy."

◆ So here Bernström alludes to the "positive aspect" of the interpretation of the verse, and does not stick to its "negative aspect": When people improve themselves spiritually, purifying themselves through `ibádah (worship) and better following the prophetic Sunnah - then Allah will bestow (more of) His blessings upon them and improve their Condition.

"In a wider sense this is an illustration for the - by God given - law of cause and effect (The way of God: *Sunnat Allah*), which determines the life of individuals and communities and which lets civilizations progress or decline depending on the moral attitude of their people and their will to change "what is in themselves" (or "their mind")."

{ Allah would not change a favor which He had bestowed upon a people until they change what is within themselves. } Sura 8-53

Tafsir by Yasir Qadhi

{ Lo! ALLAH changeth not the status of a group (or nation) until they change which is in (each and everyone of) themselves. }

Yasir Qadhi: "The qaum (people, nation) doesn't change until the nafs changes. - Look at the context: the righteous people have guarding angels who protect them (by the permission of Allah from the command of Allah.). - Meaning: a person can be saved - if protected, from a general punishment that Allah has decreed. "

Emphasised is:

1st: Allah looks at the individual, what you have done. You are not responsible for what others are doing. But you will be asked about if you did change y-s.

2nd: Allah does not judge you based on the material success of your efforts (results), but rather merely on your efforts. What did you do, based upon your talents, your time, your energy, your circle of influence - not about what is beyond your control.

"What change can I do? I can change myself. "If everyone would realise to work within his sphere of influence, a lot of change would in fact happen in society."

"Everyone has a role to play [in this.]"

"Do what you can to better y-s." Even if you can't change the world, if you can change y-s you have saved y-s from the hell-fire. "Make sure you live a righteous, exemplary life." "May Allah help us to perfect ourselves, make us of those who live righteous lives and be role models to our family and friends and communities!"

Tafsir by Abú Turáb

Another example of personal interpretation of this verse is reported from Abú Turáb 'Askar b. Husayn an-Nahshábí: "When Abú Turáb saw something which he didn't approve of, he increased his spiritual (inner) struggle, renewed his *tawbah* (repentance toward Allah) and said:

'They were misled toward this (thing) by my ruinous behaviour, for Allah says: { Allah does not change anything with a people, until they don't change, what they have with themselves. }"

Source: Risálah Al-Qushayrî; 1,18

That is why Allah Reminded us in another verse on the Qur'an in surah at Tahrim 66 verse 6:

O you who believe! Ward off from yourselves and your families a Fire (Hell) whose fuel is men and stones,

We are required to protect ourselves first, then our family members.... By seeking knowledge, obeying Allah and preventing ourselves from disobeying Him.

In another verse, Allah Warned us:

O you who believe! Take care of your ownelves, [do righteous deeds, fear Allah much (abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which He has forbidden) and love Allah much (perform all kinds of good deeds which He has ordained)]. If you follow the right guidance and enjoin what is right (Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam orders one to do) and forbid what is wrong (polytheism, disbelief and all that Islam has forbidden) no hurt can come to you from those who are in error. The return of you all is to Allah, then He will inform you about (all) that which you used to do. Qur'an surah al Maedah 5 verse 105

In surah al Ankabut 29 verses 5-6:

Whoever hopes for the Meeting with Allah, then Allah's Term is surely coming. and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower.

And whosoever strives, he strives only for himself. Verily, Allah is free of all wants from the 'Alamin (mankind, jinns, and all that exists).

In surah al Isra' 17 verse 84:

Say (O Muhammad ﷺ to mankind): "Each one does according to Shakilatihi (i.e. his way or his religion or his intentions, etc.), and your Lord knows best of him whose path (religion, etc.) is right."

This is an important verse which indicates that Allaah, may He be blessed and exalted, in His perfect justice and wisdom does not change the condition of the people from good to bad or from bad to good, from ease to hardship or from hardship to ease, unless they change their condition themselves. So if they are in a state of righteousness and goodness and they change, Allaah will change things for them with punishment, calamities, hardship, drought, famine, disunity and other kinds of punishments as appropriate requital. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): *"And your Lord is not at all unjust to (His) slaves" [Fussilat 41:46].*

Or He may give them respite and give them time so that they might turn to the right path, but if they do not then they will be seized unexpectedly, as He says (interpretation of the meaning): *"So, when they forgot (the warning) with which they had been reminded, We opened for them the gates of every (pleasant) thing, until in the midst of their enjoyment in that which they were given, all of a sudden, We took them (in punishment), and lo! They were plunged into destruction with deep regrets and sorrows" [al-An'aam 6:44].*, meaning despairing of all goodness -- we seek refuge in Allaah from the punishment and wrath of Allaah. Or they may be given respite until the Day of Resurrection, when their punishment will be more severe, as Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Consider not that Allaah is unaware of that which the Zâlimûn (polytheists, wrongdoers) do, but He gives them respite up to a Day when the eyes will stare in horror” [Ibraaheem 14:42], meaning that they are given respite until after death, and that will be a greater and more severe punishment.

Or they may be in a state of evil and sin, then they repent to Allaah and turn back to Him, and they regret their sins and adhere to obedience, so Allaah changes their state of wretchedness, hardship and poverty to ease, unity and righteousness because of their good deeds and their repentance to Allaah, may He be glorified and exalted. It says in another verse (interpretation of the meaning): *“That is so because Allaah will never change a grace which He has bestowed on a people until they change what is in their ownelves” [al-Anfaal 8:53].* This verse tells us that if they are in a state of ease, comfort and goodness, then they change and turn to sin, their situation will be changed -- there is no power and no strength except with Allaah -- or they may be given respite, as stated above. The opposite is also true: if they were in a state of evil and sin, or disbelief and misguidance, then they repent, regret their sin and adhere to obedience to Allaah, Allaah will change their situation from bad to good; He will change their disunity into unity and harmony; He will change their hardship to ease, well being and plenty; He will change their situation from draught, famine, , lack of water and so on to rainfall, fertile land and other kinds of goodness. End quote.

WHAT KIND OF CHANGES SHOULD WE MAKE?

Changing ourselves, by returning to the Islam of the Prophet Muhammad sallAllahu alaihi wa sallam and his Companions radhiAllahu' anhum. Changing our way of life, our life style, our way of thinking, mentality, our perception of life to that of the Qur'aan and the authentic Sunnah as understood by the Companions and the trustworthy, reliable Scholars of the Sunnah of the past and present. Constantly, being in the process of learning, acting, advising others with knowledge, wisdom and manners. While being balanced, not neglecting our role in this world to work, to provide for family, being a good husband/wife, father/mother, son/daughter, etc.

1. Seek proper knowledge – following the Qur’an and authentic hadith
2. Understand what Islam means – complete submission to Allah – everywhere, at all times, UNTIL DEATH. 5:45, 5: 47-49
3. Have a proper understanding of tawheed and Aqeedah
4. Understand the purpose of life 51: 56

5. Improve our heart

"Verily Allah does not look to your bodies nor to your faces but He looks to your hearts," and he pointed towards the heart with his fingers." [Muslim]

The Day whereon neither wealth nor sons will avail,

Except him who brings to Allah a clean heart [clean from Shirk (polytheism) and Nifaq (hypocrisy)].

[Quran, 26: 88-89]

6. Understand what we are doing in our acts of worship – don't be mechanical

7. Be grateful to Allah at all times – NOT ONLY when Allah Gives us His Bounties, but even when we are tested by Him.

"Therefore remember Me (by praying, glorifying). I will remember you, and be grateful to Me (for My countless favours on you) and never be ungrateful to Me" [2:152]

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Gratitude may be in the heart, in submission and humility; on the tongue, in praise and acknowledgement; and in the physical faculties, by means of obedience and submission.

And He gave you of all that you asked for, and if you count the Blessings of Allah, never will you be able to count them. Verily! Man is indeed an extreme wrong-doer, - a disbeliever (an extreme ingrate, denies Allah's Blessings by disbelief, and by worshipping others besides Allah, and by disobeying Allah and His Prophet Muhammad ﷺ). 14: 34

8. Ask for Allah's Forgiveness at all times

9. Enjoin good and forbid evil – 3: 104

Strive to do good righteous deeds, 18:110, Fastabiquil khayrat (compete/race with one another to do good deeds) – 5: 48, 2: 148

10. Don't waste too much time on things which do not benefit us in the hereafter – computer games, social media, etc

11. Feed the poor
12. Do NOT forget the lawful enjoyment in this life – work, wife, family, etc and our duties
13. Most important – do NOT miss our prayers. 29: 45

CONCLUSION

We find today, in our time, there are many different calls to the method of change. Some call to - Khilafah, ruling by the law of Allah by the Governments, Rulers and Kings (yet they do not establish the laws of Allah on themselves nor their family), others call to - the overthrowing of bad Muslim rulers by way of coup and assassination. For others, - method of change is Jihaad, yet we don't have the necessary means and power, have, we buy weapons from Kuffaar nor do we have an overall leader (Khalifah) to direct us. But defencesive Jihaad will always remain until the last day, others call for political change, yet no change have they made to themselves, others call to - unity no matter what Aqeedah or manhaj you are upon, as long as you are a Muslim, others call to - modernising Islam and suiting to secular system, others call to – mysticism, innovating in religion and isolating themselves from the world in the name of spirituality improvements. Yet others declare Muslims to be Kuffaar due to sins and permitting killings and suicide bombings of civilian non-Muslims and Muslims in the process. All these and other methods for change are futile and false and will not bring about any honour or victory for Muslims.

These issues of Jihaad, politics, khilafah, unity, takfeer etc are all part of Islaam, but there are conditions and requirements from the Qur'aan and the Sunnah and the Scholarly opinions that need to be met before it can be materialised.

But that which will make a change and is guaranteed for us is; the fundamental method of change Allah has told us in the Quraan; "Verily, Allah will not change the (good) condition of a people as long as they do not change their state (of goodness) themselves (by committing sins and by being ungrateful and disobedient to Allah)"

Imaam Abdul Aziz bin Abdullaah bin Baz Majmoo' Fataawa Ibn Baaz (24/249-251)