

# The Forbiddance of Oppression<sup>1</sup>

By: Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī

<b>The Ḥadīth</b> .....	2
<b>The Explanation of:</b> “I have made oppression forbidden even for myself...” .....	5
<b>The Explanation of:</b> “...and I have made it forbidden among you as well...” .....	8
<b>The Explanation of:</b> “Oh my servants, each of you is astray except those I have guided, so ask me for guidance and I will guide you...” .....	11
<b>The Explanation of:</b> “Oh my servants, you sin night and day but I forgive all sins...” ..	19
<b>The Explanation of:</b> “Oh my servants, you will never be able to harm me...” .....	24
<b>The Explanation of:</b> “Oh my servants, if the first of you and the last of you, the people and jinn among you, were all to be as righteous...” .....	27
<b>The Explanation of:</b> “Oh my servants, if the first of you and the last of you, the people and jinn among you, were all to stand in a single place asking of me...” .....	30
<b>The Explanation of:</b> “...that would not decrease what I have...” .....	32
<b>The Explanation of:</b> “Oh my servants, it is only your actions for which I call you to account...” .....	34
<b>The Explanation of:</b> “...and then I will pay you in full for them.” .....	36
<b>The Explanation of:</b> “So whoever finds good, let him thank Allah...” .....	38

---

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī’s book, “Jāmi’ al-‘Ulūm wal-Ḥikam,” is an explanation of the forty-two famous ḥadīth collected by Imām an-Nawawī. The ḥadīth explained in this article is ḥadīth number twenty-four of that book. The forbiddance of oppression, while it is the first lesson in the ḥadīth, is only one of many lessons.

## The Ḥadīth

عَنْ أَبِي ذَرِّ الْغِفَارِيِّ (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) عَنِ النَّبِيِّ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) فِيمَا يَرَوِيهِ عَنْ رَبِّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: « يَا عِبَادِي إِنِّي حَرَمْتُ الظُّلْمَ عَلَى نَفْسِي ، وَجَعَلْتُهُ بَيْنَكُمْ مُحَرَّمًا ، فَلَا تَظَالَمُوا

يَا عِبَادِي كُلُّكُمْ ضَالٌّ إِلَّا مَنْ هَدَيْتُهُ ، فَاسْتَهْدُونِي أَهْدِكُمْ . يَا عِبَادِي كُلُّكُمْ جَائِعٌ إِلَّا مَنْ أَطْعَمْتُهُ ، فَاسْتَطْعِمُونِي أُطْعِمَكُمْ . يَا عِبَادِي كُلُّكُمْ عَارٍ إِلَّا مَنْ كَسَوْتُهُ ، فَاسْتَكْسُونِي أُكْسِكُمْ

يَا عِبَادِي إِنَّكُمْ تُخْطِئُونَ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ ، وَأَنَا أَغْفِرُ الذَّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا ، فَاسْتَغْفِرُونِي أَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ

يَا عِبَادِي إِنَّكُمْ لَنْ تَبْلُغُوا ضُرِّي فَتَضُرُّونِي ، وَلَنْ تَبْلُغُوا نَفْعِي فَتَنْفَعُونِي

يَا عِبَادِي لَوْ أَنَّ أَوْلَكُمْ وَأَخْرَكُمْ وَإِنْسَكُمْ وَجِنَّكُمْ كَانُوا عَلَى أَتَقَى قَلْبِ رَجُلٍ وَاحِدٍ مِنْكُمْ مَا زَادَ ذَلِكَ فِي مُلْكِي شَيْئًا ، يَا عِبَادِي لَوْ أَنَّ أَوْلَكُمْ وَأَخْرَكُمْ وَإِنْسَكُمْ وَجِنَّكُمْ كَانُوا عَلَى أَفَجَرَ قَلْبِ رَجُلٍ وَاحِدٍ مِنْكُمْ مَا نَقَصَ ذَلِكَ مِنْ مُلْكِي شَيْئًا

يَا عِبَادِي لَوْ أَنَّ أَوْلَكُمْ وَأَخْرَكُمْ وَإِنْسَكُمْ وَجِنَّكُمْ قَامُوا فِي صَعِيدٍ وَاحِدٍ فَسَأَلُونِي فَأَعْطَيْتُ كُلَّ إِنْسَانٍ مَسْأَلَتَهُ مَا نَقَصَ ذَلِكَ مِمَّا عِنْدِي إِلَّا كَمَا يَنْقُصُ الْمَخِيطُ إِذَا أُدْخِلَ الْبَحْرَ

يَا عِبَادِي إِنَّمَا هِيَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ أَحْصَيْتُهَا لَكُمْ ثُمَّ أَوْفَيْتُكُمْ إِيَّاهَا ، فَمَنْ وَجَدَ خَيْرًا فَلْيَحْمَدِ اللَّهَ ،  
وَمَنْ وَجَدَ غَيْرَ ذَلِكَ فَلَا يَلُومَنَّ إِلَّا نَفْسَهُ ۝

Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī ( رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ ) reported that the prophet ( صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ) narrated that his lord ( عَزَّ وَجَلَّ ) said: **“Oh my servants, I have made oppression forbidden even for myself, and I have made it forbidden among you as well, so do not oppress one another.**

**Oh my servants, each of you is astray except those I have guided, so ask me for guidance and I will guide you. Oh my servants, each of you is hungry except those I have fed, so ask me for food and I will feed you. Oh my servants, each of you is naked except those I have clothed, so ask me for clothing and I will clothe you.**

**Oh my servants, you sin night and day but I forgive all sins, so ask me for forgiveness, and I will forgive you.**

**Oh my servants, you will never be able to harm me, and you will never be able to benefit me.**

**Oh my servants, if the first of you and the last of you, the people and *jinn*<sup>2</sup> among you, were all to have hearts as righteous as the most righteous man among you, that would not increase my kingdom in anything. Oh my servants, if the first of you and the last of you, the people and jinn among you, were to have hearts as**

---

<sup>2</sup> Jinn: Creatures Allah created that are unseen by mankind.

wicked as the most wicked man among you, that would not decrease my kingdom in anything.

Oh my servants, if the first of you and the last of you, the people and jinn among you, were all to stand in a single place asking of me, and were I to give each person what he asks for, that would not decrease what I have except as a needle might decrease the sea if put in it and pulled out.

Oh my servants, it is only your actions for which I call you to account, and then I will pay you in full for them. So whoever finds good, let him thank Allah, and whoever finds other than that, let him blame only himself.”<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Recorded by Muslim (no. 2577), Aḥmad (5/153, 160, 177), al-Tirmidhī (no. 2495), and Ibn Mājah (no. 4257).

### The Explanation of:

يَا عِبَادِي إِنِّي حَرَّمْتُ الظُّلْمَ عَلَى نَفْسِي ، وَجَعَلْتُهُ بَيْنَكُمْ مُحَرَّمًا ، فَلَا تَظَالَمُوا

“Oh my servants, I have made oppression forbidden even for myself...”

Allah has forbidden himself from oppressing his servants just as he (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) says:

﴿ وَمَا أَنَا بِظَالِمٍ لِّلْعِبَادِ ﴾

**And never will I be unjust to the servants.<sup>4</sup>**

And:

﴿ وَمَا اللّهُ يُرِيدُ ظُلْمًا لِّلْعِبَادِ ﴾

**And Allah wants no injustice for the servants.<sup>5</sup>**

He also says:

﴿ وَمَن يَعْمَلْ مِّنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَا يَخَافُ ظُلْمًا وَلَا هَضْمًا ﴾

**But whoever does righteous deeds while he is a believer will fear neither  
injustice nor deprivation.<sup>6</sup>**

In that verse, “deprivation” means a decrease in the reward for one’s good deeds; “injustice” means to be punished for the sins of another. And there are many verses such as these in the Quran, and they indicate that while Allah is fully capable of

<sup>4</sup> The Quran, Sūrah Qāf, 50:29.

<sup>5</sup> The Quran, Sūrah Ghāfir, 40:31.

<sup>6</sup> The Quran, Sūrah ṬāHā, 20:112.

oppression, he never commits it as a favor from himself – a means of showing kindness, generosity, and good treatment to his servants.

Many scholars explained this word ظُلم (ẓulm), “oppression” or “injustice” as putting anything in other than its proper place, or treating anything with other than its proper treatment. Others explained it as doing anything with the possessions of another without the owner’s permission. Similar to this has been reported from Iyās Ibn Mu’āwiyah and others. So considering this second definition, they hold the opinion that injustice is impossible for Allah because everything is within his right because whatever he does, it is done with his own possessions (his creation). Abū al-Aswad al-Dualī answered Imrān Ibn Ḥuṣayn in a similar manner when the latter asked about pre-decree and destiny.<sup>7</sup>

Abū Dāwūd and Ibn Mājah both recorded a narration in which ‘Ubay Ibn Ka’b said:

« لَوْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَذَّبَ أَهْلَ سَمَاوَاتِهِ وَأَهْلَ أَرْضِهِ ، لَعَذَّبَهُمْ وَهُوَ غَيْرُ ظَالِمٍ لَهُمْ ، وَلَوْ رَحِمَهُمْ ، لَكَانَتْ رَحْمَتُهُ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ مِنْ أَعْمَالِهِمْ »

Were Allah to punish the inhabitants of his heavens and the inhabitants of his earth, he could punish them and he would not be unjustly oppressive to them. And were he to have mercy on them, his mercy is better for them than their own (good) deeds.

The narrator came to the companion Ibn Mad’ūd who told him the same thing as did Zayd Ibn Thābit who narrated the ḥadīth from the prophet ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ).<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> See “Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim” (no. 2750).

<sup>8</sup> Recorded by Abū Dāwūd (no. 4699) and Ibn Mājah (no. 77). Shaykh al- Albānī said it is authentic in “Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Abī Dāwūd” (no. 3932).

The fact that the actions of people are considered to be created by Allah – and among those actions are acts of injustice or oppression – does not mean that Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) himself can be described as being unjust or oppressive. Similarly, other despicable deeds committed by people should not be attributed to Allah although their deeds are an aspect of his creation and planning (i.e., he allows them to do them while knowing they will choose to do so). He is only described with the actions he actually does and he is not attributed with the actions of his servants; even though they are aspects of his creation, he is still not characterized or described with any of them. He is only characterized by his own attributes and actions, and Allah knows best.

### The Explanation of:

وَجَعَلْتَهُ بَيْنَكُمْ مُحَرَّمًا ، فَلَا تَظَالَمُوا

“...and I have made it forbidden among you as well, so do not oppress one another.”

Allah has made oppression forbidden among his servants. He has forbidden them from oppressing one another in their interactions with each other, so it is impermissible for any individual to oppress or behave unjustly with anyone else. And while oppression is in itself prohibited under any circumstances, it is of two different types.

**The first type** of oppression and injustice is oppressing oneself, and the greatest of this type is *shirk*—worshipping others along with or instead of Allah alone—as Allah ( تَعَالَى ) says:

﴿ إِنَّ الشُّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴾

**Shirk is certainly a great injustice.<sup>9</sup>**

Someone who commits shirk (by worshipping anything other than Allah alone) is raising the creation to the status of the creator thereby worshipping that thing or person and deifying it. So this is a type of injustice by putting something in other than its proper place.

Most threats and warnings in the Quran directed toward oppressors are intended for those who make shirk, as Allah ( عَزَّ وَجَلَّ ) says:

---

<sup>9</sup> The Quran, Sūrah Luqmān, 31:13.

﴿ وَالْكَافِرُونَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴾

**And the disbelievers, they are unjust oppressors.**<sup>10</sup>

After the injustice of disbelieving in Allah, they may then follow that up with different kinds of other sins, great or small.

**The second type** of oppression and injustice is when one person oppresses another, and it is this type that is mentioned in this ḥadīth. The prophet ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ) also said during his farewell pilgrimage:

« إِنَّ دِمَاءَكُمْ وَأَمْوَالَكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ حَرَامٌ كَحُرْمَةِ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا فِي شَهْرِكُمْ هَذَا فِي بَلَدِكُمْ هَذَا »

Your blood, your wealth, and your honor are sacred like the sanctity of this day of yours in this month of yours in the land of yours.<sup>11</sup>

And in the two most authentic collections of ḥadīth (“Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī” and “Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim”), Ibn ‘Umar narrated that the prophet ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ) said:

« إِنَّ الظُّلْمَ ظُلُمَاتٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ »

Indeed oppression will become darkness on the Day of Resurrection.<sup>12</sup>

Abū Mūsá narrated that the prophet ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ) said:

<sup>10</sup> The Quran, Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:254.

<sup>11</sup> Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 67) and Muslim (no. 1679).

<sup>12</sup> Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 2447) and Muslim (no. 2579).

« إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَيُمَلِّي لِلظَّالِمِ حَتَّى إِذَا أَخَذَهُ لَمْ يُفْلِتَهُ »

Allah prolongs the life of an oppressor, but when he seizes him, he will never release him.

The prophet ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ) then recited the verse:

﴿ وَكَذَلِكَ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ إِذَا أَخَذَ الْقُرَىٰ وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ ۚ إِنَّ أَخَذَهُ أَلِيمٌ شَدِيدٌ ﴾

**And thus is the seizure of your lord when he seizes the cities while they are committing wrong. His seizure is certainly painful and severe.**<sup>13</sup>

Also in “Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī,” Abū Hurayrah narrated that the prophet ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ) said:

« مَنْ كَانَتْ لَهُ مَظْلَمَةٌ لِأَخِيهِ، فَلْيَتَحَلَّلْهُ مِنْهَا، فَإِنَّهُ لَيْسَ تَمَّ دِينَارٌ وَلَا دِرْهَمٌ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يُؤْخَذَ لِأَخِيهِ مِنْ حَسَنَاتِهِ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ حَسَنَاتٌ أُخِذَ مِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَخِيهِ فَطُرِحَتْ عَلَيْهِ »

Whoever has committed an act of injustice against his brother, let him make amends and stop it. For there will be a time when neither *dīnār* nor *dirham* (currency) will be accepted. (Let him make amends) before his good deeds are taken and given to his brother. And when he has no more good deeds, some of the bad deeds of his brother will be put upon him.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 4686) and Muslim (no. 2583). The Quran verse is in Sūrah Hūd, 11:102.

<sup>14</sup> Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 2449).

### The Explanation of:

يَا عِبَادِي كُلُّكُمْ ضَالٌّ إِلَّا مَنْ هَدَيْتُهُ، فَاسْتَهْدُونِي أَهْدِكُمْ. يَا عِبَادِي كُلُّكُمْ جَائِعٌ إِلَّا مَنْ  
أَطْعَمْتُهُ، فَاسْتَطْعِمُونِي أُطْعِمَكُم. يَا عِبَادِي كُلُّكُمْ عَارٍ إِلَّا مَنْ كَسَوْتُهُ، فَاسْتَكْسُونِي أُكْسِكُمْ.

“Oh my servants, each of you is astray except those I have guided, so ask me for guidance and I will guide you.

Oh my servants, each of you is hungry except those I have fed, so ask me for food and I will feed you. Oh my servants, each of you is naked except those I have clothed, so ask me for clothing and I will clothe you.”

This is an indication that all creatures are dependent upon Allah for their well-being and for protection from harm in all of their affairs whether religious or worldly. The servants of Allah possess nothing of these things themselves (without Allah’s assistance). Whoever has not been graced with the bounties of guidance and sustenance will be deprived of them in this life. And whoever has not been graced by Allah’s forgiveness of his sins, his misdeeds will ruin him in the hereafter. Allah ( تَعَالَى ) says:

﴿ مَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ ۖ وَمَنْ يُضِلِّ لَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ وَلِيًّا مُرْشِدًا ﴾

**Whomever Allah guides is rightly-guided, but whomever he leaves astray,  
you will never find for him a protecting guide.<sup>15</sup>**

There are many similar examples in the Quran. All also says:

<sup>15</sup> The Quran, Sūrah al-Kahf, 18:17.

﴿ مَا يَفْتَحُ اللَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ رَحْمَةٍ فَلَا مُمْسِكَ لَهَا ۗ وَمَا يُمْسِكُ فَلَا مُرْسِلَ لَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ ۗ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴾

**Whatever Allah grants to people of mercy, none can withhold it; and whatever he withholds, none can release it thereafter. And he is the Mighty, the Wise.**<sup>16</sup>

And:

﴿ وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ رِزْقُهَا ﴾

**And there is no creature on earth but that (dependent) upon Allah is its provision.**<sup>17</sup>

And Allah says, quoting the prayer of Adam (the prophet and first of mankind) and his wife (عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلَام):

﴿ قَالَا رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنْفُسَنَا وَإِنْ لَمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴾

**They said, “Our lord, we have wronged ourselves, and if you do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we will surely be among the losers.”**<sup>18</sup>

And quoting Noah, the prophet and first messenger (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام), Allah says:

﴿ وَإِلَّا تَغْفِرْ لِي وَتَرْحَمْنِي أَكُنُّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴾

<sup>16</sup> The Quran, Sūrah Fāṭir, 35:2.

<sup>17</sup> The Quran, Sūrah Hūd, 11:6.

<sup>18</sup> The Quran, Sūrah al-A'rāf, 7:23.

**“And unless you forgive me and have mercy upon me, I will be among the losers.”<sup>19</sup>**

Abraham ( عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام ), the prophet, messenger, and close friend of Allah, made reference to such affairs being dependent upon Allah as proof that nothing should be worshipped except Allah, and that anything else worshipped besides him is done in falsehood.

Abraham said to his people:

﴿ قَالَ أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْبُدُونَ • أَنْتُمْ وَأَبَاؤُكُمْ الْأَقْدَمُونَ • فَإِنَّهُمْ عَدُوٌّ لِّي إِلَّا رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ • الَّذِي خَلَقَنِي فَهُوَ يَهْدِينِ • وَالَّذِي هُوَ يُطْعِمُنِي وَيَسْقِينِ • وَإِذَا مَرِضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِ • وَالَّذِي يُمِيتُنِي ثُمَّ يُحْيِينِ • وَالَّذِي أَطْمَعُ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ لِي خَطِيئَتِي يَوْمَ الدِّينِ • رَبِّ هَبْ لِي حُكْمًا وَأَلْحِقْنِي بِالصَّالِحِينَ ﴾

He said, “Then do you see what you have been worshipping, you and your forefather of old? They are enemies to me, except the lord of the worlds. And it is he who created me and who guides me, the one who feeds me and gives me drink. When I become sick, it is he who heals me, and he who will cause me to die then give me life again. It is he, I hope, will forgive me for my sins on the Day of Judgment. My lord, grant me authority and join me with the righteous.”<sup>20</sup>

So the one who alone creates people, guides them, provides them with their sustenance, gives them life and death in this life and forgiveness of their sins in the

<sup>19</sup> The Quran, Sūrah Hūd, 11:47.

<sup>20</sup> The Quran, Sūrah al-Shu'arā, 26:75-83.

hereafter—he alone deserves to be singled out as the only god, the only one deserving of worship, prayer and supplication, and humble submission. Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) says:

﴿اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ رَزَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ ۗ هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَائِكُمْ مَنْ يَفْعَلُ مِنْ ذَلِكَُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ۗ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ﴾

**Allah is the one who created you, then provided for you, then will cause you to die and then will give you life. Are there any of your “partners” (you worship along with him) who does anything of that? Exalted is he and high above what they associate (in worship) with him.<sup>21</sup>**

And there are ḥadīth that show Allah loves for his servants to pray and ask for anything contributing to the well-being of their religion or worldly life such as food, drink, clothing, and similar things just as they would ask him for guidance and forgiveness.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> The Quran, Sūrah al-Rūm, 30:40.

<sup>22</sup> As some examples of such ḥadīth, the prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

« إِنَّهُ مَنْ لَمْ يَسْأَلِ اللَّهَ تَعَالَىٰ يَغْضَبْ عَلَيْهِ »

Indeed, whoever does not ask Allah (تَعَالَىٰ), he becomes angry with him.

[Recorded in “Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan al-Tirmidhī” (no. 2686) and “Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Ibn Mājah” (no. 3085) by al-Albānī]

And he (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

« أَعْجَزُ النَّاسِ مَنْ عَجَزَ عَنِ الدُّعَاءِ »

The most deficient of people is he who fails to supplicate.

[Recorded in “Silsilah al-Aḥādīth al-Ṣaḥīḥah” (no. 601) by al-Albānī]

And the prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) also instructed:

« سَلُوا اللَّهَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَتَّى الشُّسْعِ، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ إِنْ لَمْ يُيسِرْهُ لَمْ يَتيسَّرْ »

Ask Allah for everything, even for a shoe strap. For if Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) did not make such a thing easy, it would certainly not be easy.

[See al-Albānī’s statements about no. 21 of his “Silsilah al-Aḥādīth al-Ḍa’īfah”]

And he (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

Yet some of the Salaf used to be ashamed before Allah to ask him anything of worldly affairs. But following the Sunnah is better and preferable.

As for the statement in the ḥadīth, “each of you is astray except those I have guided,” some people found this to be in contradiction to another ḥadīth in which the prophet ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ) said:

« يَقُولُ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ : خَلَقْتُ عِبَادِي حُنْفَاءً (وَفِي رَوَايَةٍ : مُسْلِمِينَ) فَاجْتَالَتْهُمْ الشَّيَاطِينُ »

Allah ( عَزَّ وَجَلَّ ) said, “I have created my servants inclining to believe in the truth (and in another narration: “as Muslims”) but the devils misled them.”<sup>23</sup>

But there is actually no contradiction here. Allah created all the children of Adam with an innate nature to accept (the monotheism of) Islam, to be more inclined toward it as opposed to any other belief, and to be predisposed and prepared with the capacity for accepting it. However, a servant must still take the action to learn Islam; without actually learning about it, he is ignorant, knowing nothing of it just as Allah ( عَزَّ وَجَلَّ ) says:

﴿ وَاللَّهُ أَخْرَجَكُمْ مِنْ بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا ﴾

**And Allah has brought you out of your mothers' wombs not knowing anything.**<sup>24</sup>

---

« لَيْسَ شَيْءٌ أَكْرَمَ عَلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى مِنَ الدُّعَاءِ »

There is nothing more honorable to Allah ( تَعَالَى ) than supplication.

<sup>23</sup> Recorded in “Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan al-Tirmidhī” (no. 2684) and “Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Ibn Mājah” (no. 3087) by al-Albānī]

<sup>24</sup> Recorded by Muslim (no. 2865).

<sup>24</sup> The Quran, Sūrah al-Naḥl, 16:78.

And he said to his prophet ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ):

﴿ وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَى ﴾

**And he found you lost but he guided you.**<sup>25</sup>

The preceding verse means that he found you while you had no knowledge of the book (the Quran) and wisdom (the Sunnah) as he ( تَعَالَى ) says:

﴿ وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوحًا مِّنْ أَمْرِنَا ۚ مَا كُنْتَ تَدْرِي مَا الْكِتَابُ وَلَا الْإِيمَانُ  
وَلَكِن جَعَلْنَاهُ نُورًا نَّهْدِي بِهِ مَنْ نَّشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا ﴾

**And thus we have revealed to you an inspiration by our command. You neither knew what the book was nor faith, but we have (now) made it a light by which we guide whomever we will of our servants.**<sup>26</sup>

So people are born with a natural inclination to accept and believe in truth. If Allah then guides them then that is the reason they know guidance and become guided in action after they were guided at birth with the inclination and capacity to accept truth and guidance. But for whomever Allah has abandoned, he will be destined to learn from those who would teach him beliefs that would change his natural disposition. This is similar to the statement of the prophet ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ):

« كُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ يُوَلَّدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ، فَأَبَوَاهُ يَهُودَانِهِ وَيَنْصَرَانِهِ وَيَمَجْسَانِهِ »

<sup>25</sup> The Quran, Sūrah al-Duḥá, 93:7.

<sup>26</sup> The Quran, Sūrah al-Shūrá, 45:52.

Every newborn is born upon the natural disposition, but his parents may then raise him as a Jew, as a Christian, or as a Zoroastrian.<sup>27</sup>

As for a believer asking Allah for guidance, guidance is of two types:

**General Guidance:** This type is the guidance to Islam, faith and this occurs only with believers.

**Specific Guidance:** This second type is the guidance to knowing the details of faith and belief of Islam and Allah's assistance in acting in accordance with those details. Every believer needs this type of guidance night and day. And this is why Allah instructs his worshippers to recite in every prayer:

﴿ إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴾

**Guide us to the straight path.**<sup>28</sup>

And the prophet ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ) used to say in one of his nighttime supplications:

« اِهْدِنِي لِمَا اخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِكَ ، إِنَّكَ تَهْدِي مَنْ تَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ »

Guide me, in matters that are inconsistent with the truth, by your permission. You certainly guide whomever you will to a straight path.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 1358) and Muslim (no. 2658).

<sup>28</sup> The Quran, Sūrah al-Fātiḥah, 1:5.

<sup>29</sup> Recorded by Muslim (no. 770).

Similarly, the one who sneezes to which another replies, “May Allah have mercy on you,” should say, “May Allah guide you,” as has been narrated in the Sunnah.<sup>30</sup> And although some scholars (of the past) of Iraq rejected this under the assumption that one does not need to ask for guidance for a Muslim, most scholars differ with them by following the Sunnah in this matter.

Regarding this specific guidance, the prophet ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ) also instructed ‘Alī to ask Allah for correctness and guidance.<sup>31</sup> And he ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ) instructed al-Ḥasan to say in the supplication during the Witr Prayer:

« اللَّهُمَّ اهْدِنِي فِيمَنْ هَدَيْتَ »

Allah, guide me with those you have guided.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>30</sup> See “Ṣaḥīḥ al-Wābil al-Sayyib” (pgs. 237-238).

<sup>31</sup> In a ḥadīth, recorded by Muslim (no. 2725), ‘Alī ( رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ ) said: The prophet ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ) instructed me:

« قُلْ: اللَّهُمَّ اهْدِنِي وَسَدِّدْنِي وَأَذْكَرْ بِالْهُدَى هِدَايَتِكَ الطَّرِيقَ وَالسَّادَاتِ سَدَادَ السَّهْمِ »

Say, “Allah, guide me and correct me,” intending thereby with “your guidance,” the guidance of (a traveler on) a path, and with “correctness,” the straightness of an arrow.

<sup>32</sup> This ḥadīth is recorded by Abū Dāwūd (no. 1425) and al-Albānī said it is authentic in “Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Abī Dāwūd” (no. 1263). It is also recorded by al-Tirmidhī (no. 464), al-Nasāī (3/248), and Ibn Mājah (no. 1178). Ahmad Shākir also said it is authentic in his notes of “Sunan al-Tirmidhī.” The full Qunūt supplication is:

« اللَّهُمَّ اهْدِنِي فِيمَنْ هَدَيْتَ ، وَعَافِنِي فِيمَنْ عَافَيْتَ ، وَتَوَلَّنِي فِيمَنْ تَوَلَّيْتَ ، وَبَارِكْ لِي فِيمَا أَعْطَيْتَ ، وَقِنِي شَرَّ مَا قَضَيْتَ ، إِنَّكَ تَقْضِي وَلَا يُقْضَى عَلَيْكَ ، وَإِنَّهُ لَا يَدُلُّ مَنْ وَالَيْتَ ، وَلَا يَعِزُّ مَنْ عَادَيْتَ ، تَبَارَكَ رَبَّنَا وَتَعَالَيْتَ »

Oh Allah, guide me with those you have guided. Heal me with those you have healed. Care for me with those you have cared for. Bless me in what you have given, and protect me from the evil of what you have decreed. Indeed, you decree while no one decrees against you. Whomever you show loyalty towards will never be humiliated, and whomever you show enmity towards will never be honored. Blessed are you, our lord, and you are exalted far above (any weakness).

### The Explanation of:

يَا عِبَادِي إِنَّكُمْ تُخْطِئُونَ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ ، وَأَنَا أَعْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا ، فَاسْتَغْفِرُونِي أَعْفِرُ  
لَكُمْ

“Oh my servants, you sin night and day but I forgive all sins, so ask me for forgiveness, and I will forgive you.”<sup>33</sup>

As for asking forgiveness for one’s sins, it is a servant’s seeking of forgiveness from Allah, and this is what a servant needs most of all because he constantly makes mistakes, night and day. Repeatedly, the Quran mentions repentance and seeking forgiveness, commanding and encouraging them both.

al-Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah recorded a ḥadīth in which Anas ( رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ ) narrated that the prophet ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ) said:

« كُلُّ بَنِي آدَمَ خَطَّاءٌ ، وَخَيْرُ الْجَطَّائِينَ التَّوَّابُونَ »

All children of Adam commit sins, but the best of the sinners are those who often repent.<sup>34</sup>

al-Bukhārī recorded a ḥadīth from Abū Hurayrah ( رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ ) that the prophet ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ) said:

<sup>33</sup> In order to facilitate access to specific information and the organization of this translation, some of Ibn Rajab’s statements explaining this portion of ḥadīth have been placed in this section before they actually appear in the original text.

<sup>34</sup> Recorded by al-Tirmidhī (no. 2499), Ibn Mājah (no. 4251) and by Aḥmad (3/198). al-Albānī said it is “hasan” in “Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan al-Tirmidhī” (no. 2029).

« وَاللَّهِ إِنِّي لَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ مِئَةَ مَرَّةٍ »

By Allah, I ask for Allah's forgiveness and repent to him every day a hundred times.<sup>35</sup>

Imām Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nasāī, and Ibn Mājah each recorded a ḥadīth from Ibn 'Umar in which he said: We used to count the messenger of Allah ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ) saying a hundred times in a single sitting:

« رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَتُبْ عَلَيَّ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ »

My lord, forgive me and accept my repentance, for you are certainly the Accepting of Repentance, the Merciful.<sup>36</sup>

al-Nasāī recorded that Abū Hurayrah ( رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ ) said, "I never saw anyone saying, 'I ask Allah's forgiveness, and I repent to him,' more often than the messenger of Allah ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ )."<sup>37</sup>

In "Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī" and "Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim," the prophet ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ) said in a ḥadīth:

« أَنْ عَبَّدَا ادُّنْبَ دُنْبًا ، فَقَالَ : يَا رَبِّ ، إِنِّي عَمِلْتُ دُنْبًا ، فَاغْفِرْ لِي ، فَقَالَ اللَّهُ : عَلِمَ عَبْدِي أَنْ لَهُ رَبًّا يَغْفِرُ الدُّنُوبَ وَيَأْخُذُ بِالذَّنْبِ ، قَدْ غَفَرْتُ لِعَبْدِي »

<sup>35</sup> Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 6307).

<sup>36</sup> Recorded by Aḥmad (2/21), Abū Dāwūd (no. 1516), al-Tirmidhī (no. 3434), al-Nasāī in "Amal al-Yawm wal-Laylah" (no. 458), and Ibn Mājah (no. 3814). It is also in "Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Abī Dāwūd" (no. 1342) by al-Albānī.

<sup>37</sup> Recorded by al-Nasāī in "Amal al-Yawm wal-Laylah" (no. 454), Ibn Sinnī (no. 364), and Ibn Ḥibbān (no. 928).

A servant committed a sin and said, “My lord, I committed a sin, so forgive me.”  
So Allah said, “My servant knows that he has a lord who forgives sins and punishes for sins. I have already forgiven my servant.”<sup>38</sup>

‘Alī Ibn Abī Tālib ( رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ ) said that whenever the prophet ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ) mounted an animal for riding, he praised Allah three times, declared Allah’s greatness three times, and then said:

« سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي ، فَاعْفِرْ لِي ، فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ »

Glorified are you (Allah). I have wronged myself, so forgive me, for no one can forgive sins but you.

‘Alī continued: He then smiled, so I asked him why he smiled and he ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ) said:

« إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَيَعْجَبُ مِنْ عَبْدِهِ إِذَا قَالَ : رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي ذُنُوبِي ، إِنَّهُ لَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ غَيْرُكَ »

You lord is amazed and pleased with his servant when he says, “My lord, forgive my sins, for no one can forgive sins other than you.”<sup>39</sup>

Also in “Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī” and “Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim,” the prophet ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ) said in a ḥadīth:

« وَاللَّهِ ، لَلَّهِ أَرْحَمُ بِعِبَادِهِ مِنَ الْوَالِدَةِ يَوْلِدِهَا »

<sup>38</sup> Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 7507) and Muslim (no. 2758).

<sup>39</sup> Recorded by Aḥmad (1/97), al-Tirmidhī (no. 3446), Abū Dāwūd (no. 2602), and Ibn Ḥibbān. al-Albānī said it is authentic in “Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan al-Tirmidhī” (no. 2742).

I swear by Allah, Allah is more merciful to his servants than a mother is to her own child.<sup>40</sup>

Reflect upon the verse in which Allah ( تَعَالَى ) says:

﴿ وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَاحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا لِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَغْفِرِ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ ﴾

**And those who, when they commit an immorality or wrong themselves, they remember Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins—and who can forgive sins other than Allah?<sup>41</sup>**

In this verse is an indication that sinners have no one with which to take refuge, no one to depend upon to forgive their sins except Allah alone.

And about the three companions who chose to remain behind (when ordered to follow the messenger), Allah says:

﴿ حَتَّى إِذَا ضَاقتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ وَضَاقتْ عَلَيْهِمْ أَنْفُسُهُمْ وَظَنُّوا أَنْ لَا مَلْجَأَ مِنَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَتُوبُوا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴾

**When (they felt as if) the earth closed in on them despite its vastness and their souls felt confined to them and they were certain that there is no refuge from Allah except to him. Then he turned to them so they could repent. Indeed, Allah is the Accepting of Repentance, the Merciful.<sup>42</sup>**

<sup>40</sup> Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 5999) and Muslim (no. 2754).

<sup>41</sup> The Quran, Sūrah Āli 'Imrān, 3:135.

<sup>42</sup> The Quran, Sūrah al-Tawbah, 9:118.

In the verse, Allah mentions his acceptance of their repentance immediately after, and as a consequence of, their certainty that there is no refuge from Allah except to him. When someone fears something or someone of creation, he may flee, seeking sanctuary to some other place or with some other person. But when someone fears Allah, there is no refuge for protection, no sanctuary to retreat to except with Allah. So one must flee *from* Allah *to* Allah as the prophet ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ) used to say in his supplications:

« لَا مَلْجَأَ ، وَلَا مَنْجَا مِنْكَ إِلَّا إِلَيْكَ »

There is no refuge, no security from you except with you.<sup>43</sup>

And he ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ) used to say:

« أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ ، وَبِعَفْوِكَ مِنْ عُقُوبَتِكَ ، وَبِكَ مِنْكَ »

I seek refuge with your pleasure from your anger, with your forgiveness from your punishment, and with you from you.<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> Recorded by Bukhārī (no. 247) and Muslim (no. 2711).

<sup>44</sup> Recorded by Muslim (no. 486).

### The Explanation of:

يَا عِبَادِي إِنَّكُمْ لَنْ تَبْلُغُوا ضُرِّي فَتَضُرُّونِي، وَلَنْ تَبْلُغُوا نَفْعِي فَتَنْفَعُونِي

“Oh my servants, you will never be able to harm me, and you will never be able to benefit me.”

People are incapable of ever reaching a state in which they could benefit or harm Allah, for Allah is the Self-Sufficient, the Praiseworthy. He neither needs the obedience of his servants, nor does any benefit of such obedience reach him. It is only the servants who benefit from their obedience. Likewise, he is not harmed in any way by their disobedience, but it is they who harm themselves therewith. Allah ( تَعَالَى ) says:

﴿ وَلَا يَحْزُنكَ الَّذِينَ يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْكُفْرِ ۚ إِنَّهُمْ لَنْ يَضُرُّوا اللَّهَ شَيْئًا ﴾

**And do not be grieved by those who hasten into disbelief. They will certainly never harm Allah at all.**<sup>45</sup>

And he says:

﴿ وَمَنْ يَنْقَلِبْ عَلَىٰ عَقْبَيْهِ فَلَنْ يَضُرَّ اللَّهَ شَيْئًا ﴾

**And he who turns back on his heels will never harm Allah at all.**<sup>46</sup>

And Allah ( عَزَّ وَجَلَّ ) says:

﴿ وَإِنْ تَكْفُرُوا فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَنِيًّا حَمِيدًا ﴾

<sup>45</sup> The Quran, Sūrah Āli ‘Imrān, 3:176.

<sup>46</sup> The Quran, Sūrah Āli ‘Imrān, 3:144.

**But if you disbelieve, then to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on earth. And ever is Allah free of need, praiseworthy.**<sup>47</sup>

And he says, quoting the prophet Moses:

﴿ وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ إِنَّ تَكْفُرُوا أَنْتُمْ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ ﴾

**And Moses said, “If you should disbelieve, you and whoever is on the earth entirely, indeed, Allah is Free of need, praiseworthy.”**<sup>48</sup>

And Allah says:

﴿ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴾

**And whoever disbelieves, certainly Allah free of need from all creations.**<sup>49</sup>

And:

﴿ لَنْ يَنَالَ اللَّهَ لُحُومُهَا وَلَا دِمَاؤُهَا وَلَكِنْ يَنَالُهُ التَّقْوَىٰ مِنْكُمْ ﴾

**Neither their meat, nor their blood (e.g., of animals slaughtered for charity) reaches Allah; but what reaches him is piety from you.**<sup>50</sup>

Allah ( تَعَالَى ) loves his servants to remain conscious of him and obey him, just as he dislikes them to disobey him. For this reason, Allah is happier with people’s repentance

<sup>47</sup> The Quran, Sūrah al-Nisā, 4:131.

<sup>48</sup> The Quran, Sūrah Ibrāhīm, 14:8.

<sup>49</sup> The Quran, Sūrah Āli ‘Imrān, 3:97.

<sup>50</sup> The Quran, Sūrah al-Ḥajj, 22:37.

than the happiness felt by a person who, having lost his riding animal in a vast desert upon which are his food and drink, searches desperately for his mount to the point of exhaustion and finally, giving up all hope of ever finding it, gives in to certain despair that his life is as an end, and he abandons himself to death. As he succumbs to his exhaustion and sleeps, he later wakes up to find his riding animal standing right before him. This is one of the highest levels of happiness imaginable among creation.<sup>51</sup>

Allah is even happier than such a person despite the fact that he is in no way in need of his servants' obedience or their repentance. Rather, he returns the benefit thereof back to them out his generosity and kindness toward his servants and his love for their well-being and his desire to prevent harm from reaching them. And in return, he loves for his servants to know him, love him, fear him, remain constantly aware of him, and to obey him and exert effort in getting closer to him. He loves for them to know that no one else can forgive their sins and that he is fully capable of showing forgiveness for the sins of his servants. And in another narration of this ḥadīth from 'Abdul Raḥmān Ibn Ghanam from Abū Dharr, it is reported that Allah said, "Whoever among you knows that I am capable of showing forgiveness and were he to ask for my forgiveness, I would forgive him and would not mind at all."

<sup>51</sup> This comparison is taken from a ḥadīth in which the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

« لَلَّهِ أَشَدُّ فَرَحًا بِتَوْبَةِ عَبْدِهِ حِينَ يَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ أَحَدِكُمْ كَانَ عَلَى رَاحِلَتِهِ بِأَرْضٍ فَلَاةٍ فَأَنْفَلَتْ مِنْهُ وَعَلَيْهَا طَعَامُهُ وَشَرَابُهُ، فَأَيَسَ مِنْهَا، فَأَتَى شَجْرَةً فَاضْطَجَعَ فِي ظِلِّهَا قَدْ أَيَسَ مِنْ رَاحِلَتِهِ فَبَيْنَا هُوَ كَذَلِكَ إِذَا هُوَ بِهَا قَائِمَةً عِنْدَهُ فَأَخَذَ بِخِطَامِهَا ثُمَّ قَالَ مِنْ شِدَّةِ الْفَرَحِ: اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ عَبْدِي وَأَنَا رَبُّكَ! أَخْطَأَ مِنْ شِدَّةِ الْفَرَحِ »

Allah is happier with the repentance of his servant when he repents to him than if one of you were traveling on his riding animal in a vast desert but it escapes while carrying his food and drink. After giving up all hope of catching it, the man then reclines in the shade of a tree, having despaired of finding his mount. While in such a state, he suddenly finds it standing right next to him so he takes its reins and cries out from sheer joy, "Oh Allah, you are my servant and I am your lord!" He makes such a mistake only from extreme happiness.

[Recorded by Muslim (no. 4939) and al-Bukāhri" (no. 5863).]

### The Explanation of:

يَا عِبَادِي لَوْ أَنَّ أَوْلَكُمْ وَأَخْرِكُمْ وَإِنْسَكُمْ وَجِنَّكُمْ كَانُوا عَلَى أَتْقَى قَلْبِ رَجُلٍ وَاحِدٍ مِنْكُمْ  
مَا زَادَ ذَلِكَ فِي مُلْكِي شَيْئًا ، يَا عِبَادِي لَوْ أَنَّ أَوْلَكُمْ وَأَخْرِكُمْ وَإِنْسَكُمْ وَجِنَّكُمْ كَانُوا عَلَى  
أَفْجَرِ قَلْبِ رَجُلٍ وَاحِدٍ مِنْكُمْ مَا نَقَصَ ذَلِكَ مِنْ مُلْكِي شَيْئًا

“Oh my servants, if the first of you and the last of you, the people and jinn among you, were all to have hearts as righteous as the most righteous man among you, that would not increase my kingdom in anything. Oh my servants, if the first of you and the last of you, the people and jinn among you, were to have hearts as wicked as the most wicked man among you, that would not decrease my kingdom in anything.”

This shows that the kingdom of Allah will not increase in anything even if all creatures were as pious and had hearts as the most righteous person among them. Similarly, his kingdom will never decrease by the sins of sinners even if all the jinn and humans were to be as cruel and evil, having hearts as evil as the most wicked person among them. Allah ( سُبْحَانَهُ ) is self-sufficient, having no need whatsoever of anyone else. There is absolute perfection in his self, his characteristics, and in his actions. His dominion and authority is also perfect with no weakness or flaws to diminish it in any way.

Some people believe that the creations brought about by Allah – those present now – are the most perfect forms than had Allah created them in any other way. And the evil we witness among creation is a conditional type of evil dependent on some things within

creation; it is not an absolute evil existing in creation such that its nonexistence would be better than its current existence under all circumstances. Rather, the fact that such aspects of evil are present is actually better than if they were not. They say that such an understanding is the meaning of Allah's statement:

﴿ بِيَدِكَ الْخَيْرُ ﴾

**In your hand is all good.**<sup>52</sup>

And this is the meaning of the prophet's ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ) statement:

« الشَّرُّ لَيْسَ إِلَيْكَ »

Evil is not to be attributed to you.<sup>53</sup>

Meaning: Absolute evil – that which the absent thereof would be better than its presence – is not present in your dominion. This kind of absolute evil is not to be found in Allah's kingdom because Allah ( تَعَالَى ) brings about his creation and what it requires of wisdom and justice. Sometimes he distinguishes particular people (perhaps in this life or the next) with favors which he does not give others out of his justice and what that necessitates of complete wisdom.

Yet in such an understanding there is an issue which contradicts the point being made in the ḥadīth in that were all creations to have the best characteristics of piety and righteousness, that would not increase and improve his dominion at all. And were all the creations to have wicked characteristics that would lower the status and manner in

---

<sup>52</sup> The Quran, Sūrah Āli 'Imrān, 3:26.

<sup>53</sup> Recorded by Muslim (no. 771).

which they were initially created, that would still not decrease the dominion of Allah in any way. [In other words, perhaps it *is* possible to become better or worse than one's initial creation due to belief or disbelief in Allah, obedience or disobedience, etc.] And this (the fact that people have the choice to become better or worse) shows that Allah's dominion and kingdom are still perfect in every way; it can neither be improved, nor perfected or completed even by obedience just as it cannot be decreased by disobedience. Nothing at all affects its perfection.

These statement (of the ḥadīth) mentioning the heart also indicate that the source of righteousness and wickedness is the heart. When the heart is pious and conscious of Allah, the (actions of the) limbs will be righteous, and when the heart is evil, the limbs will be likewise.<sup>54</sup> Because of this, the prophet ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ) said:

« التَّقْوَى هَا هُنَا »

Righteousness is right here.

And he pointed to his chest.<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> This point has been reported in a ḥadīth in al-Bukāhīrī (no. 52) and Muslim (no. 1599) in which the prophet ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ) said:

« أَلَا وَإِنَّ فِي الْجَسَدِ مُضْغَةً إِذَا صَلَحَتْ صَلَحَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ ، وَإِذَا فَسَدَتْ فَسَدَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ ، أَلَا وَهِيَ الْقَلْبُ »

There is within the body an organ, if it is pure the entire body will be purified, and if it is corrupt, the entire body will be corrupted. It is certainly the heart.

<sup>55</sup> Recorded by Muslim (no. 2564).

### The Explanation of:

يَا عِبَادِي لَوْ أَنَّ أَوْلَكُمْ وَأَخْرِكُمْ وَإِنْسَكُمْ وَجِنَّكُمْ قَامُوا فِي صَعِيدٍ وَاحِدٍ فَسَأَلُونِي فَأَعْطَيْتُ  
كُلَّ إِنْسَانٍ مَسْأَلَتَهُ

“Oh my servants, if the first of you and the last of you, the people and jinn among you, were all to stand in a single place asking of me, and were I to give each person what he asks for...”

The intention here is to mention the boundless capability of Allah and his endless dominion. His kingdom and the treasures he possesses will never come to an end, will never decrease even if he were to give the first and last of all mankind and jinn together whatever they each asked him for in a single instance. This is an encouragement for his creation to ask of him so he may fulfill their needs. al-Bukhārī and Muslim recorded a ḥadīth in which Abū Hurayrah narrated that the prophet ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ) said:

« يَدُ اللَّهِ مَلَأَى لَا تَغِيضُهَا نَفَقَةٌ سَحَاءُ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ ، أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا أَنْفَقَ مُنْذُ خَلَقَ  
السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ، فَإِنَّهُ لَمْ يَغِضْ مَا فِي يَمِينِهِ »

The hand of Allah is full; spending day and night does not decrease it. Do you see what he has spent since he created the heavens and earth? It has not decreased at all what is in his right hand.<sup>56</sup>

And in another ḥadīth in “Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim,” Abū Hurayrah said that the prophet ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ) said:

<sup>56</sup> Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 4684) and Muslim (no. 993).

« إِذَا دَعَا أَحَدُكُمْ فَلَا يَقُلْ : اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي إِنْ شِئْتَ ، وَلَكِنْ لِيَعَزِمِ الْمَسْأَلَةَ وَلِيَعِظِمِ  
الرَّغْبَةَ ، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَتَعَاضَمُهُ شَيْءٌ أَعْطَاهُ »

If one of you supplicates, he should not say, “Oh Allah, forgive me *if you like*.”  
Rather, be determined and sure (of his answer) when asking him and increase  
your hope, for nothing is too great for Allah to give.<sup>57</sup>

Abū Sa’īd al-Khudrī ( رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ ), one of the prophet’s companions, said, “When you call  
upon Allah, intensify your asking of him, for nothing will decrease what is with Allah. And  
when you call upon him, be determined and sure (of an answer) because Allah is never  
forced to do anything anyway.”

<sup>57</sup> Recorded by Muslim (no. 2679). And in a similar ḥadīth recorded by al-Bukhārī (no.7477), the prophet ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ ) said:

« لَا يَقُلْ أَحَدُكُمْ : اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي إِنْ شِئْتَ ، إِرْحَمْنِي إِنْ شِئْتَ ، أَرْزُقْنِي إِنْ شِئْتَ ، وَلِيَعَزِمِ مَسْأَلَتَهُ ، إِنَّهُ يَفْعَلُ مَا  
يَشَاءُ ، لَا مُكْرَهَ لَهُ »

None of you should say, “Oh Allah, forgive me if you like, have mercy on me if you like, provide for me if you like. But he should be determined and sure in his asking. Certainly, he does what he wills – there is no coercing him anyway.”

### The Explanation of:

مَا نَقَصَ ذَلِكَ مِمَّا عِنْدِي إِلَّا كَمَا يَنْقُصُ الْمَخِيطُ إِذَا أُدْخِلَ الْبَحْرَ

“...that would not decrease what I have except as a needle might decrease the sea if put in it and pulled out.”

The is simply a statement of emphasis because whatever Allah owns will never decrease in the least under any circumstances as he ( تَعَالَى ) says:

﴿ مَا عِنْدَكُمْ يَنْفَدُ ۖ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ بَاقٍ ﴾

**Whatever you have will end, but what Allah has is lasting.**<sup>58</sup>

If a needle were dipped into the sea and then pulled out, that would not reduce the sea at all. Similarly, if a bird were to drink from it, for example, it would not diminish the sea's waters.

al-Khaḍr made the same analogy to prophet Moses ( عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلَام ) about the knowledge they both had when compared with that of Allah ( عَزَّ وَجَلَّ ).<sup>59</sup> This is because the waters and flowing rivers of the earth continuously replenish the oceans and seas. So

<sup>58</sup> The Quran, Sūrah al-Naḥl, 16:96.

<sup>59</sup> This is recorded in a long ḥadīth recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 122) and Muslim (no. 2380) in which the prophet ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ) narrated a version of the story of prophet Moses and al-Khaḍr longer than what is mentioned in the Quran (Sūrah al-Kahf, 18). In the ḥadīth, he ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ) said when Moses and al-Khaḍr were on the ship:

« فَجَاءَ عُصْفُورٌ فَوَقَعَ عَلَى حَرْفِ السَّفِينَةِ فَتَقَرَّ نَقْرَةً أَوْ نَقْرَتَيْنِ فِي الْبَحْرِ ، فَقَالَ الْخَضِرُّ : يَا مُوسَى مَا نَقَصَ عِلْمِي وَعِلْمُكَ مِنْ عِلْمِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا كَنَقْرَةِ هَذَا الْعُصْفُورِ فِي الْبَحْرِ »

A bird came and rested on an edge of the ship and dipped its beak into the sea for a drink once or twice. al-Khaḍr then said, “Oh Moses, my knowledge and your knowledge does not decrease from the knowledge of Allah except as this bird's sip of water does from the sea.”

whenever anything is taken from it, it does not actually reduce it because it is replenished by other means with what is greater than that which was taken from it. The food and other things in Paradise are similar – they are never depleted, as Allah ( تَعَالَى ) says about the food of Paradise:

﴿ وَفَاكِهَةٍ كَثِيرَةٍ • لَا مَقْطُوعَةٍ وَلَا مَمْنُوعَةٍ ﴾

**And fruit, abundant (and varied). Neither limited (to season) nor forbidden.<sup>60</sup>**

Also in support of this, the prophet ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ) said in a sermon during a solar eclipse:

« إِنِّي رَأَيْتُ الْجَنَّةَ أَوْ (أُرَيْتُ الْجَنَّةَ) فَتَنَاوَلْتُ مِنْهَا عُنُقُودًا ، وَلَوْ أَخَذْتُهَا لَأَكَلْتُ مِنْهُ مَا بَقِيَتِ الدُّنْيَا ، وَرَأَيْتُ النَّارَ (أَوْ أُرَيْتُ النَّارَ) فَلَمْ أَرَ كَالْيَوْمِ مَنْظَرًا قَطُّ أَفْظَعَ »

Indeed, I saw Paradise (or he said: I was shown Paradise) and from it I tasted a bunch of grapes. Had I taken it, you all would have eaten from it for as long as this world lasts. And I saw the fire (or he said: I was shown the fire) and until today, I have never seen a sight more horrible.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>60</sup> The Quran, Sūrah al-Wāqī'ah, 56:32-33.

<sup>61</sup> Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no.1052) and Muslim (no. 907).

**The Explanation of:**

يَا عِبَادِي إِنَّمَا هِيَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ أَحْصَيْتُهَا لَكُمْ

“Oh my servants, it is only your actions for which I call you to account...”

Allah surely takes account of the actions of his servants, and he will recompense them in full for those actions. This is like his statement:

﴿ فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ • وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ ﴾

**So whoever does an atom’s weight of good will see it. And whoever does an atom’s weight of evil will see it.**<sup>62</sup>

And his statement:

﴿ وَوَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا ۗ وَلَا يَظْلِمُ رَبُّكَ أَحَدًا ﴾

**And they will find what they did present (before them). And your lord does injustice to no one.**<sup>63</sup>

Allah also says:

﴿ يَوْمَ تَجِدُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مُّحَضَّرًا وَمَا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ سُوءٍ تَوَدُّ لَوْ أَنَّ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَهُ أَمَدًا بَعِيدًا ۗ وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ رَءُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴾

<sup>62</sup> The Quran, Sūrah al-Zalzalah, 99:7-8.

<sup>63</sup> The Quran, Sūrah al-Kahf, 18:49.

The day every soul will find what it has done of good present (before it) and what it has done of evil. It will wish that between itself and that (evil) was a great distance. And Allah warns you of himself, and Allah is kind to the servants.<sup>64</sup>

And he says:

﴿يَوْمَ يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُهُم بِمَا عَمِلُوا ۗ أَحْصَاهُ اللَّهُ وَنَسُوهُ﴾

On the day when Allah will resurrect them all and inform them of what they did. Allah had enumerated it, while they forgot it.<sup>65</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> The Quran, Sūrah Āli 'Imrān, 3:30.

<sup>65</sup> The Quran, Sūrah al-Mujādilah, 58:6.

**The Explanation of:**

ثُمَّ أُوفِّيكُمْ إِلَيْهَا

“...and then I will pay you in full for them.”

Apparently what is meant here is the full recompense on the Day of Resurrection just as Allah ( تَعَالَى ) says:

﴿ وَإِنَّمَا تُؤَفَّفُونَ أَجُورَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ﴾

**And you will only be given your (full) compensation on the Day of Resurrection.**<sup>66</sup>

The meaning could perhaps also be understood that Allah will recompense his servants for their deeds in the worldly life and in the hereafter as in his statement:

﴿ مَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا يُجْزَ بِهِ ﴾

**Whoever does wrong will be recompensed for it.**<sup>67</sup>

It has been reported that the prophet ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ) explained this in that the believers will have their bad deeds recompensed in this life but the rewards for their good deeds will be saved for them and paid in full in the hereafter. As for one who does not believe in Allah, (it is said) that the reward for his good deeds will be hastened in

<sup>66</sup> The Quran, Sūrah Āli 'Imrān, 3:185.

<sup>67</sup> The Quran, Sūrah al-Nisā, 4:123.

this life for him while his evil deeds will be saved for him, and he will be punished for them in the hereafter.<sup>68</sup>

This full recompense for one's deeds is the compensation for them whether good or bad. As for a bad deed, it will be recompensed with only a similar punishment which will not exceed the bad deed, or Allah may simply forgive it. And as for a good deed, the reward of which will be multiplied ten to seven hundred times or even much more, the extent of which only Allah knows as he (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) says:

﴿ إِنَّمَا يُوفَّى الصَّابِرُونَ أَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴾

**Indeed, the patient will be given their reward without account.<sup>69</sup>**

---

<sup>68</sup> Muslim recorded a ḥadīth (no. 2808) in a “marfū” form in which it is reported that the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

« إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ مُؤْمِنًا حَسَنَةً يُعْطَىٰ بِهَا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَيُجْزَىٰ بِهَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ ، وَأَمَّا الْكَافِرُ فَيُطْعَمُ بِحَسَنَاتٍ مَّا عَمِلَ لِلَّهِ بِهَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَفْضَىٰ إِلَى الْآخِرَةِ لَمْ تُكُنْ لَهُ حَسَنَةٌ يُجْزَىٰ بِهَا »

Allah does no injustice to a believer for even a single good deed – because of it, he is given in the worldly life and recompensed for it in the hereafter. As for a disbeliever, he is given sustenance because of the good deeds he may do for Allah in this life until when he arrives to the hereafter, he has not a single good deed for which to be rewarded.

<sup>69</sup> The Quran, Sūrah al-Zumar, 39:10.

### The Explanation of:

فَمَنْ وَجَدَ خَيْرًا فَلْيَحْمَدِ اللَّهَ، وَمَنْ وَجَدَ غَيْرَ ذَلِكَ فَلَا يَلُومَنَّ إِلَّا نَفْسَهُ

“So whoever finds good, let him thank Allah, and whoever finds other than that, let him blame only himself.”

This indicates that anything good is from Allah as a favor from himself to his worshipper even though the latter may not actually deserve it. And anything evil is from the children of Adam, from following their inclinations and desires as Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) says:

﴿ مَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَمَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِنْ نَفْسِكَ ﴾

**What comes to you of good is from Allah, but what comes to you of evil is from yourself.<sup>70</sup>**

‘Alī (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) once said, “A worshipper should hope from none but Allah and should fear nothing but his own sins.”

When Allah wants prosperity and guidance for someone, he facilitates a way for the individual to obey him, and this is a favor from Allah. But when Allah abandons someone, he entrusts all affairs of the person to the individual himself; Allah renounces the person by removing all connections between himself and the individual. So Satan is then able to deceive such a person so that he becomes negligent of remembering Allah. He follows his own inclinations and desires and consequently his affairs are lost and forsaken. All the while, this is still fair and just from Allah because the evidence has already been established upon the individual by the revelation of the Quran and the

<sup>70</sup> The Quran, Sūrah al-Nisā, 4:79.

sending of the messenger. So there is no excuse before Allah for any of mankind after the sending of the messengers.

If what is meant by “So whoever finds good” is whoever finds good in this life, then such a person is obliged to thank Allah, especially for the good reward of one’s good deeds that may be hastened in this life as Allah says:

﴿ مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيَاةً طَيِّبَةً ۖ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴾

**Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer, we will surely cause him to live a good life. And we will surely give such individuals their reward according to the best of what they used to do.<sup>71</sup>**

And (upon the understanding above) such a person would be obliged to blame himself for the negative consequences he may experience in the worldly life for the bad deeds he committed as Allah says:

﴿ وَلَنُذِيقَنَّهُمْ مِّنَ الْعَذَابِ الْأَدْنَىٰ دُونَ الْعَذَابِ الْأَكْبَرِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴾

**And we will surely let them taste the nearer punishment short of the greater punishment that perhaps they will repent.<sup>72</sup>**

<sup>71</sup> The Quran, Sūrah al-Nahl, 16:97.

<sup>72</sup> The Quran, Sūrah al-Sajdah, 32:21.

So for a true believer, when he is afflicted with any hardship in life, he looks inward, holding himself responsible. This in turn encourages him to return back to Allah with repentance and asking for forgiveness.

On the other hand, if what is meant by “So whoever finds good...whoever finds other than that” is in the hereafter, then this may be a way of Allah informing that those who find good in the hereafter will thank and praise Allah for that, and those who find otherwise should blame only themselves although at such a time blaming will be of no use. And this is an Arabic linguistic form in which the text is that of a command yet the meaning is actually to inform of a future event just as is the case with the ḥadīth in which the prophet ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ) said:

« مَنْ كَذَبَ عَلَيَّ مُتَعَمِّدًا فَلْيَتَّبِعُوا مَقْعَدَهُ مِنَ النَّارِ »

Whoever intentionally lies against me, let him occupy his seat in the fire.<sup>73</sup>

Meaning: Whoever lies against me will indeed occupy his seat in the Hellfire. [The text is in the form of a command but is a way of informing of a future occurrence.]

Allah has also informed us that the people of Paradise will thank Allah for that which he provides them of his bounty; he says:

﴿ وَنَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِنْ غَلٍّ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارُ ۖ وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدَانَا لِهَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْلَا أَنْ هَدَانَا اللَّهُ ﴾

<sup>73</sup> This ḥadīth is *mutawātir*, meaning that it has been narrated by so many different chains of narrators that it is considered authentic. See for example ḥadīth no.1841 of “Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan al-Tirmidhī” by al-Albānī.

And we will have removed whatever is within their breasts of resentment, (while) flowing beneath them are rivers. And they will say, “Praise to Allah who has guided us to this, and we would never have been guided if Allah had not guided us.”<sup>74</sup>

﴿ وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي صَدَقَنَا وَعْدَهُ وَأَوْرَثَنَا الْأَرْضَ نَتَبَوَّأُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ حَيْثُ نَشَاءُ ﴾

And they will say, “Praise to Allah who has fulfilled his promise to us and has made us inherit the earth (so) we may settle in Paradise wherever we will.”<sup>75</sup>

And he ( تَعَالَى ) says:

﴿ وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَذْهَبَ عَنَّا الْحَزْنَ ۖ إِنَّ رَبَّنَا لَغَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ • الَّذِي أَحَلَّنَا دَارَ الْمُقَامَةِ مِن فَضْلِهِ لَا يَمَسُّنَا فِيهَا نَصَبٌ وَلَا يَمَسُّنَا فِيهَا لُغُوبٌ ﴾

And they will say, “Praise to Allah who has removed from us sorrow. Indeed, our lord is forgiving and appreciative – he who has settled us in the home of duration out of his bounty. There touches us therein no fatigue, and there touches us therein no weariness (of mind).”<sup>76</sup>

As for the people of the fire, Allah informs us they will be blaming themselves, disgusted with and hating of their own souls. Allah ( تَعَالَى ) says:

<sup>74</sup> The Quran, Sūrah al-‘Arāf, 7:43.

<sup>75</sup> The Quran, Sūrah al-Zumar, 39:74.

<sup>76</sup> The Quran, Sūrah al-Fāṭir, 35:34-35.

﴿ وَقَالَ الشَّيْطَانُ لَمَّا قُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَعَدَكُمْ وَعَدَ الْحَقُّ وَوَعَدْتُكُمْ فَأَخْلَفْتُكُمْ ۚ وَمَا كَانَ لِي عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِلَّا أَنْ دَعَوْتُكُمْ فَاسْتَجَبْتُمْ لِي ۚ فَلَا تَلُمُونِي ۚ وَلُومُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ ﴾

**And Satan will say when the matter has been concluded, “Indeed, Allah had promised you the promise of truth. And I promised you, but I betrayed you. But I had no authority over you except that I invited you and you responded to me. So do not blame me, but blame yourselves.”<sup>77</sup>**

And Allah says:

﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُنَادُونَ لِمَقْتُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ مَقْتِكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِذِ تَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْإِيمَانِ فَتَكْفُرُونَ ﴾

**Indeed, those who disbelieve will be addressed (in Hell), “The hatred of Allah was (even) greater than your hatred of yourselves when you were invited to faith, but you refused.”<sup>78</sup>**

The righteous predecessors used to strive in doing good deeds, fearing the time when deeds will come to an end and they may then blame themselves for their shortcomings.

It was once said to Masrūq, “If only you would ease up with some of your worship in which you exert yourself.” He replied, “By Allah, even if he came to me and told me he

<sup>77</sup> The Quran, Sūrah Ibrāhīm, 14:22.

<sup>78</sup> The Quran, Sūrah Ghāfir, 40:10.

would not punish me, I would exert myself in worship (of him).” He was asked, “Why is that?” to which he said:

So that my own soul would pardon me if it entered the fire and so I would not have to blame it. Has there not come to you the statement of Allah:

﴿ وَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ ﴾

**And I swear by the self-reproaching soul.**<sup>79</sup>

They will blame and reproach themselves when they reach Hell. When the angels of punishment embrace them and stand between them and what they desire, when their hopes are cut off, and when mercy is withheld from them, every one of them will begin blaming and reproaching his own soul.

Muṭraf Ibn ‘Abdullah used to say:

Exert yourself in doing good deeds. If the decision is as we hope for—the mercy of Allah and his forgiveness—then for us will be levels (in Paradise). And if the decision is severe as we fear and of which we are cautious, let us not then say:

﴿ رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا نَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا غَيْرَ الَّذِي كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ ﴾

**“Our Lord, remove us; we will do righteousness other than what we used to do.”**<sup>80</sup>

We will then say, “We did deeds but they did not benefit us.”

<sup>79</sup> The Quran, Sūrah al-Qiyāmah, 75:2.

<sup>80</sup> The Quran, Sūrah Fāṭir, 35:37.