

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Tafseer Surah Al-Imraan (verses 21-28)

قال الله تعالى: {إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ النَّبِيِّينَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَيَقْتُلُونَ الَّذِينَ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْقِسْطِ مِنَ النَّاسِ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ}

Verily, those who disbelieve in the Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) of Allah and kill the Prophets without right, and kill those men who order just dealings, then announce to them a painful torment. (Verse 21)

An ayah is linguistically defined as a proof, evidence, or sign.

The Ayaat of Allah are of two types:

1. Ayaat Shar'eeyah (legislative): The verses of the Quran.
2. Ayaat Kawniyyah (universal): The signs in the universe such as the sun, moon, night, day, mountains, oceans, and other things which Allah has created.

Allah gave us these signs as proofs for the existence of a true God (ilah) of the universe.

The Messengers of Allah were the most honorable and best of people, and Allah sent them to us in order to enlighten us, guide us, and show us how to worship Him correctly. They possessed the best of hearts and the finest of manners, and yet you will find the very people to whom they were sent often killed them! Many of them were murdered by the Jews, who, due to being cruel-hearted, killed the Prophets without right. However, from them were also many who accepted Islam. Killing is always evil, but to kill a noble Prophet is from the worst of evil deeds. Prophets and Messengers have rights over us, and they deserve that we respect, love and obey them. The Jews also killed those people who commanded just dealings between the people.

The greatest form of fairness and justice is that we worship Allah alone - the Sole Creator, the Only One Who benefits, harms and provides for us. To practice tawheed - the worship of Allah upon the legislated Sunnah, without the association of any partners to Him - and to be truthful and honest, are aspects of justice. So the Jews killed the very people who called them to these things.

Allah said about these people:

Then announce to them a painful torment (فَبَشِّرْهُم بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ).

Usually, the word 'Al-Bushra' refers to a glad tidings or news for example if you were to say to someone, "I give you the good news that you have passed the exam." In Arabic, Bushra comes from bashrah, which means 'complexion of the skin'. When a person hears good news, he is pleased and this pleasure causes his complexion to light up. However, when one hears bad news, his face darkens.

قال الله تعالى: {أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِّن نَّاصِرِينَ}

They are those whose works will be lost in this world and in the hereafter, and they will have no helpers. (Verse 22)

Here "those" refers to those who killed the Prophets and people of justice.

The deeds of these people were rendered futile because they disbelieved in Allah and His Prophets; and no act of obedience or worship is accepted except after one has established tawheed. Even if a person were to pray abundantly, give much in charity, build a masjid, make Hajj or Umrah- none of these acts of his would be accepted without tawheed.

Anyone who does not implement the testimony of faith, then all of his acts are ultimately lost. They may receive rewards for their good deeds in the dunya, such as money, children, prestigious jobs etc. but on the Day of Resurrection they will find their deeds like the ashes from a burnt wood.

Such people will have no one to aid them or give them victory in the Hereafter. In this world, they may find helpers; for example, a disbelieving king may have his army and propagandists defending him, but on the Day of Resurrection no one will be able to speak for him, defend him, or support him. Each person on that Day will stand alone before Allah.

قال الله تعالى: {أَلَمْ نَرِ إِلَى الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا نَصِيحًا مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ يُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى كِتَابِ اللَّهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ يَتَوَلَّى فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ وَهُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ}

Have you not seen those who have been given a portion of the scripture? They are being invited to the Book of Allah to settle their dispute, then a party of them turn away, and they are averse. (Verse 23)

The Jews and Christians were given a share of the scriptures in their time, and then later they were invited to the Book of Allah (The Quran). Here it refers to their share of knowledge, yet when these people were invited to the Quran in order to judge between them in their disputes, they turned away and their hearts rejected the truth.

Allah is *Al-Hakam* (The Judge) and this Attribute of *Hukm* (judgement) has three meanings:

1. *Hukum Al-Kawniyy* (Universal Judgement) - Allah alone judges what takes place in the universe, for example the weather, matters of life and death, our provisions, and even the state of our hearts.
2. *Hukum Ash-Shar'ee* (Legislative Judgement) - Allah judges and commands what is halal (allowed) and what is haraam (prohibited). For example, Allah judged that rice is allowed, while alcohol is forbidden.
3. *Hukum Al-Jazaa'* (Judgement of Recompense and Reckoning) - Allah judges who deserves Paradise and who deserves the Hell-fire.

Therefore, the Quran contains judgments set forth by Allah. The Quran does not only address matters of worship such as prayer or judge between disputed parties, but rather it is a judge in all our affairs, whether they be relationships, business, etiquettes, inheritance, manner of walking, manner of speech etc.

قال الله تعالى: {ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا لَنْ نَمَسَّنَا النَّارُ إِلَّا أَيَّاماً مَّعْدُودَاتٍ وَغَرَّهُمْ فِي دِينِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ}

This is because they say: "The Fire shall not touch us but for a number of days." And that which they used to invent regarding their religion has deceived them. (Verse 24)

Their rejection of the truth occurred due to two reasons:

1. Their lack of fear of Allah and His Punishment as well as the lack of certainty and faith in the Hereafter, Paradise and Hellfire - One of the most foundational reasons due to which one finds it easy to commit sins is the lack of fear of Allah, The Glorified and Exalted, and the lack of certain belief and fear of the Hereafter. Due to this, the Jews invented lies in order to convince themselves that they had nothing to fear about.
2. Allah left them to be deceived by their own lies. Allah says:

And that which they used to invent regarding their religion has deceived them.

(وَعَرَّهُمْ فِي دِينِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ)

When the Jews invented lies regarding Allah, Allah punished them by making them believe their own fabrications. This in turn increased their deception and misguidance even further. This is how the Jews became convinced that they were safe from the punishment of Allah, due to which they arrogantly refused to submit to the Quran.

This phenomenon is commonly found amongst the people of innovation such as the Sufis. First, they invent lies about Allah, His religion, and the Quran whilst knowing that they are false, and then Allah punishes them by making them believe their own falsehood.

قال الله تعالى: {فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جَمَعْنَاهُمْ لِيَوْمٍ لَّا رَيْبَ فِيهِ وَوُفِّيَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ}

How (will it be) when We gather them together on the Day about which there is no doubt (i.e. The Day of Resurrection). And each soul will be paid in full what he has earned? And they will not be dealt with unjustly. (Verse 25)

This verse is a threat for the Jews who committed great acts of disbelief evil, and transgression.

The souls here include the souls of both mankind and jinn because both of these creations will be brought to account. Each and every soul will be recompensed for what he or she earned, so a person will either earn reward and goodness or earn punishment and torture. Each and every evil act that was done will be transferred to punishment, torture and pain for whoever does it.

And they will not be dealt with unjustly. (وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ)

It is important to know that when Allah puts a soul to account, He does so with either *adl* (justice) or *fadh* (generosity).

Allah's justice is in his punishment, that He records an evil deed as just one evil deed, whereas His *fadh* (generosity) is that He rewards a single good deed ten-fold to seven-hundred fold or more as He, the Most High, wishes.

This is how merciful and generous Allah is to His creation, yet mankind often deprives himself of His Generosity and Mercy, while hastening towards the Hellfire with evil actions.

Shaykh Ibn Al-Uthaymeen, may Allah have mercy upon him, explained:

“Why did the Jews refuse to follow Muhammad? They refused out of envy and arrogance.”

Before the sending of the Messenger (peace be upon him), they used to say to the Arabs, “We are the best of mankind. When our prophet comes, we are going to fight you.”

The people used to resort to them for judgement and decision and they would take money for this, so they wanted to maintain their authority and dominion in the land. But they were surprised when the Messenger came from the Arabs and not from Bani Israil, and so because of this they refused to follow Muhammad out of jealousy and arrogance even though they knew with certainty that he was the one foretold in their own scriptures.”

قال الله تعالى: **قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ مَالِكُ الْمُلْكِ تُؤْتِي الْمُلْكَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتَنْزِعُ الْمُلْكَ مِمَّن تَشَاءُ وَتُعِزُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُزِيلُ مَنْ تَشَاءُ بِيَدِكَ الْخَيْرُ إِنَّكَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ** {

Say (O Muhammad): "O Allah! Possessor of the kingdom, You give the kingdom to whom You will, and You take the kingdom from whom You will, and You endue with honour whom You will, and You humiliate whom You will. In Your Hand is the good. Verily, You are able to do all things. (Verse 26)

Allah specifically instructed the Prophet to say this, but the scholars have explained that it is also directed towards those who follow him.

With regards to the Will of Allah, it must be understood that the His Will is always in accordance to His perfect and complete knowledge and wisdom. So when Allah gives leadership and kingdom to someone, there is a wisdom behind this. it is always with these two things - i.e. knowledge and wisdom - that Allah wills something to occur or not to occur.

Allah is *Al-Maalik Al-Mulk* (The Possessor of the Dominion). This statement has two meanings:

1. Allah is our only Owner in every way - He created us and He owns our destiny, bodies, health, and every aspect of our being.
2. Allah is The Only One Who has the authority and ability to manage our affairs and the affairs of the kingdom - whether a person is going to be poor or rich, sick or healthy, or whether it is going to be sunny or windy, is completely up to Allah.

And You give honour to whom You will, and You humiliate whom You will.

(وَتُعِزُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُزِلُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ)

To Allah belongs all of *al-izzah* (honour) and He alone bestows it upon His slaves. This aqeedah must be deep-rooted in our hearts. Since Allah is The Only One Who can grant honor and high ranks and grant one the love and respect of the people, we must never seek *'izzah*(honour) except from Allah, This is why it is said, "Anyone who seeks honor from anyone or anything else except Allah, will be humiliated." The ability to humiliate and lower is also within the Hands and Control of Allah.

How can one achieve *al-izzah*? When one humbles himself before Allah, feeling that he does not need anyone or anything except Allah, Allah honours him. This is why during the time of the *tabi'een*, the generation that followed that of the Companions, the kings used to respect the Scholars. They would go to the scholars and beg them to ask them for something but the scholars would never seek anything from them.

In Your Hand is the goodness (بِيَدِكَ الْخَيْرُ)

Al khair is anything which is good and beneficial for a person. There is *khair* in this world such as health, money, children, and good manners and there is *khair* in the Hereafter, such as seeing Allah and residing in Paradise. All the *khair* in this world is due to Allah's will and in His Hands. Anything good that a person needs and wishes for is from the *khair* and none except Allah can grant it to him.

قال الله تعالى: ﴿تُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَتُولِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَتُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَتُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَتَرْزُقُ مَنْ تَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ﴾

You make the night to enter into the day, and You make the day to enter into the night (i.e. increase and decrease in the hours of the night and the day during winter and summer), You bring the living out of the dead, and You bring the dead out of the living. And You give wealth and sustenance to whom You will, without limit (measure or account). (Verse 27)

The night and day and life and death, are from the greatest signs of Allah and a manifestation of the precision of Allah's Power. Whatever is constant and stable, the eyes get used to it. But when something changes and alternates, such as the day and the night, the summer and winter, youth and old age, then these are signs that there is a Creator. No one is able to change himself or change others.

The night takes over the day gradually at dawn, and the light comes and takes over the darkness gradually. It is not sudden or unexpected, rather an orderly and gradual change that manifests Allah's Gentleness and Power within the creation.

And You bring the living out of the dead. (وَتُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ)

Don't you see the egg, how it is dead, and then a chick comes out from it? And the plant, how it emerges from the dead seed? This giving of life can also be moral - Allah gives life to the dead heart when He guides it to Islam.

You bring the dead out of the living (وَتُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ)

Allah causes death to come upon a living person and He causes the green land to dry and wither away.

And You give wealth and sustenance to whom You will without limit.

(وَتَرزُقُ مَنْ تَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ)

Shaykh Ibn Al-Uthaymin, may Allah have mercy upon him, said,

"If we truly understand this verse and it enters our heart, then we will never depend upon the people for our needs. We will seek sufficiency only from Allah."

So do not ever put your hopes in what is in the hands of people, rather empty your heart of hope and reliance upon anyone other than Allah. That is why, from the things that the Prophet, peace be upon him, took a pledge of allegiance from the people for, was that they would not ask the people for anything. And therefore, if a companion was mounted on a horse, and his whip fell down, he would not ask the man standing beside him to pick it up for him, but he would dismount and do it himself."

In the Sahih of Imam Muslim, Malik al-Ashja'i reported:

We, nine, eight or seven men were in the company of the Messenger of Allah, peace upon him, and he said, "Why don't you pledge allegiance to the Messenger of Allah?" We had recently pledged allegiance, so we said, "Messenger of Allah, we have already pledged allegiance to you." He again said, "Why don't you pledge allegiance to the Messenger of Allah?" And we said, "Messenger of Allah, we have already pledged allegiance to you." He again said, "Why don't you pledge allegiance to the Messenger of Allah?" We stretched out our hands and said, "Messenger of Allah. We have already pledged allegiance to you. Now tell us upon what matters we should pledge allegiance to you." He said, "(You must pledge allegiance) that you will worship Allah alone and not associate anything with Him,

(pray the) five (obligatory daily) prayers, and obey- (and he said one thing in an undertone) -that you would not beg the people for anything.” (And as a consequence of that) I saw that some of these people did not ask anyone even to pick up the whip for them if it fell down.

Is this independency upon the people unconditional? Undoubtedly, a person does require the assistance of others in some affairs. This is acceptable, but this reliance should be limited to necessity. For instance, if a person is unable to leave his bed, he may ask someone to bring him a glass of water. However, we remind ourselves that even the assistance of the people is eventually from Allah, the Glorified and Exalted, the Creator of the means.

Is this practice related to tawheed? Yes, in fact it has a deep impact on our tawheed. Tawakkul is an essential aspect of tawheed and in order to complete and strengthen our tawheed, we need to train our hearts to rely only upon Allah and cling solely onto Him, even in the smallest of affairs. Whoever places their hope in the creation will undoubtedly try to please them, fear their anger, and become attached to them. However, all of these acts of worship of the heart must be directed only to Allah.

For example, there are women who believe that if their husbands were to die, they would be lost and deprived. They say, "What will I do if he dies? Where will I get money to spend?" Glorified and Exalted is Allah! Indeed, this state of fear and insecurity comes about as a result of them placing all of her hope and trust upon her husband and depending upon him for their provision and security. This indicates a clear deficiency in tawheed and is dangerous for one's heart. A woman must take care of her heart and seek only her needs from her husband, without placing her trust or reliance upon him. If Allah has decreed a provision to reach her, she might get it without having to ask for it. The husband (or anyone else) is only a means, whilst The Provider is only Allah, The Glorified and Exalted.

If we reach this stage where we do not rely except upon Allah and do not ask but Him, then Allah will suffice us and aid us by sending people offering their help to us, without us even asking them. Moreover, the people tend to dislike those who ask a lot. However, Allah loves those who ask of Him. He gives them what they ask for and rewards them even for just asking. This is the great difference between asking Allah and asking the people.

From the many means by which a slave can increase his rizq (provision) are:

- Having taqwa of Allah (being fearful, pious and obedient to Allah) is a means by which a person attains good provisions from Allah.
- Providing for the weak - The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said:

"هل تتصرون وترزقون إلا بضعفانكم "

You are given support and provision due to your weak ones.

If a person takes care of a weak person, then Allah will provide for him because of this. For example, a man lives with his elderly mother, for whom he provides. He may think of her as a burden upon him, but rather, she might be a means by which Allah provides for him. It may be that all of the provision he has is due to him taking care of his old, weak mother. So he should never become bored of her. Likewise, if one takes care of an orphan, a widow, or the like, then Allah will provide for him because of him providing for the weak.

And there are other means such as observing thankfulness to Allah, maintaining ties of kinship, *al-istighfaar* (seeking Allah's forgiveness) etc.

قال الله تعالى: {لَا يَتَّخِذِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَلَيْسَ مِنَ اللَّهِ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا أَنْ تَتَّقُوا مِنْهُمْ تُقَاءً وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ}

Let not the believers take the disbelievers as Auliya' (supporters, helpers) instead of the believers, and whoever does so will never be helped by Allah in any way, except if you indeed fear a danger from them. And Allah warns you against Himself (His punishment), and to Allah is the final return. (Verse 28)

A Muslim should remove himself from those affected by disbelief and not show friendship or support towards them, nor ask them for support.

Will never be helped by Allah in any way. (فَلَيْسَ مِنَ اللَّهِ فِي شَيْءٍ)

Meaning, they will be distant from Allah's Help and Support, and this is a very serious threat.

Except if you indeed fear a danger from them, and you want to protect yourself from their danger and harm. (إِلَّا أَنْ تَتَّقُوا مِنْهُمْ تُقَاءً)

For example: If a Muslim living in a kafir country is asked about the disbelievers in Islam, and making true statements such as they are "kuffar" will result in some harm

or danger - such as imprisonment or expulsion from the country - then it is permissible for him to not state the truth. Rather, he may say, "Yes, we love the disbelievers," while his heart does not believe this.

The proof for this is the story of the companion, Ammar Ibn Yasir (may Allah be pleased with him). He was tortured by the Quraysh until they forced him to utter bad words about The Prophet, peace be upon him. When he told this to the Prophet, he asked him, "What was the state of your heart?" He replied, "My heart was full of faith." The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said, "If they do it again, say bad words about me, so that they leave you alone." This shows the ease and mercy of Allah's Legislation. When Allah commands us to do something, He knows that risk may be involved in the application of the command.

And Allah warns you against Himself (وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ)

Allah is now warning His slaves against Himself i.e. His punishment for committing His prohibitions.

And to Allah is the final return. (وَالِإِلَى اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ)

No matter who we are, where we live, how long we live or what we do, our point of return is one and the same - to Allah. We are all going to stand before Allah, and we are all going to be questioned about everything we said, did and spent.

The statement of truth "وَالِإِلَى اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ" and to Allah is the final return", must have an impact on us. We will leave everything behind and meet Allah alone. If we truly believe that our return is to Allah, and that He alone will reward and punish for our deeds, then we must worship Allah alone.

Above is a transcription of a class given by teacher Zaynab El-Kateb and it is based on the tafseer of Surah Ali-Imraan by Shaikh Ibn Al-Uthaymin, may Allah be pleased with him.