

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Tafseer Surah Al-Imraan

(verses 8-15)

{رَبَّنَا لَا تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ}

Our Lord! Let not our hearts deviate (from the truth) after you have guided us, and grant us mercy from you.
Truly, You are the Bestower. (verse 8)

Those who are established in knowledge say that they believe in all of Allah's Quran (His words) and then they make a beautiful supplication. We need to learn from the Quran how to supplicate (make dua) to Allah in the best manner. In this verse, they start the supplication with the word “our Lord” (رَبَّنَا) because the result of Allah being “our Lord” is that He will listen and respond to our supplications.

Sheikh ibn Al-Uthaymin said, "Here, the people of knowledge said “Do not let our hearts deviate (from the truth).”

Why did they say, “do not deviate our hearts" and not "do not deviate our minds? This is because the actual ruler of the body and soul is the heart and ultimately it is the heart that makes the decisions: It takes the information from the brain and utilises it to make decisions, and thus the brain is merely but a messenger to the heart. We can find this meaning in this verse in chapter Al-Hajj:

{أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَتَكُونَ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا أَوْ آذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِنْ تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبُ الَّتِي فِي الصُّدُورِ}

Have they not travelled through the land, and have they hearts wherewith to understand and ears wherewith to hear? Verily, it is not the eyes that grow blind, but it is the hearts which are in the breasts that grow blind.

Surah Al-Hajj [22:46]

The mind takes the knowledge gained through sight, hearing, and reading and transfers it to the heart which then makes various decisions such as to be good or bad, to believe or not, to be sincere, to name a few. This is why they say the intellect is in the heart. The heart that is healthy tells you to take care and guard yourself, to believe in Allah, and to obey Him in order to save yourself from His punishment.

Let not our hearts deviate (from the truth) after you have guided us

(رَبَّنَا لَا تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا)

Further to this, there are means for one's supplication to be accepted and we shall explore them below.

They say here, "Our Lord, You bestowed us with a bounty which is guidance. So as You guided us before with Your generosity and Your mercy, now keep us firm on the truth." So they asked Allah for assistance whilst also mentioning some of His previous bounties upon them.

Guidance (هدايه - guidance of success):

There is guidance of information, which clarifies what is right and wrong, but here 'هَدَيْتَنَا' indicates that Allah showed them the truth and guided them to accept and act upon it.

And grant us Mercy from Yourself. Truly, You are the Bestower

(وَهَبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ)

They are asking Allah to grant them from His own self, from His Mercy, because He is The One Who Bestows upon others, and when a bounty is given to mankind from The All-Great, then it will be great indeed.

So here they are asking, "From You Allah, with Your Glorification, Greatness and Vastness, we ask for support, bounties, and favors." And the greatest favor is that Allah guides a person to the correct path, that of Islam.

Truly, You are the Bestower of bounties

(إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ)

Al-Wahhab has a similar meaning to Ar-Razzaq but has a characteristic that is specific only to it.

Allah is The All-Provider (Ar-Razzaq), and He told us that there is a means to be taken in order to be provided for, and that means is to work. Similar to this is vegetation and crops: To grow successfully and yield results there are means that must be taken, such as to sow seeds at their correct times, to water according to the plant's needs, to fertilise, and so on.

As for Al-Wahhab, then it is a bounty given without any reason or means taken in order to receive it.

For instance, your father one day decides to give you a generous sum of money, without any reason at all, and you are wondering what you have done to deserve it. In fact you have not done anything and it is a gift from your father. And Allah's example is the greatest.

Thus Allah being Al-Wahhab means that He gives to us without us necessarily being deserving of His bounty. We do not deserve it and we did not do anything to be entitled to this gift. Al-Wahhab is Allah continuously giving us gifts, bounties and favours.

We can also see from this great supplication that they chose the most suitable of Allah's names to supplicate to Him with and thus we must understand which of His names to use when calling upon Him for anything. The more we understand the meaning and reality of Allah's names and attributes, the more we will be able to choose which of His names is most suitable for specific supplications.

Then the people of established knowledge said:

{رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ جَامِعُ النَّاسِ لِيَوْمٍ لَّا رَيْبَ فِيهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ}

Our Lord! Verily, it is You Who will gather mankind together on the Day about which there is no doubt. Verily, Allah never breaks His Promise. (verse 9)

Now they are stating one of the pillars of iman (faith). They say to Allah, "We believe that there is a Day of Resurrection. We do believe in this and that Allah will gather all the people on a day which will be a day of reckoning."

Verily, Allah never breaks His Promise (إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ)

Allah never breaks His promise because Allah is Al-Haqq (The Truthful).

One of the means of supplication is to ask Allah stating your monotheism, your belief in His names and attributes, and your belief in one of the pillars of faith, like that of the Day of Resurrection and the Truth of the Hereafter.

{إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَنْ تُغْنِيَ عَنْهُمْ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُهُمْ مِّنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمْ وَقُودُ النَّارِ}

Verily, those who disbelieve, neither their properties nor their offspring will avail them whatsoever against Allah; And it is they who will be fuel of the fire. (verse 10)

Meaning, when one puts wood into the fire in order to make it burn better, the disbelievers will be fuel when they are gathered and thrown in the fire.

Sheikh Ibn Al-Uthaymin said, “Those who disbelieve will not benefit from their offspring.

But the believers, on the other hand will benefit from their offspring.

For instance, from the very moment a woman conceives, to when she feels sickness, tiredness and pain, from breastfeeding and sleepless nights to every single hardship she encounters along the path of motherhood she will be greatly rewarded. Moreover, when she teaches her child to recite Al-Fatiha, to pray, to read Quran and to love Allah, and for each and every (good) word she says, she will obtain the full reward for what she has taught them, and the reward is multiplied.

If the child does not accept her words however, and does not want to be obedient nor a good Muslim then his refusal does not affect her reward for teaching it. She will have the reward in full because she did what Allah commanded her to do. So know that there is no loss when one speaks the truth and teaches it. The parents are rewarded even if their children do not accept it from them.

Moreover, each and every act of obedience the child does will be in the parents' book of good deeds. The parents and the child will all be generously rewarded for their good acts and obedience. And after the death of the parents each and every supplication the child makes for them and each and every thing the parents taught him to do will continue to benefit them. Therefore there is a vast difference between a Muslim and a disbeliever. The Muslim is a winner in every way and the disbeliever is a loser in every way.

For those who are not blessed with children then they are also greatly rewarded for their patience and acceptance of Allah's decree and thus in all cases the believer is nothing but a winner.

{كَذَّابٍ ءَالٍ فِرْعَوْنَ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا فَآخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ}

Like the behaviour of the people of Firaun (Pharaoh) and those before them; They denied Our Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.). So Allah seized (destroyed) them for their sins. And Allah is Severe in punishment. (verse 11)

These people who are refusing to accept the Prophet, may Allah's peace be upon him, and are behaving in the same manner as the people of Firaun (Pharaoh) who Refused to Accept the Ayaat of Allah. (The most well-known of Pharaohs was the Firaun from the time of Prophet Musa, peace be upon Prophet Musa.)

This verse is an evidence that there is one Lord, Allah. Allah destroyed those who denied or disbelieved in His signs, due to their sins.

Then Allah said to the Prophet, may Allah's peace be upon him:

{قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَتُغْلَبُونَ وَتُحْشَرُونَ إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ وَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ}

Say (O Muhammad) to those who disbelieve: "You will be defeated and gathered together to Hell, and worse indeed is that place of rest." (verse 12)

Sheikh Ibn Uthaymeen says, "Do not ever be shaken or feel belittled by what the disbelievers have of power, as Allah is capable of destroying all that they have, and He will grant us victory over them if we are pious and abide by what we are taught in the Quran and Sunnah.

So if Allah wishes for us to have victory over them and their money, power, nuclear weapons and army, then these things will not benefit them in this worldly life. As for the hereafter, on the Day of Resurrection none of what they have will benefit them.

The believers should find these verses soothing, and gain from them strength and encouragement.

And worse indeed is that place of rest (وَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ)

المهاد: A place of rest.

Take as an example the one who has travelled for hours, or even days. What is it that he most desires? A traveller most desires nothing more than his home, rest and comfort. Now imagine the place that these people (disbelievers) are going to ultimately reside in? Their home will be the Hellfire.

What is the proof that they will be defeated? The proof is in the following verse:

قَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ آيَةٌ فِي فِتْنَةِ قُرَيْشٍ ۚ لَمْ تَكُنْ أَهْلًا بِهَا لَكُمُ الْيَوْمَ بِأَكْبَادِكُمْ ۚ وَاللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَتِ لَمَنَّانٌ ۚ وَاللَّهُ يُؤَيِّدُ بِنَصَرِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِّأُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ

There has already been a sign for you (O Jews) in the two armies that met (in combat i.e. the battle of Badr): One was fighting in the Cause of Allah, and as for the other (they) were disbelievers. They (the believers) saw them (the disbelievers) with their own eyes twice their number (although they were thrice their number). And Allah supports with His Victory whom He wills. Verily, in this is a lesson for those who understand. (verse 13)

Here Allah is telling the Jews:

There has already been a sign for you (O Jews) (قَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ آيَةٌ فِي فِتْنَةِ الْقُرَيْشِ)

Meaning, they have already seen a sign of Allah's Power.

There were two armies that met in combat at the Battle of Badr. One army, the Muslims, were fighting in the cause of Allah, and the other army were disbelievers.

(يَرَوْنَهُمْ مِّمَّنْ لَمْ يَلِدْهُمْ وَاتَّخَذُوا آلَهُمِ الْبُحَارَ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِّأُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ)

They (the believers) saw them (the disbelievers) with their own eyes twice (although they were thrice their number). And Allah supports with His Victory Whom He wills.

Here Allah says that the Muslims themselves saw the disbelievers as double their own army. In reality, the disbelieving army was three times more numerous than that of the believers. There were three hundred Muslims against one thousand disbelievers. In this way Allah belittled the Army of the enemies in the eyes of the Muslims in order to give them confidence and strength.

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِّأُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ

Verily, in this is a lesson for those who understand.

So not just anyone can understand the lesson taught in these verses; Only those whom Allah grants understanding and comprehension are successful in this.

زُيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاطِيرِ الْمُقَنْطَرَةِ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةِ وَالْخَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ وَالْحَرْثِ

Beautified for men is the love of things they covet (have desires for); women, children, much of gold and silver (wealth), branded beautiful horses, cattle and well-tilled land. (verse 14)

For the Arabs, camels and horses were from the things that they loved most in this world. These animals were their greatest wealth. For us, at this time, it would be luxury vehicles.

ذَلِكَ مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا

Allah says that all of these- the money, children, women, palaces, and resorts- are from the pleasure of the present world's life;

وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الْمُنَآبِ

But Allah has the excellent return (Paradise with flowing rivers)

When you return home, back to a place you love or when you turn to Allah, this is مَنَاب .

But what about your مَنَاب -the last place where you will go?

In the end you will not live for long, even if you may reach 100 years of age, you will have done and enjoyed many many things; but then ask yourselves to whom will you return?

Ultimately, you will return to Allah. You will find Allah and stand in front of Him, The One Who is going to reckon your deeds and recompense you accordingly.

He is The One Who will reward or punish you. Either He will treat you with mercy and honor or humiliation and punishment, according to what you yourself have earned.

What are you going to choose? Reward or punishment? We must always keep this question in mind, because one day we will certainly return to Allah, our Lord.

Here Allah tells us to compare the pleasures of this world to the real pleasure of the eternal Paradise. We all experience trials and are tested with the pleasures of this worldly life, and these things often become the barrier between ourselves and acts of obedience to Allah. It is remarkably easy for us to give in and do acts of disobedience to gain money and other such pleasures. For instance, a man can be disobedient to his Lord by having a relationship with a woman he loves and desires who he is not married to. A mother can sacrifice her religious duties and disobey Allah for the sake of her son, daughter, husband or money she loves.

These and other acts of disobedience are barriers between us and obedience to Allah's commands. Because Allah is The All-Wise, He is The One Who has placed desire in our souls; We are tested daily by the desires we have for the things of this life.

Allah tells us clearly what is the path of Paradise and what is the path of the Hellfire. Moreover, if the path to Paradise did not at times conflict with our desires, for example if we did not care about money, children, prestige or status, then no doubt it would always be an easy path. We would not disobey Allah because we would love performing the good acts and not concern ourselves with worldly matters. If this was the case, then how would we be tested? Where then is the trial that we go through on the path to Paradise?

This is why the well-known, authentic hadith states, "The Hellfire is surrounded by desires."¹

This does not refer to the permissible desires, but rather those that are forbidden, such as watching movies, listening to music, and drinking alcohol. These prohibited desires are the things which will attract people and cause them to fall into the Hellfire. Thus, in order to enter Paradise we must fight hard to resist our desires.

You have to ask yourself who you love more, Allah or money? Allah or your daughter or husband? Allah or the woman or man you desire or love? Our lives are full of trials and we need to be aware of this. We will not get through life untested.

Allah has created you in a state wherein you may love certain things that He has forbidden for you- so what will you choose? Will you give in to your desire for something that is impermissible to you, or will you choose to obey Allah?

'Laa ilaaha illallah' means that no one should be worshipped and obeyed except Allah. This is why a sin committed while not believing that it is something permissible is considered to be from minor shirk. Things like theft, adultery and drinking alcohol are all sins that fall under minor shirk because in committing them a person has chosen to follow his own desires over obedience to Allah. So he is, in effect, saying, "Allah said this but I don't want what He says; Instead I want this." In this way he has chosen himself over Allah.

قُلْ أُوْنِبْتُكُمْ بِخَيْرٍ مِّنْ دَلِكُمْ لِلَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْاْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَأَزْوَاجٌ مُّطَهَّرَةٌ وَرِضْوَانٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ
وَ اللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ}

Say: "Shall I inform you of things far better than those? For Al-Muttaqun (the pious) there are Gardens (Paradise) with their Lord, underneath which rivers flow. Therein (is their) eternal (home) and Azwajun Mutahharatun (purified mates or wives). And Allah will be pleased with them. And Allah is All-Seer of (His) slaves. (15)

People love this and this; money, women and horses (cars and whatever else from our time). So Allah says: "Shall I inform you of things far better than those?" {قُلْ أُوْنِبْتُكُمْ بِخَيْرٍ مِّنْ دَلِكُمْ}

لِلَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا - for those who are pious (people of Taqwa)

What is Taqwa - piety- ? As one of the salaf (pious predecessors) said, it is to follow Allah's commands with evidence so that you know that it is Allah's command with proof (from the Quran and Sunnah) seeking for Allah's reward and to refrain from

¹ Ref:Sahih al-Bukhari 6487

Allah's prohibitions (when we have proof that it is something forbidden) fearing Allah's punishment.

Allah says in this verse that He will tell us of what is better than these worldly pleasures, accordingly, we should not be deceived by this world. Allah is The Creator of this world and The Creator of the Hereafter, yet here Allah warns us against putting our hopes in this world, rather we should place our hopes and attach ourselves to the pleasures of the Paradise in the Hereafter. So we should never give up on the Paradise for a perceived gain in the worldly life.

وَاللَّهُ بِصَيْرٍ بِالْعِبَادِ

Allah is The All-Seer of His slaves

Usually, when Allah says He is Al-Aleem or Al-Baseer, Al-Khabeer (The All-Knowledgeable) one of the things He means by this is that, due to His complete and perfect knowledge, Allah will deal with us according to what He sees in our hearts. So, if Allah sees in a person's heart something good such as softness, submission, humility to Him, rectification to please Him, love of Him and His names and His religion, then Allah will place that person on the path of the Paradise. He will deserve to be on that path.

But if He sees cruelty, arrogance, stubbornness, and selfishness, then the person in whose heart these things reside deserves to be put on the path of the Dunya (this worldly life) and not the path of Paradise.

The Scholars say that a person must begin his rectification with the state of his heart. If Allah is Al-Baseer (All-Seer) then He sees what is in our hearts, so we must beautify our hearts for Allah; Cleanse and rectify them for Him alone.

So we need to concentrate and begin our rectification by examining and purifying our hearts.

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