

Abu Dharr narrated from the Prophet (peace be upon him), as part of what he narrated from God, Blessed and Sublime, that He said:

- 1 My servants, I have forbidden injustice for Myself and have made it forbidden among you. So, do not be unjust to one another.
- 2 My servants, all of you are led astray except for those I have guided; so seek guidance from Me and I shall guide you.
- 3 My servants, all of you are hungry except for those I have fed, so seek food from Me and I shall feed you.
- 4 My servants, all of you are naked except for those I have clothed, so seek clothing from Me and I shall clothe you.
- 5 My servants, you sin by night and by day, and I forgive all sins, so seek forgiveness from Me and I shall forgive you.
- 6 My servants, you shall not attain the ability to harm Me, and you shall not attain the ability to benefit Me.
- 7 My servants, were the first of you and the last of you, the human of you and the jinn of you to be as pious as the most pious heart of any one person of you, that would not increase My kingdom in anything.
- 8 My servants, were the first of you and the last of you, the human of you and the jinn of you to be as wicked as the most wicked heart of any one person of you, that would not decrease My kingdom in anything.
- 9 My servants, were the first of you and the last of you, the human of you and the jinn of you to rise up in one place and make requests of Me, and were I to give everyone what they have requested, that would not decrease what I have any more than a needle decreases the sea if dipped into it.
- 10 My servants, it is but your deeds that I reckon up for you and then recompense you for. So, let him who finds good praise God and let him who finds otherwise blame none but himself. <sup>(1)</sup>

1 Related by Muslim, 2577.

#### From the Qur'an

- ﴿Indeed God does not wrong anyone by as much as an atom's weight. And if there be a good deed, He will multiply it, and will bestow a great reward out of His grace.﴾ (4: 40)
- ﴿It is He who has created me, and is the One who guides me. (78) He is the One who gives me to eat and to drink. (79) When I fall ill, He is the One who restores me to health, (80) and will cause me to die and then will bring me back to life. (81) It is He also who, I hope, will forgive me my faults on the Day of Judgement'﴾. (26: 78-82)
- ﴿Say: '[Thus speaks God]: You servants of Mine who have transgressed against their own souls! Do not despair of God's mercy: God forgives all sins; He alone is much-forgiving, ever-merciful'﴾. (39: 53)
- ﴿Everyone in heaven and earth entreats Him. Everyday He manifests Himself in some wonderful way.﴾ (55: 29)
- ﴿As for those who disbelieve, God does not stand in need of anything in all the worlds.﴾ (3: 97)

#### The Narrator

Abu Dharr Jundub ibn Junādah al-Ghifārī was an aesthetic and truthful person, a distinguished and honourable companion of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He used to engage in worship at night for nearly three years before the start of the Islamic message. He embraced Islam in Makkah in the early days of the message, and some reports mention that he was the fourth person to become a Muslim. When Abu Bakr died, Abu Dharr left Madinah for Syria and remained there until 'Uthmān became caliph. 'Uthmān invited him back and told him to settle at al-Rabadhah. He died there. His funeral prayer was led by another companion of the Prophet, 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd. He died in Year 32 AH, 653 CE.

#### Summary

God, limitless is He in His glory, mentions that He has forbidden injustice and commanded people not to resort to it. He then tells His servants that He is the One who provides guidance and sustenance and that He forgives sins and bestows mercy. He further tells us that none of His creation can ever harm Him or cause Him benefit. He tells us of His limitless treasures which are never exhausted. God then states that what everyone will receive is only the fruit of their own deeds.



# Message and Meaning

The Prophet (peace be upon him) narrates a *qudsī* hadith, which means that it is the word of God. It is different from the Qur'an in so far as its meaning comes from God, but is expressed in the Prophet's own words. The Qur'an, on the other hand, is God's word and meaning.



God calls on mankind with an address of mercy, as He attaches them to Himself, saying: 'My servants'. He tells them that He has forbidden Himself injustice, although He is able to inflict it. He says of Himself: 'Indeed God does not wrong anyone by as much as an atom's weight'. (4: 40) The entire universe is His own dominion, and He is the Creator who controls everything. Yet, He does not wrong anyone in any way. This is stated as preliminary to making it clear that He has forbidden injustice among people. In essence, then, it is forbidden for everyone to be unjust to anyone else.

Injustice means departure from what is right, replacing it by something else. God has forbidden idolatry and the association of partners with Him, describing it as 'gross injustice'. Every type of injustice among humans, whether related to life, property or honour, is very strictly forbidden, even if it involves something very trivial. God clearly warns those who are unjust, saying: 'Never think that God is unaware of what the wrongdoers are doing. He only grants them respite till the Day when eyes will stare fixedly in horror, (42) when they will be dashing in confusion, with their heads lifted up, unable to turn their eyes from what they behold, and their hearts an utter void'. (14: 42-43) He further commands that justice should be extended even to those who are hostile to us. He says: 'Believers, be steadfast in your devotion to God, bearing witness to the truth in all equity. Never allow your hatred of any people to lead you away from justice. Be just, this is closer to righteousness'. (5: 8)



God again calls on His servants, telling them that all creation are going astray except those to whom He has explained the truth and enabled them to embrace it. All of them are born knowing nothing. Given that his abilities are finite, man cannot be absolutely certain that his view is always right, or that he knows everything or that he is able to do anything. People hold different views and ways of thinking. There are many confusing things and conflicting desires. Human intelligence is not sufficient to determine the truth. Many intelligent people have erred. It is God's guidance that keeps people on the right track. Therefore, God tells people to seek His guidance.<sup>(1)</sup>

Guidance is not limited to the mere acceptance of Islam. It also includes knowledge of the rulings and laws of Islam and submission to what the Prophet tells us of obligations and prohibitions. Hence, God orders the believers to repeat in their prayers: 'Guide us on the straight path'. (1: 6)



Addressing His servants again, God tells them that all creation are hungry except those He feeds. Therefore, they need to seek their food with Him. God can, if He so wishes, make all the food on earth go bad, or keep man in want, or make food inaccessible to him because of illness or detention or some other reason. No human being gets the food they need except by God's favour.

1 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Hikam*, Vol. 2, p. 40.

4

God further addresses His servants telling them that they all are naked except those whom He clothes. As such, they need to seek clothing from Him. He can, if He so wishes, deny them any clothing.

Both food and clothing are two types of provision from Him. All God's creation are in need of God and what He provides them with, just as much as they are in need of His guidance. He says: 'God is indeed the Provider of all sustenance, the Lord of Power, the Ever-Mighty'. (51: 58)

5

In yet another address to His servants, God reminds them of their weakness, as they continue to commit sin day and night. Nevertheless, He forgives them their sins, however numerous. They need to appeal to Him for forgiveness. He says: 'You servants of Mine who have transgressed against their own souls! Do not despair of God's mercy: God forgives all sins; He alone is much-forgiving, ever-merciful'. (39: 53) The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'God stretches His hand during the night so that the person who did badly the previous day may turn to Him in repentance; and He stretches His hand during the day so that the person who did badly during the previous night may turn to Him in repentance. This will continue until the sun rises from the west'.<sup>(1)</sup>



1 Related by Muslim, 2759.

# Message and Meaning

6

Again God addresses His servants, telling them that they are powerless in front of Him. They cannot harm Him by their disbelief, or by their power or anything they have, as they are within His kingdom. Nor can they benefit Him by their belief or support. He has no need for them or anything they have or can offer. God then gives even more examples of His being in no need of them or anyone else.

7

God then tells His servants that their worship and obedience is of no benefit to Him. Were all humans and jinn to have the same strength of faith as the Prophet himself, this would not increase God's kingdom in any way. He says: 'Whoever strives hard [for God's cause] does so for his own good. For certain, God is in no need of anything in all the worlds'. (29: 6)

8

Again addressing His servants, God tells them that their disobedience and sins do not harm Him in any way. Had their disbelief and sins been at the same level as those of Satan himself, it would not decrease His kingdom in anything. God says: 'Be not grieved by those who hasten on to disbelief. They cannot harm God in any way. It is God's will not to assign to them any share in the [blessings of the] life to come. Grievous suffering awaits them. (176) Indeed, those who have bought disbelief at the price of faith cannot harm God in any way. Painful suffering awaits them'. (3: 176-177)

9

God then describes His great bounty and countless favours which He bestows on His servants. Referring to all creation, from the time when He created the universe up till the Day of Judgement, God says that were they to stand together and each one of them prays to Him for whatever favours that person wants and were God to grant every single one of them their requests, this would not decrease His kingdom in any way. It would not diminish His bounty and blessings. He gives an example of this, citing a small needle being dipped in the sea: would it decrease its water? The same is the case with God's bounty; it is boundless.

10

God, Exalted and Glorious, then states that man's destiny is dependent on his actions. God records our deeds and recompenses us for them. Therefore, whoever finds that God has prepared a good abode for him should praise God for having guided him to faith and facilitated for him doing good. A person who finds otherwise should only blame himself, for what he gets is only the result of his own deeds.



# Implementation

1

Every Muslim should beware of committing injustice, because it is the worst of sins. We need to understand its meaning so as to guard against unwittingly committing it. Idolatry, which means associating partners with God in what belongs to no one other than Him, is a clear example of injustice. Even if it is only of the type of lesser idolatry, such as by dissimulation and trying to impress people with one's prayer, knowledge or some other thing. Injustice also means taking away something that belongs to another person without valid justification, such as unfairly punishing an employee by taking away a portion of his salary, parking one's car in the wrong place, or making a sarcastic remark. A very bad example of injustice is that which one does to oneself, incurring God's punishment for the mere indulgence in a fleeting forbidden pleasure.

2

Always think about the different outcomes of whatever you do, remembering always to appeal to God alone for guidance and sustenance. He alone grants these and He loves to hear His servants' supplication.

3

Do not limit your supplication to what belongs to the life to come. We are in need of God in every moment. We remain naked and hungry unless He bestows His favours on us.

4

God created us so that we will obey Him. He has given us the night and the day so that we worship Him in such hours. Yet we often commit sins in broad daylight or under the cover of the night. We should remedy this with constantly praying for God's forgiveness and increasing our worship, particularly at the two ends of the day.



5

When you do some good deed, do not consider it a favour you do for God. Nor should you think that it earns you the right to have your prayer answered. It is you who needs God and God is in no need of you or anyone else.

6

Do not grieve or weaken if you see sins being committed, or disbelief spreading. None of this harms God in anyway. Had God so willed, none of this would be committed. We should attend to our duties of worship and give advice to people, but we need not grieve for them.

7

No one need think that they have asked God too much. Nothing is too great or too precious for God to give. God says of Himself: 'Everyone in heaven and earth entreats Him. Everyday He manifests Himself in some wonderful way'. (55: 29) The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'God's right hand is full, undiminished by nights' and days' spending, overflowing. Have you considered what He has spent ever since He created the heavens and earth? That did not diminish what His right hand holds'.<sup>(1)</sup>

8

Using similes and metaphors is a very effective way to explain one's meaning. Consider how the concept of God's ever-flowing bounty is illustrated through the simile of a needle being dipped into the sea and how much the sea water is decreased as a result. Essentially, we too need to learn how to make things easier for people to understand.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 7419; Muslim, 993.



