

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

- 1 When God brought His creation into existence, He wrote in His Book,
- 2 which is with Him above the Throne:
- 3 My Mercy prevails over My Wrath.⁽¹⁾

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Your Lord has committed Himself to bestow grace and mercy: if any of you does a bad deed out of ignorance, and then repents and mends his ways, He will be much-forgiving, ever-merciful.﴾ (6: 54)
- ﴿My grace encompasses all things; so I will confer it on those who steer away from evil, and spend in charity, and who believe in Our signs.﴾ (7: 156)
- ﴿Our Lord! You embrace all things with [Your] grace and knowledge. Forgive, then, those who turn to You in repentance and follow Your path, and shield them from the suffering in the blazing Fire.﴾ (40: 7)

The Narrator

According to the best reports, Abu Hurayrah's name was 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī, from a branch of the Azd, a Yemeni tribe. He embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. Despite being very far away, he migrated to Madinah and remained close to the Prophet (peace be upon him). He was very keen to learn and memorize the Prophet's hadiths. He was the Prophet's companion who narrated the largest number of hadiths. He died in Madinah in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions that when God, Mighty and Exalted, completed His creation, He wrote in the Imperishable Tablet which is with Him above the Throne: My Mercy prevails over My Wrath.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 3194; Muslim, 2751.



Message and Meaning



When God, Mighty and Exalted, willed to bring His creation into existence, which, as explained in another hadith, means that before He actually created them, He wrote all that happens to His creation. He wrote it all in the Imperishable Tablet or in some other great book He keeps.



This record is imperishable and kept with God, above His throne. The throne is a great creation placed above the seven heavens. It is carried by great angels. The word throne means the seat of dominion. This is evidence of His sublimity and that He – limitless is He in His glory – is above His heavens, established on the throne, as He says: ‘The Lord of Grace, established on the throne of His almightiness’. (20: 5)



God Almighty wrote in that record: ‘My Mercy prevails over My Wrath’. This means that what His creation will receive of His Mercy is more than what they receive of His Wrath. It is indeed what they receive in their varied situations. God says: ‘If God were to punish people [at once] for the wrongs they do, He would not leave a single living creature on the surface of the earth’. (35: 45) Had it not been for God’s mercy, none of His creation would have merited entry into Heaven. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘No one’s deeds shall ensure entry into Heaven. People said: ‘Not even you, Messenger of God?’ He said: ‘Not even me, unless God bestows on me favours and mercy’.⁽¹⁾

One aspect of the prevailing of His mercy is that He gives time to sinners to repent and inspires them to pray for forgiveness. When they do, He forgives them their sins.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 5673; Muslim, 71.

Implementation



Be reassured of God's grace. Just as He wrote the lots of His creation in the Imperishable Tablet, He also wrote in it the mercy He bestows. Therefore, we should not regret what happened in the past and should not worry about the future. We should always rely on God.



This record in which people's fate is written also includes the details of God's mercy. God keeps it with Him above His throne. This stresses the great importance of this record. It behoves every rational person to give this record its proper status and focus on this very grave matter, rather than trivial thoughts.



God's mercy prevails over His wrath. He accepts the repentance of sinners no matter how grave their sins are. Let everyone look at himself, and he will find that he has done numerous sins involving all his organs and faculties, such as sight, hearing, speech, hands and legs. Yet we only need to listen to God's gracious address: '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)



Draw closer to God's mercy, even by the length of a hand span. A hadith mentions: 'A man from the Children of Israel killed ninety-nine people. He then asked whether he could repent. He went to a priest and asked him. The priest told him that his repentance would not be acceptable, so he killed the priest. He continued to ask. Someone told him to go to a particular village. On his way, he was overtaken by death. He leaned towards it with his chest heading forward, then he died. The angels of mercy and the angels of punishment disputed his case. God inspired the one [village] to come nearer and the other to go farther, and He told the angels to measure the distance between them. He was found to be nearer [to the village of good people] by a hand span, and he was forgiven his sins'.⁽¹⁾



To God belongs all dominion and knowledge and He has the throne and the record that contains everything. Yet to Him belongs all mercy and grace. When people have some authority, through ownership, knowledge, position, parenthood, physical strength, wealth, etc. they may use their power to dominate those below them and they treat them unfairly. It behoves everyone to examine their conduct.



People will inevitably commit some wrong, because they cannot be perfect. To set their conduct to perfection requires the combination of mercy and wrath. True perfection requires that mercy should be greater and more dominant than wrath. Therefore, a Muslim should endeavour to acquire the pattern set in this hadith, so that his mercy prevails over his anger. Since man is weak, he should seek God's help to strengthen his mercy.



A person who hopes for God's mercy should be merciful to others, seeking only God's reward. He should always remember that God, the Lord of Grace, only extends His grace to those who are merciful.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 3470; Muslim, 2766.

