



13. Expecting the Best from Allaah and Not Losing Hope

Delivered by His Eminence
ash-Shaykh Usaamah Khayyaat
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All praise is due to Allaah. He guides those who seek His guidance, and suffices those who entrust their affairs to Him. I praise Allaah, as He is perfect in every way. I praise Him sincerely, and I hope to please Him by doing so. I testify that none has the right to be worshipped except Allaah alone, without any partner. There is no Lord except Him, and none deserves any form of worship besides Him. I further testify that our leader and Prophet, Muhammad, is Allaah's worshipping servant and Messenger. He was the most virtuous of the Prophets, and his Lord granted him guidance and special distinction. O Allaah, I beseech You to grant Your commendation and protection to Your worshipping servant and Messenger, Muhammad, as well as to his family and Companions.

Servants of Allaah, observe taqwaa of Allaah (i.e. fulfil His commands and avoid His prohibitions). In addition, always remember that you will have to meet Allaah and be brought before Him. The truly fortunate person is the one who makes the necessary preparations for that time; takes the required provisions; earnestly traverses all channels leading to Allaah; aspires to draw near to Allaah by all statements and actions; and hopes that Allaah will accept that from him, forgive him, and be pleased with him.

Dear Muslims, the worst thing with which souls can be tested, and by which hearts can be destabilized, is despair to such a degree that it kills all feelings, turns one's world dark, crushes all hopes, cuts off all paths, and closes all doors.

There are two passages in the Qur'aan that mention despair. Both of them censure and disapprove of it because it is, in fact, a major sin. Allaah, the Almighty, said,

﴿ لَا يَأْسُ مِنْ رَوْحِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴾

“Do not ever despair of Allaah's mercy. Indeed, no one despairs of Allaah's mercy except people who reject Him.”¹ This implies that one must remain hopeful that Allaah will grant him mercy and relief from adversity. Allaah, who is perfect in every way, also said,

﴿ وَمَنْ يَفْطَأْ مِنْ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّهِ إِلَّا الضَّالُّونَ ﴾

“None despairs of his Lord's mercy besides those who are astray.”² Thus, Allaah clarified to people of eemaan (i.e. people of sound beliefs and righteous deeds) that it is not fitting for them to feel such despair. Rather, the way one should strive to constantly remain is both fearful and hopeful: fearful about the consequences of one's wrongdoing and, at the same time, striving to obey Allaah and remaining hopeful about attaining His mercy, pardon, and forgiveness.

Allaah encouraged His worshipping servants to hope for His mercy, pardon, and forgiveness. He stated,

﴿ قُلْ يَعْبادِي الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا ﴾

¹ Soorah Yoosuf (12):87.

² Soorah al-Hijr (15):56.



إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٣٥﴾

“Say: My servants who have transgressed against themselves, do not despair of Allaah’s mercy. Indeed, Allaah forgives all sins. He is truly the Most Forgiving, the Bestower of mercy.”³ Allaah, who is perfect in every way, also said,

﴿وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَسَأَكْتُبُهَا لِلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ﴾

﴿وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِآيَاتِنَا يُؤْمِنُونَ﴾

“As for My mercy, it encompasses all things in this world. However, I will record My mercy in the hereafter for those who observe taqwa and give obligatory charity, and those who accept Our evidences and submit to them.”⁴

There is also a hadeeth qudsi which was collected by al-Imaam Ahmad in his Musnad with a saheeh chain of narration from Aboo Tharr (may Allaah be pleased with him). He narrated that Allaah’s Messenger (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) stated, “Allaah, the Most Exalted, said: Son of Aadam, so long as you call upon Me and hope in Me, I will forgive you for what you have done and I would not mind. Son of Aadam, even if your sins reached all the way up to the clouds in the sky but you then asked for My forgiveness, I would forgive you. Son of Aadam, if you come to Me with sins that could almost fill the entire Earth, but you had not devoted worship to anyone or anything besides Me, I would come to you with a similar amount of forgiveness.”⁵

In the Two Saheeh collections, Aboo Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) stated, “Allaah, the Almighty and Most Majestic, said: I am as My servant expects of Me.”⁶ Other narrations of this hadeeth collected by al-Imaam Ahmad, ibn Hibbaan, and al-Haakim contain the addition, “Therefore, let him expect what he wills.”

In Saheeh Muslim, Jaabir ibn ‘Abdillaah (may Allaah be pleased with both of them) narrated that he heard Allaah’s Messenger (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) say three days before he passed away, “No one among you should ever pass away without ensuring that he expects the best from Allaah.”⁷

Servants of Allaah, texts like these in the Qur’aan and Sunnah open the doors of hope for a person and steer him away from despair. They turn him in the right direction and lead him along the ideal path. They enable him to look towards the future with optimism: expecting the best from Allaah, and hoping for His mercy as well as the best final outcome that lies with Him.

A hadeeth was cited earlier saying, “No one among you should ever pass away without ensuring that he expects the best from Allaah.” Scholars of hadeeth, such as Abul-‘Abbaas al-Qurtubee and others, have explained that this means: continue performing righteous deeds and observing sound conduct while always hoping that Allaah accepts them, and while maintaining the expectation of earning Allaah’s mercy when doing those things. Allaah’s mercy is near those who strive to worship Him in the best way, and His punishment is feared as it relates to those who disobey Him and perpetrate sins. Additionally, a person deceives himself if he expects good from Allaah yet neglects to perform deeds. The aforementioned perspective is to be maintained while strong and healthy. However, when death is at

³ Soorah az-Zumar (39):53.

⁴ Soorah al-A‘raaf (7):156.

⁵ See also Jaami‘ at-Tirmitheeh (3540). Graded saheeh by al-Albaanee.

⁶ Saheeh al-Bukhaaree (7405), Saheeh Muslim (2675).

⁷ Saheeh Muslim (2877).



hand, all that a person should think about is the vastness of Allaah’s mercy; the magnitude of His grace; the fact that no sin is too great for Him to forgive; and the fact that Allaah is most generous, most forbearing, most forgiving, most rewarding for deeds performed, bestower of blessings, and bestower of mercy. A person in that state should be reminded of passages from the Qur’aan and Sunnah bearing those meanings so that his heart may accept them. That would lead him to have love for Allaah, pass away in that state, meet Allaah while having love for Him, and be gathered in the hereafter with those who have utmost love for Allaah after previously being among those who continually made mistakes. This is supported by the statement of the Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection), “Each person will be resurrected according to what he passed away adhering to.”⁸

Expecting the best from Allaah must not be confined to specific circumstances, occasions, or times. One must expect the best from Allaah while devoting oneself to Him, and also hope for Allaah’s pardon and forgiveness. Similarly, one must also expect the best from Allaah throughout all circumstances of life, including adversities that are faced. If a person is tested with things such as illness, debt, loss of property, or loss of a loved one, that individual must not despair of Allaah granting him mercy and relief. Rather, he must remain certain that whatever he faces would be a means to goodness. He must keep in mind that Allaah would either raise his rank, avert from him something worse than what happened, or compensate him with something better than anything he may have lost, and that may take place in the short term or the long term. In Saheeh al-Bukhaaree, Aboo Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) narrated that Allaah’s Messenger (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) said, “If Allaah wants good for someone, he tests that person.”⁹ In other words, Allaah tests the person with adversities in order to reward him for how he deals with them. Additionally, at-Tirmitheeh and ibn Maajah collected a hadeeth with a [hasan] chain of narration from Anas ibn Maalik (may Allaah be pleased with him). He narrated that Allaah’s Messenger (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) said, “The extent of reward attained is proportional to the extent of trials experienced. Indeed, if Allaah – the Most Exalted – loves a people, He makes them experience trials. If a person remains pleased throughout trials, Allaah would be pleased with him; but if a person becomes angry due to them, Allaah would be angry with him.”¹⁰

There are people who see life as a completely gloomy existence whenever faced with adversities and trials. They instil within themselves that the trials will last for a long time, difficulties will never depart, and adversities will destroy them. Servants of Allaah, that type of perspective reflects that a person thinks ill things about Allaah. It is a perspective that is not part of a person who has genuine eemaan or someone who is sincerely devoted to Allaah. There are many instances in which Allaah changes circumstances of fear into safety, poverty into plenty, and adversity into prosperity. Days that may cause some pain are means to attaining mercy, forgiveness, and raised ranks from Allaah.

The Companion ‘Utbah ibn Ghazwaan (may Allaah be pleased with him) said during a sermon of his, “I saw myself as the last of only seven people with Allaah’s Messenger (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection). At that time, we had nothing to eat besides the leaves of trees, and they even caused lesions on the sides of our mouths. I had obtained a garment for myself and I split it to share with Sa’d ibn Maalik such that I wore one half as my lower garment and he wore the other half as his. However, today, each one of us is nothing less than a governor of an entire region.”¹¹

Servants of Allaah, if we examined the past and present, there are very many such examples. Therefore, servants of Allaah, continue to observe taqwaa of Allaah, and always remember that a

⁸ Saheeh Muslim (2878).

⁹ Saheeh al-Bukhaaree (5645).

¹⁰ Sunan ibn Maajah (4031). Graded hasan by al-Albaanee.

¹¹ See Saheeh Muslim (2967).



person with sound beliefs who strives to worship Allaah in the best way must continue to expect the best from Allaah in all situations, hope for what lies with Allaah, and also fear the consequences of sins committed. Allaah indeed spoke the truth when He said,

﴿ وَإِذَا أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ أَعْرَضَ وَنَسَّ بِجَانِبِهِ ۗ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ كَانَ يَئُوسًا ۝٨٣﴾

﴿ قُلْ كُلُّ يَعْمَلْ عَلَى شَاكِلَتِهِ ۗ فَرَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ هُوَ أَهْدَى سَبِيلًا ۝﴾

“The very nature of human beings when We bestow blessings upon them is that they turn away from giving due gratitude and they become distant from obeying Us; and when adversity strikes them, they fall into continual despair. Messenger of Allaah, tell the people, ‘Each individual acts based on his own intentions and the course he chooses for himself. However, your Lord has best knowledge about who follows the most soundly guided path, and He will recompense each person accordingly.’”¹²

May Allaah enable us all to glean benefit from the guidance of His Book and the Sunnah of His Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection). I say this much and I beseech Allaah – the Most Magnificent and Majestic – to forgive the sins of myself, you, and all who submit to Him in Islaam. Thus, you must also ask Allaah’s forgiveness, as He is continually forgiving.



Indeed, all praise is due to Allaah. We praise Him, seek His assistance, and ask His forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allaah from the evils of our own souls and from the evil consequences of our actions. If Allaah guides someone, none can lead that person astray; and if Allaah leaves someone to stray, none can guide him. I testify that none has the right to be worshipped except Allaah alone, without any partner, and I testify that Muhammad is Allaah’s worshipping servant and Messenger. May Allaah grant commendation and protection to His Messenger, as well as to the Messenger’s family and Companions.

Servants of Allaah, in the Two Saheeh collections, there is a hadeeth narrated by Aboo Sa’eed al-Khudree and Aboo Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with them). They narrated that Allaah’s Messenger (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) said, “Any time some sort of difficulty, illness, anxiety, sorrow, harm, or distress – even the prick of a thorn – afflicts a person who submits to Allaah in Islaam, it would be a means to Allaah expiating some of that person’s sins.”¹³ Scholars have mentioned that this contains immense glad tidings for every individual who has eemaan. In the majority of cases, a person is never free from some sort of pain due to illness, distress, or other such causes. The illnesses and pains may be physical, psychological, or emotional. In all cases, they are means to a person’s sins being expiated. The majority of scholars hold that this expiation applies only to minor sins. They hold that major sins are not expiated without sincere repentance, and this is based on the hadeeth in Saheeh Muslim which states, “Performing one prayer among the five obligatory daily prayers, performing one Friday prayer, or fasting one Ramadaan is a means to being forgiven for what occurred between it and the previous one so long as major sins are avoided.”¹⁴

These glad tidings open the doors of hoping for Allaah’s kindness and forgiveness. Al-Imaam ibn al-Qayyim (may Allaah have mercy upon him) commented that hope drives people’s hearts towards Allaah and the hereafter; and it also makes the journey more enjoyable. The difference between real hope and false hope is that the latter is accompanied by laziness. A person who has false hope does not

¹² Soorah al-Israa’ (17):83-84.

¹³ Saheeh al-Bukhaaree (5641), Saheeh Muslim (2573).

¹⁴ Saheeh Muslim (233).



tread the path of diligence and earnest striving. In contrast, real hope is accompanied by striving, diligent effort, and full trust in Allaah. This is why there is consensus among the scholars that hope is not genuine if it is not accompanied by deeds. Furthermore, hope is praiseworthy in the case of a person who strives to obey Allaah while maintaining sound beliefs and hope in Allaah's reward, and also in the case of a person who committed a sin but then repented and hoped to attain Allaah's forgiveness. As for someone who persists in neglecting his duties towards Allaah and continues doing wrong, yet still hopes for Allaah's mercy although he does not perform the deeds required of him, that is false hope and such a person deceives himself.¹⁵

¹⁵ See Madaarij as-Saalikeen (2/37).