

﴿وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفْلًا عَمَّا يَعْمَلُ الظَّالِمُونَ﴾

“Do not think that Allah is neglectful of that which the oppressors do.” [TMQ Surah Ibrahim 14:42]

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(Translated)

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Allah (swt) said, ﴿وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفْلًا عَمَّا يَعْمَلُ الظَّالِمُونَ إِنَّمَا يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ لِيَوْمٍ تَشْخَصُ فِيهِ الْأَبْصَارُ﴾ **“Do not think that Allah is neglectful of that which the oppressors do but He gives them respite up to a Day when the eyes will stare in horror.” [TMQ Surah Ibrahim 14:42]**

Sheikh Muhammad Metwally Al-Shaarawy said in his interpretation of this verse:

After Allah (swt) mentioned and explained the general blessings upon the universe, and the special blessings that He (swt) bestowed upon those who settled in Mecca, and among their descendants those who stood against the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (saw), in a position of oppression, after that Allah (swt) came with this verse as a consolation and comfort for the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (saw). The background of the depiction that preceded it includes the beginning of the formation of this place which they were found in it, and how the blessings came to those who settled in this place; where fruits came to them, and the blessing of awe for them. This is whilst the Allah (swt) destroyed those who opposed them, such as Abraha and those with him, ﴿جَعَلَهُمْ كَصَفِّ مَأْكُولٍ﴾ **“And He made them like eaten straw.” [TMQ Surah Al-Fil: 5].** Then Allah (swt) said after this ayah, ﴿لَا يَأْتِيهِمْ فَرِيشٌ ۝۱ إِلَّا فِيهِمْ﴾ **“For the accustomed security of the Quraysh. Their accustomed security [in] the caravan of winter and summer. So let them worship the Lord of this House. Who has fed them [saving them] from hunger and made them safe from fear.” [TMQ Surah Quraysh 1-4].**

Despite that, they stood against the Dawah of the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (saw), with a stance of denial, obstinacy, opposition and ingratitude. They tried to seek help from all the enemies of Islam to fight this Deen. Therefore, Allah (swt) here explains a consolation for the noble Messenger Muhammad (saw), ﴿وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفْلًا عَمَّا يَعْمَلُ الظَّالِمُونَ﴾ **“Do not think that Allah is neglectful of that which the oppressors do.” [TMQ Surah Ibrahim 14:42].** Why? The answer comes in the second half of the verse, ﴿إِنَّمَا يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ لِيَوْمٍ تَشْخَصُ فِيهِ﴾ **“He gives them respite up to a Day when the eyes will stare in horror.” [TMQ Surah Ibrahim 14:42].** And the Allah’s saying, ﴿وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ﴾ **“Do not think...”** means, do not think or reckon. So hasaba here is not from calculation (الحساب) and counting. Instead, it is from حسب thinking and reckoning. The statement of Al-Haq (swt) that clarifies this issue, ﴿أَحْسِبُ﴾ **“Do people think once they say, “We believe,” that they will be left without being put to the test?” [TMQ Surah Al-Ankabut 29:2].**

The negligence that Allah (swt) denies from Him is forgetfulness, about a matter due to lack of wakefulness or attention. Of course, this is something that does not come from Him the Almighty, for He is the Self-Sustaining, Whom neither drowsiness nor sleep overtakes. Here, the Almighty addresses His Messenger and the believers with him accordingly. When the Almighty addresses His Messenger Muhammad (saw) He is addressing at the same time everyone who believed in Him. However, did the Messenger think that Allah (swt) was negligent? No. Let us note that when Allah (swt) commands something, the command may

carry out a command that the person actually carries out. Allah (swt) demands him continuity (استدامة istidaamah) in this action. When you say to someone, لا تشرب الخمر “Do not drink alcohol” and he does not drink alcohol, you are asking him by saying this to continue not drinking alcohol, meaning, استمرّ على ما أنت عليه “continue as you are” by actually doing what you command, or abstaining from what you forbid.

Is it possible for negligence to come to Allah (swt)? I say, when you see a quality that exists in humans, but does not exist in Al-Haqq (the Truth), the Almighty, then you must explain the matter with the perfections that belong to Allah (swt). Whoever commits injustice will receive punishment for it, and when the punishment is delayed, those who saw the act of injustice wonder and whisper, I wonder if the injustice that so-and-so committed has been forgotten? Is there negligence in the matter? Through these questions, they want to declare their stance on the perpetrator of the sin, and the necessity of punishing him. Accordingly, we understand the word, غَفَلًا “neglectful” in this verse to mean “deferring the punishment”.

For those who wonder, they should remember the words of Allah (swt), ﴿وَأْمَلِي لَهُمْ إِنْ كَيْدِي﴾ **“And I give respite to them; certainly My Plan is strong.”** [TMQ Surah Al-A’raf 7:183]. Accordingly, there is no negligence. There is a postponement of punishment for these oppressors. This is because oppression means taking a right from its owner and giving it to someone else, or taking it for oneself. If the oppression is in a matter of belief, then it is shirk (polytheism), which is the greatest crime. If you are oppressed in a major matter of the major sins, then this is evil doing (fisq). If you are oppressed in a minor matter, then it is oppression. Therefore, we find Allah (swt) mentioning every ruling that suits the three situations. He says about the one who overlooks the criminality of shirk, ﴿وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ﴾ **“And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed are the disbelievers.”** [TMQ Surah Al-Maidah 5:44]. He (swt) says about the indulgence in a criminality of a major sin, ﴿وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ﴾ **“And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed are the are the evil doers to Allah.”** [TMQ Surah Al-Maidah 5:47]. He (swt) says about the one who overlooks the criminality of other than a major sin, with respect to the appropriate Shariah rulings of the Deen, ﴿وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ﴾ **“And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed are the oppressors.”** [TMQ Surah Al-Maidah 5:45].

If there is a person who is judged, and he is one person, with multiple judgments, then the judgment depends on what he judged for. When we look at this issue of injustice, we find that the oppressor suppresses the oppressed. If the injustice, Allah forbid, is the ultimate injustice, which is associating partners with Allah (swt) then this injustice is divided, according to ulema, into three types. The first type, which is denying the existence of Allah (swt) and His Divinity without attributing it to anyone else, this is ilhaad (atheism). It is injustice regarding the His obligatory existence, glory be to Him. The second type, which is acknowledging the divinity of Allah (swt) but associating others with Him in divinity, and this shirk is injustice to Al-Haq (swt) in His Essence and Uniqueness. The third type. which is saying that Allah (swt) is composed of parts; this is injustice to Allah (swt) in His Oneness. Some of those of knowledge say: The first right in existence is His existence, glory be to Him... and the injustice mentioned in the verse that we are considering, and the ultimate injustice; Injustice regarding the Iman in the Divine, and with it another injustice, which is the injustice against the Messenger Muhammad (saw). The poet summarizes their injustice to the Messenger Muhammad (saw), لَقَّبْتُمُوهُ أَمِينًا فِي صِغَرٍ، وَمَا الْأَمِينُ عَلَى قَوْلِ بَيْنَهُمْ “You called him trustworthy (ameen) in his youth, but the trustworthy is not accused even by a word.”

They called the Messenger (saw), before the risalah (message), al-ameen (the trustworthy). After the message, they removed this description from him. They described him before the message as truthful (as-sadiq). They never said about him before the message that he was a magician, and they never accused him before the message of madness. So how did he have the descriptions of truthfulness and speaking the truth, and speaking about

the soundness of his ability to judge? How did he (saw) have those qualities before the message, yet you remove them from him after the message? This is the injustice of stripping away perfection, for the Messenger Muhammad (saw), had it be before he was sent. So you wronged him after the message and denied him this perfection. This is a double injustice. You had previously acknowledged his trustworthiness before the message. However, after the message you denied his trustworthiness. He was truthful before the message. Yet, you said that he was not truthful after it. He did not have a characteristic of defect before the message. So you came to him with a quality of deficiency, such as your saying: magician, soothsayer, madman. In this there is injustice to the Messenger Muhammad (saw).

This is also an injustice to the society in which you live, because whoever wants to continue tyranny with the word of kufr, and wants to continue to rule, exploit, and control others, all of that is an injustice to society. Above that, it is an injustice to the self, because whoever does that may take a simple pleasure and deprive himself of a great pleasure, which is the pleasure of life in the Path of Allah (swt). The words of the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, (swt) apply to him, ﴿وَمَا ظَلَمْنَهُمْ وَلَكِن كَانُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ﴾ **“And We did not wrong them, but it was they who wronged themselves.”** [TMQ Surah An-Nahl 16:118].

On top of the injustice of the self and the injustice of society, there is an injustice practiced by this type of human being against the entire universe, including all that is below human beings, from inanimate objects to animals and plants. This is because when a human being is not on the path of his Creator, whilst the entire universe is subject to the path of the Creator, then the human being will not take that into consideration in his dealings with the universe. Glory be to Him, Allah (swt), Who said, ﴿وَإِن مِّن شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ﴾ **“and there is not a thing but glorifies His Praise.”** [TMQ Surah Al-Isra 17:44]. When everything in the universe glorifies Him, whilst a human being who does not follow the path of Allah (swt) deviates from that, then the entire universe hates him. By doing so, the human being is unjust to himself and to the universe as well.

Thus we know the ultimate injustice of denying divinity, or associating partners with Him, the Most High, or imagining that He is made up of parts, and the injustice of stripping the Messenger Muhammad (saw) of perfection, who is the intermediary who brought the news of Iman, and the injustice of the entire universe, because the universe with all its species glorifies Allah (swt).

As for the saying of Al-Haq (swt), the Most High, ﴿وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفْلًا عَمَّا يَعْمَلُ الظَّالِمُونَ﴾ **“Do not think that Allah is neglectful of that which the oppressors do.”** [TMQ Surah Ibrahim 14:42]. We find the word “do” (ya’mal). We know that there is a difference between ‘aml (a deed that is done) and f’il (work), and f’il is what occurs through all the limbs, except for the tongue, which is called qawl (speech). F’il applies to all that the limbs do, whilst what the tongue does has a distinct word, “qawl,” what is said. This is because that which throws people on their faces into the Hellfire is nothing but the earnings of their tongues. Fi’il (فعل action) and qawl (قَوْلُ speech) are combined by the word ‘aml (deeds that are done). Here in the verse that we are thinking about, the Truth, the Most High, says “do” because the mushrifeen who heard of the Qur’an, were using speech to spreading rumors about Islam and the Messenger Muhammad (saw). All the deeds they did arose through incitement with words. This noble verse comes in which the Allah (swt) confirms that He gives respite to them to commit sins in order to enable them to be punished as well. He says, ﴿إِنَّمَا يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ لِيَوْمٍ تَشْخَصُ فِيهِ الْأَبْصَارُ﴾ **“He gives them respite up to a Day when the eyes will stare in horror.”** [TMQ Surah Ibrahim 14:42]. We know that some events fell upon them that confirmed the nearness of the victory of the Messenger Muhammad (saw). Their leaders, and some of their chiefs, were killed at Badr, and their leaders were taken prisoner. Thus, the Allah (swt) willed to bring about the promise or the threat.

He (swt) brought about came with the matter within which all listeners are included, which is the torment of the Hereafter, if they remain in shirk and resist the message. His

statement, ﴿تَشَخَّصُ فِيهِ الْأَبْصَرُ﴾ **“when the eyes will stare in horror.”** [TMQ Surah Ibrahim 14:42]. This means they will be exposed in a way that they will not turn to the right or to the left, due to the horror of what they see. The lack of turning of the eyes may be due to the extreme beauty of what they see. What differentiates between them is the distinguishing expressions made through Allah’s creation only. He, glory be to Him, is the One who creates that which distinguishes.

So, when you see a person terrified by excessive fear, his face takes on the form of this fear. As for someone who looks at something beautiful and his eyes are fixed on it, his features become harmonious as he is satisfied with looking at beauty. We can differentiate between the fearful and the one who enjoys, by the relaxed or terrified features of the face. We know that vision fixes upon sights. Every time there are multiple sights, vision moves between them. Therefore, the sighted person is always distracted by scenes, and his mind moves from here to there. As for those whom Allah (swt) has given impairment of the vision, the blind, sights do not occupy them. Therefore, we find them the most eager people for knowledge. Their minds are not occupied with anything else, and the focus of each of their feelings receives through the ear what is fixed in it. Therefore, they are called “boxes of knowledge” if they want to learn. No one who learns from them is ever empty. It is like a box that never empties. And we find Allah (swt) saying in another place in the Quran, ﴿وَإِذْ زَاغَتْ﴾ **“and when the eyes grew wild.”** [TMQ Surah Al-Ahzab 33:10].

Sometimes the eyes stare, and terror takes over the person. So they do not turn away from the terrifying scene. Sometimes the eyes wander, so that they may search for an exit, or escape, but do not find one. Allah (swt) completes the image of those whose eyes wander, saying, ﴿مُهْطَعِينَ مُقْنَعِي رُءُوسِهِمْ﴾ **“Racing ahead, their heads raised up.”** [TMQ Surah Ibrahim 14:43].