

Allāh Deals with Us According to Our Thoughts



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ، الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَحْدَهُ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى مَنْ لَا نَبِيَّ بَعْدَهُ، أَمَّا بَعْدُ:
فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ فِيمَا يَرُويهِ عَنْ رَبِّهِ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى قَالَ: أَنَا عِنْدَ ظَنِّ عَبْدِي بِي،
وَأَنَا مَعَهُ إِذَا دَعَانِي، أَوْ كَمَا قَالَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي
وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي وَاحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِّنْ لِّسَانِي يَفْقَهُوا قَوْلِي، سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا
عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ، اللَّهُمَّ أَنْفَعْنَا بِمَا عَلَّمْتَنَا، وَعَلَّمْنَا مَا يَنْفَعُنَا، إِنَّ اللَّهَ
وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا، اللَّهُمَّ
صَلِّ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا وَمَوْلَانَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَبَارِكْ وَسَلِّمْ.

The great Imām of Ḥadīth, Imām Tirmidhī رحمه الله، has narrated a Ḥadīth in which Rasūlullāh ﷺ quotes Allāh ﷻ saying,

أَنَا عِنْدَ ظَنِّ عَبْدِي بِي

*I am as My servant thinks of Me.*¹

When faced with adversity, if a person turns towards Allāh ﷻ with a positive thought, e.g. Allāh ﷻ is very Merciful and He will surely help me; Allāh ﷻ will surely cure me; Allāh ﷻ will surely remove my distress, then Allāh ﷻ will deal with him accordingly. Allāh ﷻ will assist him, cure him and remove his distress. On the

1 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: Ḥadīth: 2388 ما جاء في حسن الظن بالله chapter: الزهد

contrary, if, when faced with adversity, he has a negative thought, e.g. Allāh ﷻ will not remove this distress as I am a sinful person; then Allāh ﷻ will deal with this person accordingly and not remove his distress.

In another Ḥadīth, Rasūlullāh ﷺ quotes Allāh ﷻ saying,

أَنَا عِنْدَ ظَنِّ عَبْدِي بِي، فَلْيُظَنَّ بِي مَا شَاءَ

I am as My servant thinks of Me, so let him think of Me as he desires.²

It is entirely up to the servant whether he chooses to have positive thoughts regarding Allāh ﷻ or negative thoughts, but Allāh ﷻ will deal with him according to his thoughts. In another Ḥadīth, Rasūlullāh ﷺ again quotes Allāh ﷻ saying,

أَنَا عِنْدَ ظَنِّ عَبْدِي بِي، إِنْ ظَنَّ بِي خَيْرًا فَلَهُ، وَإِنْ ظَنَّ شَرًّا فَلَهُ

I am as My servant thinks of Me. If he thinks regarding me (that I will grant him) goodness, then for him (is that goodness), and if he thinks (that I will decree for him something) evil, then for him (is that evil).³

Allāh ﷻ is telling His servant that it is up to him. If he wishes, he may have good and positive thoughts regarding Allāh ﷻ and Allāh ﷻ will grant him goodness. If he thinks that Allāh ﷻ will surely cure him, remove his distress, guide him, etc. then Allāh ﷻ will grant him the goodness he expects from Allāh ﷻ. But on the contrary, if he entertains negative thoughts regarding Allāh ﷻ, Allāh ﷻ will deal with him accordingly. If he thinks that Allāh ﷻ

2 Musnad Aḥmad, kitāb: مسند المكيين Ḥadīth: 16016

3 Ibid, kitāb: مسند أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه chapter: مسند المكثرين من الصحابة: 9076

will not cure him, solve his problem, guide him or grant him what he wants, then Allāh ﷻ will act accordingly.

Connection with Allāh ﷻ

My late Shaykh, Ḥaḍrat Aqdas Mawlānā Muḥammad Yūsuf Ludhyānwī ﷺ used to say, ‘A thought in a servant’s heart and mind regarding his Creator will totally depend on how much connection and how much love he has for the Creator. If the connection and the love is 100%, then he will entertain 100% positive thoughts regarding the Creator. If the connection is weak and the love is next to nothing, then he will not be able to entertain good thoughts regarding the Creator. As Allāh ﷻ quotes the following statement of Sayyidunā Ya‘qūb ؑ in Sūrah Yūsuf:

إِنَّهُ لَا يَأْتِيَنَّكَ مِنْ رَوْحِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْكَافِرُونَ

Indeed, no one loses hope in the Mercy of Allāh except the disbelievers. (12:87)

A disbeliever will not have any hope whatsoever in the Mercy of Allāh ﷻ because he has no connection with the Creator and no love for Him. All that will be seen in his life is despondency. Hence, the greater one’s connection and love for Allāh ﷻ, the more positive one’s thoughts will be regarding Him. For example, we know of a doctor in our area but we are not acquainted to him in any way. We only know him because he lives in our area, comes to our masjid and we have heard from other people that he is a doctor. Because there is no connection or friendship, we will hesitate to phone him for help as negative thoughts will pass through our minds that we may disturb him or he may get angry etc. However, if we know a doctor who is closely connected to us and who is our friend, then whether it is the middle of night or

the early hours of the morning, we will not hesitate to phone him. We will pick up the phone with 100% faith, trust and hope that as soon as we call him, he will attend to us. ‘Allāmah Jaṣṣāṣ رحمہ اللہ in his Aḥkām-ul-Qur’ān states, ‘It is farḍ (compulsory) to entertain positive thoughts regarding Allāh ﷻ and it is prohibited to have negative thoughts regarding Him ﷻ.’⁴ Whatever the situation; a mu’min (believer) will always see a light at the end of the tunnel, and that light is none other than Allāh ﷻ.

Nothing is Impossible for Allāh ﷻ

Allāh ﷻ has power over everything. We read the following statement over and over again in the Glorious Qur’ān:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

Indeed, Allāh ﷻ has power over everything. (2:109,148; 3:165; 16:77; 24:45; 29:20; 35:1)

Nothing is difficult for Allāh ﷻ. There is no scenario which can be termed as difficult for the Creator. What seems difficult and impossible for us, due to our limitations, will not be as such for Allāh ﷻ.

In any situation, a mu’min will always see a ray of hope. Due to this reason, a mu’min who has become a victim of a chronic fatal illness, such as cancer, will always entertain this hope that he can still be cured. All the consultants and doctors may give up and say that this person has only a few months, weeks, or even days, yet a mu’min’s hope in Allāh ﷻ will keep him going. As far as a mu’min is concerned, nothing is impossible in the Court of Allāh ﷻ, and

4 Aḥkām-ul-Qur’ān, part 3, p.539

this is how we should all behave during all difficult circumstances. In times of distress and difficulty, we must always believe with conviction and full faith that there is still hope and that our Creator can change the situation as Allāh ﷻ has the power to do anything.

Our Creator, Our Sustainer

Allāh ﷻ mentions the statement of Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm ؑ in the Glorious Qur'ān. He said to Namrūd,

الَّذِي خَلَقَنِي فَهُوَ يَهْدِينِ

(Allāh is) He Who has created Me, thus He will guide me.
(26:78)

Allāh ﷻ guides us in relation to our worldly matters and also our matters of the Hereafter. If we are sick, it is only He Who guides us to the right doctor. If we are looking for a job, it is only He Who guides us to the right vacancy. If we are looking for a lawyer, it is only He Who guides us to the right lawyer. Similarly, at the time of death, in the grave, at the time of resurrection, when giving account of our deeds and on the Bridge of Şirāt, it is only Allāh ﷻ Who will guide us.

Allāh ﷻ further states,

وَالَّذِي هُوَ يُطْعِمُنِي وَيَسْقِينِ

And He Who feeds me and gives me to drink. (26:79)

وَإِذَا مَرَضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِ

And when I fall ill, He cures me. (26:80)

It is Allāh ﷻ and Allāh ﷻ alone Who has the ability to do whatever He desires whenever He desires. All besides Him are helpless.

In another Ḥadīth, Rasūlullāh ﷺ quotes Allāh ﷻ saying,

يَا عِبَادِي! كُلُّكُمْ ضَالٌّ إِلَّا مَنْ هَدَيْتُهُ، فَاسْتَهِدُونِي أَهْدِكُمْ، يَا عِبَادِي!
كُلُّكُمْ جَائِعٌ إِلَّا مَنْ أَطْعَمْتُهُ، فَاسْتَطْعُمُونِي أُطْعِمَكُمْ، يَا عِبَادِي! كُلُّكُمْ
عَارٍ إِلَّا مَنْ كَسَوْتُهُ فَاسْتَكَسُونِي أَكْسُكُمْ، يَا عِبَادِي! إِنَّكُمْ تُخْطِئُونَ بِاللَّيْلِ
وَالنَّهَارِ، وَأَنَا أَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا، فَاسْتَغْفِرُونِي أَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ،

O My servants! You are all astray except for the one who I guide; thus ask me for guidance, I will guide you. O My servants! You are all hungry except for the one who I feed; thus ask Me for food, I will feed you. O My servants! You are all unclothed except for the one who I clothe; thus ask me for clothes, I will clothe you. O My servants! You commit wrong day and night yet I forgive all sins; thus seek forgiveness from me, I will forgive you...⁵

Allāh ﷻ is giving us hope that if we go astray, become hungry or have no clothes, there is nothing to fear. All we have to do is turn to Allāh ﷻ and say, ‘O Allāh ﷻ! Guide me, O Allāh! Feed me, O Allāh! Clothe me,’ and Allāh ﷻ will grant us what we desire. There is no reason to lose hope.

True Beauty Lies in Good Character

Without good manners, a person will not be able to attract others. A person could be very handsome and wear stylish clothing; but if he does not have good morals and character, then people will not be attracted to him.

لَيْسَ الْجَمَالُ بِأَثْوَابٍ تُزَيِّنُنَا

5 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, kitāb: البرّ والصّلة والآداب chapter: تحريم الظلم Ḥadīth: 2577

إِنَّ الْجَمَالَ جَمَالُ الْعِلْمِ وَالْأَدَبِ
وَلَيْسَ الْيَتِيمُ الَّذِي قَدْ مَاتَ وَالِدُهُ
إِنَّ الْيَتِيمَ يَتِيمُ الْعِلْمِ وَالْأَدَبِ

Beauty is not acquired through clothes which adorn us;

Indeed, real beauty is the beauty of ‘ilm and adab.

And the real orphan is not the one whose father has passed away;

Indeed, the real orphan is the orphan of ‘ilm and adab.

Thus, we need to ask Allāh ﷻ not only for clothes that will cover our body and adorn us, but we also need to ask Allāh ﷻ to adorn us with the beautiful character of Nabī ﷺ. Rasūlullāh ﷺ has taught us that when we look in the mirror and observe that the nose, eyes, ears, and the whole face are perfect, then we should say,

اَللّٰهُمَّ حَسَّنْتَ خَلْقِيْ فَحَسِّنْ خُلُقِيْ

O Allāh ﷻ! You have beautified my physical form; beautify my character (too).⁶

It is an accepted fact that our bodies will rot in the grave and will not remain forever. However, if our morals and character are good, the good deeds that we do in this world will remain with us forever in the Hereafter. Hence, our character is more important than our bodies or exterior. If our exterior is very attractive but our morals are not, then people will begin to dislike us; and if our exterior is not so attractive but our morals and character are good, then people will be compelled to love and respect us.

6 Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Hībān, kitab: الرقائق chapter: الأدعية: Ḥadīth: 959

Ask from Allāh ﷻ

Coming back to the topic; Allāh ﷻ instructs us in the Glorious Qur'ān to not become despondent and to ask from Him in all circumstances. Allāh ﷻ says,

أَدْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْكُمْ

Call to Me, I will respond to you. (40:60)

Allāh ﷻ is telling us to ask Him for our needs as He will definitely fulfil them. Allāh ﷻ says,

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ

And when My servants ask you, (O Muhammad!) concerning Me, (then tell them that) indeed I am near. I answer the supplication of the supplicant when he calls Me. (2:186)

وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ

And we are closer to him than the jugular vein. (50:16)

In the above verse, Allāh ﷻ is telling His servants that He is very near, even nearer to them than their jugular vein. Hence, they do not have to go through any agency to reach Allāh ﷻ; they can ask directly. Allāh ﷻ says,

أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ

I answer the supplication of the supplicant when he calls Me. (2:186)

When the caller calls Allāh ﷻ and asks Allāh ﷻ to forgive him, He ﷻ forgives him; when he asks Allāh ﷻ to cure him, He ﷻ cures him, when he asks Allāh ﷻ to remove his distress, He ﷻ removes his distress. Whenever he calls Allāh ﷻ, Allāh ﷻ responds to him.

Why then should we become despondent? Why should we lose hope in the Mercy of Allāh ﷻ when He declares that He is there for us?

Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said,

مَنْ لَمْ يَسْأَلِ اللَّهَ يَغْضَبْ عَلَيْهِ

Whoever does not ask from Allāh ﷻ, Allāh ﷻ becomes angry with him.⁷

When a person does not turn to Allāh ﷻ and does not ask from Him, Allāh ﷻ becomes unhappy with him. In this world, when we ask for something from someone, he will give once or twice, but most certainly a time will come when he will get tired of us. On the other hand, Allāh ﷻ becomes unhappy with His servants when they do not ask from Him.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ has taught us to ask for everything from Allāh ﷻ. He goes as far as teaching us that even before going to the cobbler, we should first turn to Allāh ﷻ and ask Him. He said,

لَيْسَ أَلْأَحَدُكُمْ رَبُّهُ حَاجَتُهُ كُلُّهَا حَتَّى يَسْأَلَ شَيْعَ نَعْلِهِ إِذَا انْقَطَعَ

One of you should ask his Rabb for all of his needs, so much so that he should ask for his shoelace (to be fixed) when it breaks.⁸

Learn to Talk to Allāh ﷻ

Through du‘ā my friends, we are able to progress and acquire a special connection with Allāh ﷻ. Dr ‘Abdul-Ḥayy ‘Ārifī ﷺ was the khalifah of Ḥakīmul-Ummah Mawlānā Ashraf ‘Alī Thānwī ﷺ

7 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: الدَّعَوَاتِ Ḥadīth: 3373

8 Ibid, Ḥadīth: 3604

and the Shaykh of the likes of Muftī Muhammad Taqī Usmani ḥafīzahullāh and Muftī Muhammad Rafī Usmani ḥafīzahullāh. The likes of my Shaykh, Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Muḥammad Yūsuf Ludhyānwī ﷺ used to regularly go into his company once a week and benefit. Dr ‘Abdul-Ḥayy ‘Ārifī ﷺ used to say, ‘Learn to communicate with Allāh ﷻ during every moment of your life; learn to talk to Allāh ﷻ for all your needs!’

Now how do we talk to Allāh ﷻ? It is simple. When we leave for our factory in the morning, we should make du‘ā to Allāh ﷻ: ‘O Allāh ﷻ, I am going to work, make my journey easy. O Allāh ﷻ, when I reach my factory, save me from seeing anything that will cause me pain. O Allāh ﷻ, bring all my workers to work with good health, peace and safety.’ When we are going to the shop, we should make du‘ā to Allāh ﷻ: ‘O Allāh ﷻ, I am going to the shop; make my journey to the shop easy, grant me a good bargain, save me from loss and bring me home safely’, etc. Like this, we should learn to communicate with Allāh ﷻ before every task during our lives. It will seem difficult in the initial stages, but if we exert effort, we will soon find ourselves talking to Allāh ﷻ frequently throughout our lives. Once this connection with Allāh ﷻ is strengthened through this continuous stream of communication, then the love of Allāh ﷻ and reliance upon Him ﷻ will enter our hearts and Allāh ﷻ says,

وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ

...Whoever relies upon Allāh ﷻ, He is Sufficient for him...

(65:3)

One who begins to rely on Allāh ﷻ only, Allāh ﷻ is enough for him. Hence, he will not need help from anyone else. When one makes du‘ā with firm belief that Allāh ﷻ will definitely fulfil his

need, then Allāh ﷻ will definitely come to his aid. Therefore, in any situation or distress where there seems to be no way out, we must remember that the Creator is with us Who will definitely change our circumstances. Therefore, we must always turn to Allāh ﷻ and ask Him ﷻ.

Prophetic Examples of Turning to Allāh ﷻ When in Need

There are many examples of the Ambiyā ﷺ turning to Allāh ﷻ in their hour of need instead of losing hope and becoming despondent.

1. When Sayyidunā Ya‘qūb ﷺ was separated from his beloved son, Sayyidunā Yūsuf ﷺ, for many years, he wept so much that he lost his eyesight. His other sons, thinking that Sayyidunā Yūsuf ﷺ had already passed away, said to their father,

تَاللّٰهِ تَفْتَوُا تَذَكَّرُ يُوسُفَ حَتَّى تَكُونَ حَرَضًا أَوْ تَكُونَ مِنَ
الْهَالِكِينَ

By Allāh! You will not stop remembering Yūsuf until you become severely ill or become from the destroyed. (12:85)

They were trying to tell Sayyidunā Ya‘qūb ﷺ that he should have patience and stop crying over Sayyidunā Yūsuf ﷺ as, in their opinion, Sayyidunā Yūsuf ﷺ may have already passed away. Sayyidunā Ya‘qūb ﷺ replied,

إِنَّمَا أَشْكُوا بَثِّي وَحُزْنِي إِلَى اللَّهِ وَأَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

I complain of my sorrow and grief only to Allāh and I know from Allāh what you do not know. (12:86)

Sayyidunā Ya‘qūb ﷺ did not lose hope and was still optimistic that Sayyidunā Yūsuf ﷺ was alive. Hence, he instructed his sons:

يٰۤبَنِيَّ اذْهَبُوْا فَتَحَسَّسُوْا مِنْ يُۤوسُفَ وَ اَخِيْهِ وَلَا تَاِيْسُوْا مِنْ رَّوْحِ
اللّٰهِ ۚ اِنَّهٗ لَا يَاِيْسُ مِنْ رَّوْحِ اللّٰهِ اِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْكَافِرُوْنَ

O my sons! Go and search for Yūsuf and his brother (Binyāmīn) and do not lose hope in the Mercy of Allāh. Indeed, only the disbelievers lose hope in the Mercy of Allāh.
(12:87)

Sayyidunā Ya‘qūb ﷺ instructed his sons to not lose hope in the Mercy of Allāh ﷻ as it would grant them success in their search for Sayyidunā Yūsuf ﷺ. The sons were able to find Sayyidunā Yūsuf ﷺ, thus proving the belief of their father to be correct. From this incident we learn that a believer should never lose hope in the Mercy of Allāh ﷻ. Therefore, we should always believe that Allāh ﷻ will solve our problem and fulfil our need, regardless of the situation.

2. When Sayyidunā Nūḥ ﷺ was in much difficulty due to the persecution from his own people, he did not lose hope; rather he turned to Allāh ﷻ, knowing that He would provide assistance. Allāh ﷻ says,

فَدَعَا رَبَّهُ اٰنِيْ مَغْلُوْبٌ فَانْتَصِرْ

So he (Nūḥ ﷺ) prayed to his Rabb saying, ‘I have been overpowered, so help (me).’ (54:10)

Allāh ﷻ responded to his call:

وَنُوحًا اِذْ نَادٰى مِنْ قَبْلُ فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهٗ فَنَجَّيْنَاهُ وَاَهْلَهٗ مِنَ الْكَرْبِ
الْعَظِيْمِ

And (remember) Nūḥ, when he called (for help) earlier, so

We responded to him and saved him and his family from the terrible agony. (21:76)

3. Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm ؑ was thrown into fire by his own people on account of speaking against their false gods. But he did not lose hope in the Mercy of Allāh ﷻ. Instead, he turned to Him ﷻ and said,

حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ

Allāh is sufficient for us and He is the best One to entrust.⁹

As a result, the fire, instead of burning him, became cool and peaceful for him.

4. Sayyidunā Ayyūb ؑ was put through many trials and difficulties. He lost all of his children and wealth and was afflicted with such an illness that he was forced to live away from the community. Apart from his wife, no one was prepared to visit him. Despite these difficulties, he did not complain to Allāh ﷻ. Instead, he said,

(رَبِّ) أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ الضُّرُّ وَأَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

O my Rabb! Pain has afflicted me and You are the Most-Merciful of all the merciful. (21:83)

Allāh ﷻ says,

فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ فَكَشَفْنَا مَا بِهِ مِنْ ضُرٍّ وَآتَيْنَاهُ أَهْلَهُ وَمِثْلَهُمْ مَعَهُمْ

So We responded to him and removed whatever pain he had,

9 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: تفسیر القرآن chapter: فآخشوههم
Ḥadīth: 4563

and gave him (back) his family and the like thereof along with them...

Allāh ﷻ accepted his prayer and cured him. He also gave him double the number of children and wealth he had before.

5. When Sayyidunā Yūnus ؑ was in the stomach of the fish, with no apparent possibility of survival, he did not lose hope nor did he become despondent. Rather he called out to Allāh ﷻ saying,

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

There is no deity but You. You are Pure (from all imperfections). Indeed I was among the wrongdoers. (21:87)

Allāh ﷻ rescued him from the belly of the fish. Allāh ﷻ says,

فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْغَمِّ وَكَذَلِكَ نُنْجِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

So we responded to him and rescued him from grief, and this is how We rescue the believers. (21:88)

6. After witnessing the miracle of Sayyidah Maryam ؑ receiving fruits out of season whilst residing in Al-Masjidul-Aqṣā, Sayyidunā Zakariyyā ؑ was inspired with the thought that if Allāh ﷻ could give out of season fruits to Sayyidah Maryam ؑ, then he could definitely grant him a child despite his and his wife's old age. Hence, he made the following du'ā:

رَبِّ لَا تَذَرْنِي فَرْدًا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْوَارِثِينَ

O My Rabb! Do not leave me childless (without an inheritor) and You are the best of (those who provide) inheritors. (21:89)

Not only did he ask for a child, but he asked for a child who would become an inheritor of the children of Sayyidunā Ya‘qūb ﷺ and become a Nabī.

فَهَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا ۖ يَرِثُنِي وَيَرِثُ مِنْ آلِ يَعْقُوبَ

...so grant me, from You (Your Grace) an heir who inherits me and inherits the family of Ya‘qūb. (19:5-6)

Allāh ﷻ accepted the du‘ā of Sayyidunā Zakariyyā ﷺ and granted him Sayyidunā Yaḥyā ﷺ as a son.

فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ يَحْيَىٰ

So we responded to him and granted him Yaḥyā... (21:90)

Further in the verse, Allāh ﷻ mentions that it was the habit of all the Ambiyā ﷺ to ask from Allāh ﷻ in all conditions for their needs.

وَيَدْعُونَنَا رَغَبًا وَرَهَبًا

...and they (the Ambiyā ﷺ) would supplicate to Us with hope and fear... (21:90)

Solve Your Problems through Du‘ā

If we also strengthen our connection with Allāh ﷻ, all our problems will be solved too. If we are sick, for example, we should not become despondent. We should turn to Allāh ﷻ and ask him for cure. If not today then tomorrow, and if not tomorrow then the day after; sooner or later Allāh ﷻ will grant us cure. Similarly, if we have gone astray then although other people are also praying for us, i.e. our parents, teachers and Mashā’ikh, we should also make du‘ā for ourselves and ask Allāh ﷻ to show us

the straight path and remove obstacles. So there are three things we need to remember:

Whatever situation we are in, we should never lose hope in the Mercy of Allāh ﷻ.

When we pray to Allāh ﷻ, we should believe that Allāh ﷻ will definitely answer our prayers.

We should try our utmost to strengthen our connection with Allāh ﷻ so that the possibility of our du‘ā being accepted increases.

Conviction Results in Acceptance of Du‘ā

Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ حَيُّ كَرِيمٌ يَسْتَحْيِي إِذَا رَفَعَ الرَّجُلُ إِلَيْهِ يَدَيْهِ أَنْ يَرُدَّهُمَا صِفْرًا
خَائِبَتَيْنِ

Indeed, Allāh has the most ḥayā and is Most-Generous. When a person raises his hands to Him (in du‘ā), He feels shy to return them empty and deprived.¹⁰

Any person with an average level of ḥayā will not turn anyone away from his door empty handed. Then how is it possible for Allāh ﷻ to turn that person away empty handed who beseeches Him for his need. Unfortunately, we supplicate to Allāh ﷻ without this conviction that Allāh ﷻ will fulfil our needs. When this is the case, how can we then expect our du‘ās to be accepted? Rasūlullāh ﷺ said,

وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَسْتَجِيبُ دُعَاءَ مَنْ قَلْبٍ غَافِلٍ لَهِ

10 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: الدَّعَوَاتُ Ḥadīth: 3556

Know that Allāh does not accept a du‘ā from a negligent and heedless heart.¹¹

Making du‘ā with a negligent heart means that a person does not have conviction that his du‘ā will be accepted. Instead, his frame of mind in regard to du‘ā is that his du‘ā is not likely to be accepted, but he will just give it a try; if it is accepted then fine, otherwise he will at least acquire the reward for making du‘ā. We behave in this manner because when we look at the means and resources at hand, everything seems impossible. But we do not realise that Allāh ﷻ can make the impossible possible.

Another reason for this incorrect mindset is that when we make du‘ā and see that it has not been accepted straight away, we lose hope and feel that our du‘ās will never be accepted. When a person thinks in this way, how can his du‘ā be accepted? Rasūlullāh ﷺ said,

يُسْتَجَابُ لِأَحَدِكُمْ مَا لَمْ يَعْجَلْ، يَقُولُ: دَعَوْتُ فَلَمْ يُسْتَجَبْ لِي

The du‘ā of a person will be accepted as long as he does not hasten by saying, ‘I have made du‘ā to my Rabb but I (i.e. my du‘ā) have not been answered.’¹²

The reason for impatience in regards to du‘ā stems from the fact that most people believe that the only purpose of du‘ā is that one’s needs are fulfilled. However, the prime purpose of du‘ā is that one connects to Allāh ﷻ and gains His proximity.

11 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: الدَّعَوَاتُ Ḥadīth: 3479

12 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: الدَّعَوَاتُ chapter: لعجل ما لم يعجل Ḥadīth: 6340; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, kitāb: الإِسْتِغْفَارُ chapter: الذكر والدعاء والتوبة والإِسْتِغْفَارُ chapter: بيان أنه يستجاب: للإدعاء ما لم يعجل... Ḥadīth: 2735

One only needs to look at the fact that the du‘ā of Sayyidunā Mūsā ؑ against Fir‘awn and his people was accepted only after forty years, despite him being the Nabī of Allāh ﷺ.¹³ However, during this forty year period, he never lost hope.

Therefore, if one’s du‘ā is not accepted straight away, one should not become despondent and leave making du‘ā altogether. He should continue making du‘ā, for even though his du‘ā is not being accepted immediately, he is still acquiring proximity to Allāh ﷻ by engaging in a great ‘ibādah (worship). Rasūlullāh ﷺ says,

الدُّعَاءُ مُخُّ الْعِبَادَةِ

*Du‘ā is the essence of ‘ibādah.*¹⁴

الدُّعَاءُ هُوَ الْعِبَادَةُ

*Du‘ā is ‘ibādah.*¹⁵

Whether we acquire something or not in this world as a result of our du‘ās, Allāh ﷻ will definitely grant us a lot of reward in the Hereafter. However, we should not engage in du‘ā solely for reward and think that we will not be granted what we ask for. Rather, we should have full hope in the Promise of Allāh ﷻ:

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ ۖ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ

And when My servants ask you, (O Muḥammad), concerning Me - indeed I am near. I answer the supplication of the supplicant when he supplicates to Me... (2:186)

13 Tafsīrul-Qur’ānil-‘Aẓīm, part 4, p.253

14 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: الدَّعَوَات chapter: فضل الدَّعاء: ما جاء في فضل الدَّعاء: Hadīth: 3371

15 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: الدَّعَوَات chapter: فضل الدَّعاء: ما جاء في فضل الدَّعاء: Hadīth: 3372

Forms of Acceptance

Allāh ﷻ always accepts our du‘ās. However, we need to realise that Allāh ﷻ accepts them in different ways:

1. Allāh ﷻ grants us exactly what we are asking from Him. For example, if a person asks Allāh ﷻ for £500, Allāh ﷻ, sooner or later, grants him £500.
2. Allāh ﷻ prevents a calamity from befalling us which would have resulted in a loss equivalent to that which we made du‘ā for. For example, a person asks Allāh ﷻ for £500; as a result of his du‘ā Allāh ﷻ saves him from an accident which would have resulted in £500 worth of damage.
3. Allāh ﷻ does not give us what we ask for in this world. Instead, Allāh compensates for it in the Hereafter. This is the best form of acceptance as the material bounties of this world are nothing compared to the everlasting rewards of the Hereafter. We understand from a Ḥadīth that such unanswered du‘ās will bear so much reward in the Hereafter that a person will wish that none of his du‘ās were accepted in the world.¹⁶

Therefore, whatever the situation, we should never lose hope in Allāh ﷻ. We should always make du‘ā with a firm conviction that Allāh ﷻ will definitely accept it, even if we have to repeatedly make du‘ā for the same thing.

Allāh ﷻ is Always Ready to Forgive

Similarly, when we commit a sin, minor or major, we should never lose hope in the Mercy of Allāh ﷻ. We should turn to Allāh ﷻ

16 Al-Mustadrak ‘alaṣ-Ṣaḥīḥayn, kitāb: الدَّعَاءُ وَالتَّكْبِيرُ وَالتَّهْلِيلُ وَالتَّسْبِيحُ وَالذِّكْرُ Ḥadīth: 1819

with full conviction that Allāh ﷻ will most certainly forgive us. In another Ḥadīth, Rasūlullāh ﷺ quotes Allāh ﷻ saying,

يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ! إِنَّكَ إِذَا دَعَوْتَنِي وَرَجَوْتَنِي غَفَرْتُ لَكَ عَلَى مَا كَانَ فِيكَ وَلَا أُبَالِي

O son of Ādam! Indeed, for as long as you call unto me and have hope in me, I will (continue to) forgive you for whatever you did, and I will not care (how great your sins are).¹⁷

The amount of sins one commits is irrelevant when it comes to the Forgiveness of Allāh ﷻ. As long as one is remorseful and makes a firm resolution not to commit that sin again, when he turns to Allāh ﷻ and repents, Allāh ﷻ will most certainly forgive him. Once he has repented, he now has a clean slate. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said,

التَّائِبُ مِنَ الذَّنْبِ كَمَنْ لَا ذَنْبَ لَهُ

The one who repents from sin is like the one who has no sin.¹⁸

When this is the case, why should we be despondent? Why should we think that there is no point in repenting when we still end up sinning afterwards? We must never lose hope in the Mercy of Allāh ﷻ. Allāh ﷻ says,

قُلْ يَعْبادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِنْ رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ

[O My Messenger ﷺ] Say, [that Allāh ﷻ is saying,] O My servants who have oppressed themselves [by sinning]! Do not lose hope in the Mercy of Allāh. (39:53)

17 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: الدعوات chapter: ما ذكر من فضل التوبة والإستغفار و ما ذكر من رحمة الله بعباده Ḥadīth: 3540

18 Sunan Ibn Mājah, kitāb: الزهد chapter: ذكر التوبة Ḥadīth: 4250

In this verse, Allāh ﷻ is calling out to those who have oppressed themselves by making themselves worthy of Jahannam through countless sins. When addressing them, Allāh ﷻ is not saying, ‘O criminals!’ Rather, Allāh ﷻ is adopting a loving and caring approach by saying, ‘O My servants!’ The fact that Allāh ﷻ is referring to them as His servants, despite their sinful ways, should be enough for us to have hope in the Mercy of Allāh ﷻ.

Shayṭān’s Deception

Shayṭān is very cunning; when the opportunity arises to fulfil our unlawful desires, Shayṭān tricks us into sinning by whispering into our hearts, ‘Allāh ﷻ is Most-Forgiving and Most-Merciful; He will forgive you.’ And once we have committed the sin, Shayṭān makes us feel despondent and disinclined towards repenting by whispering, ‘Allāh ﷻ is Shadīd al-‘Iqāb (Severe in punishment); He will never forgive you.’

We should not fall into this trap of Shayṭān. When faced with unlawful passions, we should remind ourselves of the severity of the Punishment of Allāh ﷻ so that we refrain from the sin. And if, overcome by the whispers of Shayṭān, we commit a sin, we should remind ourselves that Allāh ﷻ is Al-Ghafūr (the Ever-Forgiving) and Ar-Rahīm (the Most-Merciful) so that we do not become despondent and immediately repent.

The Mercy of Allāh ﷻ

In another Ḥadīth, Rasūlullāh ﷺ quotes Allāh ﷻ saying,

يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ! إِنَّكَ مَا دَعَوْتَنِي وَرَجَوْتَنِي غَفَرْتُ لَكَ عَلَى مَا كَانَ فِيكَ وَلَا أُبَالِي، يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ! لَوْ بَلَغَتْ ذُنُوبُكَ عَنَانَ السَّمَاءِ ثُمَّ اسْتَغْفَرْتَنِي غَفَرْتُ لَكَ

وَلَا أَبَالِي، يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ! إِنَّكَ لَوْ أَتَيْتَنِي بِقُرَابِ الْأَرْضِ خَطَايَا ثُمَّ لَقَيْتَنِي لَا تُشْرِكُ بِي شَيْئًا لَا تَتُّكَ بِقُرَابِهَا مَغْفِرَةً

O son of Ādam! As long as you supplicate to Me and have hope in Me, I shall forgive you for what you have done and I shall not mind (how great your sins are). O son of Ādam! Were your sins to reach the clouds of the sky and you then asked forgiveness from Me, I would forgive you and I would not mind (how great your sins are). O son of Ādam! Were you to come to Me with sins nearly as great as the Earth, and were you then to face Me, ascribing no partner to Me, I would bring you forgiveness nearly as great as it [too].¹⁹

Rasūlullāh ﷺ also says regarding the Mercy of Allāh ﷻ,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يَبْسُطُ يَدَهُ بِاللَّيْلِ لِيَتُوبَ مُسِيئُ النَّهَارِ، وَيَبْسُطُ يَدَهُ بِالنَّهَارِ لِيَتُوبَ مُسِيئُ اللَّيْلِ

Indeed, Allāh, Honoured and Exalted He is, spreads out His Hand (i.e. is Ever-Ready to accept repentance) during the night so that the sinner of the day may repent; and He spreads out His Hand during the day so that the sinner of the night may repent...²⁰

We understand from these Aḥādīth that Allāh ﷻ is always ready to accept our tawbah. This will be the case until we breathe our last as Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَقْبَلُ تَوْبَةَ الْعَبْدِ مَا لَمْ يُعْرِغْ

19 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: الدَّعَاوَات chapter: ما ذكر من: في فضل التَّوْبَةِ وِاسْتِغْفَارٍ و ما ذكر من: رحمة الله بعباده Ḥadīth: 3540

20 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, kitāb: التَّوْبَةِ chapter: التَّوْبَةُ و تَكَرَّرَتِ الذُّنُوبُ و إن تَكَرَّرَتِ الذُّنُوبُ و قبول التَّوْبَةِ مِنَ الذُّنُوبِ و إن تَكَرَّرَتِ الذُّنُوبُ Ḥadīth: 2759

Indeed, Allāh ﷻ accepts the repentance of a servant for as long as his soul has not reached his throat.²¹

Hence, we should make sure that we repent sincerely before we leave this world. Regardless of how many sins we have committed, Allāh ﷻ will not take the amount into consideration if we repent sincerely.

Conclusion

Returning to the Ḥadīth discussed at the beginning wherein Rasūlullāh ﷺ quotes Allāh ﷻ saying,

أَنَا عِنْدَ ظَنِّ عَبْدِي بِي

I am as My servant thinks of Me.²²

If our mind-set is positive when turning to Allāh ﷻ to remove our difficulties, Allāh ﷻ will free us from them. But if we have a negative mind-set, our problems will not be solved. Similarly, if we make du‘ā with firm conviction and we turn to Allāh ﷻ with the belief that Allāh ﷻ will definitely accept our prayers, Allāh ﷻ will accept our prayers. But if we turn to Allāh ﷻ with a negligent heart or thinking that Allāh ﷻ is not going to accept our prayers, Allāh ﷻ will not accept our prayers. In another Ḥadīth, Rasūlullāh ﷺ quotes Allāh ﷻ saying,

أَنَا عِنْدَ ظَنِّ عَبْدِي بِي وَأَنَا مَعَهُ إِذَا دَعَانِي

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21 Sunanūt-Tirmidhī, kitāb: الدَّعَوَات chapter: ما ذكر من في فضل التَّوْبَةِ وِ الْإِسْتِغْفَارِ وِ مَا ذَكَرَ مِنْ: Ḥadīth: 3537 رحمه الله بعباده

22 Sunanūt-Tirmidhī, kitāb: الرَّهْد chapter: ما جاء في حسن الظَّنِّ بِاللَّهِ: Ḥadīth: 2388

*I am as My servant thinks of Me and I am with him when he supplicates to Me.*²³

This means that when we call upon Allāh ﷻ in a state of distress, the Help of Allāh ﷻ will be with us. When we ask Him for His Forgiveness, Allāh ﷻ will forgive us. When we ask Him for a cure, Allāh ﷻ will cure us. It is for this reason Rasūlullāh ﷺ said to his cousin, Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās ؓ,

إِحْفَظِ اللَّهَ يَحْفَظَكَ، إِحْفَظِ اللَّهَ تَجِدْهُ تُجَاهَكَ، إِذَا سَأَلْتَ فَاسْأَلِ اللَّهَ،
وَإِذَا اسْتَعْنَيْتَ فَاسْتَعِنْ بِاللَّهِ

*Protect (the Commands of) Allāh ﷻ, He will protect you.
Protect (the Commands of) Allāh ﷻ, You will find Him in front
of you. When you ask, ask Allāh ﷻ, and when you seek help,
seek help from Allāh.*²⁴

We may have committed many crimes, but there is no crime as grave as shirk (ascribing partners with Allāh ﷻ). If Allāh ﷻ could grant the highest status that a person can acquire after the Ambiyā ؑ to those individuals who had committed such crimes, only because they repented, then will Allāh ﷻ not grant us the highest status of wilāyah (friendship of Allāh ﷻ) if we repent sincerely and resolve to never commit sins again? There is not a shadow of doubt in this because He is Al-Ghaffār (the Most-Forgiving), Ar-Raḥīm (the Most-Merciful), Ar-Raḥmān (the Most-Beneficent) and Ar-Ra’ūf (the Most-Kind). Let us make a firm resolution that from now on,

23 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, kitāb: فضل الذكر والدعاء والتوبة والاستغفار chapter: فضل الذكر والدعاء
Hadīth: 2675 والتقرب إلى الله تعالى

24 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: صفة القيامة والرقائق والورع عن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم
Hadīth: 2516

in every situation of our lives, we will always entertain positive thoughts regarding Allāh ﷻ, not just because it is farḍ, but also because it will benefit us in this world and in the Hereafter. And we will never entertain negative thoughts regarding Allāh ﷻ, not only because it is unlawful, but also because it is destructive in this world and in the Hereafter.

وَأٰخِرُ دَعْوَانَا اِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِيْنَ وَصَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلٰى نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَّ
عَلٰى اٰلِهٖ وَصَحْبِهٖ اَجْمَعِيْنَ بِرَحْمَتِكَ يَا اَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِيْنَ

بِجَمْعِ الدَّعْوَةِ الْإِسْلَامِيَّةِ

ISLĀMIC DA‘WAH ACADEMY