

**Whoever finds good, let him thank Allah, and whoever finds other than that, let him blame only himself – Imam Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī**



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

*Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī's book, "Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Ḥikam," is an explanation of the forty-two famous ḥadīth collected by Imām an-Nawawī. In this article, last part of the twenty-fourth ḥadīth of that book explained.*

The Explanation of:

نَفْسُهُ إِلَّا يَلُومَنَّ فَلَا ذَلِكَ غَيْرَ وَجَدَ وَمَنْ اللَّهُ، فَلْيَحْمَدِ خَيْرًا وَجَدَ فَمَنْ

**“... So whoever finds good, let him thank Allah, and whoever finds other than that, let him blame only himself.”**

This indicates that anything good is from Allah as a favor from himself to his worshipper even though the latter may not actually deserve it. And anything evil is from the children of Adam, from following their inclinations and desires as Allah ( وَجَلَّ عَزًّا ) says:

نَفْسِكَ فَمِنْ سَيِّئَةٍ مِنْ أَصَابِكَ وَمَا لِلَّهِ فَمِنْ حَسَنَةٍ مِنْ ابْنِكَ أَصَدَّ مَا

What comes to you of good is from Allah, but what comes to you of evil is from yourself. [Sūrah al-Nisā, 4:79]

‘Alī (عَنْهُ اللهُ رَضِيَ) once said, “A worshipper should hope from none but Allah and should fear nothing but his own sins.”

When Allah wants prosperity and guidance for someone, he facilitates a way for the individual to obey him, and this is a favor from Allah. But when Allah abandons someone, he entrusts all affairs of the person to the individual himself; Allah renounces the person by removing all connections between himself and the individual. So Satan is then able to deceive such a person so that he becomes negligent of remembering Allah. He follows his own inclinations and desires and consequently his affairs are lost and forsaken. All the while, this is still fair and just from Allah because the evidence has already been established upon the individual by the revelation of the Qur'aan and the sending of the messenger. So there is no excuse before Allah for any of mankind after the sending of the messengers.

If what is meant by “**So whoever finds good**” is whoever finds good in this life, then such a person is obliged to thank Allah, especially for the good reward of one’s good deeds that may be hastened in this life as Allah says:

كَانُوا مَا بِأَحْسَنِ أَجْرِهِمْ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ طَيِّبَةً حَيَاةً فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهُ مُؤْمِنٌ وَهُوَ أَنْتَى أَوْ ذَكَرٍ مِّنْ صَالِحًا عَمِلَ مَنْ يَّعْمَلُونَ

Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer, we will surely cause him to live a good life. And we will surely give such individuals their reward according to the best of what they used to do. [Sūrah al-Naḥl, 16:97]

And (upon the understanding above) such a person would be obliged to blame himself for the negative consequences he may experience in the worldly life for the bad deeds he committed as Allah says:

يَرْجِعُونَ لَعَلَّهُمْ الْأَكْبَرِ الْعَذَابِ دُونَ الْأَدْنَى الْعَذَابِ مِّنْ وَلَنُذِيقَنَّهُمْ

And we will surely let them taste the nearer punishment short of the greater punishment that perhaps they will repent. [Sūrah al-Sajdah, 32:21]

So for a true believer, when he is afflicted with any hardship in life, he looks inward, holding himself responsible. This in turn encourages him to return back to Allah with repentance and asking for forgiveness.

On the other hand, if what is meant by “So whoever finds good...whoever finds other than that” is in the hereafter, then this may be a way of Allah informing that those who find good in the hereafter will thank and praise Allah for that, and those who find otherwise should blame only themselves although at such a time blaming will be of no use. And this is an Arabic linguistic form in which the text is that of a command yet the meaning is actually to inform of a future event just as is the case with the ḥadīth in which the prophet (وَسَلَّمَ عَلَيْهِ اللهُ صَلَّى) said:

النَّارِ مِنْ مَفْعَدَهُ فَلْيَتَّبِعُوا مُتَعَمِّدًا عَلَيَّ كَذَبَ مَنْ

*Whoever intentionally lies against me, let him occupy his seat in the fire.*

[This ḥadīth is mutawātir, meaning that it has been narrated by so many different chains of narrators that it is considered authentic. See for example ḥadīth no.1841 of “Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan al-Tirmidhī” by al-Albānī]

Meaning: Whoever lies against me will indeed occupy his seat in the Hellfire. [The text is in the form of a command but is a way of informing of a future occurrence.]

Allah has also informed us that the people of Paradise will thank Allah for that which he provides them of his bounty; he says:

كُنَّا وَمَا لِهَذَا هَدَانَا لِدِي اللَّهِ الْحَمْدُ وَقَالُوا الْأَنْهَارُ تَخْتِهِمْ مِنْ تَجْرِي غِلٌّ مِّنْ صُدُورِهِمْ فِي مَا وَنَزَعْنَا اللَّهُ هَدَانَا أَنْ لَوْلَا لِنَهْتِدِي

And we will have removed whatever is within their breasts of resentment, (while) flowing beneath them are rivers. And they will say, “Praise to Allah who has guided us to this, and we would never have been guided if Allah had not guided us.” [Sūrah al-‘Arāf, 7:43]

نَشَاءُ حَيْثُ الْجَنَّةِ مِنْ نَتَبَّوْا الْأَرْضَ وَأَوْرَثْنَا وَعَدَهُ صَدَقْنَا الَّذِي لِلَّهِ الْحَمْدُ وَقَالُوا

And they will say, “Praise to Allah who has fulfilled his promise to us and has made us inherit the earth (so) we may settle in Paradise wherever we will.” [Sūrah al-Zumar, 39:74]

And he (تَعَالَى) says:

لَا فَضْلِيهِ مِنَ الْمَقَامَةِ دَارَ أَحَلَّنَا الَّذِي شَكُورٌ لَعَفُورٌ رَبَّنَا إِنَّ الْحَزْنَ عَنَّا أَذْهَبَ الَّذِي لِلَّهِ الْحَمْدُ وَقَالُوا لُغُوبٌ فِيهَا يَمَسُّنَا وَلَا نَصَبٌ فِيهَا يَمَسُّنَا

And they will say, “Praise to Allah who has removed from us sorrow. Indeed, our lord is forgiving and appreciative – he who has settled us in the home of duration out of his bounty. There touches us therein no fatigue, and there touches us therein no weariness (of mind).” [Sūrah al-Fāṭir, 35:34-35]

As for the people of the fire, Allah informs us they will be blaming themselves, disgusted with and hating of their own souls. Allah ( تَعَالَى ) says:

مَنْ عَلَيْكُمْ لِي كَانَ وَمَا فَأَخْلَقْتُمْ وَوَعَدْتُمْ الْحَقَّ وَعَدَّ وَعَدَّكُمْ اللَّهُ إِنَّ الْأَمْرَ قُضِيَ لِمَا الشَّيْطَانُ وَقَالَ  
مَأْنَسْتُ وَلَوْمُوا تَلُومُونِي لَأَفَ لِي فَاسْتَجَبْتُمْ دَعْوَتِكُمْ أَنْ إِلَّا سُلْطَانٍ

And Satan will say when the matter has been concluded, “Indeed, Allah had promised you the promise of truth. And I promised you, but I betrayed you. But I had no authority over you except that I invited you and you responded to me. So do not blame me, but blame yourselves.” [Sūrah Ibrāhīm, 14:22]

And Allah says:

فَتَكْفُرُونَ الْإِيمَانَ إِلَى تَدْعُونَ إِذْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ مَقْتِكُمْ مِنْ أَكْبَرُ اللَّهُ لَمَقْتٌ يُنَادُونَ كَفَرُوا الَّذِينَ إِنَّ

Indeed, those who disbelieve will be addressed (in Hell), “The hatred of Allah was (even) greater than your hatred of yourselves when you were invited to faith, but you refused.”[Sūrah Ghāfir, 40:10]

The righteous predecessors used to strive in doing good deeds, fearing the time when deeds will come to an end and they may then blame themselves for their shortcomings.

It was once said to Masrūq, “If only you would ease up with some of your worship in which you exert yourself.” He replied, “By Allah, even if he came to me and told me he would not punish me, I would exert myself in worship (of him).” He was asked, “Why is that?” to which he said: So that my own soul would pardon me if it entered the fire and so I would not have to blame it. Has there not come to you the statement of Allah:

اللَّوَامَةَ بِالنَّفْسِ أَفْسِيمٌ وَلَا

And I swear by the self-reproaching soul.[Sūrah al-Qiyāmah, 75:2]

They will blame and reproach themselves when they reach Hell. When the angels of punishment embrace them and stand between them and what they desire, when their hopes are cut off, and when mercy is withheld from them, every one of them will begin blaming and reproaching his own soul.

Muṭraf Ibn ‘Abdullah used to say:

Exert yourself in doing good deeds. If the decision is as we hope for—the mercy of Allah and his forgiveness—then for us will be levels (in Paradise). And if the decision is severe as we fear and of which we are cautious, let us not then say:

نَعْمَلُ كُنَّا الَّذِي غَيْرَ صَالِحًا نَعْمَلُ أَخْرَجْنَا رَبَّنَا

“Our Lord, remove us; we will do righteousness other than what we used to do.” [Sūrah Fāṭir, 35:37]

We will then say, “We did deeds but they did not benefit us.”

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