

Tafseer Al-Baqarah (2: 263-266)

From the Book, Introduction to the Tafseer of the Quran, by the Ameer of Hizb ut Tahrir, Eminent Jurist and Statesman,

Ata Bin Khalil Abu Al-Rashtah,

﴿قَوْلٌ مَّعْرُوفٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ صَدَقَةٍ يَتْبَعُهَا أذى وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَ حَلِيمٍ﴾ (٢٦٣) يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَبْطُلُوا صَدَقَاتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَى كَالَّذِي يُنْفِقُ مَالَهُ رِئَاءَ النَّاسِ وَلَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ ءَآخِرِ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ صَفْوَانٍ عَلَيْهِ تُرَابٌ فَأَصَابَهُ رِءَابٌ فَتَرَكَهُ صَلْدًا لَا يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَى شَيْءٍ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ (٢٦٤) وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُم مِّبَغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَتَثْبِيئًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ كَمَثَلِ جَنَّةٍ بِرَبْوَةٍ أَصَابَهَا وَابِلٌ فَآتَتْ أُكُوهَا ضِعْفَيْنِ فَإِن لَّمْ يُصِبْهَا مِن وَّابِلٍ فَطَلَّتْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ (٢٦٥) أَيَوَدُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن تَكُونَ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ مِّن نَّجِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ لَهُ فِيهَا مِن كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ وَأَصَابَهُ الْكِبَرُ وَلَهُ ذُرِّيَةٌ ضِعْفَاءُ فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ إِنَّكَ كَدَّالِكُ بَلِيغٌ مُّبِينٌ وَاللَّهُ لَئِيْلٌ لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ (٢٦٦) ﴿

“Kind speech and forgiveness are better than charity followed by injury. And Allah is Free of need and Forbearing. (263) O you who have believed, do not invalidate your charities with reminders of generosity or harm as does one who spends his wealth [only] to be seen by the people and does not believe in Allah and the Last Day. His example is like that of a [large] smooth stone upon which is dust and is hit by a downpour that leaves it bare. They are unable [to keep] anything of what they have earned. And Allah does not guide the disbelieving people. (264) And the example of those who spend their wealth seeking means to the approval of Allah and assuring [reward for] themselves is like a garden on high ground which is hit by a downpour - so it yields its fruits in multiple. And [even] if it is not hit by a downpour, then a drizzle [is sufficient]. And Allah, of what you do, is Seeing. (265) Would one of you like to have a garden of palm trees and grapevines underneath which rivers flow in which he has from every fruit? But he is afflicted with old age and has weak offspring, and it is hit by a whirlwind containing fire and is burned. Thus does Allah make clear to you [His] verses that you might give thought. (266)”

Allah (swt) explains the following in these verses:

1. In follow-up to the previous verses, it is clarified that sincerity to Allah (swt) in spending for His cause is obligatory. The one who spends should not pursue spending, with reminders of generosity or harm.

So in the verse, ﴿قَوْلٌ مَّعْرُوفٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ﴾ “kind speech and forgiveness”, Allah (swt) assures the believers that a kind word and Dua are better in His sight than charity. Charity here refers to all types of charity, both obligatory and voluntary. The kind word and Dua is better than charity if charity is followed by harm and reminders of generosity to the recipient.

And Allah (swt) concludes the verse by stating that He is free of need from charity mixed with reminders of generosity and harm. He (swt) is forbearing by not hastening the punishment for those who remind others of their charity, thus causing harm.

﴿قَوْلٌ مَّعْرُوفٌ﴾ “kind speech” means nice and beautiful words. It is correct to begin with the indefinite noun (قَوْلٌ) “speech” due to its specification by the description ﴿مَّعْرُوفٌ﴾ “kind”, which makes it effectively in the status of a definite noun.

﴿حَلِيمٌ﴾ “Forbearing” He does not hasten the punishment, as we have explained earlier in this tafseer.

2. Then Allah (swt) addresses the believers not to nullify their charity with reminders of generosity and harm. This is not a mere repetition of the previous two verses. Each verse carries a new meaning. So in the first verse, ﴿الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ لَا يُتَّبِعُونَ مَا أَنْفَقُوا مَنًّا وَلَا أَذَىٰ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ﴾ **“Those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah and then do not follow up what they have spent with reminders [of it] or [other] injury will have their reward with their Lord, and there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve”** [TMQ Al-Baqarah 2:262], it is clarified that this reward is for those who spend, without reminders of generosity and harm. In the second verse, ﴿قَوْلٌ مَّعْرُوفٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ صَدَقَةٍ يَتَّبِعُهَا أَذَىٰ﴾ **“Kind speech and forgiveness are better than charity followed by injury”**, explains the distinction between the two situations: a kind word and charity followed by harm. This verse, ﴿لَا تُبْطِلُوا صَدَقَاتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَىٰ﴾ **“do not invalidate your charities with reminders of generosity or harm”** it is clarified that reminders of generosity and harm nullify the charity.

So, **Firstly:** The reward is conditional, on the absence of reminders and harm.

Second: The kind speech is better than the charity, which is accompanied by reminders of generosity and harm.

Third: That reminders of generosity and causing harm nullify the charity, to remove any ambiguity from understanding the first verse, that Zakat or spending in Jihad might suffice without reward. Thus, the mentioned verse clarified that, ﴿لَا تُبْطِلُوا صَدَقَاتِكُمْ﴾ **“do not invalidate your charities.”** It mentioned the possibility of charity accompanied by reminders of generosity and causing harm. It indicated that the charity is nullified in this case.

After that, Allah (swt) provides an example of those who spend their wealth to be seen by people, without their spending being purely for Allah (swt) and the Last Day. In this case, the spending is likened to dust on a smooth rock upon which a heavy rain falls, removing all that clings to it. This means that such spending has no value or weight. It does not benefit the one who spends with any reward from Allah (swt). Similarly, the one who spends in this way cannot reclaim it. That means he gains no benefit from it, either in this world or the hereafter.

Then Allah (swt) concludes the verse by stating that the disbelievers are not guided by Allah (swt). Instead, they are in clear misguidance.

﴿لَا تُبْطِلُوا صَدَقَاتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَىٰ كَالَّذِي يُنْفِقُ مَالَهُ رِئَاءَ النَّاسِ وَلَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ﴾ **“do not invalidate your charities with reminders of generosity or harm as does one who spends his wealth [only] to be seen by the people and does not believe in Allah and the Last Day”**, meaning do not invalidate, O believers, your charities by reminders of generosity and hurtful words, like the hypocrites who invalidate their donations, through their showoff (riyaa) and lack of belief in Allah (swt) and the Last Day, meaning their hypocrisy.

﴿كَمَثَلِ صَفْوَانٍ﴾ **“like that of a [large] smooth stone”**, like a large smooth stone.

﴿عَلَيْهِ تُرَابٌ﴾ **“upon which is dust”**, any small amount of it.

﴿فَأَصَابَهُ وَايُنٌ﴾ **“and is hit by a downpour”**, a heavy rain.

﴿فَتَرَكَهُ صَلْدًا﴾ **“that leaves it bare”**, all the smooth surface has nothing on it.

﴿لَا يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا﴾ **“They are unable [to keep] anything of what they have earned”**, they do not find the reward of anything they spent ostentatiously. They do not benefit from it at all, as they cannot get it back. Thus, they lose it in this world because it has

left their hands. They lose it in the Hereafter because they spent it for showoff and hypocrisy, so they have no reward for it.

3. And Allah (swt) gives an example for those who spend sincerely for His sake and seeking His pleasure. Their spending is like a fruitful garden in every situation. If it is hit by heavy rain, its yield is multifold. If it is only touched by a little drizzle like dew, it is sufficient and produces the normal yield of fruit.

This is a representation of the acceptance of the charities of those who are sincere to Allah (swt), whether their charities are abundant or scarce. In all the situations, they are pure and good in the sight of Allah (swt).

Then Allah (swt) concludes the verse by stating that He is All-Seeing, knowing the true nature of the deed, in terms of its sincerity to Him and the truthfulness of the intention behind it. ﴿وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ﴾ **“And Allah, of what you do, is Seeing”**.

﴿يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَتَثْبِيئًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ﴾ **“those who spend their wealth seeking means to the approval of Allah and assuring [reward for] themselves”**.

﴿ابْتِغَاءَ﴾ **“seeking”** meaning the seeking the pleasure of Allah (swt), and it is in the accusative case (منصوب) in this place.

And ﴿تَثْبِيئًا﴾ **“assuring”** is conjoined to it. This is more likely than saying it is in the accusative case (منصوب) as an object of purpose. This is because if it were so, then ﴿ابْتِغَاءَ﴾ **“seeking”** would also be conjoined to it in the meaning of the object of purpose, which contradicts the intended meaning. This is because the spending by the believers is not for the purpose of establishing themselves, implying that they were not steadfast and spent to become steadfast. Instead, they spend while they are steadfast in truth, or while they wish to ensure that their spending falls into a place that pleases Allah (swt). Both instances are evidence favoring the accusative case (منصوب), as indicating a state or condition, over it being an object of purpose.

﴿كَمَثَلِ جَنَّةٍ عَلَىٰ رِبْوَةٍ﴾ **“like a garden on high ground”**, Jannah, the garden.

And (الربوة) is the slightly elevated place predominantly composed of soil, which is better for plant growth.

﴿أَصَابَهَا وَابِلٌ﴾ **“which is hit by a downpour”** i.e. a heavy rain.

﴿فَأَتَتْ أَكْثَرَهَا﴾ **“so it yields its fruits”** i.e. it yielded its fruit.

﴿ضِعْفَيْنِ﴾ **“multifolds”** i.e. it yielded many times the fruit of other lands.

﴿فَإِن لَّمْ يُمْسِكْهَا وَابِلٌ فَطَلٌّ﴾ **“And [even] if it is not hit by a downpour, then a drizzle [is sufficient]”** i.e., even with light drizzle like dew, it suffices for it to yield its usual fruit.

If it receives a downpour, it yields many times its normal yield its fruit. If it does not receive rain, then dew alone is sufficient for it to yield its normal yield fruit. This means it is fruitful in all situations.

4. Then Allah (swt) gives another example in addition to the previous two examples, for those who invalidate their charities by following them with reminders of generosity and harm.

So the **First example**: In the previous verses, it is like the hypocrite who spends his wealth to show off to people.

And the **Second example**: Like a hard rock with soil, then it was struck by a heavy rain that left it bare.

And the **Third example** in this verse: Like a man who owns a great garden from which he benefits and fulfills his needs. When he reaches old age and does not have mature offspring, to assist him in his life, at this time the garden catches fire. His calamity is immense because due to his old age, he cannot repair it or establish another one like it. Similarly, his young offspring cannot help him in earning a living. This is a severe and deadly calamity.

The one who nullifies their charity with reminders of generosity and harm is like someone whose abundant source of livelihood burns down, when they are in utmost need of it.

He is like someone who, instead of benefiting from his charities on a day when wealth and children will not avail, except those who come to Allah (swt) with a sound heart. He sees his charities invalidated, so they do not benefit him. It is as if he is burning down his orchard, while he is in utmost need of it.

And similarly, it is like someone who does good deeds but then concludes them with an evil deed. He thus burns and invalidates all that goodness.

Al-Bukhari narrated from Ubayd bin Umair who said: Umar bin Al-Khattab (ra) once said to the companions of the Messenger of Allah (saw): In what context do you think this verse was revealed, ﴿أَيُّدُ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ تَكُونَ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ مِّنْ نَّخِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ﴾ **“Would one of you like to have a garden of palm trees and grapevines”**? They said: Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw) know best. Umer (ra) became angry and said: Say we know or we do not know. Ibn Abbas (ra) said: I have something in my mind about it, O Ameer-ul Momineen. Umar (ra) said: O son of my brother, speak and do not belittle yourself. Ibn Abbas (ra) said: It gives an example of a deed. Umar (ra) said: What deed? Ibn Abbas (ra) said: The deed of a rich man who acts in obedience to Allah (swt), then Allah (swt) sends him the devil, so he acts in disobedience until he burns his deeds. In another narration: When his life ends and his death approaches, he concludes with an act of misery. Umar (ra) was pleased with this. (Bukhari: 4538).

﴿أَيُّدُ أَحَدُكُمْ﴾ **“Would one of you like”** so as, would any of you like? The interrogative particle (أ) “would” is used here for disapproval.

﴿فَأَصَابَهَا إِعْصَارٌ﴾ **“and it is hit by a whirlwind”** The whirlwind is a wind that spins around itself intensely, and is also called a tornado.

﴿فِيهِ نَارٌ﴾ **“in it is fire”** The fire: the scorching heat, i.e., extreme heat.

And Allah (swt) concludes the verse by urging reflection on the examples He (swt) sets forth, to take heed and remember. ﴿كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ﴾ **“Thus does Allah make clear to you [His] verses that you might give thought.”**