THE WILL OF ALLAH AND OUR DESTINY

Part XIII: The interpretation of Religious Terms on the subject

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Abstract: *In this final part, it is shown that some of the terms in the holy Quran may be misleading if one does not acquire its correct interpretation from Ahl al-Bait* (PBUT). *These examples make clear that limiting our search space to the divine explanations delivered through Allah's messenger and his appointed deputies are vital in finding the orthodox ad intended views of all religious issues including the subject at hand, i.e., the will of Allah, His guidance and misguidance, and the written fate.*

Keywords: *Guidance; misguidance; written fate; will of Allah.*

1. The Ambiguous Terms in the Quran

There is a very long but quite interesting Hadith from the Commander of Faithful, Imam Ali *(PBUH)* on the interpretation of some of the tokens of the holy Quran, reported in *Tafsir al-Nu'mani*. Below, some parts of this precious long Hadith

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that are relevant to the issue at hand are quoted. In the first paragraph, the Imam *(PBUH)* points to the major problem that

. ... ثُمَّ سَأَلُوهُ صَلَوَاتُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ عَنْ تَفْسِيرِ الْمُحْكَمِ مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ فَقَالَ أَمَّا الْمُحْكَمُ الَّذِي لَمْ يَنْسَخْهُ شَيْءٌ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ فَهُوَ قَوْلُ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَ «هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتابَ مِنْهُ آياتٌ مُحْكَماتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتابِ وَ أُخَرُ مُتَشابِهاتٌ» وَ إِنَّمَا هَلَكَ النَّاسُ فِي الْمُتَشَابِهِ لِأَنَّهُمْ لَمْ يَقِفُوا عَلَى مَعْنَاهُ وَ لَمْ يَعْرِفُوا حَقِيقَتَهُ فَوَضَعُوا لَهُ تَأْوِيلَاتٍ مِنْ عِنْدِ أَنْفُسِهِمْ بِآرَائِهِمْ وَ اسْتَغْنَوْا بِذَلِكَ عَنْ مَسْأَلَةِ الْأَوْصِيَاءِ وَ نَبَذُوا قَوْلَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ص وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِهِمْ.

Concerning the solid and clear meanings of the Book of Allah, the Commander of Faithful, Imam Ali *(PBUH)* said, “As for (one of) the solid and clear (tokens) that no other token in the Quran abrogated it, is this saying of the Lord of might and majesty: ‘He is Him who has sent down to you the Book; of it are some tokens with solid and clear (meanings) which are the foundation of the Book, and others that are ambiguous.’ (3:7) Certainly, people have perished in the allegorical and ambiguous (meanings of the tokens of the holy Quran) since they were not aware of what they refer to, and did not recognize their realities (and the reasons for which it was sent down causes misunderstanding of the Quranic terms including misguidance attributed to Allah: ambiguous). Thus, they made interpretations and exegeses for these tokens by themselves and according their own opinion. Consequently, they felt satisfied with their own ideas, and thought that they were able to do it without asking its interpretations from the executors (*al-Awsiyaa*) (of the will of the messenger of Allah *(PBUH&HF)* who were commissioned by him due to Allah’s command so as to expound the religion for people after him). In this manner, they throw away behind themselves the saying of the Messenger of Allah *(PBUH&HF)* (who urged people to ask the interpretation of the Quran from the Ahl al-Bait *(PBUT)*).

وَ الْمُحْكَمُ مِمَّا ذَكَرْتُهُ فِي الْأَقْسَامِ مِمَّا تَأْوِيلُهُ فِي تَنْزِيلِهِ مِنْ تَحْلِيلِ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ سُبْحَانَهُ فِي كِتَابِهِ وَ تَحْرِيمِ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْمَآكِلِ وَ الْمَشَارِبِ وَ الْمَنَاكِحِ وَ مِنْهُ مَا فَرَضَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ مِنَ الصَّلَاةِ وَ الزَّكَاةِ وَ الصِّيَامِ وَ الْحَجِّ وَ الْجِهَادِ وَ مِمَّا دَلَّهُمْ بِهِ مِمَّا لَا غِنَا بِهِمْ عَنْهُ فِي جَمِيعِ تَصَرُّفَاتِهِمْ ... وَ مِنْهُ قَوْلُهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَ «حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةُ وَ الدَّمُ وَ لَحْمُ الْخِنْزِيرِ وَ ما أُهِلَّ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ» فَتَأْوِيلُهُ فِي تَنْزِيلِهِ وَ مِنْهُ قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى «حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ أُمَّهاتُكُمْ وَ بَناتُكُمْ وَ أَخَواتُكُمْ وَ عَمَّاتُكُمْ وَ

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do not need interpretation even though the in-depth meanings of such tokens, or any part of them that may be understood differently, are partly ambiguous and need divine interpretations) …

وَ أَمَّا الْمُتَشَابِهُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ فَهُوَ الَّذِي انْحَرَفَ مِنْهُ مُتَّفِقُ اللَّفْظِ مُخْتَلِفُ الْمَعْنَى مِثْلُ قَوْلِهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ- «يُضِلُّ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَشاءُ وَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشاءُ» فَنَسَبَ الضَّلَالَةَ إِلَى نَفْسِهِ فِي هَذَا الْمَوْضِعِ وَ هَذَا ضَلَالُهُمْ عَنْ طَرِيقِ الْجَنَّةِ بِفِعْلِهِمْ وَ نَسَبَهُ إِلَى الْكُفَّارِ فِي مَوْضِعٍ آخَرَ وَ نَسَبَهُ إِلَى الْأَصْنَامِ فِي آيَةٍ أُخْرَى فَمَعْنَى الضَّلَالَةِ عَلَى وُجُوهٍ فَمِنْهُ مَا هُوَ مَحْمُودٌ وَ مِنْهُ مَا هُوَ مَذْمُومٌ وَ مِنْهُ مَا لَيْسَ بِمَحْمُودٍ وَ لَا مَذْمُومٍ وَ مِنْهُ ضَلَالُ النِّسْيَانِ .

On the other hand, the ambiguous parts of the Quran that people deviated from their (meanings), are those with (some) common words with different meanings. One such example is His saying: ‘Allah misguides whom He wills and guides whom He wills.’ (74:31) Therefore, He attributes misguidance to Himself in this instance, and refers to misguiding (the disbelievers) from the direction of Paradise due to their actions. In another place, however, He attributes misguidance to the disbelievers, and yet in another token, He attributes it to the idols. Misguidance has different meanings. There is a misguidance that is

خالاتُكُمْ» إِلَى آخِرِ الْآيَةِ فَهَذَا كُلُّهُ مُحْكَمٌ لَمْ يَنْسَخْهُ شَيْءٌ قَدِ اسْتُغْنِيَ بِتَنْزِيلِهِ مِنْ تَأْوِيلِهِ وَ كُلُّ مَا يَجْرِي هَذَا الْمَجْرَى.

The solid and clear parts are of different categories. It includes any token whose exegesis is in (the story of) its revelation, which in turn include some of what Allah clearly forbade or allowed in His book, for instance, some of foods, drinks, and marriages, and also include (the foundations of) some of what Allah made obligatory of prayer, charity, fasting, pilgrimage, and strife (*Jihad*) and also whatever is necessary in their actions and their possessions … Such are the saying of Allah, ‘Forbidden to you are carrion (that which dies of itself), blood, the flesh of swine, what has been slaughtered and consecrated to (or in the name of) other than Allah …’ (5:3) and His saying, ‘Forbidden to you are marriage with your mothers and your daughters and your sisters and your paternal aunts and your maternal aunts …’ (4:23). The (apparent meanings of these tokens) are solid and are not subject to interpretations and nothing abrogate those (meanings) (thus their clear meanings must be followed as they

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praiseworthy, another that is blameworthy, another that is neither praiseworthy nor blameworthy, and yet another that is due to forgetfulness.

فَالضَّلَالُ ... الْمَذْمُومُ هُوَ قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى «وَ أَضَلَّهُمُ السَّامِرِيُّ» وَ قَوْلُهُ «وَ أَضَلَّ فِرْعَوْنُ قَوْمَهُ وَ ما هَدى» وَ مِثْلُ ذَلِكَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ كَثِيرٌ وَ أَمَّا الضَّلَالُ الْمَنْسُوبُ إِلَى الْأَصْنَامِ فَقَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى فِي قِصَّةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ع «وَ اجْنُبْنِي وَ بَنِيَّ أَنْ نَعْبُدَ الْأَصْنامَ- رَبِّ إِنَّهُنَّ أَضْلَلْنَ كَثِيراً مِنَ النَّاسِ» الْآيَةَ وَ الْأَصْنَامُ لَمْ تضلن تُضْلِلْنَ أَحَداً عَلَى الْحَقِيقَةِ وَ إِنَّمَا ضَلَّ النَّاسُ بِهَا وَ كَفَرُوا حِينَ عَبَدُوهَا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ .

As for the blameworthy misguidance, it is in His saying, ‘And Samiri misguided them,’ (20:85) and His saying, ‘The Pharaoh misguided his people and did not guide (them) aright,’ (20:79) There are many other instances in the Quran that have similar meaning. As for the misguidance that is attributed to the idols, it is in His saying about the story of Abraham *(PBUH)*, ‘And preserve me and my sons from worshipping the idols. O my Lord! They have indeed led astray many among mankind.’ (14:35-36) The idols do not misguide anyone in reality. Surely, it is people who went astray by (making) them, and became disbelievers when they worshipped them instead of Allah, the Lord of might and the majesty.

وَ أَمَّا الضَّلَالُ الَّذِي هُوَ النِّسْيَانُ فَهُوَ قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى- «وَ اسْتَشْهِدُوا شَهِيدَيْنِ مِنْ رِجالِكُمْ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُونا رَجُلَيْنِ فَرَجُلٌ وَ امْرَأَتانِ مِمَّنْ تَرْضَوْنَ مِنَ الشُّهَداءِ أَنْ تَضِلَّ إِحْداهُما فَتُذَكِّرَ إِحْداهُمَا الْأُخْرى» وَ قَدْ ذَكَرَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى الضَّلَالَ فِي مَوَاضِعَ مِنْ كِتَابِهِ فَمِنْهُ مَا نَسَبَهُ إِلَى نَبِيِّهِ عَلَى ظَاهِرِ اللَّفْظِ كَقَوْلِهِ سُبْحَانَهُ «وَ وَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدى»- مَعْنَاهُ وَجَدْنَاكَ فِي قَوْمٍ لَا يَعْرِفُونَ نُبُوَّتَكَ فَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ بِكَ.

As for the misguidance that refers to forgetfulness, it is His saying, ‘… And call into witness two witnesses out of your own men, and if there are not two men, then a man and two women from those whom you approve as witnesses, so that if one of them forgets (*Tadhilla*), the other would remind her.’ (2:282) Verily, Allah, Whose (remembrance) is exalted, made mention of lack of guidance (attributed to individuals) in different places of His Book; of them is that which He seemingly attributed to His Prophet *(PBUH&HF)* in outward wording, like His saying, the glorious, ‘and He found you lost (Dhaal), then He guided.’ (93:7) It means, ‘He found you among a folk that did not recognize your prophethood, and then He guided them

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(to recognize your mission) by you.'

وَ أَمَّا الضَّلَالُ الْمَنْسُوبُ إِلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى الَّذِي هُوَ ضِدُّ الْهُدَى وَ الْهُدَى هُوَ الْبَيَانُ وَ هُوَ مَعْنَى قَوْلِهِ سُبْحَانَهُ «أَ وَ لَمْ يَهْدِ لَهُمْ»- مَعْنَاهُ أَيْ أَ لَمْ أُبَيِّنْ لَهُمْ مِثْلَ قَوْلِهِ سُبْحَانَهُ- «فَهَدَيْناهُمْ فَاسْتَحَبُّوا الْعَمى عَلَى الْهُدى» أَيْ بَيَّنَّا لَهُمْ وَجْهٌ آخَرُ وَ هُوَ قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى- «وَ ما كانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِلَّ قَوْماً بَعْدَ إِذْ هَداهُمْ حَتَّى يُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ ما يَتَّقُونَ» ... الضَّلَالُ الْمَحْمُودُ وَ هُوَ الْمَنْسُوبُ إِلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى كَقَوْلِهِ يُضِلُّ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَشاءُ هُوَ ضَلَالُهُمْ عَنْ طَرِيقِ الْجَنَّةِ بِفِعْلِهِم ...

As for the misguidance that is attributed to Allah Whose remembrance is exalted, it is the negative of guidance, and guidance (here) means expounding and clarifying and indicating. (Thus one meaning of misguidance is when Allah did not intent to guide someone which, of course, does not hold him accountable on what He did not inform him). This is the intended meaning in His saying, 'Does it not guide them (to [reflect on] how many generations We destroyed before them...)?' (32:26) which means, 'Does it not clarify for them?' Moreover, His saying, 'We guided them, but they preferred blindness (of heart) to guidance,' (41:17) means 'We clarified for them.' Another type of misguidance (attributed to Allah means Allah's punishment for rejecting His guidance) which is in His saying, 'And Allah will not misguide a people after He has guided them until He makes clear to them as to what they should avoid.' (9:115)" … Such is the praiseworthy misguidance, which is what was attributed to Allah, the most High, like His saying, 'Allah misguides whom He wills,' (74:31), and it refers to their misdirection from the route of Paradise due to their actions.

وَ أَمَّا مَعْنَى الْهُدَى فَقَوْلُهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ- «إِنَّما أَنْتَ مُنْذِرٌ وَ لِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ هادٍ» وَ مَعْنَى الْهَادِي هَاهُنَا الْمُبَيِّنُ لِمَا جَاءَ بِهِ الْمُنْذِرُ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَ قَدِ احْتَجَ قَوْمٌ مِنَ الْمُنَافِقِينَ عَلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى- «إِنَّ اللَّهَ لا يَسْتَحْيِي أَنْ يَضْرِبَ مَثَلًا ما بَعُوضَةً فَما فَوْقَها» وَ ذَلِكَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى لَمَّا أَنْزَلَ عَلَى نَبِيِّهِ ص- «وَ لِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ هادٍ» فَقَالَ طَائِفَةٌ مِنَ الْمُنَافِقِينَ- «ما ذا أَرادَ اللَّهُ بِهذا مَثَلًا يُضِلُّ بِهِ كَثِيراً» فَأَجَابَهُمُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى بِقَوْلِهِ- «إِنَّ اللَّهَ لا يَسْتَحْيِي أَنْ يَضْرِبَ مَثَلًا ما بَعُوضَةً فَما فَوْقَها فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَ أَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَيَقُولُونَ ما ذا أَرادَ اللَّهُ بِهذا مَثَلًا يُضِلُّ بِهِ كَثِيراً وَ يَهْدِي بِهِ كَثِيراً وَ ما يُضِلُّ بِهِ إِلَّا الْفاسِقِينَ - الَّذِينَ يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ ميثاقِهِ وَ يَقْطَعُونَ ما أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوصَلَ وَ يُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أُولئِكَ هُمُ الْخاسِرُونَ».

"As for this meaning of guidance, it is His saying, the mighty and the majestic,

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فَهَذَا مَعْنَى الضَّلَالِ الْمَنْسُوبِ إِلَيْهِ تَعَالَى لِأَنَّهُ أَقَامَ لَهُمُ الْإِمَامَ الْهَادِيَ لِمَا جَاءَ بِهِ الْمُنْذِرُ فَخَالَفُوهُ وَ صَرَفُوا عَنْهُ بَعْدَ أَنْ أَقَرُّوا بِفَرْضِ طَاعَتِهِ وَ لَمَّا بَيَّنَ لَهُمْ مَا يَأْخُذُونَ وَ مَا يَذَرُونَ فَخَالَفُوهُ ضَلُّوا هَذَا مَعَ عِلْمِهِمْ بِمَا قَالَهُ النَّبِيُّ ص وَ هُوَ قَوْلُهُ- لَا تُصَلُّوا عَلَيَّ صَلَاةً مَبْتُورَةً إِذَا صَلَّيْتُمْ عَلَيَّ بَلْ صَلُّوا عَلَى أَهْلِ بَيْتِي وَ لَا تَقْطَعُوهُمْ مِنِّي فَإِنَّ كُلَّ سَبَبٍ وَ نَسَبٍ مُنْقَطِعٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِلَّا سَبَبِي وَ نَسَبِي وَ لَمَّا خَالَفُوا اللَّهَ تَعَالَى ضَلُّوا وَ أَضَلُّوا فَحَذَّرَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى الْأُمَّةَ مِنِ اتِّبَاعِهِمْ وَ قَالَ سُبْحَانَهُ «وَ لا تَتَّبِعُوا أَهْواءَ قَوْمٍ قَدْ ضَلُّوا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَ أَضَلُّوا كَثِيراً وَ ضَلُّوا عَنْ سَواءِ السَّبِيلِ» وَ السَّبِيلُ هَاهُنَا الْوَصِيُّ وَ قَالَ سُبْحَانَهُ- « وَ أَنَّ هذا صِراطي مُسْتَقِيماً فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَ لا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ذلِكُمْ وَصَّاكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ».

‘You are but a warner (*Mundhir*), and for every nation (there is a) guide (*Had*).’ (13:17) Here, the guide means the expounder (i.e., the Imam) for what came to the warner (i.e., the Prophet *(PBUH&HF)*) from Allah... When this was revealed to the Prophet *(PBUH&HF)*, some of the hypocrites said, ‘What does Allah mean by this saying? By it, He causes many to stray.’ (2:26) Thus Allah, the Lord of blessings, responded to them, ‘Allah is not ashamed to strike a similitude even of a gnat, or aught above it. As for the believers, they know it is the truth from their Lord, but those who disbelieved say that," What did Allah intend by bringing such a similitude by which He misguides many, and (Allah says in response to them that) by which He guides many to (the right path) and He does not misguide anyone by it (i.e., the examples in the Quran) except the wicked; (who are) those that break their established covenant with Him as well as the relations He has commanded to be kept and spread evil and corruption on earth. These are the real losers. (2:26-27)

Thus, this is the meaning of misleading attributed to Allah, Whose remembrance is exalted. This is because Allah established for them an Imam who was the guide to what the warner (i.e., the Prophet *(PBUH&HF)*) brought to them. However, they opposed him and turned away from him after they had confessed to the obligation of obeying him. And when he explained to them what they should be take and what they should avoid, they opposed him and thus became misguided while knowing what the Prophet *(PBUH&HF)* had said about his rights ... Since they disobeyed Allah,

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the Lord of glory, they went astray and then led others astray. Thus, Allah warned the nation from following such people and said, ‘And do not follow the vain desires of people who have already gone astray, who misled many, and strayed from the even path.’ (5:77) The ‘path’ here is *al-Wasi* (the executor of the will of Prophet *(PBUH&HF)*, and the person to whom the Prophet *(PBUH&HF)* advised people to refer and listen to after him in all religious-related issues). Moreover, Allah, Who is pure and far beyond (all imaginations), said, ‘Verily, this is My way, leading straight. Thus, follow it, and follow not (other) paths because they will divert you from His path. This is what He advised and ordered you.’ (6:153)

فَخَالَفُوا مَا وَصَّاهُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى وَ اتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ فَحَرَّفُوا دِينَ اللَّهِ جَلَّتْ عَظَمَتُهُ وَ شَرَائِعَهُ وَ بَدَّلُوا فَرَائِضَهُ وَ أَحْكَامَهُ وَ جَمِيعَ مَا أُمِرُوا بِهِ كَمَا عَدَلُوا عَمَّنْ أُمِرُوا بِطَاعَتِهِ وَ أَخَذَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْعَهْدَ بِمُوَالاتِهِمْ وَ اضْطَرَّهُمْ ذَلِكَ إِلَى اسْتِعْمَالِ الرَّأْيِ وَ الْقِيَاسِ فَزَادَهُمْ ذَلِكَ حَيْرَةً وَ الْتِبَاساً وَ أَمَّا قَوْلُهُ سُبْحَانَهُ « وَ ما جَعَلْنا أَصْحابَ النَّارِ إِلاَّ مَلائِكَةً وَ ما جَعَلْنا عِدَّتَهُمْ إِلاَّ فِتْنَةً لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيَسْتَيْقِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتابَ وَ يَزْدادَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِيماناً وَ لا يَرْتابَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتابَ وَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَ لِيَقُولَ الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ وَ الْكافِرُونَ ما ذا أَرادَ اللَّهُ بِهذا مَثَلًا كَذلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَشاءُ وَ يَهْدي مَنْ يَشاءُ» فَكَانَ تَرْكُهُمُ اتِّبَاعَ الدَّلِيلِ الَّذِي أَقَامَ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ ضَلَالَةً لَهُمْ فَصَارَ ذَلِكَ كَأَنَّهُ مَنْسُوبٌ إِلَيْهِ تَعَالَى لَمَّا خَالَفُوا أَمْرَهُ فِي اتِّبَاعِ الْإِمَامِ ثُمَّ افْتَرَقُوا وَ اخْتَلَفُوا وَ لَعَنَ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضاً وَ اسْتَحَلَّ بَعْضُهُمْ دِمَاءَ بَعْضٍ- «فَما ذا بَعْدَ الْحَقِّ إِلَّا الضَّلالُ فَأَنَّى يُؤْفَكُون».

However, they opposed what Allah ordered them, followed their desires, altered the religion of Allah and His codices (*Shari’a*), modified His obligatory commandments, regulations, and all what they were ordered just as they turned away from those whom they were ordered to obey and whom they were taken oath of accepting their guardianship. This way of conduct compelled them to use their own opinions (in the domain of religion in place of divine text) and to apply analogy (to religious commands in order to develop their own solutions for their problems), which further increased their wandering, embarrassment, and confusion. As for the saying of Allah, ‘And We have appointed none but angels as Guardians of the Fire; and We have fixed their numbers (to nineteen) only as a trial for unbelievers, so that the People of the Book may arrive at

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certainty (to believe in the religion of Islam), and the believers may increase in Faith, and that no doubts may be left for the People of the Book and the believers, and that those in whose hearts is a disease and the disbelievers say, What did Allah intend by such a parable? This way, Allah misguides whom He wills and guides whom He wills.' (74:31) Thus, their deserting the adherence to the guide that He established for them was misguidance for them, and this appeared to be as if attributed to Allah, the Lord of glory (since Allah decreed such consequence for their wrong choice). They violated Allah's command on obeying the Imam, and divided (from the orthodox path) and then differed among themselves, abused one another, and regarded lawful to shed the blood of each other. 'thus, what exists except misguidance after Truth?' (10:32) How then are you deluded away (from the truth)?"[1]

In some tokens of the holy Quran, deceiving (*Ighwaa*), tricking (*Makr, Khud'a*), mocking (*Istihzaa*), and ridiculing (*Sakhra*) have been attributed to Allah. According to the interpretation of Ahl al-Bait *(PBUH&HF)*, all such instances mean Allah's punishment for the disbeliever's deception, trick, mockery, or ridicule. Hasan bin Fadhdhal narrated:

سَأَلْتُ الرِّضَا ع عَنْ قَوْلِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَ «فَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنْهُمْ سَخِرَ اللَّهُ مِنْهُمْ» وَ عَنْ قَوْلِهِ «وَ إِذا لَقُوا الَّذينَ آمَنُوا قالُوا آمَنَّا وَ إِذا خَلَوْا إِلى شَياطينِهِمْ قالُوا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ إِنَّما نَحْنُ مُسْتَهْزِؤُنَ-اللَّهُ يَسْتَهْزِئُ بِهِمْ وَ يَمُدُّهُمْ في طُغْيانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ» وَ عَنْ قَوْلِهِ «وَ مَكَرُوا وَ مَكَرَ اللَّهُ وَ اللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْماكِرينَ»» وَ عَنْ قَوْلِهِ «يُخادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَ هُوَ خادِعُهُمْ» فَقَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ لَا يَسْخَرُ وَ لَا يَسْتَهْزِئُ وَ لَا يَمْكُرُ وَ لَا يُخَادِعُ وَ لَكِنَّهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ يُجَازِيهِمْ جَزَاءَ السُّخْرِيَّةِ وَ جَزَاءَ الِاسْتِهْزَاءِ وَ جَزَاءَ الْمَكْرِ وَ الْخَدِيعَةِ تَعَالَى اللَّهُ عَمَّا يَقُولُ الظَّالِمُونَ عُلُوّاً كَبِيراً.

I asked Imam al-Ridha *(PBUH)* about Allah's saying, "They ridicule the (believers), Allah shall ridicule them (in return)," (9:79) and His saying, "When they meet the faithful, they say, 'We believe,' but when they are alone with their devils, they say, 'We are with you;' we were only kidding. Allah mocks them and give them respite so that they prolong their transgression blindly," (2:15) and also His saying, "They tricked, and Allah tricked, and Allah is the best of schemers" (3:54) and "The

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hypocrites think they deceive Allah, but Allah is their deceiver." (4:142) The Imam *(PBUH)* replied, "Allah, the Lord of might and majesty, does not ridicule, mock, trick, or deceive. However, Allah punishes them as requital for their ridicule, mockery, trickery, and deception. Allah is greatly far above what the wrongdoers say."[2]

Some other traditions explain that the action of ridiculing disbelievers is actually the action of the believers in Paradise when they watch disbelievers being punished in Hell, and Allah has attributed their action to Himself.[3] This interpretation is in conformity with the following tokens of the holy Quran:

إِنَّ اَلَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا كانُوا مِنَ اَلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يَضْحَكُونَ ... فَالْيَوْمَ اَلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنَ اَلْكُفَّارِ يَضْحَكُونَ عَلَى اَلأَرائِكِ يَنْظُرُونَ هَلْ ثُوِّبَ اَلْكُفَّارُ ما كانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ.

Those who committed crimes used to laugh at those who believed... But on this Day, the believers will laugh at the disbelievers. On raised couches, they will watch (those who are being punished in Hell). Have not the disbelievers been paid back for what they did? (83:29, 34-36)

وَ يَصْنَعُ الْفُلْكَ وَ كُلَّما مَرَّ عَلَيْهِ مَلَأٌ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ سَخِرُوا مِنْهُ قالَ إِنْ تَسْخَرُوا مِنَّا فَإِنَّا نَسْخَرُ مِنْكُمْ كَما تَسْخَرُونَ.

He started constructing the ark. But every time that a group of his people passed by him, they threw ridicule on him. He said, "If you ridicule us now, we will look down on you with ridicule likewise!" (11:38)

وَ لَقَدِ اُسْتُهْزِئَ بِرُسُلٍ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فَحاقَ بِالَّذِينَ سَخِرُوا مِنْهُمْ ما كانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِؤُنَ .

And certainly messengers before you were mocked at, but that which they mocked at encompassed the scoffers among them. (21:41)

1 Conclusion

As a conclusion, let us reflect on apart of very interesting letter from Imam al-Jawad *(PBUH)* to Sa'd al-Khair. He *(PBUH)* wrote:

... أَنَّ اللَّهَ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى الْحَلِيمَ الْعَلِيمَ إِنَّمَا غَضَبُهُ عَلَى مَنْ لَمْ يَقْبَلْ مِنْهُ رِضَاهُ وَ إِنَّمَا يَمْنَعُ مَنْ لَمْ يَقْبَلْ مِنْهُ عَطَاهُ وَ إِنَّمَا يُضِلُّ مَنْ لَمْ يَقْبَلْ مِنْهُ هُدَاهُ ثُمَّ أَمْكَنَ أَهْلَ السَّيِّئَاتِ مِنَ التَّوْبَةِ بِتَبْدِيلِ الْحَسَنَاتِ دَعَا عِبَادَهُ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِلَى ذَلِكَ بِصَوْتٍ رَفِيعٍ لَمْ يَنْقَطِعْ وَ لَمْ يَمْنَعْ دُعَاءَ عِبَادِهِ فَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَ كَتَبَ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ فَسَبَقَتْ قَبْلَ الْغَضَبِ فَتَمَّتْ صِدْقاً وَ عَدْلاً فَلَيْسَ يَبْتَدِئُ الْعِبَادَ بِالْغَضَبِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يُغْضِبُوهُ.

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"… Verily Allah, the Lord of blessings and loftiness, is clement and omniscient. Surely, His wrath is only for people who did not admit His pleasure. He only holds back from people who did not accept His grant. He merely misguides people who did not accept His guidance. Besides, He made repentance possible for the sinful so that He would turn their sins into good deeds (afterwards). He called His servants to it in His book with a strong voice, and did not deter the call of His servants towards Him. May Allah curse those who conceal what Allah has sent down. 'He wrote for Himself mercy,' (6:12; 6:54) and thus His mercy preceded (His) wrath. (This decree) was fulfilled in truth and fairness. Thus, He does not initiate anger against the servants before they anger Him." [4]

The anger Allah merely appears in His will, not in His Essence, because Allah does not fall into any state and all states are His creations. As explained in the previous parts, Allah's vicegerent on Earth is the vessel of the will of Allah, and he chooses to will only what Allah wills. Therefore, for other people who do not this lofty status, the anger of Allah's vicegerent is an indication for the anger of Allah. Moreover, the anger of Allah appears in His actions in the form of punishment.

Allah's mercy is of His great creation, and the extent of His mercy for people is according to His will. Due to His grace, Allah initiates mercy on people before the time that they deserve it by worship and obedience. In one of his supplications, Imam al-Sajjad *(PBUH)* prayed to Allah, saying:

يَا مُبْتَدِئاً بِالنِّعَمِ قَبْلَ اسْتِحْقَاقِهَا.

"O the initiator of the bounties before (before the servants deserve it."[5]

The grace of Allah in this world does not have any initial requirement, and Allah may initially bestow it to whom He wills. However, due to His justice, Allah never initiates wrath unless people deserve it by rejecting His commands and His vicegerents. This custom of Allah is also stated in a number of tokens of the holy Quran. For instance:

كَدَأْبِ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ وَ اَلَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَفَرُوا بِآياتِ اَللَّهِ فَأَخَذَهُمُ اَللَّهُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ إِنَّ اَللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ شَدِيدُ اَلْعِقابِ ذلِكَ بِأَنَّ اَللَّهَ لَمْ يَكُ مُغَيِّراً نِعْمَةً أَنْعَمَها عَلى قَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا ما بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَ أَنَّ اَللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ.

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(Their manner) is like the manner of the people of Pharaoh and of those before them. They rejected the signs of Allah, and Allah caught them for their sins; for Allah is strong and strict in punishment. That is because Allah will never change the bounty that He has bestowed on a people until they change that which is in their souls (from obedience to disobedience), and (that is) because Allah is He who hears and knows (all things). (8:52-53)

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[1] *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 90, pp 12-15, Hadith 1, taken from *Tafsir al-Nu'mani*.

[2] *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 6, p. 51, Hadith 1, cited from *al-Tawhid*.

[3] See for instance, *Tafsir*, Imam Hasan al-Askari *(PBUH)*, pp. 123-125; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 6, pp 53-54, Hadith 2.

[4] *al-Kafi*, vol. 8, pp 52-53, Hadith 16.

[5] *Jamal al-Usbu'*, p. 275; *Mafatih al-Jinan*, p. 43, under the Salat of Imam Zain al-Abidin *(PBUH)*.

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