145615 - Ruling on some people saying “Time is treacherous”

the question

Is it permissible to say, “Time is treacherous” if what is meant by az-zaman (time) is ad-dahr (the vicissitudes of time), and according to the hadith, “Do not inveigh against time (al-dahr), for Allah is time”?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

It is not permissible to say “Time is treacherous.” That is because time has no control over what happens; rather the One Who controls time, controls the entire universe and runs its affairs is Allah alone, with no partner or associate. Hence the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) forbade inveighing against time, because in reality this is inveighing against Allah, exalted be Allah far above that. This has been discussed previously in the answer to question no. 9571 .

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked about such phrases as “This is a bad time” or “Time is treacherous” or “What a failure was the time when I saw you.”

He replied:

These phrases that you mentioned in your question are used in two ways:

The first way is by way of inveighing against and reviling time. This is haram and is not permissible, because whatever happens in time comes from Allah, may He be glorified and exalted. Therefore whoever inveighs against time has inveighed against Allah. Hence Allah, may He be exalted, says in the hadith qudsi: “The son of Adam offends Me; he inveighs against time (ad-dahr), and I am time, in My hand are all affairs, I alternate the night and day.”

The second way is that they say that by way of making a statement. There is nothing wrong with

that. That includes what Allah, may He be exalted, tells us about Lut (peace be upon him): {[he] said, “This is a trying day”} [Hud 11:77], meaning that it was difficult. All people say, “This is a difficult day; this is a day on which such and such happened,” and there is nothing wrong with that.

As for saying “Time is treacherous,” this is inveighing against time, because treachery is a blameworthy characteristic and is not permissible.

As for saying “What a failure was the day when I saw you,” describing oneself as a failure on that occasion, there is nothing wrong with this, and it is not inveighing against time or the vicissitudes of time. But if the speaker means to refer to time or that day, then this is inveighing against time, so it is not permissible."(*Majmu‘ Fatawa wa Rasa’il Ibn ‘Uthaymin* 1/198).

And Allah knows best.