81283 - The view on one who says “If my Lord calls me to account for my stinginess I will call Him to account for His generosity.”

the question

How sound or otherwise is the story that is repeated on many websites and in many books, about the Bedouin who met the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and said to him: “If my Lord calls me to account for my stinginess I will call Him to account for His generosity; if He calls me to account for my sins, I will call Him to account for His pardon; if He calls me to account for my errors, I will call Him to account for His mercy”? If it is not saheeh, is it permissible to repeat such phrases?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The general approach which the Muslim should follow with regard to what he hears or reads is to try and find out how sound it is before basing any knowledge or action on it. This is what Allaah has enjoined in His Book, as He says (interpretation of the meaning):

“O you who believe! If a Faasiq (liar — evil person) comes to you with any news, verify it”

[al-Hujuraat 49:6]

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) also warned against accepting everything that is published, announced or broadcast, because transmission and reporting is a trust which should be fulfilled properly, and that can only be done by checking and verifying.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “It is sufficient lying for a man to speak of everything that he hears.” Narrated by Muslim (5). This story has not been narrated by any scholar in a hadeeth, and no da’eef (weak) isnaad is known for it, let alone any saheeh isnaad. The fault in its text is obvious, because even though it is not far-fetched to imagine that a Bedouin

may utter such words about Allaah, may He be exalted – due to their ignorance and harshness – it is impossible to imagine that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) would hear such words that indicate poor etiquette towards Allaah, may He be exalted, and approve of them or remain silent about them, let alone weep in approval of them as they say in this story.

Allaah, may He be glorified and exalted, loves people to be humble in asking of Him and in turning to Him, and He loves sincerity in humbling oneself before Him and worshipping Him, and acknowledging one's weakness, incapability, sin and shortcomings.

Thus Adam (peace be upon him) said in his du'aa':

"They said: 'Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If You forgive us not, and bestow not upon us Your Mercy, we shall certainly be of the losers'"

[al-A'raaf 7:23]

And Nooh (peace be upon him) said:

"O my Lord! I seek refuge with You from asking You that of which I have no knowledge. And unless You forgive me and have mercy on me, I would indeed be one of the losers"

[Hood 11:47]

And our Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) taught us to express humility and submission, and to admit our sins in our du'aa'.

It was narrated from Shaddaad ibn Aws (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said:

"Shall I not tell you of the best of prayers for forgiveness? 'Allaahumma anta rabbi la ilaaha illa anta, Khalaqtani wa ana 'abduka wa ana 'ala 'ahdika wa wa'dika ma astata't. A'oodhu bika min sharri ma sana'tu, aboo'u laka bi ni'matika 'alayya wa a'tarifu bi dhunoobi, faghfir li dhunoobi innahu laa yaghfiru'l-dhunooba illaa anta (O Allaah, You are my Lord. None has the right to be worshipped but You. You created me and I am Your slave, and I am faithful to my covenant and my

promise (to You) as much as I can. I seek refuge with You from all the evil I have done. I acknowledge before You all the blessings You have bestowed upon me, and I confess to You all my sins. So I entreat You to forgive my sins, for nobody can forgive sins except You).' Whoever says this when evening comes and the decree (i.e., death) comes to him before morning comes, will be among the people of Paradise, and whoever says it when morning comes, and the decree (i.e., death) comes to him before evening comes, will be among the people of Paradise."

Al-Bukhaari (6306).

This is the etiquette of du'aa' that Allaah, may He be glorified and exalted, loves; this is the etiquette of the Prophets and Messengers; it is not right for a person to be harsh or insolent in addressing the Creator, may He be glorified, by saying, "If He calls me to account I shall call Him to account."

Standing before Allaah and addressing Him is a very serious matter and the slave is weak and in great need of Allaah. It is not befitting for the slave to address his Lord with harsh words. Even if his intention is sound, the slave should still speak in a humble manner.

The point is that this hadeeth is false and fabricated, and it is not permissible to narrate it or attribute it to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). Similarly, it is not permissible for a person to address his Lord in this manner that is attributed to the Bedouin, rather the Muslim must use words of submission which reflect his true status and position.

Shaykh Haatim al-Shareef said:

The hadeeth mentioned is an example of the kind of ahaadeeth that show obvious signs of being fabricated and forged. It contains poor language, weak composition and silly ideas, and anyone who has any knowledge of the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and its noble essence and eloquence will have no doubt that this cannot be a saheeh hadeeth from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). I could not find this version of it, and I wish that the questioner had told us of the source from which he found this hadeeth, so that we could warn people against it. But Abu Haamid al-Ghazaali (may Allaah have mercy on him), as

was his wont, narrated a false hadeeth in Ihya' 'Uloom al-Deen (4/130) which is similar in content to the hadeeth asked about here. In it, it says that a Bedouin said to the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him): O Messenger of Allaah, who is in charge of bringing people to account on the Day of Resurrection? He (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Allaah, may He be blessed and exalted." He said: He Himself? He said: "Yes." The Bedouin smiled and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: Why are you smiling, O Bedouin? He said: When the Most Generous has the power to punish He will forgive, and when He calls to account He will pardon …

Al-'Iraaqi said concerning this hadeeth: I could not find any basis for it. Al-Subki mentioned it among the ahaadeeth for which he could find no isnaad. Takhreej Ahaadeeth al-Ihya', no. 3466; Tabaqaat al-Shaafa'iyyah al-Kubra, 6/364.

Nevertheless many texts in the Qur'aan and saheeh Sunnah point to the vastness of Allaah's mercy and forgiveness, and that He accepts the repentance of the penitent and responds to the prayers of those who seek forgiveness. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"And verily, I am indeed forgiving to him who repents, believes (in My Oneness, and associates none in worship with Me) and does righteous good deeds, and then remains constant in doing them (till his death)"

[Ta-Ha 20:82]

"And He it is Who accepts repentance from His slaves, and forgives sins, and He knows what you do"

[al-Shoora 42:25]

"My Mercy embraces all things. That (Mercy) I shall ordain for those who are the Muttaqoon (the pious), and give Zakaah; and those who believe in Our Ayaat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs and revelations, etc.)"

[al-A'raaf 7:156]

In Saheeh al-Bukhaari (7554) and Saheeh Muslim (2751) it is narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Allaah wrote a document before He created the universe: My mercy prevails over My wrath.”

And Allaah knows best. End quote.