



The Supplication of Distress

Hadeeth from the Saheeh of Imaam Al-Bukhaaree with the explanation from various sources
Trans Aboo Talhah Dawood ibn Ronald Burbank

*AL-IMAAM AL-BUKHAAREE-rahimahullaah-said in his 'Saheeh' [The Book of Supplications: Chapter (27): Supplication at times of distress (no. 6346)]:

"Musaddad narrated to us: Yahyaa narrated to us: from Hishaam ibn Abee `Abdillaah: from Qataadah: from Abul `Aaliyah: from Ibn `Abbaas that Allaah's Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to say at times of distress:

لا إله إلا الله العظيم الحليم لا إله إلا الله ربُّ العرش العظيم
لا إله إلا الله ربُّ السمواتِ وَ رَبُّ الأرضِ وَ رَبُّ العرشِ
الكريم

((None has the right to be worshipped except Allaah, the Tremendous One, the Forebearing. None has the right to be worshipped except Allaah, the Lord of the tremendous Throne. None has the right to be worshipped except Allaah, the Lord of the heavens, and the Lord of the earth, and the Lord of the honourable Throne.))"

-Also reported by Muslim (no. 2730), at-Tirmidhee (no. 3435), and Ibn Maajah (no. 3883).

*an-Nawawee said in his explanation of 'Saheeh Muslim': "It is a tremendous hadeeth. Careful attention should be given to it, and it should be said plentifully at times of distress, and when serious affairs occur. at-Tabaree said: 'The Salaf used to supplicate with it, and they called it <The Supplication of distress> (Du`aa-ul-Karb)."

So if it is said: This is remembrance (dhikr) of Allaah, and it is not a supplication (du`aa), then the response to this is from two well-known aspects:

Firstly: This is remembrance which is used to begin the supplication then the person supplicates with whatever he wishes.

Secondly: The response of Sufyaan ibn `Uyainah, who said: ‘Do you not know of His Saying-He the Most High-:

Whoever is preoccupied from asking of Me by remembrance of Me, then I shall give him that which is better than what I give to those who ask”?’¹

And the poet said:

*If a person praises you one day,
Then his praising suffices him from having to make requests of you”*

لا إله إلا الله العظيم الحليم لا إله إلا الله ربُّ العرش العظيم

al- Haafiz Ibn Hajr said in ‘Fathul-Baaree’ : “at-Teebee said: These words of praise begin with a mention of the Lord and Nurturer (ar-Rabb) so that it conforms with the removal of distress, since that is something necessitated by nurturing (tarbiyah). And it contains ‘tahleel’ (the declaration that Allaah alone has the right to be worshipped) which comprises Tawheed, and which is the foundation for the declaration of His splendid Perfection; and ‘al-`Azamah’ (Greatness) which indicates perfect Ability; and ‘al-Hilm’ (Forbearance)-, which indicates knowledge- since forbiddance and generosity are not envisaged from the ignorant ones; and these two are the foundation for the characteristics of honour and generosity.

(العظيم) (al-`Azeem) (The Tremendous One) :

`Alee al-Qaaree said in ‘Mirqaatul-Mafaateeh’ (5/327): “Meaning: With respect to His Self and His attributes, so no request is too difficult for Him (to answer)

al-`Aynee said in ‘`Umdatul-Qaaree’: “Meaning: Therefore nothing should be requested except from Him, and no one should be asked except Him, since no one can remove tremendous distress except for the Tremendous Lord... And this dhikr contains an indication that no one is able to remove distress except Allaah. at-Teebee said: This is a dhikr which results in removal of the distress.”

(الحليم) (al-Haleem) (The Forbearing):

al-Qaaree said: “The One Who does not hasten to punish. He is not quick to punish the one who falls short in serving Him, rather He removes harm from him by His Mercy.”

Ibn Hajr said in ‘Fathul-Baaree’: “The scholars said, al-Haleem is the One Who delays punishing whilst having the ability (to punish)..

¹ A hadeeth qudsee, see ‘ad-Da`eefah’ (no. 1335) of Shaikh al-Albaanee.

al-`Aynee said: "The reason why 'al-Haleem' (The Forbearing One) is particularized in the dhikr is that distress which comes to the Believer is usually because of some form of falling short in acts of obedience, or some heedlessness, and this gives an indication of having hope for Pardon which will reduce the grief..."

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَرَبُّ الْأَرْضِ وَرَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْكَرِيمِ

al-`Aynee said: "His Saying (The Lord and Nurturer of the heavens and the earth): He mentioned these two in particular since they are from the greatest of that which we see, and 'ar-Rabb' (the Lord and Nurturer) in the language is used for the one who is an owner, a master, a controller, one who nurtures, one who brings things to their state of completeness, and one who bestows favours. It is not unrestrictedly except for Allaah-the Most High. If it is used for anyone else besides Him then it is restricted to something specific, such as the owner/master (Rabb) of such and such...(thing)... His Saying: (Lord of the Tremendous Throne) also comprises Tawheed, Lordship (Ruboobiyyah) and the greatness of the Throne... and the Throne is mentioned in particular because it is the greatest of the objects in the creation and everything else falls under it, in the way that which is lower falls under that which is higher..."