

The Danger of Siding with Oppressors

(Translated)

<https://www.al-waie.org/archives/article/20073>

Al Waie Magazine Issue No. 472

Thirty-Ninth Year, Jumada I 1447 AH corresponding to November 2025 CE

Allah (swt) said, ﴿وَلَا تَرْكَنُوا إِلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا فَتَمَسَّكُمُ النَّارُ وَمَا لَكُم مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ مِن أَوْلِيَاءَ ثُمَّ لَا تُنصَرُونَ﴾ “And do not incline toward those who oppress, lest you be touched by the Fire, and you would not have other than Allah any protectors; then you would not be helped.” [TMQ Surah Hud:113]. This verse should make one pause and awaken the senses of every intelligent person... Before pondering this noble verse and reflecting upon it, it is necessary to examine the meanings of incline, inclining and inclination linguistically.

If we consult Arabic dictionaries, we find that “rukun” means tendency and inaction. Al-Zamakhshari understood “rukun” here to mean «الميل اليسير» “a facilitating tendency.” Al-Qurtubi said, «الرُّكُونُ حَقِيقَتُهُ الْإِسْتِثْنَاءُ وَالْإِعْتِمَادُ، وَالسُّكُونُ إِلَى الشَّيْءِ وَالرَّضَى بِهِ» “The literal meaning of “rukun” is leaning and relying, and inaction and content with something.” Qatadah said, «معناه لا تَوَدُّوهم ولا تُطِيعوهم» “Its meaning is: Do not befriend them, nor obey them.” Ibn Jurayj said, «لا تَمِيلُوا إِلَيْهِمْ» “Do not tend towards them.” Abu al-'Aliyah said, «لا تَرْضَوْا أَعْمَالَهُمْ» “Do not approve of their actions.” All these interpretations are similar. Ibn Zayd said, «الرُّكُونُ هُنَا الْإِدْهَانُ» “Rukun here means flattery.”

Linguists have interpreted “inclination” as simply leaning towards and being at ease with something. Al-Qurtubi stated that the true meaning of inclination in the language is relying on, depending on, being at ease with, and being content with something.

Perhaps it is derived from the word “corner,” which is the support of every building. Allah (swt) said, ﴿أَوْ عَاوِي إِلَى رُكْنٍ شَدِيدٍ﴾ “Or take refuge in a strong support (rukun)” [TMQ Surah Hud:80]. The Noble Qur’an used the word “corner,” which is the absolute inclination, from which it is understood, min baab ul oola (for greater reason, or a fortiori), to prohibit supporting and assisting the people of oppression. The expression “inclination” carries a more profound meaning regarding the intent of this prohibition, as in the words of Allah (swt) when He (swt) said, ﴿إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلَامُ رِجْسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ﴾ “Indeed, intoxicants, gambling, idols, and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid them.” [TMQ Surah Al-Ma'idah: 90]. The expression “avoidance” is more emphatic than the expression “Do not drink intoxicants, nor engage in gambling.”

So, inclination includes, «الميل والسكون والاطمئنان والاعتماد» “tendency, inaction, reassurance, and dependence,” because being still towards something and being steadfast with it is included in the meaning of strength. The language encompasses gradual meanings of reliance, starting from tendency to inaction, then to reassurance, then to dependence, and some of these meanings lead to others. It is not hidden that oppression is not of one degree, but instead it has types and degrees. So, if we know that oppression has types and degrees, then it is appropriate that the prohibition against inclination towards it, in the verse, also be of types and degrees, and that the meaning of inclination encompasses all of that and includes it, with what this word has stored of meanings.

The opposite of inclination, as Imam al-Razi mentioned in his commentary, is «النفور» “aversion” to those who commit oppression. Therefore, the meanings of the verb “to incline” (tarakana) do not deviate from actions of the heart, and actions of the limbs. The heart-related actions include inclination, love, and approval, while the limb-related actions include inaction, participation in embellishing oppression, and flattering the oppressors through visits, companionship, sitting with them, speaking highly of them, and relying on them. The lowest level

of inclination towards the oppressor is failing to prevent him from oppressing others, while the highest level is embellishing this oppression for him and for others.

We must pause and reflect upon this noble verse:

1. Allah's saying, «وَلَا تَرْكَبُوا إِلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا» **“And do not incline toward those who have wronged.”** [TMQ Surah Hud:113] is a prohibition that has not been repeated in the Noble Qur'an, and this verse from Surah Hud is unique to it, which included the stories of seven peoples who are united by their description of oppression and tyranny, in more than one place in the Book of Allah (swt). The prohibition against inclining toward those who have wronged came at the end of Surah Hud, after reviewing all the scenarios of oppression and tyranny in the Surah, with the difference in the structure of power and the structure of despotism related to each people.

The prohibited inclination towards oppression includes being pleased with the actions of the oppressors, or embellishing and beautifying their ways in the eyes of others, and participating with them in any of their transgressions and prohibitions. Al-Hasan al-Basri said regarding this noble verse, «جعل الله الدين بين لأعين: «وَلَا تَطْغَوْا»، «وَلَا تَرْكَبُوا»» “Allah has placed Deen between two prohibitions, **“And do not be tyrants”** [TMQ Surah Taha: 81] and **“And do not incline towards oppression.”** [TMQ Surah Hud:113]. Thus, al-Hasan summarized the entirety of Deen in two points: the prohibition of transgression and the prohibition of inclining towards the oppressors. This indicates the importance of avoiding inclination towards the oppressors, because it weakens the Deen and diminishes its standing.

2- Tyranny and inclination towards the oppressors harms society and the state, not individuals. The danger of inclination to the oppressors is particularly severe when it is practiced collectively, through the general submission of the citizens to the oppressor. We note in the verse that the prohibition of oppression, in general, came in the plural form, and the prohibition of inclination to the oppressors came in the plural form, not the singular, which indicates the danger of inclination to the oppressors. Wherever tyranny exists in any society, there is a faction of people who incline towards the oppressors, in whom true righteousness cannot be achieved because of this inclination.

3- Inclination is often the easiest negative reaction to oppression, whether in feeling or in action, by not taking any action that indicates aversion to those who have oppressed. However, mere inaction, not support or tendency, only inaction towards those who have wronged, is prohibited. As for why the expression, «الذين ظلموا» “those who have oppressed” was used, not «الظالمين» “the oppressors,” this means that the prohibition in the verse, with which it begins, addresses the degradation of the desires to “those who have oppressed,” and the attachment to them, and their companionship and sitting with them, and visiting them, and flattering them, and being satisfied with their actions, and imitating them, and dressing in their attire, and gazing in fascination at their adornment, and mentioning them in a way that glorifies them.

Imam Al-Alusi says regarding this verse, «ذهب أكثر المفسرين، قالوا: وإذا كان حال الميل في الجملة إلى من وجَدَ «Most commentators have said: If the general tendency is towards those who have committed some oppression, leading to people being touched by fire, then what do you think of those who are completely tending towards those firmly rooted in oppression?!” The wording is general, encompassing every oppressor, whether believer or disbeliever. Al-Qurtubi considered it more likely that the verse refers to all oppressors in general. Abdullah Ibn Abbas (ra) said regarding this, «إنه ينطبق على «It applies generally without any distinction between Muslim and non-Muslim, because the lesson is in the generality of the wording, not the specificity of the reason of revelation.” Imam Al-Shawkani, may Allah have mercy on him, said, «الظاهر من الآية العموم، ولو فرض أن سبب النزول هم المشركون، لكن الاعتبار بعموم اللفظ لا «The apparent meaning of the verse is generality, and even if it were assumed that

the reason for its revelation was the mushrikoon, the consideration would be in the generality of the wording, not the specificity of the reason of revelation.”

4- The noble verse established two consequences of inclination to those who have oppressed: The first is worldly, which is the lack of nasr (support for victory) and help from Allah (swt). The second is the punishment of Hellfire in the Hereafter.

These two conclusions are derived from the verse, ﴿فَتَمَسَّكُمُ النَّارُ وَمَا لَكُم مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ مِن أَوْلِيَاءَ ثُمَّ لَا تُنصَرُونَ﴾ **“Then the Fire will touch you, and you will have no protectors besides Allah, nor will you be helped.”** [TMQ Surah Hud:113]. It is as if He (swt) is saying to us: If you are content with the path of the oppressors, follow in their footsteps, and support them in their falsehood, the Fire of Hell will touch you in the Hereafter, and Allah (swt) will not help you in this world. Instead, He will abandon you, empower your enemy against you, and forsake you. This is the state of the jamaah (community) of Muslims today. When you align yourselves with an oppressor, you are in fact opposing the way of Allah (swt). Therefore, Allah (swt) will forsake you, and no one will help you, for there is no protector or helper except Allah (swt).

The punishment for mere inclination towards those who have oppressed is, ﴿فَتَمَسَّكُمُ النَّارُ وَمَا لَكُم مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ مِن أَوْلِيَاءَ ثُمَّ لَا تُنصَرُونَ﴾ **“Then the Fire will touch you, and you will have no protectors besides Allah, nor will you be helped.”** Here I quote the words of Imam Al-Shawkani, «قوله، ﴿فَتَمَسَّكُمُ النَّارُ﴾ بسبب الركون إليهم، وفيه إشارة إلى أن الظلمة أهل النار أو كالنار، ومصاحبة النار توجب لا محالة مس النار» His saying, **“Then the Fire will touch you”** is due to inclination to them, and in it is an indication that the oppressors are the people of the Fire or are like the Fire, and associating with the Fire inevitably entails being touched by the Fire.”

There is another subtle point that Al-Mawardi alluded to when he said, «فَيَتَعَذَّى إِلَيْكُمْ ظَلْمُهُمْ كَمَا تَتَعَذَّى النَّارُ إِلَى إِحْرَاقِ مَا جَاوَرَهَا، وَيَكُونُ ذِكْرُ النَّارِ عَلَى هَذَا الْوَجْهِ اسْتِعَارَةً وَتَشْبِيهًا» “Their oppression will extend to you as fire extends to burn what is around it, and the mention of fire in this way is a metaphor and simile.” And in Allah’s saying, ﴿وَمَا لَكُم مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ مِن أَوْلِيَاءَ ثُمَّ لَا تُنصَرُونَ﴾ **“And you have no protectors besides Allah, nor will you be helped”** is evidence of the great sin of inclination to those who have oppressed, for whoever takes them as a support to which he resorts and on which he relies and in whose shade he rests, they will not be protectors or helpers for you to stand between you and the punishment of Allah (swt) after you have accepted them as protectors and helpers in this worldly life, and you have become deprived of the protection and help of Allah (swt) through them.

4- The scourge of this world is inclining towards oppressors, for inclining towards them only encourages them to persist in their oppression and spread it. Inclining towards oppressors, especially by ulema, is extremely dangerous and its evil is widespread. It begins with approaching them initially, and then many of these ulema soon come to consider their words permissible, accept their justifications for their actions, and are even deceived by their words. Then they become complacent in accepting their gifts and favors, and their tongues fall silent. Their approach transforms from an approach for the sake of Allah (swt) and seeking His pleasure into an approach driven by self-interest and inclination towards them and their worldly luxury and oppression of people.

There is no protection from that except piety towards Allah (swt), sincerity in doing work for His sake, feeling His awe and greatness, and standing before Him.

This Imam al-Zuhri, despite his high standing in knowledge, came to associate with the rulers. During this association, a sincere brother advised him of danger to his Deen. So, he wrote to him, admonishing and reminding him, عافانا الله وإياك أبا بكرٍ من الفتن، فقد أصبحت بحالٍ ينبغي لمن عرفك أن يدعوك، وعلمك من سنة نبيه، وليس كذلك أخذ الله الميثاق على لك الله وبرحمك، أصبحت شيخاً كبيراً وقد أثقلتك نعم الله بما فهمك الله من كتابه، قال الله سبحانه: ﴿لَتُبَيِّنَنَّ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَكْتُمُونَهُ﴾ آل عمران: 187 “May Allah (swt) protect us and you, Abu Bakr, from trials. You have reached a state where whoever knows you should pray for you and ask

Allah (swt) to have mercy on you. You have become an old man, and Allah's blessings have weighed heavily upon you because of what He has granted you of His Book and taught you of the Sunnah of His Prophet (saw). This is not how Allah (swt) took the covenant from the ulema. Allah (swt) said, 'You must make it clear to the people and not conceal it' [TMQ Surah Aal-i Imran:187]."

He then said, واعلم أن أيسر ما ارتكبت، وأخف ما احتملت: أنك أنست وحشة الظالم، وسهلت سبيل الغي بدنوك ممن لم يؤدِّ حقاً، ولم يترك باطلاً، حين أدناك اتخذوك قُطْباً، تدور عليك رحي باطلهم، وجسراً يعبرون عليك إلى بلائهم، وسلماً يصعدون فيك إلى ضلالهم، يدخلون الشك بك على العلماء، ويقتادون بك قلوب الجهلاء، فما أيسر ما عمروا لك في جنب ما خربوا عليك، وما أكثر ما أخذوا منك في جنب ما أفسدوا عليك من دينك، فما يؤمنك أن تكون ممن قال الله فيهم: ﴿فَخَلَفَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ أَضَاعُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَاتَّبَعُوا الشَّهْوَاتِ فَسُوفَ يَلْقَوْنَ غَيًّا ۝٥٩﴾ "Know that the least of what you have committed, and the lightest of what you have borne, is that you have comforted the oppressor and facilitated the path of error by your closeness to those who neither fulfilled the truth nor abandoned falsehood. When they drew you near, they made you a central figure, the millstone of their falsehood grinding around you, a bridge they crossed to reach their calamity, a ladder they climbed to ascend to their misguidance. They instilled doubt in the minds of ulema through you, and they led the hearts of the ignorant astray through you. How little they built for you, compared to what they destroyed! How much they took from you compared to what they corrupted of your Deen! What makes you certain that you are not among those of whom Allah (swt) said, **"Then there came after them a generation who neglected Salah and followed their desires; so they will meet the punishment of destruction."** [TMQ Surah Maryam:59]?"

He then said, فَإِنَّكَ تُعَامِلُ مَنْ لَا يَجْهَلُ، وَيَحْفَظُ عَلَيْكَ مَنْ لَا يَغْفُلُ، فداو دينك، فقد دخله سقمٌ، وهَيَّ زَادَكَ فَقَدْ حَضَرَ السَّفَرُ "You deal with one who is not ignorant, and He (swt) Who protects you is not negligent. So treat your Deen, for it has become sick, and prepare your provisions, for the long journey has arrived. Nothing is hidden from Allah (swt) on earth or in heaven. And Salaams."

It is narrated that a man came to Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal and said, يَا إِمَامَ أَنَا أَعْمَلُ خِيَاطًا عِنْدَ حَكَّامٍ "O Imam, I work as a tailor for oppressive rulers. Does the Almighty's saying apply to me: 'And do not incline toward those who do wrong, lest you be touched by the Fire'?"

Imam Ahmad said, «بل أنت من الذين ظلموا، أما الذي يبيعك الخيط فهو من الذين ركنوا إلى الذين ظلموا» "Instead, you are among those who have oppressed others, while the one who sells you the thread is among those who have inclined to the oppressors."

If we apply Imam Ahmad's standard to those who defend the oppressors, conceal their oppression, justify their actions, pity them, or support them in some of their oppression, which group do they belong to? Especially when we consider the rest of the verse, ﴿وَلَا تَرْكَنُوا إِلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا ۖ فَتَمَسَّكُمُ النَّارُ وَمَا لَكُم مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ مِن أَوْلِيَاءَ ثُمَّ لَا تُنصَرُونَ ۝١١٣﴾ **"And do not incline toward those who do wrong, lest you be touched by the Fire, and you would not have other than Allah any protectors; then you would not be helped."** So, O you who incline toward the oppressors, support them, and justify their crimes! Do you not know that you are partners with them in their crime?! And you draw closer to be among those who sold their Deen for the worldly gain of others!

Isn't it time for you to reconsider your stance towards the tyrants and oppressive criminals after all this bloodshed and destruction in Gaza and other Muslim countries, and the crimes and corruption that these oppressors are committing on earth?!