

UCB – CONCEIT

QUR'AN - (The Qur'an with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English by Ali Ünal)

(O human being!) Whatever good happens to you, it is from God; and whatever evil befalls you, it is from yourself. We have sent you (O Messenger) to humankind as a Messenger, and God suffices for a witness. (Surah an-Nisa, 79)¹

HADITH

Narrated Ibn `Abbas:

I brought water to `Uthman bin `Affan to perform the ablution while he was sitting on his seat. He performed the ablution in a perfect way and said, "I saw the Prophet (ﷺ) performing the ablution in this place and he performed it in a perfect way and said, "Whoever performs the ablution as I have done this time and then proceeds to the mosque and offers a two-rak`at prayer and then sits there (waiting for the compulsory congregational prayers), then all his past sins will be forgiven." The Prophet (ﷺ) further added, "Do not be conceited (thinking that your sins will be forgiven because of your prayer)."²

Narrated Haritha bin Wahb:

Al-Khuzai: The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Shall I inform you about the people of Paradise? They comprise every obscure unimportant humble person, and if he takes Allah's Oath that he will do that thing, Allah will fulfill his oath (by doing that). Shall I inform you about the people of the Fire? They comprise every cruel, violent, proud and conceited person."³

From the Risale-I Nur Collection by Beduizzam Said Nursi – a thematic tafseer

¹ http://mquran.org/index.php?option=com_quran&action=viewayat&surano=4&min=70&show=10

² <http://sunnah.com/bukhari/81/22>

³ <http://sunnah.com/bukhari/78/101>

AL-Mathnawi AL-Nuri, The Fourth Treatise, A Drop from the ocean of [the proofs] of Divine Unity, First chapter, Conclusion: About four diseases

Second disease: Self-admiration (due to good deeds) When despair causes us to look for support against Hell's punishment, we look at our good deeds and deviate into self-admiration. In reality, we have no right to own our good deeds. You have no right to claim ownership of your body, for you neither created it nor found it on the way, and it is neither the result of blind chance nor the product of lifeless causes. Rather, through its amazing design and the marvels of the art it exhibits, your body testifies that it is the handiwork of an All-Wise Maker Who continually looks after it. Our part in our body's operations is minute. Although humanity is the noblest cause and has the most comprehensive willpower among creation, the amount of free will we exercise is quite small. The area for freedom of action is, despite its apparent comprehensiveness, very narrow. If reason cannot control such a faculty as imagination, how can other faculties be considered within the realm of human free will? How can anyone take personal pride in them? Furthermore, many things work for or against us. Although we might be unaware of many of them, they evidently serve many deliberate purposes. This means that the One Who causes them to occur is an All-Hearing, All-Seeing One with infinite consciousness, and not the individual or other deaf and blind causes. Thus there is no reason to claim personal ownership of good deeds, for one's share in them is quite limited. We are rather susceptible to the faults and defects engendered by misusing our free will. Such misuse changes the quality of the virtues pouring into the world due to the incessant manifestations of Divine Perfections. Your body (dwelling place) is a free loan in which you are a guest. Good deeds are gifts [that the Almighty enables us to do]; sin and evil are the result of misused willpower. So say: He owns (all things in the universe), to Him is all praise, and there is no power and strength except with Him.⁴

The Words, Twenty-sixth Word, Addendum

THIRD STEP: As the verse, "*Whatever good happens to you is from God, but whatever evil befalls you is from yourself. (An-Nisa, 79)*" teaches, the nature of the evil-commanding soul demands that it always considers goodness to be from itself and becomes vain and conceited. Thus, in this Step, a person sees only faults, defects, impotence, and poverty in himself, and understands that all his good qualities and perfections are bounties bestowed on him by the All-Glorious Creator. He gives thanks instead of being conceited, and offers praise instead of boasting. According to the meaning of the verse, "*Truly he succeeds who purifies it. (Ash-Shams, 9)*" his purification at this stage is to know his perfection to lie in imperfection, his power in impotence, and his wealth in poverty.⁵

Fethullah Gulen – Broken Jug – a thematic tafseer

Question: You state in your talks that the services carried out so far needed many factors and apparent causes in order to become real; that nobody but the Creator of all causes could do these

⁴ <https://a43ba27b67228edb1e4215c627315cc07ccd3013.googleusercontent.com/host/OB4gGR-cTc4VobVdiYTIZNFRpOGs/RN/PDF/Sahdamar/BSN%20-%20Mesnevi%20Nuriye.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.erisale.com/index.jsp?locale=en#content.en.201.492>

things; and therefore, laying a claim on achievements is an unreasonable behavior. Could you elucidate on this?

Answer: First, it is necessary to point out that achievements happen by virtue of the graces and favors of God, the Causer of Causes. This is not a matter that only concerns us but is a general principle that holds true for all eras. For example, as it is told in books of Qur’anic exegesis, Prophet Noah, peace be upon him, told and taught truths to people for some more time after they were saved from the flood by God’s permission and grace. Within that time, he freed his people from animal life, saved them from the narrow cage of physicality, and guided them to the level of the heart and spirit. Thus, they tried to fulfill the due of their servanthood by adopting a God-oriented life. Therefore, Divine help is clearly seen in the life of struggle Prophet Noah led. With sole reference to causality, it is neither possible to find a logical explanation for their being saved from the flood, nor for his being influential over his people. The following words of Prophet Noah, as revealed in the Qur’an, also emphasize that these events were all realized thanks to Divine help: *“In God’s Name be its course and its mooring...”* (Hud 11:41).

Similarly, from a perspective of causality, we could not deem it possible that Prophet Moses, peace be upon him, would be saved from the Pharaoh’s tyranny, would lead the Children of Israel out of Egypt and keep them in the El Tih Plateau, and that they would enter Palestine after some time with Joshua ibn Nun, peace be upon him. From a perspective of causality, the possibility of realization for all of these is only one out of a million.

Divine protection and the failure of conspiracies

When the life of the Pride of Humanity is studied, Divine help and protection can clearly be observed. The polytheists were trying to destroy their hope by lying in wait for him and other believers at every corner. They wanted to fall upon them and inflict various torments—even hoping to kill some of them. However, the hopes of the blessed Prophet were never shaken. The poet Süleyman Nazif virtually voices this mood of the noble Prophet with the couplet, “Given that I have my spirit together with this faith; it will keep standing for three, four, and five hundred years...”

The polytheists of Mecca also devised various plots against the Prince of the Prophets, as it is stated in the Qur’an: *“And (recall, O Messenger,) how those who disbelieve schemed against you to take you captive, or kill you, or drive you away (from Mecca). Thus were they scheming, but God put His will into effect (and brought their scheme to nothing)”* (al-Anfal 8:30).

When the humble abode of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, was surrounded by assassins and there seemed to be no possible way out, the same Divine providence occurred as happened during the Battle of Uhud, when he was losing blood after his blessed cheek was wounded and his blessed tooth was broken. It would have been impossible to find a way out of any of these instances from a perspective of causality. However, God Almighty saved His beloved Messenger. When his home was under siege, God let him walk through the antagonists comfortably and then let him cover more than 400 km without anybody catching him. Even the skillful Suraqa ibn

Malik, who traced and caught up with the blessed Prophet, came to his knees and diverted the other chasers.⁶

In fact, with a careful look, it is possible to see similar scenes of Divine providence in the lives of all of those who struggled on the path of God. Eminent persons such as Tariq ibn Ziyad and Uqba ibn Nafi are examples to this. As it is known, Uqba ibn Nafi conquered the whole of North Africa; he rode his horse until the Atlantic Ocean and then said, "My God, had this dark sea not appeared before me, I would take your exalted name to the worlds beyond seas."⁷ When the exemplary lives of these wonderful persons are viewed, it is seen that the bestowals they were granted were realized would seem improbable when viewed through the lens of causality.

It is possible to add to these examples the rise of the Ottomans, the conquest of Istanbul, and the movement of volunteers that started with Bediüzzaman and still continues in our time. For example, considering the initial state, master Bediüzzaman would not have deemed such a flourishing possible. He was constantly kept under surveillance; virtually his every step was followed, and he was sent from one exile to another. But in spite of all of these negativities, the lights of the Qur'an and faith have spread everywhere. As a hero of hope, even in the most negative atmosphere, master Bediüzzaman gave the glad tidings that the Truth would resound clearly and he always inspired those around him with this hope. Thinking about the conjuncture of his time, all of these successes were not likely to have been realized under normal conditions; maybe the current developments are a realization of the glad tidings given then.

One out of a million probability

As for the volunteers of education in our time, they adopted the message of Jalaluddin Rumi, who said, "A candle does not lose anything from its own light by lighting another," and set forth to the four corners of the world in order to light up the entire world with their hands. By God's permission and grace, they were welcome in the lands they traveled to. Like the services carried out in earlier periods, those in our time also constitute a phenomenon that is only possible through the confluence of many different circumstances. For example, concerning the first opening to the former Soviet Republics, the necessary conditions were the disintegration of one of the superpowers of that period, the presence of qualified young teachers and tutors at that time, and their volunteering to go to places they would have had difficulty finding on a map, in spite of the difficulties that awaited them. Most of them were new graduates and many of them likely wanted to stay in their homelands. Homesickness is hard. However, although those young men and women were in the prime of their lives, they overcame their misgivings and fears, and they went without any panic or hesitation to these new lands, many of which were countries whose traditions, customs, and languages they did not understand.

Similarly, it should not be forgotten that the parents of those newly graduated devoted souls expected things from them. How did those volunteers of education, who had devoted their lives to making others live, soften their parents and convince them? How did these parents agree to be separated from their children?

⁶ *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Manaqibu'l-Ansar, 45; *Sahih Muslim*, Zuhd, 75.

⁷ Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamil fi't-Tarikh*, 3/451.

Also, some of these self-sacrificing people were engaged and they had to leave behind the person they were engaged to. Both those who went away and those who stayed behind felt longing and grief, but they didn't let these feelings serve as obstacles to the services they needed to carry out. By saying, "This is what our people and humanity expect from us," they made a moving sacrifice. Thinking about these altogether, it is almost impossible for these probabilities to be realized simultaneously, except through Divine grace.

In addition, the necessary causes for these good activities rendered for the sake of humanity were not limited to these. There was also the need for self-sacrificing benefactors who believed in the correctness and necessity of these educational services. Finding those benefactors, convincing them, and asking them to voluntarily finance these needs was a difficult task.

Here, I would like to clarify the subject by relating a memory. Years ago, two wealthy gentlemen and I visited some factory owners and asked them to support the Higher Institute of Islamic Studies to be built in Izmir. In order to tell them the importance of the issue and convince them easily, these businessmen took me with them, since I was a preacher. After telling about the significance of the issue in a brick factory we visited, the owner of the factory only gave fifty Liras to us, if I am not wrong (approximately five dollars at the time). It was nearly impossible to establish the Higher Institute of Islamic Studies with such small donations.

After consulting about the issue, we decided to invite wealthy people likely to accept our invitation to a place and to ask for their support. As far I as remember, the people who attended barely filled the four sides of a table. I made a speech. The people who attended promised donations of different amounts, such as a hundred thousand, fifty thousand, or forty thousand Liras, etc. But one of the people there broke the spirits of everyone by saying, "Everyone gives as much as they believe in an issue, so I am giving 2500 Liras."

Despite this, there came a time when tens of people in different parts of the country encouraged one another to give to such acts of charity; when people were not informed about a meeting held about donations, they expressed reproach by saying, "Why didn't you call me?"

After a similar gathering one day, I finished my speech and retired to a room. A veteran sergeant entered the room with some keys in his hand. In an emotional state he said, "During the meeting everybody did donate something, but I did not have anything to give. Therefore, I have brought the keys of my apartment to you." Naturally, it was not possible for me to accept such an offer; I thanked him and turned him down with kind words.

In the nineties, when we expanded to other, this spirit had already formed in our people. Therefore, it was not solely a matter of finding teachers and tutors. The worldwide education activities happened as a result of so many factors, such as parents' consent, the suitability of the places to go, and of the financial support by the magnanimous people of Anatolia to the people who would travel. Considering all this, success was actually a one out of a million probability. When success is achieved despite such long odds, nobody can attribute it to his own genius, perspicacity, sagacity, reason, judgment, or strategic power. One who does that will have committed a gross wrong, and irreverence.

It is God who grants these accomplishments!

Actually, ascribing every good deed and achievement to God is an issue given special care in Muslim belief and ethics. For example, adhering to this consideration, Umar ibn al-Khattab removed the army commander Khalid ibn al-Walid during a very critical battle at Yarmuk.⁸ At this war, which ended the Roman rule in Syria and maintained Muslim dominance, the enemy forces were some 7 or 8 times greater than Muslims. With God's permission, the Muslims were victorious in the end. The strategies applied by the commander, Khalid ibn al-Walid, who was a military genius, together with his courage and valor were appreciated by all.

In spite of such an ongoing battle, the Caliph Umar took the commander from duty and the famous Khalid was humbly standing before the caliph. He was a great commander who had crushed the Sassanid Empire and was then defeating the Romans. The blessed caliph Abu Bakr said, "no mother has given birth to a son like Khalid."⁹ As a Western commentator remarked, commanders like Hannibal can only beg for assistance from Khalid.

Although he was a person of such standing, he was an ordinary member of the army who humbly stood before the caliph to be taken from duty. When Khalid came before the caliph—may my soul be sacrificed for both—Umar ibn al-Khattab told him, "Khalid, you know that I love you very much. But people are ascribing the victories gained to your person. But I know that it is God Almighty who actually grants these to us. I am anxious for you to become a myth. This is why I have discharged you from command."¹⁰

In that situation, Khalid ibn al-Walid crowned his greatness with dizzying modesty and came under the command of Abu Ubayda ibn al-Jarrah who had been a soldier under his command; from then on, until the end of his life, he served as a brilliant soldier.

In short, it should never be forgotten that any issue cannot be realized without Divine power and help. Every good thing happens only by God's permission, help, and custody. Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate the activities realized so far as a result of God Almighty's custody and as a manifestation of His help and support. At the same time, these should trigger our feelings of praise and gratitude to Him, so that the blessings we have received so far will continue with our thankfulness. Otherwise, if we attribute the achievements made—may God forbid!—to ourselves, then God leaves us with our own limited power, strength, and will. This would be a breach of this blessed trust, which we have inherited from very sincere hands. Upholding the truths of the Qur'an in this universe as they deserve can only be possible by remaining faithful to the truth of Divine unity, believing that it is not possible for even a leaf to move without His help, and leading our lives by remaining true to this belief.¹¹

⁸ Tabari, *Tarikhul-Umam wa'l-Muluk*, 2/491.

⁹ Tabari, *Tarikhul-Umam wa'l-Muluk*, 2/315.

¹⁰ Tabari, *Tarikhul-Umam wa'l-Muluk*, 2/491.

¹¹ <http://fgulen.com/en/fethullah-gulens-works/thought/the-broken-jug/49766-everything-is-from-him>