

The General Banquet

This refers to the Divine banquet that every human being enjoys. Rather every created entity seeks advantage from its provisions. Every entity, both in its existence, as well as subsistence needs the All-Sufficient. Therefore, he always enjoys from the provisions of the All-Merciful.

The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said:

...إِنَّ مَنْ فِي الدُّنْيَا ضَيْفٌ، وَمَا فِي أَيْدِيهِمْ عَارِيَةٌ...

“...Surely the inhabitants of the earth are guests and whatever they have at their disposal are loans...¹”

Similarly, Imam ‘Alī (‘a) says in one of his sermons:

عِبَادَ اللَّهِ إِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَأْمَلُونَ - مِنْ هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا أَثَوِيَاءُ مُوَجَّلُونَ.

“O servants of Allāh, surely your beings and what you aspire from this world are guests (*athwiyā*)² for whom a time for departure has been specified...³”

Therefore the human beings, rather every dependent entity, is a guest of Allāh (SwT). Appreciating this, al-Bayḥaqī in his *Adab al-Diyāfah* says:

الضيافة في الدين خلق من أخلاق الله سبحانه وتعالى الذي استضاف مخلوقاته في عالم الوجود بالمعنى الواسع للكلمة. وهو يستضيف عباده كل يوم في

مملكته. ويدعوهم إلى طيب أرزاقه...

“Inviting a guest in religion is a trait among the traits of Allāh, the Immaculate and Exalted, Who entertains His creatures in the world of existence in the broad sense of the word. He caters for His servants every day in His Dominion, and invites them to His pleasant sustenance...⁴”

This kind of invitation is in reality a manifestation of Allāh’s All-comprehensive Mercy (*al-Rahmah al-Rahmāniyyah*), about which the Holy Qur’ān says:

وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ

“...but My mercy embraces all things...”⁵

1. Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 77, pg. 187.

2. Athwiy’ is the plural of thawī which in the Arabic is ‘a guest’ (Ibn Maytham al-Bahrānī, Ikhtiyāru Misbāh al-Salīkīn, pg. 287.

3. Nahj al-Balāghah, sermon 129.

4. Adab al-Siyāfah, pg. 13.

5. Holy Qur’ān, 7: 156.

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