

Three Categories of People In This Life

by Shaykh Al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah (رحمه الله)

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله والصلاة والسلام على رسول الله وعلى آهله وصحبه أجمعين

Shaykh Al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah (رحمه الله) said in his book, “**Introduction to the Fundamentals of Tafsīr**” regarding the Statement of Allāh (سبحانه و تعالى),

﴿ثُمَّ أَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتَابَ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا ۖ فَمِنْهُمْ ظَالِمٌ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مُقْتَصِدٌ وَمِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ يُأْذِنِ اللَّهُ ۗ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْكَبِيرُ﴾

“Then We caused to inherit the Book, those We have chosen of Our servants. Among them is he who wrongs himself, among them is he who is moderate, and among them is he who is foremost in good deeds by the permission of Allāh.”

[Sūrah Fāṭir 35: 32]

“It is known that,

-The one who ‘**wrongs himself**’ (ظَالِمٌ لِنَفْسِهِ) includes both the one who fails to perform his obligations, as well as the one who indulges in prohibitions.

-The ‘**moderate one**’ (مُقْتَصِدٌ) includes the one who performs his obligations and refrains from prohibitions.

-The ‘**foremost in good**’ (سَابِقٌ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ) is the one who hastens to come closer to Allāh by performing [voluntary] good deeds along with his obligatory good deeds.

The moderate are the companions of the right (أَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ).”

﴿ وَالسَّابِقُونَ السَّابِقُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ أُولَئِكَ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ ﴿١١﴾ ﴾

“And the foremost, will be foremost (in Paradise) – those are the ones brought near [to Allāh].” [Al-Wāqi‘ah 56: 10-11]

“Each [category] is to be mentioned (in the way it relates to) different acts of obedience [to Allāh]. It may be said that the ‘foremost in good’ is the one who performs the prayer at its earliest time; that the ‘moderate’ is the one who prays during the middle time of the prayer; and that the one who ‘wrongs himself’ is the one who delays praying ‘Aṣr until the sun becomes a pale yellow color.

It may also be said that the ‘foremost in good,’ the ‘moderate,’ and the one who ‘wrongs himself,’ are all mentioned toward the end of Sūrah Al-Baqarah. The generous [foremost in good] is mentioned as giving ṣadaqah, the oppressor [wrongdoer] is mentioned as dealing in ribā, and the just [moderate] is mentioned as buying and selling.

When it comes to money, people are either generous, just, or oppressive. The generous do both what is obligatory as well as what is voluntary. Those that are oppressive deal in ribā, and refuse to give zakāh and the moderate give the obligatory zakāh and refrain from ribā.”¹

¹ Muqaddimah fi Uṣūl Al-Tafsīr pages 41-44