

The Meaning of Allaah being the “Best of Plotters”

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

Question: Allaah informs us about Himself saying:

وَمَكَرُوا وَمَكَرَ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَاكِرِينَ

“And they plotted and Allaah too plotted. And Allaah is the best of plotters.”¹

Perhaps the minds of some people may limit the understanding of this ayah to just its apparent meaning. And maybe we are not in need of explaining it. But how is it that Allaah is the best of plotters?

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said: This question is easy by the Grace of Allaah. This is since we are able to understand that plotting is not always necessarily characterised with being evil nor is it always necessarily characterised with being good. So perhaps a disbeliever may plot against a Muslim however this Muslim is bright and clever and not heedless and stupid. So he is aware of the plots of his disbelieving opponent and thus deals with him in retaliation to his plot. This is such that the end result is that this Muslim through his good plotting compels the disbeliever’s evil plot to backfire on his own self. So can it be said that when this Muslim plotted against the disbeliever, he engaged in an illegal affair? No one says this.

It is easy to comprehend this fact from the statement of the Prophet (sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam): “**War is deception.**”² What can be said about deception is exactly the same that can be said about plotting. A Muslim deceiving his Muslim brother is forbidden. However, if a Muslim deceives a disbeliever who is an enemy to Allaah and an enemy to His Messenger, this is not forbidden. On the contrary, it is obligatory. The same goes for a Muslim plotting against a disbeliever who intends to plot against him, such that this Muslim reverses the plot of this disbeliever. This is a good form of plotting. This is a human being and that is a human being. But what do we say with respect to the Lord of all that exists, the All-Able, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise?

¹ [Soorah Aali ‘Imraan: 54]

² Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree (3030) and Saheeh Muslim (1740)

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He invalidates the plots of all the plotters. This is why Allaah says: “**And Allaah is the best of plotters.**” So when Allaah describes Himself with this description, our attention should be directed to the fact that plotting – even on the part of humans – is not always negative. This is since Allaah says: “**The best of plotters.**” So there is plotting that is good and plotting that is bad. So whoever plots for a good reason should not be condemned. And Allaah, Mighty and Majestic, is as He says, the “**best of plotters.**”

In brief, I say: Whatever suppositions may come to your mind, Allaah is contrary to that. So if a person imagines something that is not befitting to Allaah, then he should know right away that he is wrong. Hence this ayah contains praise for Allaah, so there is nothing in it that is impermissible to ascribe to Allaah.