



Synopsis of Friday Sermon

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IONA
REPENTANCE
REVITALIZATION OF FAITH
RENEWAL OF COVENANT

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Synopsis of the Friday Sermon

Purity - Part 2 Prayer, Charity, and Patience

Part one of the “Purity” sermon dealt with purification and glorification. In continuation of the profound hadith on purity; part two deals with three very important aspects of our faith. They are prayer (*salah*), charity (*sadaqah*) and patience (*sabr*). The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in his concise speech eloquently stated, “Prayer is light, charity is proof, and patience is illumination.”

Prayer

Prayer is light (*nur*). Just as the statement, “Purity is half of faith,” left the scholars dumbfounded, similarly the statement, “Prayer is light,” left the scholars wondering about the nature of light the Prophet (SAW) refers to. Some say it is spiritual light while others believe it to be physical light. However, it is agreed that there is a spiritual dimension to the statement. Perhaps the “light” here may refer to the inner spiritual light or *basirah*. In other words, the light of salah providing for the light within, the spirit or *ruh*.

Human beings are composed of two separate fully conscious entities joined together in a mysterious way. They are the spirit (*ruh*) and the body. After a mother conceives, the fetus goes through many different distinct stages and develops rapidly. According to an authentic hadith, the Prophet (SAW) informed us that the spirit is blown into the fetus in the womb of its mother after 120 days of its conception. This unification of body and spirit make up what the Qur’an describes as *al-Nafs* or the soul.

The body, we are informed, came from the crust of the earth, “*And of His signs is that He created you from dirt (earth) and then you became basbar (spiritless species).*” (*al-Rum, 30:20*). The source of the human spirit on the other hand is God’s own spirit, “*And (mention) when your Lord said to the angels, I am creating a basbar (spiritless species) from baked clay, so when I fashion him and blow into him from My spirit, fall then in prostration before him*” (*al-Hijr, 15:28,29*).

Unlike the body where its physical and chemical properties are known to man, the spirit remains a mystery. Man possesses very little knowledge about the spirit. The only certainty we know about the spirit is that it was originated by the command of Allah and of Allah’s fundamental nature, spirit (*ruh*), “*They ask you (O Prophet) about the spirit, say, The spirit is by the command of my Lord and you have been given very little knowledge*” (*al-Isra’, 17:85*).

The body receives its nourishment from earth, the very same source it came from. Similarly, the source of nourishment of the spirit comes from the divine Himself. Since the Qur’an, the speech of Allah (SWT), dominates a major part of salah, one may conclude that salah is the primary source of nourishment for the soul. “*And thus, have We, by Our Command, revealed a spirit to you (O Prophet) you knew neither the Book nor the faith, but We made it (the Qur’an) a light, guiding with it whomever We will of Our servants. And indeed, (O Prophet) you guide to the straight path*” (*al-Shura, 42:52*).

The *ruh*, which is in reality a divine spark, is ignited with salah. Hence, salah is light. Salah makes us feel like nothing else can. It is that spiritual light which illuminates our path to true happiness and salvation. “*Alif, Lam, Ra, (this is) a Scripture which We have sent down to you (O Prophet) so that, with their Lord’s permission, you may bring people from the depths of darkness into light, to the path of the Almighty, the Praiseworthy One*” (*Ibrahim, 14:1*).

This spiritual light is a guiding light on the Day of Judgment. *“On the day when you (O Prophet) will see the believing men and women; their light proceeds in front of and to the right of them” (al-Hadeed, 57:12).*

Salah in the life of a believer is very crucial. Among other things, it helps one identify evil and stay away from sins and transgression, *“Recite (O Prophet) what has been revealed to you of the Scripture and keep up the prayer for verily, the prayer prevents one from indecent (shameful) and wicked (detested) deeds” (al-Ankaboot, 29:45).* Recitation of the Qur’an and *azkar* among other acts of worship will help the soul sustain its spiritual existence avoiding it from decay and rot.

Prayer is indeed light. It glows on the faces of the true God-fearing, God-conscious, sincere slaves and servants of Allah (SWT), *“Their mark (of faith) is on their faces from the trace of prostration” (al-Fath, 48:29).*

Charity

The next gem of wisdom is, “Charity is proof.” What did the prophet intend when he (SAW) said charity is proof? Proof of what? One may ask. The scholars agreed that charity (*sadaqah*) is proof of one’s truthfulness (*sidq*). Charity is evidence sufficient to establish one’s true faith. It is proof that one is a true servant of Allah (SWT).

The Qur’an confirms the true nature of man vis-à-vis wealth and riches. *“Alluring unto man is the enjoyment of worldly desires through women, and children, and heaped-up treasures of gold and silver” (Aal Imran, 3:14).* People tend to adore wealth passionately. *“And you have an insatiable love of wealth” (al-Fajr, 89:20), “He is truly excessive in his love of wealth” (al-Adiyat, 100:8).*

Anyone who can part with his wealth and money solely for the pleasure of Allah (SWT) is considered among the truthful ones (*al-siddiqeen*) who rank next to the Prophets in the sight of Allah (SWT), *“Whoever obeys Allah and His messenger, they are with those upon whom Allah has bestowed favors from among the prophets and the truthful and the martyrs and the righteous, and what excellent companions they are!” (al-Nisa’, 4:69).*

Only genuine servants of Allah (SWT) have passion to help and assist the less fortunate, *“And they feed, for the love of Allah, the indigent, the orphan, and the captive.”* They say, *“We feed you, for the sake of Allah only. We seek neither recompense nor thanks from you” (al-Insan, 76:8-9).* This good deed, among other great deeds proves that such people have real conviction in their lord and that only Allah (SWT) can reward them. They understand that having complete trust in Allah (SWT), who is the source of all provision, is the only way to help them sustain a good and content life in this world while awaiting for a greater bounty in the hereafter.

Charity is not restricted to disbursing money or other commodities. Less fortunate ones give their share of charity by other means and that will be proof of their faithfulness and they will be considered among the truthful ones on the Day of Judgment. According to the Prophet (SAW), the glorification and praise of Allah (SWT) is a form of charity as is repeating, *“La ilaha illallah, there is no god but Allah”* or saying, *“Allah is Great.”* Enjoining what is right and forbidding evil is another form of charity, as is smiling at your brother. Charity is indeed a proof of one’s faith.

Allah (SWT) on the Day of Judgment will undoubtedly question us about the wealth, property and assets we possess in this world. The Prophet (SAW) in a hadith collected by al-Tirmidhi said, *“A person’s foot will not move on the Day of Resurrection until he is asked about his life and how he spent it, about his knowledge and how he acted upon it, about his wealth and how he earned it and spent it, and about his body and how he used it.”* Knowing that Allah (SWT) is pure and that He accepts nothing but purity, believers who are cognizant of the afterlife make sure that every penny they spend for the pleasure of Allah (SWT) is earned from a pure and clean source. They spend from Allah’s provision generously.

Believers also understand that wealth and material possession is only a test and trial.

“Your wealth and your children are only a trial (fitnah). And Allah has with Him a great reward” (al-Taghabun, 64:15). Regrettably, the heedless ones avoid giving lest their wealth is diminished, while others give strictly for showing off (*riya*). They will have a hard time proving their charity on the Day of Judgment.

According to the Prophet (SAW), among the first to be judged on the Day of Judgment is a man whom Allah (SWT) blessed with plenty of wealth and made affluent. Allah (SWT) will remind him of this blessing and inquire about it. The man will say, *“I spent it for Your sake and Your pleasure.”* Allah (SWT) replies, *“You are a liar, you spent it with the intention of being called generous, and that was said.”* He will be ordered to be dragged to hell on his face. What a dreadful day for such individuals.

Those who give the optional charity are aware of their obligatory charity, *zakah*. They give annually 2.5% of their accumulated wealth to deserving people or have Islamic institutions pay out the money on their behalf. This is Allah's right and only He rewards accordingly.

Patience

The Prophet (SAW) informed us about another gem of wisdom, patience. He said, "Patience is illumination." Illumination refers to the use of a light source to view other objects by the light reflected from those objects. It is said that illumination is the light of the mind. Patience gives off light to the mind. The statement, "Salah is light" can be interpreted as the spiritual radiant energy (Divine light - Qur'an) that is capable of exciting the soul to act righteously. Similarly, the statement, "Patience is illumination," may be understood as patience acting as the virtue that reflects light off the divine light stimulating the mind to act sensibly. The light the mind receives through patience enables the person in distress to think clearly, and with the help of salah, one is in total control of any difficult situation.

Praying regularly and punctually as well as being patient is very difficult. Only the true and humble servants of Allah (SWT) appreciate the blessing of salah and patience. Allah (SWT) gives us a remedy to combat our laziness and impatience. He (SWT) says, "*Seek help through patience and prayer - it is indeed difficult except for the humble ones, who know that they will meet their Lord and that it is to Him they will return*" (al-Baqarah, 2:45,46).

There are three types of patience: patience regarding obedience to Allah (SWT), (*sabr 'ala al-Ta'ah*), patience against committing sins (*sabr 'an al-Ma'siyah*), and patience in times of distress (*sabr 'ala al-Bala*).

The first type, patience in obeying Allah (SWT) includes praying under conditions that are not conducive, fasting for very long hours and deprivation of sleep to ensure one's dawn prayer is offered are some examples. The second type, patience against committing sins, means to restrain oneself from disobeying Allah (SWT) no matter how desirable or attractive the sin may be. One needs to have patience to be able to fight against the soul (*nafs*) that invites one to evil. "*Man's very soul incites him to evil*" (Yusuf, 12:53).

The third type of patience is patience in times of trials, (*sabr 'ala al-Bala*). Believers know that the life of this world is full of trials. They do not complain, rather they endure them patiently. Knowing that all trials in life come from Allah (SWT) and having full trust in Him, the true believer can overcome anxiety, anguish and mental torture. They are the ones whom Allah (SWT) will bestow grace and guide. "*We shall certainly test you with fear and hunger, and loss of property, lives, and crops. But give good news (O Prophet) to those who are patient, who say, when afflicted with a calamity, 'We belong to God and to Him we shall return.' It is they upon whom their Lord's blessings and grace are bestowed, and it is they who are on the right path!*" (al-Baqarah, 2:155-157).

It is not easy to overcome impatience. Patience helps control oneself and become the master of his own self. Exercising patience is a sign of real virtue and piety. We must keep in mind that Allah (SWT) will always support the patient ones. "*Have patience. Verily, Allah is with those who are patient*" (al-Anfal, 8:45).

END