



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 4 Selling Your Soul

The hadith on “Purity” is concluded with the statement, “everyone leaves in the morning selling himself. He either emancipates or destroys himself.” It is quite evident that people of all faiths and backgrounds whether consciously or unconsciously leave their homes every morning selling themselves. Some do for material gains while others for spiritual benefit.

Strictly speaking, Muslims also leave in the morning to make a living, study, worship, etc. In each instance everyone is either sincere, truthful, and honest, or deceitful, disingenuous and dishonest. Those belonging to the first category are in essence freeing their souls from annihilation, while those belonging to the second category are destroying themselves. Our actions lead us either to freedom from or destruction in Hell. This concept of emancipation/destruction of one’s soul is beautifully depicted in *surat al-lail*.

“Certainly your endeavors have divergent ends (different aims and purposes.) As for him who gives and keeps his duty to Allah and believes in a reward (from Allah), We will make smooth for him the path of ease (goodness). But he who is greedy and thinks himself self-sufficient, and belies the good reward, We will make smooth for him the path of hardship (evil)” (al-Lail, 92:4-10).

The Qur’an has on several occasions informed and warned us about satan being our sworn enemy in addition to his ways of deception. His old tricks of convincing people that the life herein is the only life have been skillfully repackaged to suit the level of intelligence of modern-day people. They claim, *“In fact, the life of this world is the only life. We die and live and we shall never be resurrected” (al-Mu’minoan, 23:37)*. Such people have no idea or knowledge of the true reality of our existence. In another claim, *“They say, ‘There is nothing beyond our life in this world. We die as we come to life, and nothing but time destroys us.’ They have no knowledge of this; they only follow guesswork” (al-Jathiyah, 45:24).*

Satan’s skillful mastery has led many people to consciously sell themselves and become subservient to him in exchange for provisional sensual gratification employing various means including the most popular, music, sex and drugs, wealth, power and lust. *“(satan) makes them promises and creates in them false desires, but satan’s promises are nothing but deception. They will have hell for their abode and will find no escape from it” (al-Nisa’, 4:120,121)*. Such are the people who sold themselves to this worldly life and became masters of their own corporeal desires.

Others, who may not have consciously sold out themselves to the devil, may be influenced by his genius philosophies and principles that are diametrically opposite to the Islamic ideology and worldview. As good as they may be at heart and intelligent in mind, they succumb to defeat. They invent false ideologies and dogmas such as communism, socialism, and secularism and hence fell victims to satan’s plan. The paths of satan are obvious. They all lead to utter destruction.

Conversely, the Qur’an declares, *“But there is (also) a kind of individual who would willingly sell his own self in order to please Allah, and Allah is most compassionate toward His servants” (al-Baqarah, 2:207)*. A crucial imperative is mentioned in the very next ayah to all who pay heed, *“O believers, enter into Islam (submission to Allah) wholeheartedly and do not follow in satan’s footsteps, for he is your sworn enemy.”*

Accepting Islam entirely implies that one has no choice but to become wholly subservient to Allah (SWT). Muslims who adopt an attitude of selectively choosing from the Qur’an and Islam what suits their desires, while willfully rejecting some parts, are

labeled as hypocrites in the Qur'an. They may appear to be pious and God-fearing, praying in congregation and breaking fast with other Muslims. They may even profess their faith in Allah (SWT) and the hereafter in public. Allah (SWT) informs us that such people are in fact disbelievers. *"And there are people who say, 'We do believe in Allah and the Last Day,' but they do not (really) believe. They seek to deceive Allah and the believers, but they only deceive themselves, though they do not realize it. In their hearts is a disease, and so Allah let their disease grow; and for them is a painful punishment for lying"* (al-Baqarah, 2:8-10).

The disease concealed in their hearts is disbelief and rejection of the truth. They have deprived themselves of spiritual perfection for the sake of petty worldly gains. In reality, they traded the next world with this world. *"They purchased misguidance in exchange for guidance, so their trade yields no profit, and they are not guided"* (al-Baqarah, 2:16). More profoundly, *"They purchased misguidance in exchange for guidance, and punishment in exchange for forgiveness. How shall they endure the fire!"* (al-Baqarah, 2:175).

There are, however, sincere believers who without any hesitation consciously sell themselves to Allah (SWT) and dedicate their lives for His cause pledging, *"Verily, my prayer and offerings (in acts of worship), my life and death are for the Lord of the Worlds who has no partners and for this I have been commanded and I am the first to surrender"* (al-'An'am, 6:162,163). The pledge is the outcome of perfect faith and sincerity. As they are aware that Allah (SWT) does not lose sight of them, they too do not lose sight of their Creator, Cherisher and Provider. Their hearts, thoughts, movements, and actions all move in His direction seeking His good pleasure. In other words, He alone is sought, and He is the goal.

Reflecting on the ayah, the noble companion Abu Musa al-Ash'ari used to say, "I honestly wish that every Muslim would keep reciting this ayah time and again, almost making it the constant formula of his or her life." Only genuine believers who are free from all types of *shirk*, hypocrisy and have a strong desire for the next world would make such a commitment, i.e. live and die for the sake of Allah (SWT).

Such a decision is in essence based on a bargain that was offered by Allah (SWT), *"O you who (profess to) believe! Shall I show you a bargain that will save you from painful torment? Have faith in Allah and His Messenger and struggle for His cause with your possessions and your persons—that is better for you, if only you knew"* (al-Saff, 61:10-11). Those whose hearts are attached to the next life and are anxious to return to their permanent home have willingly and without delay struck a deal with Allah (SWT), *"Surely, Allah purchased from the (true) believers their souls and possessions in exchange for Paradise"* (al-Tawbah, 9:111).

The sirah of the Prophet (SAW) is rich with examples of noble companions who sold themselves to Allah (SWT). Not only former slaves and oppressed companions like Bilal, Sumayyah, and Yasir (RAA) traded their souls in exchange for the priceless Paradise. Affluent and well to do companions such as Abu Bakr, Uthman Ibn 'Affan and Abdul Rahman Bin 'Awf among many others (RAA) also chose the hereafter over this temporary world. How can one not be touched and motivated by the teenage youth, born with a silver spoon in his mouth, Mus'ab Bin 'Umair, who abandoned the riches of this world in exchange for the eternal bliss of the hereafter.

They are indeed the ones who sold their souls for the sake of an ultimate truth, "there is no god but Allah" thus emancipating themselves from doom and destruction. It requires real and unwavering faith in Allah (SWT) and His messenger Muhammad (SAW) as well as the commitment to struggle for Allah's cause, i.e. solely make Him Supreme and establish His system of Justice making the Qur'an reign over all the constitutions of the world.

The last statement in the "Purity" hadith, *"everyone leaves his home in the morning selling his soul. He either emancipates or destroys it,"* in connection with the other gems of wisdom in the same hadith makes clear that one who has gone through the process of purification, physical as well as spiritual (both are equally important), understands the meaning of praise (*hamd*) and glorification (*tasbih*) having solid conviction in and comprehends Allah's attributes, appreciates salah and is very charitable, one who is patient and frequently resorts to the Qur'an for constant guidance is likely to sell him/herself to Allah (SWT), thus emancipating his/her soul from doom on the Day of Judgment.

While those who are heedless of those great gems of wisdom of the Prophet (SAW) and follow their own whims and vain desires are forcing their souls to ruin.

There is only one path to salvation. Every morning we have a choice, either to pursue the path of destruction or the path to salvation. Our souls are more precious than anything this world has to offer. Let us not sell eternal, permanent, and perpetual bliss for temporary and short-lived pleasures.

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