



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 Friday Sermon

I AM as you Think of ME

I Am as you think of Me is what Allah (SWT) said in a sacred hadith (Qudsi).

In one of the most profound sacred narrations (Hadith Qudsi), Allah (SWT) declares: *“I am as My servant thinks of Me, and I am with him when he remembers Me. By Allah, Allah is more pleased with the repentance of His servant than one of you who finds his lost camel in the wilderness. Whoever draws near to Me by a handspan, I will draw near to him by an arm’s length. And whoever draws near to Me by an arm’s length, I will draw near to him by a fathom’s length. And if he comes to Me walking, I will go to him running.”* (Muslim)

This hadith, narrated by Abu Huraira (RAA), encapsulates the boundless mercy, love, and closeness of Allah (SWT) to His servants. It offers profound lessons of hope, trust, and encouragement, urging believers to maintain a positive view of their Creator. The hadith emphasizes Allah's joy at the repentance of His servants and His readiness to accept those who seek closeness to Him through acts of remembrance, repentance, and devotion.

A Call to Think Well of Allah

The opening statement of the hadith, *“I am as My servant thinks of Me,”* highlights the importance of having good expectations of Allah (SWT). It emphasizes the central role of our perception of Allah (SWT) in shaping our relationship with Him. Allah (SWT) treats His servant in accordance with their expectations. If a believer views Allah as merciful, forgiving, and compassionate, they will experience these attributes in their interactions with Him. Conversely, negative assumptions, such as despairing of Allah’s mercy, may lead a person to distance themselves from His forgiveness and grace.

This statement teaches us to always think positively of Allah, regardless of our circumstances. In moments of ease or difficulty, we are reminded to trust in His mercy and to never lose hope even in the darkest times. Allah (SWT) says in the Qur’an: *“Do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.”* [al-Zumar, 39:53] This ayah reinforces the importance of maintaining a hopeful and trusting outlook, knowing that Allah’s mercy encompasses all.

The Closeness of Allah to His Servants

The hadith continues: *“I am with him when he remembers Me.”* This profound statement assures believers that Allah (SWT) is always near to those who engage in His remembrance (dhikr). This nearness is not a physical proximity, as Allah (SWT), the Exalted, is beyond space and place, but rather a spiritual closeness that encompasses Allah’s care, guidance, and support.

When a servant remembers Allah (SWT)—whether through glorification, praise, supplication, seeking forgiveness, or reflection—they attain a special connection with their Creator. *“Indeed, Allah is with those who are mindful of Him and those who are doers of good.”* [al-Nahl, 16:128]

When a servant remembers Allah (SWT), Allah bestows His mercy and blessings upon them. Allah (SWT) listens to His servants’ remembrance and supplications.

The Qur’an frequently highlights the tranquility and peace that come from remembering Allah. Allah (SWT) says, *“Those who have believed and whose hearts find comfort by the remembrance of Allah. Is it not with*

the remembrance of Allah that hearts find comfort?” [al-Ra’d, 13:28]

This comfort stems from the awareness that Allah is always with those who turn to Him. Tranquility descends upon gatherings of remembrance. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) further emphasized this in a hadith. He (SAW) said, “People will not sit in an assembly in which they remember Allah without angels surrounding them, mercy covering them, tranquility descending upon them, and Allah mentioning them among those who are with Him.” (Muslim) These blessings illustrate the immense spiritual rewards of engaging in dhikr, which strengthens the bond between the servant and their Lord.

A believer who remembers Allah (SWT) in all aspects of their life will find their efforts and life blessed. The remembrance of Allah (SWT) serves as an expiation for sins and a means of elevating one’s status.

Remembrance of Allah involves both the tongue and the heart and includes:

Glorifying Allah (Subhan Allah), praising Him (Alhamdulillah), declaring His oneness (La ilaha illa Allah), and magnifying Him (Allahu Akbar).

Reciting and reflecting upon the Qur’an, “*Indeed, it is We who sent down the Qur’an (Dhikr) and indeed, We will protect it (from corruption).*” [al-Hijr, 15:9] Similarly, Allah (SWT) said, “*And We have sent down to you (O Prophet) the Reminder (al-dhikr), so that you may explain to the people what was sent to them, so that they may reflect.*” [al-Nahl 16:44]

Another form of remembrance is supplication, as in: “*O Allah, help me to remember You, be grateful to You, and perfect my worship of You.*” Seeking forgiveness is another vital aspect, as exemplified by the supplication: “*I seek forgiveness from Allah (Astaghfirullah).*” Both remembrance and seeking forgiveness are essential acts of devotion.

Servants of Allah remember Him in all situations. Allah (SWT) says: “*So remember Me; I will remember you. Be grateful to Me and never be ungrateful.*” [al-Baqarah, 2:152]. Whether in times of ease or hardship, in public or in private, remembrance of Allah should always remain an integral part of a believer’s life.

Consequences of Neglecting Remembrance

Neglecting the remembrance of Allah (SWT) results in the loss of this special closeness. Allah (SWT) says, “*And whoever turns away from the remembrance of the Most Merciful – We appoint for him a devil, and he is to him a companion.*” [al-Zukhruf 43:36] This means that those who forget Allah’s remembrance become vulnerable to falling into the traps of satan.

The Prophet SAW) emphasized the importance of remembrance. He (SAW) said, “The example of the one who remembers his Lord and the one who does not is like the example of the living and the dead.” The believer who remembers Allah is spiritually alive, while the one who is heedless is in a state of spiritual death.

The remembrance of Allah (Dhikr) should be a constant aspect of a Muslim’s life, as it is the source of peace, tranquility, and blessings. It is the connection that binds the servant to his Lord and grants him divine closeness and mercy in both this world and the Hereafter.

We ask Allah (SWT) to make us among those who constantly remember Him in all circumstances and grant our hearts His closeness and care.

Allah’s Joy at the Repentance of His Servants

The hadith vividly illustrates Allah’s immense joy at the repentance of His servants with a striking comparison, “*By Allah, Allah is more pleased with the repentance of His servant than one of you who finds his lost camel in the wilderness.*” This imagery depicts a person in a desolate place, utterly dependent on their lost camel for survival. Their relief and joy upon finding it is overwhelming, yet Allah’s joy at a servant’s repentance surpasses even this.

This comparison highlights Allah’s boundless compassion and eagerness to forgive. No matter how far a person has strayed, Allah (swt) is always ready to accept their repentance and dispense His infinite Mercy. In a hadith, the Prophet (SAW) said: “*Allah has divided mercy into 100 parts. He kept 99 parts with Himself and sent down one part to the earth. From that one part, the creation is merciful to each other, such that a horse raises its hoof over its child for fear of trampling it.*” (Bukhari and Muslim) This demonstrates the infinite nature of Allah’s mercy, which far surpasses any human conception.

Drawing Closer to Allah

The latter part of the hadith beautifully illustrates Allah's eagerness to draw closer to those who make even the smallest effort to approach Him: "*Whoever draws near to Me by a handspan, I will draw near to him by an arm's length. And whoever draws near to Me by an arm's length, I will draw near to him by a fathom's length. And if he comes to Me walking, I will go to him running.*" These statements symbolize Allah's generosity and eagerness to welcome and embrace His servants.

Any small step taken by a servant toward Allah (SWT) is reciprocated by Allah in a far greater measure. Any act of devotion, no matter how small, is met with an overwhelming response from Allah (SWT). This serves as a powerful encouragement for believers to take proactive steps, knowing that their efforts will be magnified by Allah's grace.

The Qur'an repeatedly reassures believers of Allah's responsiveness: "*Call upon Me; I will respond to you.*" [Ghafir, 40:60] This divine promise reminds us that Allah's door is always open. He is never distant from those who seek Him sincerely.

Lessons Derived from the Hadith

This hadith provides several key lessons for believers:

Positive Expectations of Allah: Believers must always have a hopeful view of Allah, trusting in His mercy and compassion. Allah (SWT) treats His servants according to their perception of Him, and a positive outlook strengthens one's relationship with Him.

The Importance of Dhikr: Remembering Allah (dhikr) brings spiritual closeness, tranquility, and blessings. Acts of dhikr, such as glorification, praise, and supplication, are powerful means of maintaining this connection.

The Joy of Repentance: No sin is too great for Allah's forgiveness. Repentance not only erases sins but also brings immense joy to Allah, demonstrating His eagerness to accept those who turn to Him with sincere hearts.

Taking Steps Toward Allah: Even small efforts to draw closer to Allah (SWT) are met with immense grace and favor. Believers are encouraged to consistently strive in their devotion, knowing that Allah (SWT) multiplies their efforts manifold. Allah's eagerness to accept those who turn to Him illustrates His infinite love and compassion for His creation.

The Consequences of Neglecting Remembrance: Neglecting Allah's remembrance leads to spiritual deprivation and vulnerability to Satan's influence. The Prophet (SAW) warned, "*The example of the one who remembers his Lord and the one who does not is like the example of the living and the dead.*" (Bukhari)

Conclusion

This sacred hadith serves as a profound reminder of Allah's boundless mercy, love, and readiness to forgive. It encourages believers to maintain hope, seek closeness to Allah through remembrance and repentance, and trust in His infinite compassion. As Allah (SWT) says in the Qur'an, "*Say, 'O My servants who have transgressed against themselves, do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.'*" [al-Zumar, 39:53]

We ask Allah to make us among those who constantly remember Him, repent to Him sincerely, and draw closer to Him with humble hearts and righteous deeds. May He bless us with His mercy and grant us the ultimate success in this world and the Hereafter. Ameen.

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