

Muharram 1435 Lecture Summaries

Night 3 - Wednesday 06 November 2013

Title / Topic: Spiritual Jihad v Spiritual Suicide

Quranic References / Hadith

Main Ayat:

Qur'an 4:100

وَمَنْ يُهَاجِرْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يَجِدْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُرَافِقًا كَثِيرًا وَسَعَةً وَمَنْ
يَخْرُجْ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ مُهَاجِرًا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ يُدْرِكُهُ الْمَوْتُ فَقَدْ وَقَعَ أَجْرُهُ
عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١٠٠﴾

“Whoever migrates in the way of Allah will find many havens and plenitude in the earth. And whoever leaves his home migrating toward Allah and His Apostle, and is then overtaken by death, his reward shall certainly fall on Allah, and Allah is all-forgiving, all-merciful.” (4:100)

We can use the word MIGRATE instead of TRAVEL, as it is more important for the phrase HAJIR.

Question: HOW do I migrate towards God? God is non-physical, what does this mean?

Answer: This is a hint / to be taken indirectly. The ‘house’ in the verse is the ‘self’ - leaving it means we are leaving the familiar and the safe. It is a place of routine and comfort.

Allah (s) wants you to be a *muhajir* (emigrant) - impossible to a migrant if you are in a home. Similarly, we cannot be in a routine and expect to reach the infinite God - we need to be in a state of progress. Since Allah (s) is endless, the journey is also endless.

Yesterday

- Analogy of the Rabbit and the Elephant - need to look beyond the familiar for the secrets.
- Shahr Ramadhan - result is Eid ul Fitr: return to our nature (*fitrah*).
- Polishing the heart.

Perceiving Allah (swt)

Question: Why can I not perceive God as he is? Why do I need to polish the heart to perceive Him?

There are Two main reasons

1. Veils

- On their deathbeds, many pure souls will claim to hear or see something that nobody else can. E.g. Quran recitation etc.
- This is because veils have been lifted. If one has lived a good life this will entail good things. Those who are really special will see the Ahlul Bayt. This is supported by Hadith.
- These veils are of two types:
 - a. Hijab Dhulmani (veils of darkness)
 - b. Hijab nurani (veils of light)

This is the first reason we cannot see God directly.

2. Our Capacity to perceive Him

- In the same way we cannot see the sun directly. It has multiple negative effects on the eyes, because the eyes are deficient. In the same way we cannot perceive God because we are deficient. In the next life we will perceive Him more.
- So Allah cannot reveal himself to us directly.
- Example: In the story of Musa, he asks Allah to show himself. Allah tell him this is impossible and shows him a glimpse of the power of Allah - This causes the mountain to shatter!
- To perceive Allah we must purify our hearts. Just like a prism allows us to perceive light in a new way. Or like a rainbow. In the same way Allah is perceived through the heart.
- The most perfect hearts are those of Ahlul Bayt (as). Their hearts manifest the most perfect reflections of Allah. The attributes of Allah are reflected in the personalities of the Ahlul Bayt.

Hajj

Allah shows us signs to get closer to him. Yesterday we discussed Ramadhan, today we will look at Hajj.

- After Ramadhan, Allah HONOURS us by inviting us to His house. What an honour! But He says before coming you need to clean your own house here.
- Before Hajj he banishes us to Arafat. What to do at Arafat? Just to spend an afternoon. Why? To GET TO KNOW (Arafat comes from the root 'to know')
- So we spend an afternoon get to know ourselves and our lord.
- Then Allah invites us closer, to Muzdalifah. Then even closer to Mina. Mina comes from MUNA, meaning longing or desire. This signifies the beginning of Allah's AREA, but we are still asked to ponder more.
- Wherever there is closeness to God, there is test from Shaitan, as is manifested in Mina, and hence we are asked to stone the Shaitan.
- Eid of Adha, closer because of purification. Allah allows us now to come out of the state of Ihram, we have been through purification, we are allowed to return to normal life.

What Next?

- Now we have been through Ramadhan and Hajj, now what? The answer is given by I. Hussain in Karbala. Everything we learn in Ramadhan is displayed in Karbala, the practical applications: patience, interaction with others, courage etc etc.
- Next difficult Question: how do I interact with Karbala today, different culture, place, time, society. I Hussain answers: "May Allah witness, Hussain does not leave as a mischief maker, he leaves for the seeking of betterment in the UMMA of his grandfather."
- So we must ask ourselves: our motives for coming to Majalis? I Hussain says come for two reasons:
 - 1. Come for what I offer: reform, social justice, whatever I am offering.
 - 2. Mourning, in order to purify the heart.

Nafs-e-Ammara

An anecdote about the student of Ayatullah Haeri who was attending a class about Shaitan. Sees a dream seeing Shaitan working with different ropes to operate systems. Some of the ropes are very thin, some very thick. Shaitan explains these are the different tricks I use to tempt people and keep them on these leashes.

So the student asked, why are some big and some thin? He said the stronger souls need tougher measures, so I use my thick ropes. The weaker ones are easier, I use the thin ropes. He said do you have a rope for my teacher? He said yeah, I have a thick rope, but it doesn't work. So he said: show me my rope! Shaitan said, you don't need one, you're doing just fine on your own. That is Nafs – always with us, does shaitan's job for him...

- Hadith Imam Sadiq(as): Your most dangerous enemy is your Nafs, between your two sides.

- Nafs Ammara: Most dangerous Nafs – characterised by a hungry, animalistic nature, pushing people towards base desires: sleep, food, pleasures of the carnal self.
- Quran, Sura Yusuf (12:53): *most surely (man's) self [NAFS AMMARA] is wont to command (him to do) evil, except such as my Lord has had mercy on, surely my Lord is Forgiving, Merciful.* (Shakir)
- The NAFS AMMARA represents the deep carnal, beastly side of us. For some it becomes their foremost aspect. These people drown in it.
- Imam Ali(as) in Nahj al-Balagha tells us to take heed of the story of Shaitan. According to Nahj al-Balagha, shaitan worshipped God for 6000 years. Allah gave him one command: 'bow down'. Somewhere deep down in Shaitan, was a speck of pride. Despite all his years and rewards, there was something deep down. So he rebelled.
 - Shaitan had the opportunity to seek refuge in Allah and address his pride, but he chose not to.
- The NAFS AMMARA is the one that encourages all our base desires. To follow these desires, to let our NAFS lead us, is spiritual suicide. It can become very difficult to get through to such a person. They become closed. Allah says they have seals upon their hearts. They have been taken over by their NAFS.

Anecdote from Rumi

Rumi said once a man comes into the bazaar of the perfume sellers. As soon as he came in, the smell and fragrances hit him and he immediately fell down and began to shake, to have a fit. Many people rushed to him. Someone took off his shoes, someone wiped his head, someone opened his shirt. He just gets worse. Someone knows him and goes to call his brother. His brother says don't worry. He goes out, round the corner, returns after a minute and then put his sleeve under his brother's nose. The man came round. People asked for an explanation.

He said: My brother works with animals all day, all the time. He has become so acquainted with faeces, waste, dirt etc. that he has become immune to that and allergic to these nice perfumes etc. So I just had to get some animal waste and make him smell it.

Rumi says this is like someone immersed in NAFS AMMARA – he can see nothing else, he is too accustomed.

Our Journey through these Lectures

So on our journey towards Allah, we have now acquired some weapons.

- First weapon on our journey: Understand NAFS AMMARAH. To recognise if we are in this state and understand the importance of working out of it.
- Second Weapon: To leave NAFS AMMARA and to embrace NAFS LAWAMMA. This is something we must resolve to do if we recognise any tendencies of these within us.