

Muharram 1435 Lecture Summaries

Title/Topic: Spiritual Jihad vs Spiritual Suicide

Night 8 – Monday 11 November 2013

Sura an-Nisaa, Verse 100:

وَمَنْ يُهَاجِرْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يَجِدْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُرَافِقًا كَثِيرًا وَسَعَةً وَمَنْ
يَخْرُجْ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ مُهَاجِرًا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ يُدْرِكْهُ 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.

Review of Yesterday

- Discussion is around the above verse (4:100).
- Previously we have discussed the **Hadith of Inwaan al-Basri** (with Sixth Imam).
 - Disconnection between the method of obtaining “normal” knowledge and “true” knowledge - latter comes directly from Allah (s).
 - True nature of servitude is three things:
 - Not considering oneself the owner, as Allah is the true owner.
 - Not making independent plans, as Allah is the true planner.
 - Not being distracted, but making Allah (and doing good) the true focus.

Today

- In relation to **not making independent plans, a story by Rumi**.
 - A man is hard of hearing, almost deaf. He usually asks people to come near him and speak very loudly. He understands his neighbour is unwell and wants to visit. Given his sick neighbour is unwell, he may be weak and thus won't have the strength to raise his voice. So the deaf man plans out the conversation with his neighbour. He scripts his response, giving all the appropriate encouragement and saying 'Alhamdulillah' in the right places. When the conversation actually occurs, unbeknownst to the deaf man, he ends up completely demoralising his friend and wishing a quick death upon him!
 - Key message is that Allah (s) is the true planner. In the same way the deaf man is impaired, we are also impaired. We can't perceive the full reality, only Allah (s)

has this capability.

- Saying of Imam Ali (a): **Do not sacrifice yourself for the world.**
 - Key challenge is to be able to use the world and prosper in the hereafter.
 - **Example from the Qur'an is [verse source - is it 29:27?]** which discusses Ibrahim and Ishaq and Yaqub. They are referred to as both having reward in this life and the hereafter.
 - **Example from the Qur'an is also Sura al-Asr: *man is in loss*** ("al-khusr"). Khusr actually refers to extreme loss of a deprived person: the example being a poor person in a warm country who saves up pennies to buy a block of ice, from which to sell smaller blocks to make a profit. He obtains no customers and therefore at the end of the day the ice has melted, and he has lost his investment - he is in the state of *Khusr*.
- Previously mentioned that the **Nafs will fight back against change.**

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا
يُحْيِيكُمْ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّهُ اللَّهُ يَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَأَنَّهُ
إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ

O you who have believed, respond to Allah and to the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life.

- The above verse indicates that there is **more to our understanding of "life"**. Every person who reads the verse is alive (in the biological sense) - therefore **Allah (s) is calling us to that which is true life.**
 - The way to achieve this true life is to connect with the original source of true life, which is Allah (s).
 - There is no opposite to life (the opposite of death is in fact birth). Life is just a reality.
- In the Qur'an, Allah (s) talks about Jihad in two ways:
 - *fi sabil-lillah* ("in the cause of God") referring to physical struggle
 - *lil-lah* ("towards God") referring to a metaphysical struggle

- **The Nafs has two strategies to try to make its presence felt.** Nafs is particularly resistant to change due to habits developed in childhood. These are variously referred to as “**Negative Suffering**” or in our terminology: **Spiritual Suicide**.
 - **Conflict**
 - As a baby, we learn that if we cry, our carers will sort out for us the cause of discomfort - e.g. feeding, changing clothes, etc.
 - As an adult, rather than cry outwardly, we can convert this habit into an inward form of distress which is then reflected outward.
 - Anxiety, Stress, Negativity
 - **Future or Past Focus**
 - We never manage to enjoy or live in the present moment. We have two symptoms:
 - Future focus: always looking at the next deadline or activity, rushing about.
 - Past focus: living out our regrets, constantly worrying over decisions previously made.
 - **Solution to the above issues is to “live in the current moment”, in a slow, calm and measured way.** For example, turning off or not checking the mobile phone so often.
- Turning now to the Quranic verse which has been quoted at the start of the lectures, **the solution to the problem is actually found in the verse.**

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- You will note that the **first clause** includes the phrase *fi sabil-lillah* (“in the way of Allah”) but the **second clause** is *lillah* (“towards Allah”). Thus we can see that the first part refers to a physical journey but the second part refers to the metaphysical (spiritual) journey.
 - The verse talks about being overtaken by death. This is the death of Carnal soul, the bit that is about me me me.

- The Prophet gives the example of Imam Ali (as) as a man who has achieved this death on this world. He had attached his soul to Allah (swt) completely.
- Our hearts are full of garbage, when we empty them, God enters.
- This is why we constantly consider 'what if' scenarios. Plan and leave the result to God!
- For example, people in high pressure jobs tend to either relax by taking drugs, or extreme sports. Why? It gives them peace. In those situations everything else goes out of your mind.
- As the nafs hits back, it becomes very tempting to lash out, due to inner conflicts. As we get stronger, we mature: easier to walk away and easier to apologise.

A story in relation to controlling our nafs:

- At the time of an Abbasid caliph, who was known to bribe people to join his party, there was an Alim present who constantly resisted bribes. The caliph was desperate to win over this man but it was proving very difficult to buy him out. It even reached the point where the caliph offered him the position of Chief Justice and the chance to be the teacher of his children - still the Alim refused to be bought.
- One day an advisor of the Caliphs met with the Alim. After some discussion, he pleaded with the Alim simply to come to the palace for a dinner, after which he promised the Alim would be bothered no more. The Alim considered the prospect of being left alone and was very tempted. So he accepted the dinner invitation.
- The Caliph, when he found the Alim was coming for dinner, made sure a huge spread was put out, everything was organised to impress the Alim, poets were told to read poetry about him, the best food was served in the best possible way.
- When the Alim saw all this, he was very impressed - and he accepted the Caliph's proposals. He forgot his principles because he left his precautionary nature.
- Once in the position of Chief Justice, he was on a very high salary, of 20,000 Dinaar. Once he went to the treasurer after being paid and informed him that a single dinar out of the 20,000 had been defective and he wanted a replacement. The treasurer obliged, but queried his extreme fussiness, when those on lower salaries never asked for a single dinar replacement!
- The Alim explained to the treasurer: 'For this position, I have sold myself, so I will take my full measure.'

General Conclusion

Our Nafs, if let loose, can be very dangerous and have an impact on whole family and those around us.

