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Ramadan Lectures- Quran Interpretation 1421- Lesson(49-52): Extremism

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of Creations, and Peace and blessings be upon our prophet Muhammad, the faithful and the honest.

Oh, Allah, we know nothing but what You teach us. You are the All- Knower, the Wise. Oh Allah, teach us what is good for us, and benefit us from what You taught us, and increase our knowledge. Show us the righteous things as righteous and help us to do them, and show us the bad things as bad and help us to keep away from them.

O Allah our Lord, lead us out from the depths of darkness and illusion, unto the lights of erudition and knowledge, and from the muddy shallows of lusts unto the heavens of Your Vicinity.

Islam is Greatly Served by the Other Party (the Disbelievers):

Dear brothers, the topic of our lesson yesterday revolved around the following ayah:

(Whoever disbelieves in Taghut and believes in Allah, then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that will never break.)

[Al-Baqarah, 256]

Nothing can serve Islam more than the other party. When man disbelieves in Taghut (false deities and false leaders, etc)and sees the crimes, moral lapse, depravity, selfishness, tyranny and aggression of the disbelievers, he will naturally distinguish between the righteous believer and the ungrateful disbeliever, the benevolent believer and the malevolent disbeliever, the believer who sacrifices his life for the sake of serving people and disbeliever who makes people scarify themselves for his sake. All the good deeds of the believers will be crystal clear as the other party's misdeeds are apparent; this is how this party unintentionally serves Islam and makes people see that the other party set an infamous example

of selfishness, aggression, and superiority. They will notice that the wrongdoings of the disbelievers are turned into good ones, their arrogance turned into modesty, their malevolence into benevolence and their aggression into kindness. It was narrated in the Qudsi (Divine) Hadith:

((O, Dawood, remind My servants of My blessings, as souls are molded to like the benefactor and hate the hurtful.))

[Divine Hadith, narrated by Baihaqee, by Umair bin Wahab]

The Strong Will and Time are Prerequisites of Having deep Belief in Allah:

Having a great belief in Allah, in fact, needs time, place and will. The Muslim who follows customs that contradict Islam mistakenly thinks that having faith means attending Islamic lessons from time to time and listening to a Friday sermon and admiring it. Such faith does not lead a Muslim to al-Jannah (Paradise); Allah never grants al-Jannah to people who work for the Hereafter randomly and purposelessly. Al-Jannah demands intensive effort. For instance, if someone wants to get his PhD and have the abbreviation Dr. whenever his name is written, he devotes nearly thirty-three years for his studies. This person studies hard at well-known and costly universities, passes difficult exams and does the assignments which require good skills. However, the minute this person dies, he will leave the abbreviation Dr. behind; it will not accompany him to the grave.

If you want to be one of those who deserve to enter al-Jannah, you should dedicate a lot of time to work for it and have strong will to keep seeking it. Whoever wishes to enter al-Jannah but does not work for it seems to be making fun of Allah. Some Muslims wrongly believe that al-Jannah can be attained by praying two raka'at without performing ablution before, and giving a very small amount of money as Sadaqah. Other Muslims satisfy their desires in a way does not please Allah, and they have relationships that go against Islam, thinking that having faith is enough for them to enter al-Jannah. What faith is this? How dare they think like that while their habits, customs and behavior have nothing to do with Islam? To have a true faith requires hard working, strong will, righteous company, good Islamic teachers and contemplation over Allah's Signs.

The Work Which Takes Much of Your Time Cancels Your Mission in Life:

Dear brothers, if your job requires working the whole day and the whole night in order to earn one million liras daily, it is useless. Such a job cancels your main mission in life and the purpose of your existence (worshipping Allah). There are so many successful careers, but unfortunately they are time consuming. You meet someone who tells you that he goes to his work before his children wake up and he gets home at night to find them asleep. This person destroys his role and duties as a father, a husband and a man who is responsible for his family. Beware; the

grave is the container of everyone's deeds. Those who are always busy with their jobs are oblivious of their main mission in life. When they awaken, it will be too late; they will be already in the grave leaving all their fortune and money in the worldly life.

I have consoled people who live in very luxurious houses; each one costs 1, 000.000 liras. Where are the owners of these houses? Did they take anything with them to the grave? They died and left all their properties. Nothing will benefit them except their children who may make supplications for them if they are well-raised. After death, those who forgot about worshipping Allah and were always preoccupied with earning money whether legally or illegally will regret living their lives striving for the adornments of the worldly life and being forgetful of the Hereafter. Had they had the chance to get back to life, they would have said, "O my family, O my children, do not be entrapped by the enjoyments of the worldly life as I did. I accumulated my wealth legally and illegally, and I spent it through forbidden and permissible ways. Now, I am paying the price of my wrongdoings, while you are there enjoying the worldly life." The most regretful man is the one whose wealth led him to hellfire, while it led those who inherited him to al-Jannah as they spent it in ways that please Almighty Allah. Working for al-Jannah is a serious issue; it is not about attending a religious lesson in the Masjid and say, "Wow! What a wonderful Masjid it is!"

Being Secured is a Great Feeling for Believers:

As I mentioned earlier, our lesson yesterday was about:

(Whoever disbelieves in Taghut)

The topic of our lesson today revolves around the following ayah:

(and believes in Allah)

You should get yourself acquainted with Allah through His universe, His actions and His Signs. Also, you should know His Method, which can be obtained by questioning scholars, attending religious lessons, listening to a tape of recorded religious lectures, buying a reliable book...etc. Islamic knowledge needs a lot of efforts, so that one can reap the fruit of obtaining it represented by the security granted to them by Almighty Allah.

Allah the Almighty says:

((So) which of the two parties has more right to be in security? If you but know* It is those who believe (in the Oneness of Allah and worship none but Him Alone) and confuse not their belief with Zulm (wrong i.e. by worshipping others besides Allah), for them (only) there is security and they are the guided.)

[Al -An'am, 81-82]

Thus, security is granted for them only.

The Passage of Time does not Serve People:

Most of people are anxious of the passage of time, because they know very well that they are getting closer to a period when they lose their health, youth and prestige. In al-Jannah, however, believers are always elevated as they live in eternal happiness and progress.

Let me tell you something: the most crucial period in life is when you get old. This period is based on the way you spent your life when you were young. Did you spend it in committing sins and disobeying Allah? Or did you spend it in worshipping Allah and seeking His Pleasure? You should always remember that whoever does not spend his youth in working hard for al-Jannah will not have a glorious end. Shawwal is coming soon, so let us pledge to set up a program to seek Islamic knowledge, have Islamic behavior and manners and improve your performance of the acts of worship. Worshipping is a voluntary act based on a deep Islamic knowledge and leads to everlasting happiness. Thus, you need an intensive detailed program.

The university student who loves his studies and wants to have a prosperous future, sets up a plan and work hard to have his wish come true. He writes down the important notes highlighted by his professors at the university, wakes up early to revise his lectures before going to the university and studies for 8 hours at night. Unlike this hardworking student, a believer is indifferent to the Islamic knowledge, he sleeps whenever he is asleep, wakes up whenever he wants and meets his friends to have fun, laugh and gossip. Is this person a true believer? How could he be granted the victory of Allah? Allah grants His victory to the true believers.

The Prophets did the Best Deed Ever:

Let us make Ramadan the preparation step for our program which- as I suggest- we will start with insha Allah in Shawwal. Ask yourself about the non-Islamic customs that you follow and write them down one by one. You will recognize them by seeking the Islamic knowledge; you can attend a religious meeting and know many Islamic rulings on the manners of eating, sleeping, marriage, meeting others, visiting others...etc. If you are really interested in attaining the Islamic knowledge, you can have a notebook to write down whatever you find useful; a word of wisdom, an ayah that contains the solution of a problem, a Hadith...etc. The minute you start to pay great attention to the important sources of Islamic knowledge, you will be able to taste the sweetness of inviting people to Allah's Islamic Monotheism, which is the best mission ever. It is the mission of the Prophets, may Allah have peace upon them all. Almighty Allah says:

(And who is better in speech than he who [says: "My Lord is Allah (believes in His Oneness)," and then stands straight (acts upon His Order), and]

invites (men) to Allah's (Islamic Monotheism), and does righteous deeds, and says: "I am one of the Muslims.")

[Fussilat, 33]

Do not marginalize your religion at the expense of your business. Your religion is your top priority, so get yourself prepared to start with applying the program after celebrating Eid Ul-Fitr with the family and relatives and after relaxing for few days. You should read attentively at least 5 Pages of the Noble Quran every day and get yourself used to memorize some supplications to repeat them when you get out of your home, go to work and walk in the street. Supplication keeps you in touch with Allah; Almighty Allah says:

(And those who guard their Salat (prayers) well.)

[Al-Ma'arij, 34]

People Should Set up a Program that Makes them Closer to Allah:

I repeat again, you should set up a program to improve your performance of the acts of worship. For example, get yourself used to praying the five prayers on time, and it will be better if you pray in the Masjid. Another thing you can enlist in your program is reading ayat from the Noble Quran...etc. This program can be applied alongside the behavioral one. According to this program, try to avoid habits and behavior that contradict the Islamic teachings. Scholars said that there are thirty-three habits Muslims should avoid. For instance, the bad company; keep away from bad friends.

You should always act upon Allah's Order, otherwise Allah will forsake you. If you look up to Allah's orders, glorify them and obey them, you will be endeared by Allah and will be elevated in His Sight. On the other hand, when you ignore Allah's orders, Allah disciplines you by making people humiliate you and treat you in a disrespectful way. Almighty Allah says:

(But when Allah wills a people's punishment, there can be no turning back of it.)

[Ar-Ra'd, 11]

When Muslims despised Allah's orders, He despised them.

Whoever considers pleasing Allah the most important thing in his life, Allah endears him and makes him under His Eyes. The feeling that Allah loves you costs 1 million liras. Allah loves you when you are on the Straight Path, seeking His Pleasure and serving His servants. You can notice the difference between the person who is good and generous to people and the one who terrifies people, violates their honor and blackmails their money. Listen to the beautiful quote in praise of the Prophet, may Allah have peace and blessings upon him,

“You who came to life to give not to take, you who glorified existence and care for other humans, you who elevated reasoning and belittled animal instincts and whose outstanding noble traits made you at top of all people, but you lived a humble life among other people. You who made mercy his soul, justice his law, love his natural instinct, elevation his craft and solving people's problems an act of worship.”

If You Control Yourself, You will be Closer to Allah

Dear brothers, the following Qudsi Hdith expresses better what I would like to focus on:

((And if he draws near to Me an arm's length, I draw near to him a fathom's length. And if he comes to Me walking, I go to him at speed.))

[Narrated by Abu Hurayra in Sahih Bukhari (also, by Muslim and At-Tirmidhi)]

How can you draw yourself nearer to Allah? Simply when you have great intention to do so, therefore, you start lowering your gaze, controlling your tongue and giving Sadaqah. If you listen to people talking badly about others, do not comment on the words being said in order not to share them in gossiping, but if someone asks you for a piece of advice, you can advise him without hurting others or insulting them. Try to keep silent when someone is insulted by others before you. Whenever you control yourself, you feel that you get closer to Allah. Only then you can feel that praying is not a burden, on the contrary, you will love it and feel comfortable while performing it.

((And when they stand up for As-Salat (the prayer), they stand with laziness.))

[An-Nisa', 142]

Work on the program of improving your performance of the acts of worship and start with praying your prayers properly. When you keep in touch with your Lord, you will not feel that you are detached from him while praying. However, you may be distracted while praying if you pray in a noisy room. Thus, find yourself a calm place where you can pray without being disturbed. If you do not memorize some ayat, read Surah Al-Ikhlaas or hold the Quran in your hand and read from it while praying. This is acceptable in Islam according to the Maliki Islamic School of Thought. You can increase your prayers by praying night prayers, for instance. Also, you can dedicate a certain number of pages to read from the Noble Quran every day.

The behavioral and scientific parts of your program complete the one of improving your performance of the acts of worship. Again, lower your gaze, lower your voice and keep working on making your heart humble while praying. You can write down the bad things that you avoid doing daily. For instance, you may write, “Today, I

quit a bad habit, backbit none, slandered none, made fun of none and stopped joking indecently.” You can change your bad habits and improve your Islamic one as long as you have the strong will. Listen to the following Hadith, please:

((If Allah wants to favor someone, He grants him comprehension (understanding) of this religion.))

[Sahih Bukhari, from Hmid Ben Abdul Rahman]

Pretend to be generous, eventually generosity will become one of your noble characteristics, and pretend to be patient, and bit by bit patience will be one of your traits. If the Hereafter is all what you work for in this worldly life, and pleasing Allah is the main objective in your life, you will feel that you get closer to Almighty Allah. By Allah, dear brothers if you taste the sweetness of this closeness, the worldly life will be under your feet.

Whoever Knows Allah Truly, Forsakes the Worldly life:

Do you know why the Companions of the Prophet, may Allah have peace and blessings upon him, did not care about the worldly life? Because they reached what is more important than it; they acquainted with Almighty Allah. Let me clarify this point by making a comparison between those who deserted the worldly life for what is better and someone who is very hungry. This man may accept a cheap and spoiled meal, because it is the only thing he can find, but once he is presented an expensive and delicious meal, he will leave the cheap meal and eat the expensive one. People who are closely attached to the worldly life think that it is everything, because they do not know Allah. If they only taste the sweetness of getting closer to Almighty Allah, they will abandon it. The daily Islamic program of the believer throughout the whole year is just like the one applied in Ramadan. OF course this requires a lot of effort, hard working and concentration. If you want to attend a religious lesson in the Masjid, invite your friend to attend it with you. The main point is to keep doing good deeds even they are small, go on praying the five prayers regularly, stick to a certain Islamic manner and do not stop attending religious lessons for trivial excuses, so that Allah may bestow His Mercy on you.

Bear in mind that religion is a complete method, so if one part is missed, it is no more religion. It resembles a plane which consists of many parts, such as the engine, the seats, the crew members...etc; if one part of it is missed, the plane cannot fly. I once told people who live in a distant country that their understanding of religion resembled the naïve understanding of someone who mistakenly thinks that a broken car with two wheels can work just like the one which has all its components. We cannot call two wheels a car, nor can we call an engine a car. Similarly, we cannot call some Islamic teachings religion. We cannot adhere to some of the basics of religion and forget about the other ones. Some people abandon some Islamic deeds which may deprive them from meeting Allah. In fact this is not religion; because as I said religion is a complete method. When

someone says that religion is a complete method and that you either take it all or leave it all, this is extremism. I would rather say: do not leave it all but you should take it all.

O Allah, teach us what is good for us, benefit us from what You taught us, inspire us to do good and admit us to the ranks of Your obedient and righteous servants.

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