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## Ramadan Lectures 1430H- Al- Fawaid (Points of Benefit) by Ibn A-IQayyem- Lesson (31-31): Affliction2

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.

### **Disciplining, affliction and honoring:**

Dear brothers, we will tackle a new wise saying (Fai'dah) from the book of AlFawa'id by Ibn Al-Qayyim, may Allah have mercy on his soul. Today's Fai'dah (singular of Fawa'id) is related to affliction.



I would like to clarify a fact before going on with afflictions. Actually, the believer passes through three stages which sometimes overlap with each other or separated from each other. The first inevitable stage is disciplining in which the believer is cured and disciplined by Allah whenever he/she falls short in fulfilling his religious duties, transgresses Islamic limits or neglects what he is ordered to do. Allah says:

**(( And verily, We will make them taste of the near torment (i.e. the torment in the life of this world, i.e. disasters, calamities, etc.) prior to the supreme torment (in the Hereafter), in order that they may (repent and) return (i.e. accept Islam).))**

[As-Sajdah, 12]

The second stage the believer passes through is testing; when the believer is upright on Allah's path and is reconciled with Him, he/she should be tested. Imam Al-Shafi'i, may Allah have mercy on his soul, was once asked, "Should we ask Allah to test us, or to be firmly established (in our religion)?" He answered, "You will never be firmly established unless you are tested first." As for the third stage, it is the stage of honoring. Hence, as a believer, you go through disciplining, testing and honoring.

**Glorifying, fearing and loving Allah are gathered in the believer's heart:**



These three stages overlapped with each other, and they may be separated from each other. They can be overlapped when the believer passes through them on the same day; he might be disciplined in the morning, tested at noon and honored in the evening. Also, they can be separated when the believer passes through them in different phases of his life; he might be Divinely disciplined when he reaches a certain age of his life, tested when he reaches another and honored when he reaches other one. Therefore, keep in mind that you are between the

stages of disciplining, testing and honoring. It was reported in some Qudsi (sacred) relics:

**((The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said that Dawud, peace be upon him, said to his Lord, "O my Lord! Who is most beloved to You of Your servants, so that I love him for the sake of Your love?" He said, "O Dawud! The most beloved of My servants is the one whose heart and both the palms are pure. He neither wrongs anyone, he loves Me and My lovers and endear Me to My servants." Dawud said, "O my Lord! You know that I love You and love those who love You, but how shall I endear You to Your servants?" He said, "Remind them of my graces, boons and afflictions))**

[Mentioned in the relic]

This means that you should remind them of My graces, so that they glorify Me, remind them of My boons, so that they love Me and remind them of My afflictions, so that they fear Me. In other words, the heart of the believer should include the glorification of Allah through His universal Signs, love for Him through His generous graces and fear of Him through afflictions and adversities.

### **Life is but a movement:**



Dear brothers, regarding the topic of affliction, you should know that every society is defined according to the movement of life in it. Life is marked by the movement of people; there are powerful, weak, rich, poor, pious and corrupted people. All these types of people live together creating the movement of life. This movement is the effect of man's motivations, such as the motivation to have food and drink. If you look at the streets in the morning, you will see people heading to their jobs in order to make a living, which is a movement in life. There are other movements in life. For example, the movement to get married, the movement to self-esteem and so on. Hence, the movement in life is there, and from it some man-made laws, which do not accord with Shari'ah in some cases, are made. One of these laws is

that your security is maintained as long as you praise the powerful, and you are deprived of it when you criticize them. Another law is that the mistakes of someone are overlooked if he bribes those who are responsible for punishing people who make mistakes. Movement exists in all societies and from it some man-made laws are derived.

AlHasan Al-Basry was sitting with the governor of Basra when the latter received an order from the Khalifah Yazid. The letter he received scared him as it contained some orders which if he did, he would make Allah angry with him, and if he did not do, he would make the Khalifah angry with him, and he might even be deposed. The Governor was confused in the presence of the great Imam Al-Hasan Al-Basry, so he asked, 'What am I to do, O Imam?' The Imam answered saying words which each one of us should adopt as a rule of behavior, he said, 'Allah protects you from Ziad (his punishment), but who can protect you from Allah (Allah's punishment)?'. These concise words say it all.

As I've just said, there is a movement in life, and there are man-made laws which might contradict the Divine Method of the Almighty Allah, so whoever neglects such laws and submits to Allah's Laws and to the Divine Method may put his own interests on the line. However, he will be under the Divine care, through which Allah protects him from the harmful consequences of his choice, and so he will gain Allah's contentment and have his worldly goals achieved at the same time. Take the example of Imam Al-Hasan Al-Basry, who completed his message in the Islamic knowledge, but his statement made Al-Hajjaj outrageous. Al-Hajjaj said to his companions, "You cowards, I swear to make you drink his blood!!", and he ordered that Al-Hasan had to be killed. The executor prepared the leather mat, and Al-Hajjaj summoned for Al-Hasan Al-Basri to be killed. When he came, he automatically understood the situation. Then, he murmured, but no one understood what he said. Suddenly, Al-Hajjaj stood up and welcomed him, and he kept coming closer to him until he made him sit on his bed. After that, he asked him about the fatwa of a certain matter, and he honored, perfumed and accompanied him till they reached the door of the palace. The doorkeeper was extremely exclaimed, so he followed Imam Al-Hasan out and said, "O Aba Sa'id, you were summoned to be slaughtered. What did you ask your Lord?" Imam Al-Hasan replied, "I made Du'a saying, 'O my Refuge at times of hardship and my Companion at my loneliness, made his indignation upon me cold and peace as You turned fire and made it cold and peace upon Ibrahim'."

### **Whosoever favors obeying Allah will be under the Divine Care:**

Dear brothers, some people live in societies where some of the laws contradict Allah's Method. Bribing people is the simplest example, and it is a problem in some countries where you cannot have your document packages finished unless you bribe the employees. It is forbidden to bribe people or to accept a bribe from others, so this prevailing problem is really serious. In such countries, the believer can't go along with such laws which don't please Allah, and upon pleasing Allah,

he might lose or get destroyed. Nevertheless, Allah will keep him under His care, which is a Divine Law, and so he will exalt. Allah says:

**((And say (O Muhammad, peace be upon him): My Lord! Let my entry (to the city of Al-Madinah) be good, and likewise my exit (from the city of Makkah) be good.))**

[Al-Isra', 12]



Some of you may ask, "Is not it more concise if Allah said, 'And say (O Muhammad, peace be upon him): My Lord make me good (honest)'?" You have to pay attention to the precise meaning of this Ayah. Sometimes you may enter to a place while you are honest, but after a period of time, you backslide, and so will not come out of it as honest as you are when you enter to it. This is why Allah has taught us to say the following:

**(( And say (O Muhammad, peace be upon him): My Lord! Let my entry (to the city of Al-Madinah) be good, and likewise my exit (from the city of Makkah) be good. And grant me from You an authority to help me (or a firm sign or a proof).))**

[Al-Isra', 12]

The above mentioned facts (about pleasing Allah and displeasing people) are included in a Mawquf (refers to a narration attributed to a companion, whether a statement of that companion, an action or otherwise) and Marfu (refers to a narration attributed specifically to the Prophet [Muhammad, peace be upon him]) Hadith which Aishah, may Allah be pleased with her narrated. She said:

**((Whoever seeks the pleasure of Allah (swt) at the risk of displeasing the people, Allah (swt) will take care of him and protect him from them. But whoever seeks the pleasure of the people at the risk of displeasing Allah (swt), Allah (swt) will abandon him to the care of the people.))**

[At-Tirmizi in As-Sunan Kitab Az-Zuhd, by Aishah]

When you please a powerful person at the expense of displeasing Allah, you will gain Allah's wrath and Allah will make this person raged at you, but when you please Allah at the expense of displeasing this powerful person, you will gain Allah's Contentment and Allah will make this powerful person pleased with you, do you how this happens? It happens due to the Divine Wisdom and Care, according to which the believer is protected by Allah whenever he favors obeying Him over obeying man-made laws which contradict the Divine Method. As a result, the believer will manage to please His Lord and gain the worldly life as well.

### **The sweetness and the facts of faith:**

The Almighty Allah have made it clear to us that there is "the sweetness of faith" in religion, and the Prophet, peace be upon him, referred to it saying:

**((Whoever possesses the following three qualities will taste the sweetness of faith... ))**

[Agreed upon, by Anas Ibn Malik]



However, the sweetness of faith comes at a high price. You should know that there is a difference between the facts of faith and the sweetness of faith. Let me make an analogy between the facts of faith and the blueprint of a mansion. The mansion is drawn as a huge place that has a big balcony, huge reception hall, master bedroom and stunning views, but after all it is on paper only and so are the facts of faith (they are theoretical), whereas the sweetness of faith is like owning this mansion and living in it. Having the facts of faith is like owning the blueprint of

a mansion, but testing the sweetness of faith is like owning the mansion itself. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said:

**((Whoever possesses the following three qualities will taste the sweetness of faith: 1. The one to whom Allah and His Apostle become dearer than anything else.))**

[Agreed upon, by Anas Ibn Malik]

A believer pays a down payment in order to taste the sweetness of faith when he prefers acting upon Allah's Order and following the Sunnah of His messenger to anything else including his false interests in this worldly life:

**((The sweetness of Eemaan has been tasted by he, whomever is pleased with Allaah as a Lord, Islaam as a religion and Muhammad as a Messenger))**

[Muslim, by Abdul Muttalib]

**((Whoever possesses the following three qualities will taste the sweetness of faith. The one to whom Allah and His Apostle become dearer than anything else. 2. Who loves a person and he loves him only for Allah's sake.))**

[Agreed upon, by Anas Ibn Malik]

### **Loyalty and renouncement:**

The believer should favor Allah's Quran (Allah's Orders and Prohibitions) and the Prophetic Sunnah (the orders and the prohibitions which are mentioned in it) over whatever contradicts them in his life. In other words, when the believer's interests contradict the Shari'ah texts, he should choose obeying Allah and neglect his delusional interests. Only then the believer will pay the price for the sweetness of faith and will taste it.

The second quality is:

**((Who loves a person and he loves him only for Allah's sake.))**

[Agreed upon, by Anas Ibn Malik]

We call this quality according to Aqeedah "Al Wala'a Wal Bara'a" (Loyalty and renouncement), which means that the person should be loyal to other believers even though they might be weak and poor, and he should renounce the other party (the disbelievers) even though they might be powerful, strong and rich:



**((Who loves a person and he loves him only for Allah's sake.))**

What marks the believer in the worldly life (the abode of trials) is that he gives other people, deprives them, keeps in touch with them, severe ties with them, is pleased with them and gets angry with them only for the sake of Allah (in Allah's Cause).

The third quality is:

**(( Who hates to revert to disbelief (Atheism) after Allah has brought (saved) him out from it, as he hates to be thrown in fire))**

[Agreed upon, by Anas Ibn Malik]

Let me mention the entire Hadith again:

**((Whoever possesses the following three qualities will taste the sweetness of faith: 1. The one to whom Allah and His Apostle become dearer than anything else. 2. Who loves a person and he loves him only for Allah's sake. 3. Who hates to revert to disbelief (Atheism) after Allah has brought (saved) him out from it, as he hates to be thrown in fire))**

[Agreed upon, by Anas Ibn Malik]

**The Worldly life is the abode of trials not the abode of reckoning:**

Dear brothers, we are still tackling the Fa'idah that is about affliction:



**((Verily! We have made that which is on earth as an adornment for it, in order that We may test them (mankind) as to which of them are best in deeds. [i.e.those who do good deeds in the most perfect manner, that means to do them (deeds) totally for Allah's sake and in accordance to the legal ways of the Prophet].))**

[Al-Kahf, 7]



There are a lot of beautiful adornments out there. The Almighty Allah says:

**(( until when the earth is clad with its adornments and is beautified, and its people think that they have all the powers of disposal over it, Our Command reaches it by night or by day and We make it like a clean-mown harvest, as if it had not flourished yesterday!))**

[Yunus, 24]

In another Ayah Allah says:

**(( And We tried them with good (blessings) and evil (calamities) in order that they might turn (to Allah's Obedience). ))**

[Al-A'raf, 168]

If Allah bestows upon you good, you are tested through it, and if Allah afflicts you with calamity, Allah forbid, you are also tested through it. Even guidance is a test:

**(( Then whoever follows My Guidance shall neither go astray, nor fall into distress and misery\* "But whosoever turns away from My Reminder (i.e. neither believes in this Qur'an nor acts on its orders, etc.) verily, for him is a life of hardship, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection."))**

[Ta-Ha, 123-124]

"Affliction" is one of the most crucial topics.

The way you deal with Allah, should be based on believing that you live in the abode of trial (worldly life), not in the abode of reckoning (the Hereafter) The nature of the worldly life looks like the one of the academic year; the latter is spent in studying, paying the coveted efforts, endeavoring, keeping up with duties and memorizing in order to pass the exam, and then to be honored (people are honored in the Hereafter after they passed successfully all the tests (calamities and trials) they are afflicted with in the worldly life).

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