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Islamic Education- Madarij Assalikin- Lesson (021-100): Neediness

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.

The state of neediness:

Dear brothers, this is the 21st lesson of Madarij As-Salikin (the Stations of the Seekers in the Ranks of 'You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help (for each and everything)'). Today we are tackling the station of neediness.

Forward:

Dear brothers, whoever knows himself well, knows his Lord. The first attribute of man is that he is in need of his Lord, so once he dispenses with his Lord, he will suffer the adverse consequences of his bad deeds. The real worship is being in bad need to Almighty Allah. Actually, man is poor, and the truth about him as a creature for whom Almighty Allah has subjected the whole universe is that he needs Allah in everything. Thus, when he turns away from this truth, becomes oblivious about it and thinks mistakenly that it is something else, he is considered ignorant.

The difference between knowledge and ignorance:

Dear brothers, the simplest definition of ignorance is that it is whatever contradicts reality. For instance, when you refer to a cup of water and say it is a cup of milk, then this is ignorance. Again; ignorance is the opposite of reality. Thus, you should realize that there is a truth about you which you have to accept whether you like or not. You can never deny this crystal-clear truth about you, nor can you make a truth of your own imagination. Otherwise, you will be ignorant.

Let us move to the definition of knowledge, do you know what it is? It is realizing things as they are, provided that such recognition is supported by an evidence. For instance, if a doctor wrongly thinks that the high blood pressure and the hyperthermia of a patient are indications of a certain disease, but they are indications of a different disease, his diagnosis is wrong, and he lacks knowledge.

In previous lessons I defined knowledge as the stable and absolutely correct relation between two definite things. This relation is confirmed by the reality and supported by proofs. If not, it becomes invalid and mere ignorance. The relation between two things means law; when we say all metals expand by heat, and we prove this with a proof, then it turns to be truth. If this scientific fact cannot be proved for a certain reason, then reality can confirm it, but if it is not proved by reality, it remains false information. Whatever is not proved by reality, it turns into tradition. Do you what tradition is? It is the truth which lacks evidence. Now, what is ignorance? It is whatever contradicts reality. What is the crystal-clear fact? It is whatever does not accept doubts, illusions or assumptions. We should believe that knowledge is realizing things as they are, it is to understand an Ayah as it is intended by Almighty Allah, to understand a ruling as it is referred to in the Prophetic Sunnah and to know the truth about the universe, man, the worldly life, after death, money and its rule...etc. If you realize everything as it is, then you are knowledgeable. However, if you want to convince people of the facts you know, you should give them evidences. When you do that, you are considered a knowledgeable person.

How nice it would be if our minds are full of facts. It is a serious problem to meet someone whose mind is full of illusions and superstitions. This is ignorance; you may think ignorance is the lack of knowledge, but it is not; it is having incorrect knowledge. The ignorant is whoever knows things that have no relation with reality. For example, there is no relation between spilling water which contains salt on the road of someone to make him love his wife. There is no relation between the spilling of the water and making the husband love his wife.

One of the deceased Damascus scholars, may Allah have mercy upon him, was gifted and blessed by Almighty Allah. One of his students came to him and asked him repeatedly to push him to Makkah, so that he can perform Hajj (the student thought mistakenly that since his teacher is blessed by Almighty Allah he could send him to Makkah by pushing him.) The Shiek knew that the student is ignorant, so he asked him to come the next day to At-Tekkiyah Al-Sulaimaniyah (A huge building in Damascus where the Tekkiye Masjid is) and told him that he had to

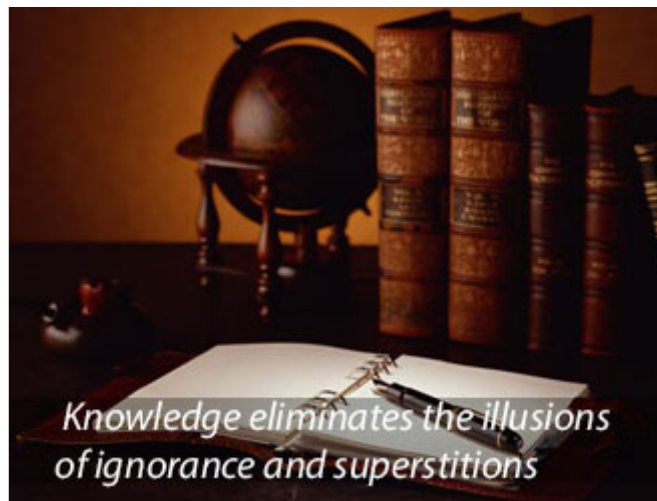
swear to keep whatever happened a secret. When the two got there, the Sheikh ordered the young man to stand on one side of the fountain in the courtyard of that Masjid, and he pushed him into water. You should throw away all incorrect information from your mind. Ignorance means incorrect information. People think that since they belong to the Ummah of Prophet Muhammad, may Allah have peace and blessings upon him, they are blessed and be granted Allah's Mercy, so they can do whatever they want! How ignorant those people are!

Sahl bin Sa'd narrated:

I heard the Prophet saying, "I am your predecessor at the Lake-Fount (Kauthar), and whoever will come to it, will drink from it, and whoever will drink from it, will never become thirsty after that. There will come to me some people whom I know and they know me, and then a barrier will be set up between me and them." Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri added that the Prophet further said: "I will say those people are from me. It will be said, 'You do not know what changes and new things they did after you.' Then I will say, 'Far removed (from mercy), far removed (from mercy), those who changed (the religion) after me! "

(Reported by At-Tirmidhi, who considers it a sound Hadith)

If you stick to the belief that the Prophet, may Allah have peace and blessing upon him, would intercede for you in spite of the many sins you commit throughout your life, you are ignorant.



I hope that this lesson makes you know that knowledge is realizing things as they are and supporting your realization by an evidence, while ignorance is realizing things incorrectly. Let me give you a simple example; it is ignorance when someone tells you that whenever the red light of your car flashes, it is just to entertain you, whereas the truth is that the function of it is to warn you that there is something wrong with your car and it could be dangerous. If I tell you that this red light is a decoration in your car, and that it is just for amusement, then this is

definitely ignorance. If you can keep all wrong beliefs, imaginations, ideas, information and whatever has to do with ignorance from your mind, you are a hero.

If you want to be happy in the worldly life, seek knowledge, if you want to be happy in the Hereafter, seek knowledge and if you want to be happy in both of them seek knowledge.

I intended by this introduction to make you know that there is a truth about you which you should realize as it is, whether you like it or not. It is just like when you live in a house; it is a fact that you live in a house where all your properties are. This fact does not change if the house you live in is big or small, dark or enlightened or yours or not.

The truth about man:

You should realize that there is a truth about you which you cannot deny whether you like it or not; you are Allah's servant, so you are in need of Him in everything. Also whatever you have is not yours; it is in the Hand of Allah:

"O Allah! Possessor of the kingdom, You give the kingdom to whom You will, and You take the kingdom from whom You will, and You endue with honour whom You will, and You humiliate whom You will. In Your Hand is the good. Verily, You are Able to do all things."

(Aal-'Imran: 26)

Almighty Allah owns your brain, so no matter how important your Ph.D; even if it is in physics and from the most famous university in America. If Allah changes something in your brain, you may become insane. You own nothing; neither your mind, your heart, lungs, nerves nor muscles:

"O Allah! Possessor of the kingdom,"

Whatever you have is Allah's; if you believe in this truth you will find yourself driven to Allah because He owns everything. In other word, whose Hand is working inside the nerves? It is Allah's. If a drop of blood clots in some arteries in the brain it may cause paralysis, loss of memory or madness. Everything is controlled by Allah, so the subject of our lesson is the obvious truth about man. Do you know what it is? It is being in need of Allah, and that Allah is capable of controlling everything

While an airplane was flying forty three thousand feet over Europe, it burnt in the air, cracked and fell down. All its passengers died except one. Can you believe that there was a survival of the plane which burst at forty three thousand feet over Europe? The seat of that survival was exactly where the airplane cracked. He fell on five meters of snow covering branches of cypress tree. Those branches with the snow covering them were like pillows which absorbed the collision, so the survival fell down standing:

"O Allah! Possessor of the kingdom,"

I knew a man who was away from religion, and he committed many sins in his life. When he was in the peak of his life and in the peak of his energy and power he died. A very trivial thing caused him death; he wanted to adjust the place of an electronic device on the wall, so he had to put it a little higher than where it was. He was compelled to use a chair to do that, but when he stood on the chair, the chair cracked and the man fell. He went to the hospital, stayed there for fifteen days and died. Allah saved a man who fell down from an airplane, and in a trivial accident He took the soul of someone.

You should know that you are in need to Allah. For trivial reasons, Allah may either give you everything or take from you everything. A man was driving his car, but suddenly oil started to spill because a screw was about to fall. He stopped his car and wanted to check the defect. It was afternoon, and the sun rays were very strong so upon checking his car, he got fever and died.

"O Allah! Possessor of the kingdom,"

This is the first truth which I want to convey to you from the very beginning of our lesson today; you are always in need of Allah. The question is, why does Allah wants us to be poor and in need of Him? The adjective poor here has a different meaning from the one mentioned in the following Ayah:

"As-Sadaqat (here it means Zakat) are only for the Fuqara' (poor), and Al-Masakin (the poor) and those employed to collect (the funds); and for to attract the hearts of those who have been inclined (towards Islam); and to free the captives; and for those in debt; and for Allah's Cause (i.e. for Mujahidun - those fighting in the holy wars), and for the wayfarer (a traveller who is cut off from everything); a duty imposed by Allah. And Allah is All-Knower, All-Wise.)"

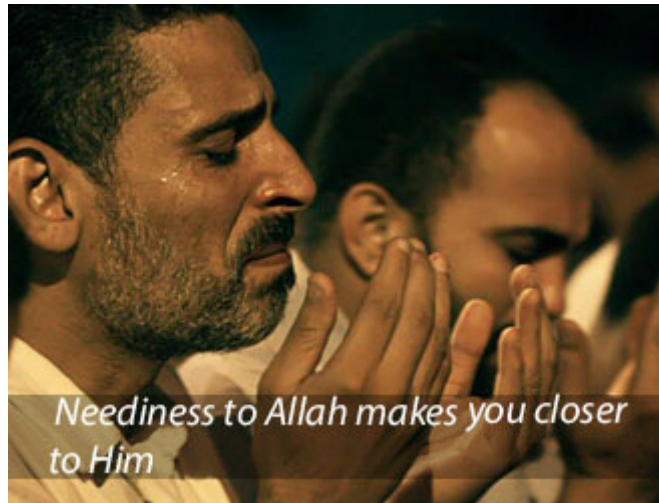
(At-Taubah: 60)

What is mentioned in this Ayah has nothing to do with the subject of our lesson, but when Allah says:

"O mankind! it is you who stand in need of Allah, but Allah is Rich (Free of all wants and needs), Worthy of all praise."

(Fatir: 15)

All people, whether they are healthy, ill, powerful, weak, rich, poor, old, young, smart, stupid, good looking or ugly are in need of Allah. Let me repeat the question, why are all of us poor?



Because the secret of our happiness is being poor. If we are in need of Allah, we turn to Him, and when we turn to Him we feel happy in His proximity. On the other hand, if we dispense with Allah, we will be miserable without Him. Allah says:

"Allah wishes to lighten (the burden) for you; and man was created weak (cannot be patient to leave sexual intercourse with woman)."

(An-Nisa': 28)

As if Almighty Allah addresses us saying, 'O My servant I created you weak to seek my protection, to turn to me, to seek my refuge and to seek my help, but had I created you powerful, you would have dispensed with me and because of this, you would have had a miserable life.'

I would like to sum up the points we have tackled so far:

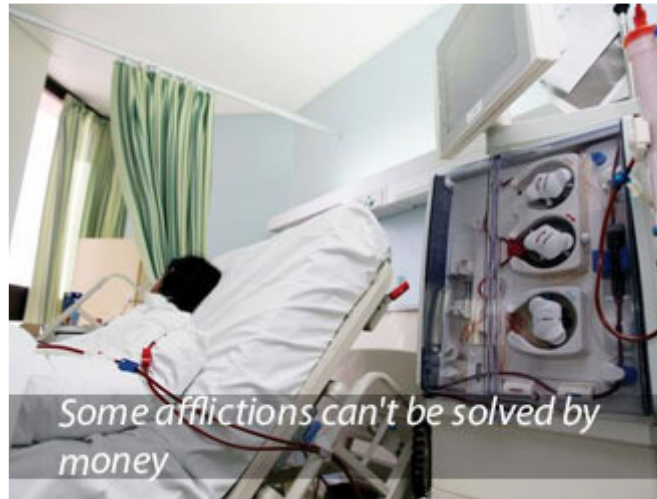
- The first point: There is a truth about you, so you have to accept it whether you like it or not.
- The second point: You are poor and in need of Allah.
- The third point: Being in need of Allah is for your own interest, happiness, religion, the worldly life, the Hereafter and your turning to Allah.

The meaning of poverty:

Our lesson today is not about the common meaning of poverty. People think that the poor is whose income is not enough to fulfill his need, or he is someone who needs financial help. However, in the scholars' view the poor are those who are extremely rich, but they are still poor.

Allah may send you a distress which you cannot get rid of even if you want to pay all your huge wealth. While I was in the doctor's clinic, he received a phone call. After he finished with it, he told me that the caller was someone whose father had a fatal disease. He said that the son told the doctor that he could pay as much money as the doctors wanted and that he could travel with his father abroad to the best hospitals in the world, but the doctor kept repeating that all would be in vain.

The patient had a fifth-degree tumor, so if doctors tried to get rid of it, it would spread in the patient's body immediately. Upon listening to the doctor, I was shocked and I started to think about calamities which cannot be solved by money. Thus, whoever thinks that his money can be the solution of all problems, is ignorant, because there are many problems which cannot be solved by money no matter how abundant the money is.



Sometimes Almighty Allah humiliates a man even if he is very powerful. A Minister of Interiors in a country held a press conference two days ago, he was at the highest level of power, but the very next day he committed suicide. He was the Minister of Interiors, which means a powerful man, but the day when he committed suicide he was very weak and on the verge of collapse. Therefore, whoever says that he is strong is ignorant, because Almighty Allah is the Most Powerful. Someone may say that he is handsome, but he may have an accident in which his face could be deformed. You may say that if he goes under a plastic surgery, his face may look like as it is before the accident, but handsomeness can fade away as time passes. Similarly, you can lose your power and money out of sudden.

A man hated the country where he lived, so he decided to live in another country. Before leaving his country, he sold his car, his factory, his shop and his house in order to collect the money and deposit them in the bank. He wanted to buy a prestigious house where he intended to live and put a huge amount of money in the bank, so that he could spend money from the interests of that amount. However, for a simple mistake he lost everything; he deposited his money using the name of someone. When that person guaranteed that the money was transferred, he told the owner that the money was his and he would not give him anything.

No matter how healthy you are, how powerful you are and how knowledgeable you are, you stand in need of Allah. A doctor may feel proud of his specialty, and he always keeps himself healthy, forgetting that he stands in need of Allah. Out of Allah's Wisdom, some doctors who are specialists in the digestive disease, suffer from a stomach ulcer. Other doctors may suffer from the disease of their own

specialty, but why? Because when man thinks that he is not in need of Allah, Allah punishes him. The Prophet, may Allah have peace and blessings upon him, said:

"From his secure place a careful person is usually attacked."

He, may Allah have peace and blessings upon him, also said:

"No care avails anything against Divine Decree."

If you want to be the most powerful person, put your trust in Allah, and if you want to be the most prosperous, be more confident in what is in Allah's Hand than what is in yours.

Neediness:

The common meaning of poverty is lacking the money to suffice one's needs. We are not tackling this meaning in our lesson today; we are interested in the Ayah in which Almighty Allah says:

"O mankind! it is you who stand in need of Allah, but Allah is Rich (Free of all wants and needs), Worthy of all praise."

(Fatir: 15)

Let me tell you this truth; When does man feel his neediness? He feels it in two occasions. When he either knows Allah or knows himself, and this knowledge can be sought by three ways: contemplation, reading and sight. By contemplating over the universe, can you say that the Creator of this universe is weak? Of course not. You will realize that He is Powerful. Moreover, pondering upon this universe makes you know many facts. Not only Allah's Creation, but also His Actions make you know many facts. You may notice amazing things by Allah's Actions; you may see how someone rich becomes poor out of the blue, and how someone poor becomes rich. Also you may see how a powerful man is humiliated by becoming weak and a weak person is dignified by becoming powerful. Our Master Yusuf, may Allah have peace upon him, was a slave in Al-'Aziz palace, but later on he became 'Aziz of Egypt. When a maiden in Al-'Aziz Palace saw the procession of Prophet Yusuf, may Allah have peace upon him, she commented on that saying, "Glory to Allah! He made the slaves kings because they obey Him, and he made the kings slaves because they disobey Him."



I told you previously that man discovers the truth by the experiences he went through, but it will be too late. Thus, if we understand the Words of Allah and the words of the Prophet, may Allah have peace and blessings upon him, we will benefit from them and know many facts earlier in our life. After Al-Fajr prayer, I started to think about the minute Fir'aun (Pharaoh) was about to die, so I just want to clarify a point about what happened exactly. When Fir'aun was about to die, he said, "I believe that La ilaha illa (Huwa): (none has the right to be worshipped but) He," in Whom the Children of Israel believe, and I am one of the Muslims (those who submit to Allah's Will)." Fir'aun was the one who said previously, "I am your lord, most high," who verily, transgressed all bounds (in crimes, sins, polytheism, disbelief, etc.), who were afflicting the Children of Israel with horrible torment, killing their sons and letting their females live and who said, "O chiefs! I know not that you have an ilah (a god) other than me." What made that tyrant say when he was about to drown, "I believe that La ilaha illa (Huwa): (none has the right to be worshipped but) He," in Whom the Children of Israel believe, and I am one of the Muslims (those who submit to Allah's Will)." I deduced from this Ayah that the issue is not about believing or not believing; it is about believing in the right time, and when it is not too late. All of you must believe; the evidence is manifested in the believing of the most infidel man ever, but it was too late; when his belief does not benefit him because he spent all his life disobeying Allah. Let me repeat this point: the issue is not about to believe or not, but it is about to believe in the right time; before it is too late. Fir'aun believed in Allah, but Allah blamed him saying:

"Now (you believe) while you refused to believe before and you were one of the Mufsidun (evil-doers, corrupts, etc.)."

(Yunus: 91)

Take for example the case of the student after he has an exam. If he fails in writing the correct answer, it will be too late for him to know that answer after finishing the exam. Thus, Believing in Allah is a matter of time. We believe either when we are powerful, healthy and young, so that we can make use of our faith or when it is too late and regret will be useless.

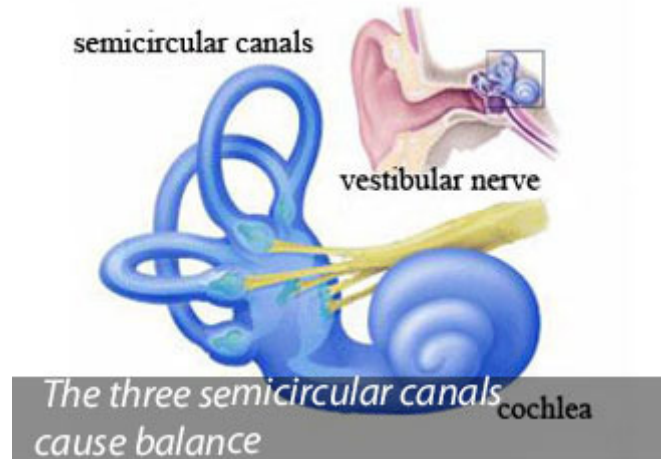
As I told you previously, ignorance is the incorrect information, incorrect saying, incorrect conception, incorrect realization or incorrect philosophy. No matter how high your study degree is, you are considered ignorant if you believe in thousands of wrong pieces of information. Thus, the first point is to get used to deal with facts and not with superstitions, illusions, doubts, traditions or ideas without proof to support them. The second point is that there is a reality and a truth about you. Suppose you have a vehicle of 5 horsepower, and you have a -5 ton- goods. You may regret having such a vehicle, but this is another story. Let us say that such a vehicle is able to carry five hundred kilos only, which is a fact about it. You may either make it carry beyond its scope and cause it imbalance or deal with it realistically. The Muslim is not an imaginary person or a dreamer; he doesn't live in illusions. The people of the worldly life get disgusted if someone goes beyond reality. I tell you the true believer is in the highest degree of reality, and you man is in need of Allah.

In one of the mental sanitarium, there is dormitory No.6 where the most insane people are. There was a man in that dormitory who take off all his clothes and eats his stool. You cannot imagine that; a man who has systems, brain, arteries, veins, muscles and nerves, and he can move, eat and talk, but he has a mental disorder which makes him eat his stool. Someone who I trust told me that one of his female relatives has to be tied to her bed in order to prevent her from eating her stool. Always remember that you are in need of Allah, because your brain is poor and your muscles are poor...etc.

Ibn Umar said, "Rarely would the Messenger of Allah, may Allah have peace and blessings upon him, stand from a sitting until he supplicated with these words for his Companions:

"O Allah, apportion to us the fear of You that will stand between us and acts of disobedience to You. And the obedience to You that will bring us to Your Paradise. And the certainty sufficient for You to make the calamities of this world easy for us. Grant us enjoying of our hearing, our sight, and our power as long as You grant us life, and do the same for those who inherit from us. Grant us victory over those who have wronged us and help us against those who are hostile to us. Let no calamity befall our din, do not let worldly affairs become our greatest concern or all that we know about, and do not let those rule over us who do not show us mercy."

(Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3502)



Man's power, if we suppose that he has any, is closely related to the functions of his organs. If his kidneys stop working, his life will turn into hell. If the tear duct is blocked the tears will keep running over his cheeks scratching them, and his life will be turned into hell. If the balance system in the inner ear is defected, you can't stand and you will fall down immediately. Imagine that you had no balance system, you would need a base of 60 to 70 cm. You can see the prove in the plastic models. These models cannot stand by their own, they should have a base of 70 cm to stand on. Therefore, out of Allah's Wisdom, you have two small nice legs which suit your body structure and make you balanced by the balance system The inner ear balance mechanism has two main parts: the three semicircular canals and the vestibule. Together they are called the vestibular labyrinth and are filled with fluid. When the head moves, fluid within the labyrinth moves and stimulates nerve endings that send impulses along the balance nerve to the brain. Those impulses are sent to the brain in equal amounts from both the right and left inner ear. Nerve impulses may be started by the semicircular canals when turning suddenly, or the impulses may come from the vestibule, which responds to changes of position, such as lying down or turning over. Without the balance system you can't ride a bike. You see how yo