

Causes of Piety

Friday Sermon Presented by

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In this blessed month, the following words of the Exalted Allah are repeated frequently:

O ye who believe! fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may {learn} self restraint (Al Baqarah, 183).

The above mentioned verse clearly indicates the wisdom of fasting whose aim is to guide the believer to piety. Piety is a light that lodges in the heart and makes man abstain from disobeying the orders of Allah. It calls him to be righteous in the straight path.

The above mentioned verse (that refers to one of the causes of piety) leads us to look for the other texts mentioned in the Holy Qur'an in which the Exalted Allah reveals to us the causes of piety.

Piety, that we miss today, has become something rare at a time materialism fills the hearts of people.

Piety is one of the two parts of the preludes of *Wilayah* (sainthood):

Saints shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve

Those who believe and {constantly} guard against evil.
(Yunus, 62-63).

Piety is one of the two parts of causing victory and safety from the enemy:

But if ye are constant and do right, not the least harm will their cunning do to you (Al Imran, 120).

Piet is the cause of deliverance from every distress:

And for those who fear Allah, He {ever} prepares a way out . And He provides for him from {sources} he never could imagine. (At Talaq, 2-3).

Piety is the cause of making man be able to distinguish the truth from falsehood. It is a faculty by which the believer can consult himself to know the difference between wrong and right even if jurists legalize him to do or not to do.

if ye fear Allah, he will grant you a Criterion {to judge between right and wrong} (Al Anfal, 29).

Ten types of the causes of piety (of which, fasting is one type) are mentioned in the Holly Qur'an. One of these tpyes is mentioned twice, thus the number becomes eleven. These causes are as the following:

1-Worship and servitude to Allah

Even if outwardly you do not feel the meaning of piety in your worship, in fasting, in praying, in giving charity and alms, go on doing that because finally they will lead you to piety.

If you are one who do good deeds (a type of worship in itself), and you do not feel piety, go on doing that because perseverance in worship produces piety. The Exalted Allah said: '**O ye people**', not 'Oh you who believe'. The address here is directed to all people not only to the believers, for faith may not have existed in your heart yet,

and you may not have felt the meaning of piety, **"adore your Guardian Lord, Who created you and those who came before you, that ye may become righteous"** (Al Baqarah, 21).

2-Walking onward along the path of Allah

You have to make a plan for yourself and take a decision, and say to yourself: 'I will follow only the method of Allah'. How far is the difference between the one who lacks this decision and surrenders to his whim that makes him turn right and left, and the one who makes his whim subjected to the mission of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), for the Exalted Allah makes some matters allowed, and some others prohibited to test man with them. Consequently, man has to take his decision and have a starting point to walk onward along the distinct straight path. The allowed is distinct and the prohibited is distinct.

The concept of worship is not decreed in vain and in fantasy. The Exalted Allah presents a method in which both, the allowed and the prohibited are clearly stated, and calls this method 'the straight path'. The Exalted Allah said: **"Verily, this is my way, leading straight; follow it"**. He, Exalted He is, calls this path His. He sets for you a path that is the most straight and most forward, **"follow not {other} paths"**, i.e., what whims call to **do "they will scatter you about from his {great} path"**. If you do not follow the straight path, you will disperse right and left. Consequently, you will not fear turning away from the allowed. Beware of stepping the paths that are away from the straight path because of your whim **"thus doth He command you, that ye may be righteous"** (Al An'am, 153).

Thus, the first cause is frequency of worship. The second is to have determination and will to follow the right way. It is to be a follower not an innovator; to recognize the straight path of Allah and to go through it and not deviate from it because of your whims.

The third cause (repeated twice, once in Surat Al Baqarah, and at another time in Surat Al A'raf) is:

3-You have to be heedful and recite frequently the revelation sent by the Exalted Allah by inspiration to mankind:

It is the heedfulness in which man should be serious not playful. The Exalted Allah said: "**Hold firmly to what We have given**" (Al Baqarah, 63), i.e., be diligent in following the orders of the Exalted Allah and do not deal with it playfully or superficially. You have to react with it seriously, as the Exalted Allah said: "**O Yahya! take hold Of the Book with might**" (Mariam, 12), then He said: "**and bring {ever} to remembrance what is therein**" (Al Baqarah, 63), i.e., recite frequently what the Exalted Allah revealed by inspiration so that repetition, even if it were only by the tongue, will result in understanding it and meditating upon it. Then The Exalted Allah said: "**perchance ye may fear Allah**"(Al Baqarah, 63).

4-Understanding the clarification:

After repetition by tongue, there will be an attempt to comprehend the revelation. Thus, repetition is the cause of piety because it may produce understanding, but the text that comes after refers to clarity and explicitness. It also refers to meaning and connotation. The Exalted Allah said:

"Thus doth Allah make clear his Signs to men; that they may learn self-restraint" (Al Baqarah, 187).

When I say be attentive to the clarification and clarity, we have to notice two messages:

The First is a meaning that is alluded to in the Holy Qur'an.

The second is a meaning that is hinted at through the signs of existence, and through a recital that you repeat every day. When you read about the incidents of the universe and what happens in it (i.e., the Exalted Allah's signs), He treats you differently. The Signs of the Exalted Allah may be distinct in the Holy Qur'an, or in His universe, and when you are able to understand these Qur'anic verses from the Exalted Allah and from His cosmic signs this will lead you to piety.

5-Listening to Admonition: This is different from listening to glad tidings. In the Holy Qur'an, there is admonition as well as glad tidings. 'Glad tidings' is a promise of delight which is a reward, and in which there is bliss. I did not find a statement in the Holy Qur'an that indicates giving glad tidings is one of the causes of piety. On the other hand, admonition and being exposed to it is one of the causes of piety.

When you listen to admonition, you feel fear of Allah. Consequently, admonition is one of the Exalted Allah's Exalted attributes, because it is a warning of punishment, or warning that **"He cannot be questioned For his acts, but they will be questioned {for theirs}" (Al Anbiya', 23)**, i.e., what the scholars of monotheism call 'what is permissible in the right of the Exalted Allah'. This

admonition makes man live in fear and great reverence of the Exalted Allah.

The Exalted Allah said:

Give this warning to those in whose {hearts} there is the fear that they will be brought {to judgment} before their Lord; except for him they will have no protector nor intercessor: that they may guard {against evil} (Al An'am, 51).

The Exalted Allah indicates that being exposed to admonition is one of the causes that leads to piety. Admonition is also revealed by the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) as well as in his state in addition to the indication of the Holy Qur'an.

6-Reminding

Reminding may be in speech, in deed or in state.

The Exalted Allah said:

On their account no responsibility falls on the righteous, but {their duty} is to remind them, that they may {learn to} fear Allah (Al An'am, 69).

In this verse, reminding is one of the causes of piety. Don't you see how the behavior of the youth who attends the assemblies of remembering Allah with his fellows is different from that who does not?

Don't you see that the righteousness of the youth is a supporting factor that helps in making the youth attend the assemblies of reminding, and that the man who lives in his individuality away from the assemblies of reminding is liable to deviate quickly and gets astray from the straight path?

7-Exposure to Exhortation

Exhortation is everything that softens the hearts. Reminding is general, while exhortation is particular. The Exalted Allah said:

When some of them said: 'why do ye preach to a people whom Allah will destroy or v' to discharge our duty to your Lord, and perchance they may fear him' (Al A'raf, 164).

In this verse, the Exalted Allah tells that exhortation that softens the hearts is one of the causes of piety.

8-To join admonition with the Qur'an.

In the above mentioned verse, there is mention of admonition alone by reciting the Book frequently, but here there is mention of the recital of the Qur'an in addition with admonition. It is as if the Exalted Allah would say: 'Warn people by the Holy Qur'an, i.e., one of the methods of admonition is to make people listen to the exhortation of the Holy Qur'an. The Exalted Allah said:

Do ye wonder that there hath come to you a message from your Lord, through a man of your own people, to warn you, so that ye may fear Allah and happily receive his mercy? (Al Airaf, 63).

Thus, the Exalted Allah joins between the human Warner and the Divine one, i.e., the Exalted Allah's words in the Book.

9- Inhibition about custom in worship

The Exalted Allah said:

O ye who believe! fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may {learn} self restrain (Al Baqarah, 183). ◦

What is the relationship between fasting and piety?

It is a state of rebuke for habit in worship.

10-Inhibition in Treatment

It is in the Exalted Allah's words:

In the law of equality there is {saving of} life to you, o ye men of understanding; that ye may restrain yourselves (Al Baqarh, 179).

The Exalted Allah prescribes a deterrent law in treatment when He decreed the law of penalty that the killer should be killed by the order of the ruler who is a Muslim.

On the other hand, the text that relates fasting to piety implies inhibition of habit in worship. You are used to eating, drinking and getting anything whenever you like. In worship the Exalted Allah inhibits and organizes your habit in worship.

Hence, the Exalted Allah wants to train you to making your habit subordinated to worship and disciplined by the order of the Exalted Allah. It is a training that happens once a year. Every year, you fast for one month so that training for you becomes continuous till you attain a day on which you submit your habit to your Lord. When you do that, your whim becomes submissive to what the Exalted Allah wants and what His Messenger (PBUH) indicates.

Accordingly, the causes of piety mentioned in the Holly Qur'an are ten "**These are ten perfect days**" (Al Baqarah, 196).

Allahum..., guide us to You favorably, and make us from those who listen to wisdom and follow the best of it.

I say my words and ask Allah's forgiveness.