

How Prayer becomes the Way to Justice

Friday Sermon Presented by

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Al 'Adiliyya Mosque, Aleppo, 8\8\2008

As the Exalted Allah sent a heavenly concrete repast to the disciple of the Prophet Jesus (PBUH) to be nourishment for their bodies, so did He to this Ummah when He sent them an abstract repast to be nourishment for their souls, a method for their life and an organizer for their behavior. Thus He presents a comprehensive example in the beginning of Surat Al Ma'idah in this abstract repast, and delays the mention of the concrete repast till the end of this surah.

Last week, we read the first ten verses of Surat Al Ma'idah and knew how they presented a comprehensive example of legislation. Whoever reads them can see that Islam deals with habit and worship, with the system of the community as well as directing the believer in his behavior to the straightway. Moreover, as we explained part of the meanings of the mentioned verses last week, today, we continue the explanation of the second part so that we learn lessons and get behavioral benefit.

The following are the verses that open Surat Al Ma'idah:

1- O ye who believe fulfill {all} obligations, Lawful unto you {for food} are all four footed animals, with the exceptions named; but animals of the chase are forbidden while ye are in the sacred precincts or in

pilgrim garb; for Allah doth command, according to His Will and Plan.

2- O ye who believe violate not the sanctity of the symbols of Allah, nor of the sacred month, nor of the animals brought for sacrifice, nor the garlands that mark out such animals, nor the people resorting to the sacred house, seeking of the Bounty and good pleasure of their Lord. But when ye are clear of the sacred precincts and of pilgrim garb, ye may hunt and let not the hatred of some people on {once} shutting you out of the sacred mosque lead you to transgression {and hostility on your part}. Help ye one another in righteousness and piety, but help ye not one another in sin and rancor; fear Allah, for Allah is strict in punishment.

3- Forbidden to you {your food} are: dead meat, blood, the flesh of swine, and that on which hath been invoked the name of other than Allah; that which hath been killed by strangling, or by a violent blow, or by a headlong fall, or by being gored to death; than which hath been {partly} eaten by a wild animal; unless ye are able to slaughter it {in due form}; that which is sacrificed on stone {altars}; {forbidden} also is the division {of meat} by raffling with arrows: that is impiety. This day have those who reject Faith given up all hope of your religion: yet fear them not but fear me. This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed my favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion. But if any is forced by hunger, with no inclination transgression, Allah is indeed Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

4- They ask thee what is lawful to them {as food}. Say: lawful unto you are {all} things good and pure: and what ye have thought your trained hunting animals {to catch} in the manner directed to you by Allah: eat what they catch for you, but pronounce the

name of Allah over it: and fear Allah; for Allah is swift in taking account.

5- This day are {all} things good and pure made lawful unto you. The food of the People of the Book is lawful unto you and yours is lawful unto them. lawfully unto you {in marriage} are {not only} chaste women who are Believers, but chaste women among the People of the Book, revealed before your time, when you give them their due dowers, and desire chastity, not lewdness, nor secret intrigues. If any one rejects Faith, fruitless is his work, and in the Hereafter he will be in the ranks of those who have lost {all spiritual good}.

6- O Ye who believe when ye prepare for prayer, wash your faces, and your hands {and arms} to the elbows; rub your heads {with water}; and {wash} your feet to the ankles. If ye are in a state of ceremonial impurity, bath your whole body. But if ye are ill, or on a journey, or one of you cometh from offices of nature, or ye have been in contact with women, and ye find no water, then take for yourselves clean sands or earth, and rub therewith your faces and hands. Allah doth not wish to place you in a difficulty, but to make you clean, and to complete his favour to you, that ye may be grateful.

7- And call in remembrance the favor of Allah unto you, and his convenient, which he ratified with you, when ye said: we hear and we obey; and fear Allah, for Allah knoweth well the secrets of your hearts.

8- O ye who believe stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to piety: and fear Allah. For Allah is well acquainted with all that ye do.

9- To those who believe and do deeds of righteousness hath Allah promised forgiveness and a great reward.

10- Those who reject Faith and deny our Signs will be companions of Hell-fire.

If you consider this heavenly Muhammadan repast sent by the Exalted Allah to honor this Muhammadan Ummah, you find headlines that make you realize the comprehensiveness of this religion, beginning from dealings "**fulfill (all) obligations**", because Islam builds up an Ummah that is committed to ethics, and fulfills its obligations and contracts. The Islamic society is not built on interest void of morality. In these verses, Islam deals with dealings disciplined by ethics, with the rules of Pilgrimage, with human needs such as food and drink, with rules of prayer, and ends with a headline of legislation in the Islamic society.

In these verses, fundamentals of our Islamic legislation are mentioned. They reveal our balanced realistic identity, such as removing blame from the compelled. They guarantee the continuity of this Ummah whose legislative rules decreed by the Exalted Allah are preserved by the preservation of the Exalted Allah: "**This day have those who reject Faith given up all hope of your religion**" for your religion is permanent in defiance of the unbelievers. It is everlasting with all its rules, not one rule can be dropped, even the rule of the emirate when people miss it on the level of the Ummah. Islam preserves it even in three items, so no one rule can be missed from this legislation.

This day have those who reject Faith given up all hope of your religion yet fear them not but fear me. This day

have I perfected your religion for you, completed my favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.

How can those, who are lower than the rank of animals, when Allah chooses Islam for the believers, reject what the Exalted Allah has chosen for man?

The Exalted Allah has chosen Islam as the only religion for man.

The Exalted Allah has chosen Islam as a guide, as an instructor and as an organizer for man. So who are you, oh weak and impoverished man to say: "I accept or refuse Islam"?

What kind of creature, Oh man, are you to be rebellious against what the Exalted Allah has chosen for you?

The Exalted Allah has chosen a method for you in dealings, in habits, in behavior, in worship, then who are you, oh man, when you stand in defiance against what the Lord of the Worlds, the King of the kings, Exalted He is, has chosen for you?

How can you defy the Exalted Allah in whose hand your destiny is, and by Him your affairs are controlled? It is He only Who is able to make you honorable or humiliated. The Exalted Allah said: **"Say: 'O Allah! Lord of Power {and Rule}, Thou givest Power to whom Thou pleasest, and Thou strippest off Power from whom Thou pleases; Thou enduest with honor whom Thou pleasest, and Thou bringest low whom Thou pleases; In Thy hand is all Good .Verily, over all things thou hast power"** (Al Imran, 26).

Last week, we stopped at the verses concerning prayer. Today, I'd like to benefit from these holy verses as well as benefit the others when the Exalted Allah mentions the rules of prayer followed by the headline of legislation, for legislation is the organizer of justice.

Thus, what is the relationship between prayer and justice? Why does the Exalted Allah mention prayer and its rules, its ablution, its bathing, its Tayammum (sand ablution), then He presents the great headline concerning the legislation He decreed for the Islamic society?

It is because the Exalted Allah wants to reveal to us the relationship between the slave and his Lord when justice is realized in society. When the slave becomes tied to the Exalted Allah and prostrates to Him admitting and confessing his servitude, only then justice is realized in this society.

However developed the positive laws are trying to approach justice, they fail to reach a standard by which man becomes fair with himself. When the Holy Qur'an talks about justice, it refers to man's testimony to be just with himself, and man's justice cannot be realized through positive laws, because the latter is unable to go deep into man's inner heart. Hasn't the president of the United States said: "We are able to reach the moon, but we fail in organizing the relationships among neighbors" ?

The relationship of man with his Lord makes him have the same feeling whether he is in privacy or in company, because he always fears the Exalted Allah whether he is alone or with people. He glorifies the Exalted Allah whether he is alone, when nobody sees him, or when he is among people.

Consequently, man's relationship with his Lord is a way of training him to be obedient to the Exalted Allah alone.

Man will not become a true slave to the Exalted Allah until he gives up being a slave to objects, to desires, to instincts, to lust, etc... .

Only when man becomes a true slave to the Exalted Allah alone, he will enjoy true freedom. Freedom is not what we witness on Sunday night in the West when man releases himself from the law. Freedom is when man is freed from all objects. When he does that, he derives instructions from his Lord Who is the Master of all the world with all its creatures: **“Should He not know, He that created? And He is the One that understands the finest mysteries {and} is well acquainted {with them}”** (Al Mulk, 14).

Prayer is not mere movements. As the month of Ramadan is approaching when mosques will be filled with praying people, you may wonder why our behavior is not set right in our markets, in our shops, in our factories, and in the system of our life in spite of our prayers?

The answer is that, in Ramadan, we are used to praying Al Tarawih (optional night prayer in Ramadan), but some violate the laws of the Exalted Allah and His prescribed limits while, at the same time, they are keen to perform Al Tarawih prayer. They fall short of their religious obligations and duties and trespass on the prohibited: **“A sign of compliance with passion is haste in supererogatory deeds and sluggishness in fulfilling obligatory deeds”**. This is what the owner of the writer of The Book of Wisdom (MBUH) states after understanding the Holy Book and Sunnah.

Certainly, as conventions, customs and social essentials have changed for some people into fundamentals that cannot be trespassed, so is the case with Al Tarawih. It has become a practice that nobody neglects whether he is pious or not. Some may commit the prohibited, deal with usury, and fall short of the obligations prescribed by the Exalted Allah, yet they adhere to prayer. Their prayer is a sham because it does not produce the effect stated in the Holy Qur'an. In His Illuminated Book, the Exalted Allah, the most Truthful, said: **“and establish regular Prayer; for Prayer restrains from shameful and unjust deeds”** (Al 'Ankabut, 45). The Exalted Allah does not say: 'pray'; He rather says 'establish, because establishing prayer produces its effect in behavior. As a result, the believer turns away from shameful and ill deeds.

If our Islamic societies established prayer, they would definitely change into virtuous and fair ones. Formal prayer is like sport movements. What is the value of such a prayer in which the heart does not pray, does not kneel and does not prostrate with the body. This is the prayer of the hypocrite, because the difference between the believer's prayer and that of the hypocrite is the praying of the heart. Moreover, the hypocrite surpasses the believer in his outward behavior. Hasn't the Exalted Allah described the hypocrites saying: **“but surely thou wilt know them by the tone of their speech”** (Muhammad, 30)?

They used to increase praise and be more fluent before the Prophet (PBUH) so that if one heard their speech he would wonder at their expressions that were well fashioned in praise of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and in praise of Islam.

How many the merchants of expressions are today!

How many those who ascribe themselves to Islam through mere words are today while their behavior is in contradiction with Islam!

How can such people establish true prayer?

True prayer produces justice, virtue and a society that includes only virtuous morality. It is a society in which man hurries to repentance whenever he makes a mistake or commits a sin.

In the beginning of Surat Al Mu'minin, the Exalted Allah said:

1-The Believers must {eventually} win through:

2-Those who humble themselves in their Prayers:

3- Who avoid vain talk:

4-Who are active in deeds of Charity:

5-Who abstain from sex:

6-Except with those joined to them in the marriage bond, or {the captive} whom their right hands possess, for {in their case} they are free from blame:

7-But those whose desires exceed those limits are transgressors:

8- Those who faithfully observe their trusts and their covenants:

9- And who {strictly} guard their Prayers

for ye must gain mastery if ye are true in Faith.

These verses begin with prayer and end in prayer, and in between the good behavior of man is mentioned because

the one who begins with prayer will produce a behavior distinguished with virtue so that **he begins with prayer and ends with prayer.**

I formerly mentioned the story of the great proselytizer, Al Nawrasi (MBUH), who was once called by a senior founder of Turkey to present a speech in the parliament in the beginning of establishing the new state of Turkey. Al Nawrasi went on speaking for one hour about prayer and nothing else. Then he ended in leading the members of parliament in prayer. Afterwards he was called by the senior founder of Turkey who said to him: “We called you to speak about establishing Turkey, but you talked only about prayer!!”. Al Nawrasi answered: “The one who betrays his God is ready to betray his nation”.

Members of parliament hold great responsibility to preserve trust. They are authorized by the nation to preserve their country. So, when they betray their God, they are liable to betray their nation too!

Al Nawrasi said to him: “Oh Basha, the one who betrays his God is ready to betray his nation.

When we cut the relationship between prayer and behavior, influenced by the West in their experience that fails spiritually and morally, even if it is comparatively successful on the level of the material, and if we disregard the spiritual value of prayer, we lose our status that the Exalted Allah distinguishes us with as a coherent believing Ummah.

Hasn't the Exalted Allah said: **for ye must gain mastery if ye are true in Faith**” (Al Imran, 139).

We can never attain superiority nor glory but by faith. The pillar of religion is prayer that is based on the relationship between the slave and his Lord, and his realizing of his servitude to Him and his feeling that he is His slave.

The Exalted Allah said:

19- Truly man was created very impatient:

20- Fretful when evil touches him:

21- And niggardly when good reaches him:

22- Not so those devoted to Prayer:

23- Those who remain steadfast to their prayer:

Notice how the Exalted Allah concludes these verses saying: **“Those who remain steadfast to their prayer”**.

Peace be upon Jalaliddin Ar-Rumi who said: “Man’s prayer cannot be continuous if it is formal” for the continuous prayer is that of the soul, while the formal prayer is temporary. How can one be in continuous prayer while he sometimes prays, at another time he sells or buys goods? How does the Exalted Allah say: **“Those who remain steadfast to their prayer”**? In this verse, the Exalted Allah refers to the prayer in the soul that is continuous. He said: **“By men whom neither traffic nor merchandise can divert from the Remembrance of Allah”** (An Nur, 37). In other words, their bodies buy and sell while their souls are praying.

In conclusion, the abstract repast sent by the Exalted Allah in the beginning of the mentioned Surah (complete ten verses) produces a realization of what is required and aimed at to whoever meditates upon them, so that man moves from the form and the image into the interaction

with the connotation, and interaction with religion and its truths.

I'd like to conclude my speech by the words of the Prince of the Believers, Omar (ABPWH), when he said: **"We are a nation glorified by Islam, If we seek glory with other than Allah we become humiliated"**.

We are an Ummah glorified by Islam. If we are verified by the truth of Islam, glory will be our lot, but if we turn away from it, humiliation will be our destiny.

Allahum..., do not direct our hearts but to you, and make us from those who listen to wisdom and follow the best of it.

I say my words and ask Allah's forgiveness.