

Ilm Essentials

Purification of the Heart

Lesson 6

Praiseworthy Traits

Humility

Defining Humility

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- Humility (tawādu') is to lower oneself (for the one who has raised himself up) in recognition of one's true state
 - ▣ Or to recognize and confirm one's true rank
 - We were a thing un-remembered only to come into this world as a despised, filthy thing
 - We cannot even pass 24 hours without doing something wrong
- Its perfection is believing oneself to be the most contemptible and lowest creation
 - ▣ Even lower than dogs and animals
 - Sahābah would sometimes say I wish my mother had never born me or I wish I was created as a tree or a blade of grass
- Humility is contrasted against arrogance
 - ▣ As things are known from their opposites

Understanding Humility

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- But hasn't Allah raised up and honored mankind
 - ▣ “We created man in the finest state and then reduced him to the lowest of the low, except those who believe and do good deeds” (Quran 95:4-6)
 - Even if Allah left us in the finest state
 - It would still mandate humility
- True humility arises when we view ourselves and our actions relative to Allah
 - ▣ Relative to His grandeur and recognize the manifestations of His attributes (tajallī)
 - The result of which is we see everything we do as inherently incomplete and imperfect
 - ▣ “None of you will enter Paradise by his deeds alone”
 - They asked, “Not even you, Oh Messenger of Allah?”
 - He said, “Not even me, unless Allah covers me with His Grace and Mercy” (Bukhārī and Muslim)

Understanding Humility

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- How can anyone do anything if they feel they are worthless
 - ▣ When one recognizes their state before Allah
 - They also recognize His ability to assist His creation
 - So when we act, we do so with full recognition of where all power and ability come from
- “He (Yūsuf) said, ‘Put me in charge of the nation’s storehouses; I shall manage them prudently and carefully’” (Quran 12:55)
 - ▣ Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) was worried about his ability to fulfill the task put upon him
 - Three squeezes in the cave
 - Standing on the mountainside

Understanding Humility

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- “Oh Allah, I complain to you of my lack of strength (children just chased him out), of my helplessness (this was his last ditch effort) and how insignificant I am to other people. Oh Most Merciful of the Merciful, You are the Lord of those who have no power and You are my Lord...
- ▣ If You have no anger toward me, I have no objection (because trials come either as a test or to raise one's state). But to be lenient toward me, is easier for me
 - I seek refuge in the light of Your countenance, whereby all of the darkness becomes illuminated and all of the dunyā and the ākhirah is taken care of...
- And there is no strength nor power except from You (Duā after Tāif)

Subtleties of Humility

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- Humility is contrasted with arrogance
 - ▣ Which can be very subtle
- Whoever asserts humility for himself is undoubtedly a man of pride
 - ▣ When a claim of humility is made, it is made after the perception of one's (supposed) rank
 - Implies that one believes they have a rank
 - Which is a manifestation of their arrogance and pride
- When we see faults in others
 - Often indicates to those very faults within ourselves
 - “A believer is the mirror of a believer” (Abū Dāwūd)
 - ▣ Why does a person look into a mirror

Subtleties of Humility

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- The sin which causes remorse and dependency upon Allah is better than the worship which causes pride and arrogance
- ▣ Bearing in mind the inherent beauty in worship and the inherent evil in sin
 - Highlights that all of our actions are either for or against us
 - Stresses even more the need to purify the heart

Benefits of Humility

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- “There is no one except that the wisdom of his mind is in the hands of an angel
 - ▣ When he shows humility, the angel is ordered to increase his wisdom
 - When he shows arrogance, the angel is ordered to decrease his wisdom” (Tabarānī)
- “It is the right of Allah that nothing is raised in the dunyā (in stature or esteem), except that Allah will bring it down” (Bukhārī)
 - ▣ Because being raised up is only for Allah
- Look at animals eating, lowering themselves toward the bounty of Allah
 - ▣ Man is given the choice of how to eat
 - So he can prove his superiority to all of creation
 - Through his humility
- “No one is humble for the sake of Allah except that Allah raises his rank” (Muslim)
 - ▣ The way to have a place, to have a rank, is to actually lower yourself down

Inculcating Humility

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- Can be brought about by reflecting on the true source of all things, which is Allah
 - ▣ Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) entered Makkah with his head down
 - Recognizing that while he was the apparent means for its opening
 - It was really from Allah
 - “We have destroyed many a town stronger than your own - the town which expelled you - and they had no one to help them” (Quran 47:13)
- Also by viewing yourself relative to those above you
 - ▣ There is always someone stronger, smarter, better looking, wealthier, etc.
 - For every positive characteristic that we have
 - There is an animal who can out do us
 - Except the soul
 - Otherwise they are made from dirt and we are made from dirt
 - ▣ The Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) was saved by a spider’s web
 - The flimsiest of houses, until Allah puts His power into it

Inculcating Humility

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- Be mindful of Allah at all times
 - ▣ “Be mindful of Allah and you will find Him in front of you” (Tirmidhī)
 - When you keep Allah in front, you don’t notice anything else
 - Your reference point is always against His perfection
- This is how we bring humility into our worship
 - ▣ “Worship Allah as if you see Him” (Muslim)
 - And how the Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) could be so forgiving
- How is it that the angels never disobey
 - ▣ Because they are always attentive toward Allah
 - When shaytan focused on other than Allah
 - He fell from grace

Inculcating Humility

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- Reflect on the honor that Allah has placed in things around us
 - ▣ Fish in the sea make more istighfār than us
 - A dead tree shed more tears from being distant from the Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam)
- “There is no disease that Allah has sent down except that He sent down its cure” (Bukhārī)
 - ▣ We were created to worship and the pinnacle of worship is salāh
 - Pinnacle of salāh is sajdah
 - Putting the head down and lowering the mind below the heart
- Spend time reflecting on your soul, on your state
 - ▣ “When a person looks deep within himself, his true reality becomes apparent” (Shaykh Zulfiqar)

Praiseworthy Traits

Gratitude

Defining Gratitude

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- Gratitude (shukr) is a recognition of the favors and blessings given by Allah
 - ▣ Occurring in the heart and manifesting on the tongue and limbs
 - Includes recognizing that they are from Allah alone
 - Given by Him as a gift, through no right of our own
- Requires following His command and using the blessings we have been given in His obedience
 - ▣ “Should I not be a grateful servant?” (Bukhāri)
 - Also in service of His creation
 - “The dīn is sincerity...to Allah, His Book, His Messenger, the leaders of the believers and their common folk” (Muslim)
- This is the litmus test for how grateful we are
 - ▣ The extra ibādah and good actions we perform

Recognizing Blessings

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- Expression of gratitude will be commensurate to the blessing
 - ▣ We have not only been given īmān, which is the greatest blessing
 - We could have never been created, but Allah decided to create us
 - We could have been an inanimate object, but Allah created as animate
 - We could have been an animal, but Allah created us as humans
 - We could have been disbelievers, but Allah created us as believers
 - We could have been believers from other ummahs
 - But Allah brought us in the ummah of the Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam)
- So when Allah blessed us so perfectly in the most important aspect of our existence
 - ▣ Doesn't it make sense that everything else in our lives would be inline
 - “Perhaps you may hate something, yet it is better for you” (Quran 2:216)
- Part of gratitude is to make much of His favors
 - ▣ Even those that are apparently small

Dangers of Ingratitude

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- Recognize that gratitude leads to the perpetuation of favors already received and leads to new favors
 - ▣ Just like sadaqah never decreases wealth, gratitude never decreases blessings
 - “If you are thankful, I will give you more, but if you are ungrateful, My punishment is terrible indeed” (Quran 14:7)
- Ingratitude leads to removal of blessings
 - ▣ “Allah would never change a favor He had conferred on a people unless they changed what was within themselves” (Quran 8:53)
 - Referring to being ungrateful and showing ingratitude
- Ingratitude leads to a weakening of īmān
 - ▣ “So remember Me and I will remember you; thank Me and do not reject me (disbelieve in me)” (Quran 2:152)
- Ingratitude is a covering up, because everyone has been blessed
 - ▣ But the ungrateful hide those blessings by ignoring them or attributing them to other than Allah

Prevalence of Ingratitude

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- “Yet most of mankind is not grateful” (Quran 40:61)
 - ▣ Verse is not condemning us
 - Such that we give up and lose hope
 - Or that we focus on others and point out their ingratitude
 - ▣ Rather when Allah mentions something over and over again
 - Our job is to take note, reflect and make changes
- Why is ingratitude so prevalent
 - ▣ “I will come at them, from their front and their back, from their right and their left, and You will find that most of them are ungrateful” (Quran 7:17)
 - When something is under attack, how do you respond
 - ▣ We have given the dunyā a place it does not deserve
 - Instead of treating it as capital to be used for the ākhirah
 - We have made it a place of permanence

Benefits of Gratitude

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- “Be thankful to Allah. Whoever gives thanks benefits his own soul” (Quran 31:12)
- Proof that our worship is for His sake
 - ▣ “Oh you who believe...be grateful to Allah, if it is Him that you worship” (Quran 2:172)
 - And that we are believers
- Earns the pleasure of Allah
 - ▣ “If you are ungrateful, remember Allah has no need of you
 - ...if you are grateful, He is pleased to see it in you” (Quran 39:7)
 - ▣ “Allah is pleased with His servant if, when he eats something, he thanks Allah for it, and when he drinks something, he thanks Allah for it” (Muslim)

Inculcating Gratitude

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- Recognize that everything you have is from Allah
 - ▣ “Whatever good you possess is from Allah” (Quran 16:53)
 - How can it be when we ourselves are from Allah
 - That we forget that everything else around us is also from Allah
 - ▣ Similar to when a child grows up and is successful and thanks their parents
 - Doctor is always indebted to his teachers
- Reflect on the sheer number of blessings that we have in our lives
 - ▣ “If you tried to count Allah’s favors you could never enumerate them; man is truly unjust and ungrateful” (Quran 14:34)

Inculcating Gratitude

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- Allah has laid out the path leading to Paradise and set us upon it
 - ▣ All we have to do is take a few steps forward
 - Even if everything else in our life was difficulty and tribulation
 - It would still be worth bearing to attain the reward that awaits
- When a person focuses on the good in his life, the difficulties become trivial and easier to bear
 - ▣ Wait in line 30 minutes for a 60-second roller coaster
 - Coping with the crowds on Black Friday
 - Exercising or dieting
 - But if you focus on the difficulty, you tend to give up
 - Need to keep the focus on what is most important, the ākhirah
- Reflect on His attribute of Ash-Shakūr, the Most Appreciative
 - ▣ Meaning that He takes little and gives back much and He does not diminish any of your actions

Questions and Discussion

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