

Ilm Essentials

Purification of the Heart

Lesson 7



Praiseworthy Traits

Patience

Defining Patience

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- Patience (sabr) is to maintain control of one's lower self, that self which calls to evil and disobedience
 - ▣ By disallowing it those things it desires
 - Forcing upon it those things it abhors
- Entails recognizing the two competing forces within man
 - ▣ One inclining toward righteousness
 - One toward base desires and disobedience

Understanding Patience

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- “How amazing is the affair of the believer! Every condition of his is good, and this is unique to the believer
 - ▣ If he receives some bounty, he is thankful and this brings good to him
 - And if some adversity befalls him, he is patient and this too brings good to him” (Muslim)
- The more highly a virtue is extolled or praised
 - ▣ The greater the level of effort required to achieve it
 - Much like higher quality indicates a higher price
 - ▣ Patience must be worked toward, requiring effort
 - Because the untrained nafs naturally inclines toward evil
 - And because it is only through effort and perseverance that man receives gifts from Allah

Understanding Patience

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- Necessary to remember that even though we work and strive
 - ▣ Patience is a gift from Allah
 - “Whoever forces himself to be patient will be granted patience by Allah
 - No one was given a better and more expansive gift than patience” (Bukhāri)
- “Patience is a glowing illumination” (Muslim)
 - ▣ As if it is something that overtakes the heart and shines outward
 - Overcomes the darkness of the self
- “Patience is at the first shock” (Bukhāri)
 - ▣ Only possible for that person who has worked to achieve patience
 - Does not negate the necessity of striving to continue in patience
 - Nor to manifest it even if it did not come at the first shock
 - ▣ Also applies to the urge to perform bad deeds
 - It’s the first instance that is the most deadly

Types of Patience

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- Patience in performing righteous deeds
 - ▣ Includes giving them preference, coming to them whole heartedly, purely for His sake
- Patience during the performance of righteous deeds
 - ▣ Includes the inner states required by the act
 - Sincerity, humility, gratitude and presence of the heart
 - ▣ Also the outward states
 - Showing zeal and ensuring their proper performance
- Can be facilitated by remembering the rewards associated with these acts

Types of Patience

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- Patience in abstaining from inappropriate action
 - ▣ Also has an inner and outward form
 - Outward is to abstain from the act
 - Also anything which brings one near the act
 - Inward is to have a true disdain for the act
 - ▣ Facilitated by remembering the associated punishments
- Patience in renunciation of desires
 - ▣ Best achieved by starting with things one is most strongly inclined toward
 - Overall goal is to bring those desires inline with the sunnah
 - To ensure that we are not a slave to our desires
 - ▣ Abū Bakr refused dessert
 - Because he was addicted to the sweets of the next life

Types of Patience

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- Patience in unpleasant things
 - ▣ Includes those things which occur without an intermediary
 - Getting sick or an accident or stock market crash
 - “We shall try you with something of fear, hunger and loss of wealth, lives and fruits. And give glad tidings to those who have patience, who when stricken by hardship say, ‘We belong to Allah and to Him we shall return’
 - Allah will send blessings and mercy upon them, they are the ones who are rightly guided” (Quran 2:155-157)
 - ▣ Includes those which occur at the hands of other people
 - “The recompense for an evil deed is the like thereof, but whoever is forgiving and reconciling, his reward is with Allah
 - He does not love the unjust
 - And whoever defends himself after he has suffered wrong, there is no blame against him...But those who endure patiently and forgive, indeed that is from the greatest of things” (Quran 42:40-43)

Understanding Hardship

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- There are two types of hardships
 - ▣ The first are those which bring one closer to Allah, elevate one's spiritual rank and expiate past omissions
 - The result of these apparent hardships should be an increase in submission to Allah
 - ▣ Sometimes Allah wants to raise us up
 - But since we don't have the righteous deeds
 - He does so through trials and tribulations

Understanding Hardship

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- Second type is true hardship
 - ▣ When one falls into sin or leaves the straight path
 - As this is a means of spiritual deprivation
 - ▣ But even this should be viewed, after the fact, as a blessing
 - Because it allows one to turn back to Allah
 - Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) made istighfār everyday
 - Even shaytan becoming shaytan was a blessing for us
- When hardship afflicts, start by remembering your sins and the mistakes you made in your life
 - ▣ People ask, “Why me?” or “What did I do to deserve this?”
 - One reason may be the wrongs that we perpetrate in our lives
 - Should cause us to readily accept what has come upon us
 - And then turn back in repentance

Inculcating Patience

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- Recommended to recite “innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rāji’ūn”
 - ▣ Its meaning focuses one on Allah, both in this world and the next
 - Has nothing to do with the duynā
 - ▣ “We belong to Allah”
 - When something bad happens to someone else
 - We feel it, but the effect is vastly different than if it happened to us
 - So if you are Allah’s, its happening to Allah, not to you
 - ▣ Even if you feel like its affecting you
 - Remember that this world is temporary and “to Him is our return”
- Reflect on the hardships faced by those in the past
 - ▣ Especially the passing of the Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam)
 - You will begin to realize that there is good in difficulty
 - If born with patience
- Since patience is essentially a competition with the nafs
 - ▣ Work on weakening the nafs and maturing it
 - Through dhikr and struggle

Praiseworthy Traits

Reliance

Defining Reliance

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- Reliance (tawakkul) is the heart's certainty that all matters are in Allah's absolute control
 - ▣ Whether beneficial or harmful
 - Pleasant or unpleasant
 - Apparent or hidden
- Ties into patience
 - ▣ Because one can only be patient when they know it is from Allah
 - And being generous
 - Because one gives knowing it will not decrease their wealth
 - ▣ And forgiveness and leniency
 - Because one forgives trusting in Allah's mercy
 - ▣ And focusing on the ākhirah and not fearing death
 - Because one trusts in the promise of the next life

Understanding Reliance

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- “When you ask, ask of Allah, and when you seek help, seek help from Allah” (Ahmad)
 - ▣ Inherent negation of everything other than Allah
 - Similar to what is in the shahādah
 - ▣ Not limited to things related to the ākhirah
 - Includes everything that man has a need for
 - Recognition that Allah not only deserves our worship
 - But that worship is not complete without a sense of our endless need of Allah
 - “Oh mankind, you are in absolute need of Allah, while He is Free, worthy of all Praise” (Quran 35:15)

Understanding Reliance

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- Word “wakīl” comes from the same root letters
 - ▣ Means trustee or caretaker
 - The person who is put in charge of another due to their incapacity
 - So after recognizing their inability, they turn to, and put their trust in, one who is able
 - ▣ Also means lawyer
 - Because the lawyer stands up for you when you cannot
 - ▣ A wakīl is considered an extension of the other person
 - Idea is that we are an extension of Allah’s creation

Understanding Reliance

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- “And the one who relies on Allah, Allah will suffice for him”
(Quran 65:3)
 - ▣ So if we rely on Allah, Allah will take care of us
 - But if we rely on other than Allah, that is what we are left to
- Entire dīn is based on the idea of trust and reliance
 - ▣ We trust Allah that when He promises something, He will fulfill it
 - When the Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) says something, that it is a manifestation of Allah’s command
- “How amazing is the affair of the believer! Allah decrees nothing for His servant except that it is good for him”
(Ahmad)

Signs of Reliance

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- He neither has hopes in, nor fears, other than Allah
 - ▣ Its proof is speaking the truth in front of those who are normally feared
 - Or acting on the dīn in the face of its consequences
- Another is that worrying about sustenance never enters his heart
 - ▣ Because of Allah's guarantee to him
 - His trust in the writing of the angels when his soul was blown into his body
 - ▣ So his heart is tranquil when in need just as it is when his need is fulfilled
 - Story of the shaykh and his ship

Signs of Reliance

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- Another sign is that his heart remains firm in fearful situations
 - ▣ Knowing that what missed him, could never have hit him
 - And what hit him, could never have missed him
 - ▣ Losing a job, getting into an accident, missing a flight, a family member passing away or getting ill
 - Ties into belief in the divine decree

Effects of True Reliance

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- Does this mean we stop acting, stop taking medicine, stop asking others for help
 - ▣ Reliance is not about negating the means
 - Rather understanding that the means are inherently powerless
 - And that the only real power and authority lies solely with Allah
- When we perfect our reliance and patience upon Allah
 - ▣ We begin to see His help from the most unlikely of places
 - “Were you to rely on Allah as He should be relied on, He would provide for you as He provides for the birds, who go off hungry in the morning and return full in the evening” (Tirmidhī)
 - ▣ But if we don’t, then we begin to forget about Allah
 - Our focus comes upon the means, and not the Giver of the means
- Examples of saving Mūsā and curing Yūsuf’s father

Questions and Discussion

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