



Synopsis of Friday Sermon

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IONA
REPENTANCE
REVITALIZATION OF FAITH
RENEWAL OF COVENANT

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

"How to Taste the Sweetness of Iman"

Synopsis of the Friday Sermon delivered by Ameer Mustapha Elturk on November 29, 2013:

In a hadith narrated by al-Abbas Bin Abdul-Muttalib (the Prophet's uncle) recorded by Imam Muslim, the Prophet (SAW) said, "Indeed he who is pleased (and content) with Allah as his Lord (*Rubb*), Islam as his Deen and Muhammad as his Messenger has tasted the sweetness of faith (*iman*)."

How can one taste the sweetness of *iman*? We perceive taste through sensory organs called taste buds located on top of the tongue. The taste sensation and flavors are produced and determined when a substance in the mouth reacts with the receptors of taste buds. Thus sweet and bitter tastes can be experienced by the tongue.

Iman is neither a food nor a substance that can be tasted by the tongue. How would one then taste iman and which organ is responsible for that? The organ responsible for the taste of iman is the heart. The Prophet (SAW) once pointed to his chest declaring taqwa is here; indicating that iman is in the heart. We know from an ayah in surat al-Hujurat where, in response to the Bedouin Arabs who came to the Prophet (SAW) claiming iman, Allah (SWT) rejected their claim saying, "You have not yet come to believe, all you may say is 'We have surrendered,' and not until iman enters your heart" (*al-Hujurat, 49:14*). This ayah is a clear proof that the organ responsible for iman is the heart. If the heart is sound one may experience the sweet taste of iman. Otherwise, one's iman is either weak or the heart is so corrupt and damaged that there isn't a mustard seed's weight of iman in one's heart.

The tongue among other functions is used to articulate one's thoughts. One may express his faith by saying I believe, however it is the heart that may or may not confirm that profession of faith. To patiently endure the trials one goes through as a test of one's faith is a sign of a sound heart. Allah (SWT) says, "Do people think that they will be left alone on saying, 'We believe,' and not be tried? We have certainly tried those who came before so that Allah may for certain know the truthful ones and the liars" (*al-Ankabut, 29:2,3*).

To taste the sweetness of iman, one must be convinced of Allah's existence having a firm belief in Him as the only Supreme Being and Deity who is worthy of worship. One must put his full trust in Allah (SWT) and accept Him as his Lord and Master (*Rubb*). Thus the statement, I am pleased with Allah as my Lord, (*Raditu Bil-Lahi Rubba*).

The word, *raditu*, in the hadith comes from the root (Ra Da Wa), which carries several meanings. It means, to acknowledge, to accept, to confirm, to approve, to be satisfied with, to be content with and to be pleased with, among other meanings. The statement *Raditu Bil-Lahi Rubba*, conveys all these meanings and the implications of such a statement are:

1) *Rida bil-uluhiyyah*: To accept, be content and pleased with Allah (SWT) as the God, *Ilah*. In other words, nothing in the heavens nor on earth deserves or is worthy of worship except Allah (SWT). This is called *Tawhid*

al-Uluhiyyah, or Unity of God, i.e. to single Him out in worship with utmost sincerity.

2) *Rida bil-Rububiyyah*: To accept, be content and pleased with Allah (SWT) as *the* Lord or Master, *Rubb*. It is also to recognize Him as the sole Creator and Sustainer of everything and to firmly believe that He alone has the power to manage all affairs. Furthermore, to depend solely on Him and to seek help from no one else other than Him while accepting the Divine Decree He decreed for us. This can be summed up as *Tawhid al-Rububiyyah* or Unity of Lordship.

3) Another implication is to accept all His commands. One must be happy and content with Allah's final rulings and judgments for He is the true Ruler and Sovereign.

4) Finally, to be pleased with Allah (SWT) as *the* Master (*Rubb*), one must have extreme love, respect and reverence for Allah (SWT). In describing the believers, Allah (SWT) says, "*Those who (truly) believe, love Allah most passionately*" (*al-Baqarah*, 2:165).

The outcome of this contentment is for one to be happy and pleased with Islam as the only way of life Allah (SWT) decreed for His slaves and servants to follow; which confirms the statement from the hadith mentioned above, "I am pleased with Allah as my Lord and with Islam as my Deen."

To claim to be pleased with Islam as one's deen means that one accepts Islam as the only legitimate way of life with the purpose of genuinely guiding individuals and societies. In other words, one is to accept the final divine legislation, the Shariah of Allah (SWT) in its entirety. Allah (SWT) completed His favor upon humankind. This declaration appears in surat al-Ma'idah, "*Today I have perfected for you your Deen, completed My blessing upon you, and am well-pleased with Islam as your Deen (way of life)*" (*al-Ma'idah*, 5:3). If Allah (SWT) is happy and pleased with Islam as our way of life, why can't we then be happy with it as our way of life? After all it came from the One who knows and is Wise, (Hud, 11:1).

It is noteworthy to mention that the progression of Shariah started with Nuh (AS) and then Ibrahim (AS). Musa (AS) received the Torah (al-Taurat) filled with guidance and light, the divine commandments and legislation, and the do's and don'ts. The Prophets, Rabbis and scholars were entrusted to uphold and implement the Torah, so that the children of Israel may live with one another in peace and harmony and may prosper. Ending the legacy of Musa (AS), Isa (AS), the last messenger sent to the Children of Israel, was given the Injil or Gospel, which encompassed the Torah and confirmed the Shariah of Musa (AS). The Injil was again complete guidance to be followed. Allah (SWT) emphatically in surat al-Ma'idah, ayat 44-47, declared that those who don't judge by that which Allah (SWT) had sent (the divine law) are disbelievers, unjust, and rebellious.

Muhammad (SAW), Allah's final Prophet and Messenger, receives the last complete book of guidance, the Qur'an, that contains the final Shariah (law), from the Supreme Law-Giver Allah (SWT). This was the ultimate manifestation of Allah's grace and mercy upon His servants. Allah (SWT) promises those who follow His guidance to never fall in despair, be in a state of fear or be grieved. Whoever upholds and adheres to Allah's commands shall never go astray or be depressed, while those who turn away from His guidance, Allah (SWT) has assured them a miserable life (*al-Baqarah*, 2:38 and *TaHa*, 20:123,124). Hence, if anyone desires a life of contentment and peace, let him find it in Islam. While at the same it must be clear that, "*whoever desires a deen other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him, and he will be one of the losers in the Hereafter*" (*Aal Imran*, 3:86).

Our faith and way of life should bring us utmost contentment and happiness. This joy comes only when we accept Islam in its entirety, "*O you who believe enter into Islam totally*" (*al-Baqarah*, 2:209). A true believer will never reject any of Allah's commands in spite of his infallibility or inability to enforce all of Allah's commands. The sweet taste of iman comes from the constant struggle against one's baser self for the sole purpose of obeying Allah (SWT).

Sadly, the Deen of Allah has been replaced by the deen of the king or the people. God has been stripped

from His authority. The sweetness of iman may be tasted through the strenuous struggle exerting maximum effort to re-establish Allah's authority in this world making Islam a concrete historical reality. *Surat al-Shura* lays this responsibility upon the believers, the same responsibility that was once enjoined upon the great willed and determined messengers. *"In matters of faith, He ordained for you that which He enjoined upon Noah, that which We have revealed to you (O Muhammad), as well as that which We had enjoined upon Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, that you establish the deen and divide not therein"* (*al-Shura*, 42:13).

Conscious believers do their very best to uphold Islam in their lives wherever they may be. While recognizing our weaknesses one should never despair from Allah's grace. One must implore Allah for help believing that He alone can help. One develops the sense of conviction (*yaqin*) and confidence that He, the almighty, *will* take care of him.

Believers who are mindful of their duties promote and disseminate the ideology and world view of Islam to the masses sharing this great blessing as our Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and his noble companions did. It is through such efforts; treading the footsteps of Allah's last and final noble, upright, honest and truthful Prophet and Messenger Muhammad (SAW), one may taste the sweetness of iman. Being pleased and content with Muhammad (SAW) as a messenger implies:

1) Complete obedience to him: Allah (SWT) has commanded the believers to obey Muhammad (SAW). Obeying Allah's Messenger is in essence obedience to Allah (SWT) (*al-Nisa'*, 4:59 and 80).

2) Unconditional love for him: It is incumbent upon the believers to love Muhammad (SAW) more than anyone including oneself besides Allah (SWT). In an agreed upon hadith found in *sahih al-Bukhari* and *Muslim*, he (SAW) says, "None of you attains faith until I become dearer to him than his own son, father and all mankind." Another authentic hadith found in the two *sahih* says, "[There are] three traits and whoever possesses them shall experience the sweetness of iman; to love Allah and His Messenger more than anyone else; to love people only for the sake of Allah; and to hate to return to disbelief after Allah has saved him from it as much as he hates to be thrown into Fire."

3) Follow his example: Contrary to obedience, one who is truly pleased and content with Muhammad (SAW) as Allah's Messenger would want to follow him in every aspect of one's life including the arduous journey he undertook to making His Lord Supreme. In one of His instructions, Allah (SWT) says, *"Say (O Prophet): 'If you love Allah, follow me, [and] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins; for Allah is Forgiving, Merciful'"* (*Aal Imran*, 3:31).

4) Defend him: It is not a choice to defend our noble Prophet (SAW). Allah (SWT) commanded us to do so, *"O you who believe! Obey Allah and His Messenger and do not turn away from him now that you hear (his message)"* (*al-Anfal*, 8:20). The Prophet of Allah survived many attacks in the past and will continue to triumph over the bigots and hate mongers who slander him and attack Islam. We must be proactive in our approach to dawah. The least we can do is convey to the masses one ayah on his behalf.

The love of Allah's Messenger is connected with the love of Allah (SWT) and ranks second to it. The following ayah helps one appreciate the aforementioned hadith. *"Say O Prophet! 'If your fathers, sons, brothers, spouses, relatives, the wealth you have acquired, the trade which you fear will decline, and the dwellings you love are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger and the struggle in His cause, then wait until Allah brings out His Decree.' Allah will not guide the rebellious ones"* (*al-Tawbah*, 9:24).

Therefore, in order to taste the sweetness of iman, one must unconditionally be pleased and content with Allah as the Master and Lord, Islam as the only true deen and way of life and to be pleased with Muhammad (SAW) as the seal of all prophets and Messengers who continued the legacy of his predecessors and preached, there is no god but Allah.

The Prophet (SAW) instructed the believers, “*Whoever says, when one hears the call to prayer (adhan) I am pleased with Allah as my Lord, with Islam as my deen and with Muhammad as my Messenger, his sins will be forgiven*” (Muslim). May this statement move our hearts whenever it is uttered.

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