

RAMADAN

IMMERSION



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Waheed

Introduction

The Importance of Focus

- When a lesson is being taught, a student must pay attention and retain focus so that the knowledge reaches their heart.
 - Allah said:

فَبَشِّرْ عِبَادِ ﴿١٧﴾ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمْ
أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿١٨﴾

So give good news to My servants 'O Prophet'— those who listen to what is said and follow the best of it. These are the ones 'rightly' guided by Allah, and these are 'truly' the people of reason. (39:17-18)

- In every lesson, a student should engage in active, not passive, listening, allowing their entire body to participate in the learning process.

Healing After Loss

- Our sessions will provide guidance on managing loss and overcoming adversity.

How to Respond to Loss?

- **1. Determining our response to our state**
 - Our condition doesn't determine our state but our response to it does.
 - How we respond to our state determines our outcome (i.e. reward, sin etc.) — our response is what Allah awaits.

- According to scholars there are four states of human response:
 - 1. Ta'ah (obedience):
 - This is a rewarding state, but the determining factor is how we respond afterward. For example, how do we respond after fasting — that's what truly counts.
 - When Allah grants tawfiq (ability), our immediate response is to acknowledge that this accomplishment was made possible only by Him.
 - We learn to respond to Allah's tawfiq when the muezzin calls to the adhan, by saying "La hawla wala quwwata illa billah" (There is no might or power except with Allah) when he says "Hayya 'alas-salah" and "Hayya 'alal-falah".
 - This phrase affirms that all might, capacity, and ni'mah (blessing) originate from Allah, highlighting our complete dependency on Him
 - A comprehensive supplication is asking for tawfiq (ability) and qaysir (ease), seeking to be granted opportunities by Him."
 - 2. Ma'siyah (disobedience)
 - Responses to sin vary. Some people respond to a sin by committing further transgressions — such as encouraging others to sin. Others respond by making tawbah (repentance).
 - Allah will not judge us based on our sins alone, but He will reward us for our repentance.
 - Even when we sin, we are never far from Allah, He is waiting for our tawbah and loves those who constantly seek His forgiveness.
 - Abu Hurairah reported Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) having said:

" وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَوْ لَمْ تُذْنِبُوا لَدَهَبَ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ وَلَجَاءَ بِقَوْمٍ يُذْنِبُونَ فَيَسْتَعْفِفُونَ اللَّهَ فَيَغْفِرُ لَهُمْ "

By Him in Whose Hand is my life, if you were not to commit sin, Allah would sweep you out of existence and He would replace (you by) those people who would commit sin and seek forgiveness from Allah, and He would have pardoned them. (Sahih Muslim)

- We shouldn't get caught up in our sins. We all sin, but what matters is immediately turning back to Allah through tawbah.
 - Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, said,

إِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنَ يَرَىٰ ذُنُوبَهُ كَأَنَّهُ قَاعِدٌ تَحْتَ جَبَلٍ يَخَافُ أَنْ يَقَعَ عَلَيْهِ وَإِنَّ الْفَاجِرَ يَرَىٰ ذُنُوبَهُ
كَذُبَابٍ مَرَّ عَلَىٰ أَنْفِهِ

“Verily, the believer views his sins as if he were sitting under a mountain, fearing it will fall upon him. The wicked views his sins as if they were a fly passing over his nose.” (Sahih al-Bukhari)

- This is the reason why our pious predecessors urged us to spend time with those who frequently make tawbah, as their hearts are soft and tender.
- 3. Ni'mah (blessing)
 - The ni'mah we receive doesn't determine our closeness with Allah.
 - Receiving ni'mah like children doesn't necessarily mean Allah is pleased with us.
 - Tests from Allah manifest as either increased ni'mah or greater adversity.
 - The response to ni'mah should be gratitude. Allah responds to our gratitude for His ni'mah; the more grateful we are, the more we earn His love and favor.
 - In showing gratitude, there are three levels:
 - 1. The ni'mah (The Blessing): This refers to the blessing being given (i.e. abundance in wealth). True gratitude involves acknowledging this as a gift, not just a result of one's own effort.
 - 2. The Mun'am (The recipient): This refers to the person who is being blessed. Recognizing oneself as the recipient brings humility and requires that the blessings be used to draw closer to Allah rather than as a distraction.

- 3. The Mu'nim (The Bestower of Blessing): This refers to Allah, the one who is blessing. This is the highest level of gratitude — recognizing that the blessing came from Him and that He is worthy of praise, regardless of whether the blessing increases or decreases.
- Many people either become lost in the ni'mah they have, or get lost in themselves, consumed by their own ego and feel entitled to the ni'mah. However, only a select few are truly grateful to Allah for His ni'mah.
- Allah refers to these select few as shakur (grateful). It is crucial that we remain focused on thanking the Giver, not just the gift. He tells us:

وَقَلِيلٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِيَ الشَّكُورُ

'Only' a few of My servants are 'truly' grateful. (34:13)

- Difference between shakir and shakur:
 - Shakir (The Appreciator) — Referring to someone who is grateful, thankful, or appreciative.
 - Shakur (The Extensively Grateful) — Referring to someone who is the "most appreciative," "constantly thankful," or one who always directs everything back to Allah.
 - A shakur appreciates every ni'mah without becoming attached to it, maintaining a constant state of thanking Allah.
- Our ni'mah should lead us to humility and closeness to Allah. For example, an increase in wealth should result in a stronger connection with Him.
- An example of gratitude:
 - Towards the end of Abdullah ibn Mas'ud's life, whenever he performed salah and raised his hands to the back of his ears for takbirat al-ihram, they were shaking. When he was asked why he persisted, he said: "I have seen the behavior of the donkey. The more you feed it, the harder it works."
 - This teaching highlights that Allah has blessed us abundantly. Hence, the more Allah grants us, the heavier our responsibility to be grateful to Him.

- 4. Musibah (loss/difficulty)
 - Allah tests those He loves, which is why we face trials like loss.
 - Abu Hurairah reported: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said,

مَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ بِهِ خَيْرًا يُصِبْ مِنْهُ

"If Allah wills good for someone, He afflicts him with trials." (Sahih al-Bukhari)

- Both Muslims and non-Muslims experience loss. However, as Muslims, our response to loss is different because we turn to Allah. We say 'Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un' and offer du'a.
- The test isn't in the condition we are in. It starts in our response towards the loss — it is in doing what is right as part of healing.
- Life is unpredictable and loss is inevitable. During such times, the Prophet (ﷺ) advised that the best request for strengthening iman in is to ask Allah for afiyah (overall well-being).
 - Mu`adh bin Rifa`ah narrated from his father, that he said: "Abu Bakr stood upon the Minbar, then wept, and said: 'The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) stood upon the Minbar the first year (of Hijrah), then wept, and said:

" سَلُوا اللَّهَ الْعَفْوَ وَالْعَافِيَةَ فَإِنَّ أَحَدًا لَمْ يُعْطَ بَعْدَ الْيَقِينِ خَيْرًا مِنَ الْعَافِيَةِ " .

"Ask Allah for pardon and Al-`Āfiyah (well-being). None of you is given anything after Yaqeen (certainty), anything better than Al-`Āfiyah (well-being). (Jami` at-Tirmidhi)

- **2. Changing our perspective about loss**
 - Islam teaches that healing involves changing one's perception — the lens of how we view life and live it; it reframes our perspective.

- Allah tells us:

وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتٌ بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ

*Never say that those martyred in the cause of Allah are dead—in fact, they are alive!
But you do not perceive it. (2:154)*

- We need to step back and widen our perspective. We are too zoomed in on the immediate details, which keeps us from seeing the bigger picture — the akhirah.
- This is why Allah mentions death before life in Surah Al-Mulk (67:2). It serves to remind us of the certainty of the afterlife. The purpose of life is to prepare us for what comes after death.
- We must maintain yaqeen (certainty) and anchor ourselves in Allah's promises to prevent us from drowning in the midst of trials.
 - Mu 'awiyah bin Qurrah narrated that his father said:

كَانَ نَبِيُّ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِذَا جَلَسَ يَجْلِسُ إِلَيْهِ نَفَرٌ مِنْ أَصْحَابِهِ وَفِيهِمْ رَجُلٌ لَهُ ابْنٌ صَغِيرٌ يَأْتِيهِ مِنْ خَلْفِ ظَهْرِهِ فَيُقْعِدُهُ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ فَهَلْكَ فَاْمْتَنَعَ الرَّجُلُ أَنْ يَحْضُرَ الْحَلْقَةَ لِذِكْرِ ابْنِهِ فَحَزِنَ عَلَيْهِ فَفَقَدَهُ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ " مَا لِي لَا أَرَى فُلَانًا " .
قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ بَنِيهِ الَّذِي رَأَيْتَهُ هَلْكَ . فَلَقِيَهُ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَسَأَلَهُ عَنْ بَنِيهِ فَأَخْبَرَهُ أَنَّهُ هَلْكَ فَعَزَّاهُ عَلَيْهِ ثُمَّ قَالَ " يَا فُلَانُ أَيُّمَا كَانَ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْكَ أَنْ تَمْتَعَ بِهِ عُمْرَكَ أَوْ لَا تَأْتِي غَدًا إِلَى بَابٍ مِنْ أَبْوَابِ الْجَنَّةِ إِلَّا وَجَدْتَهُ قَدْ سَبَقَكَ إِلَيْهِ يَفْتَحُهُ لَكَ " . قَالَ يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ بَلْ يَسْبِقُنِي إِلَى بَابِ الْجَنَّةِ فَيَفْتَحُهَا لِي لَهْوٍ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ . قَالَ " فَذَاكَ لَكَ " .

"When the Prophet of Allah sat, some of his Companions would sit with him. Among them was a man who had a little son who used to come to him from behind, and he would make him sit in front of him. He (the child) died, and the man stopped attending the circle because it reminded him of his son, and made him feel sad. The Prophet missed him and said: 'Why do I not see so-and-so?' They said: O Messenger of Allah, his son whom you saw has died.' The Prophet met him and asked him about his son, and he told him that he had died. He offered his condolences and said: 'O son-and-so, which would you like better, to enjoy his company all you life, or to come to any of the gates of Paradise on the Day of Resurrection, and find that he arrived there before you, and he is opening the gate for you?' he said: 'O Prophet of Allah! For him to get to the gate of Paradise before me and open it for me is dearer to me.' He said: 'You will have that.'" (Sunan an-Nasa'i)

- We can find comfort in the thought of death, knowing that the Prophet (ﷺ) awaits us at al-Hawd and that our loved ones are preparing for our arrival in Paradise.
- Examples of reframing loss:
 - Due to their extreme focus on the afterlife, upon hearing news of a Muslim passing away with husnul khatimah (a good ending), the Sahabah would rejoice after tearing. Abu Darda viewed death in a good state as a success. He would exclaim, "Congratulations! I wish I were in that place."
 - When Ja'far ibn Abi Talib, the cousin of Prophet (ﷺ), was martyred at the Battle of Mu'tah, his arms were severed. The Prophet (ﷺ) revealed that Allah replaced his arms with two wings, allowing him to fly wherever he wishes in Paradise alongside the angels.
 - Amr ibn Tufayl lost his arm in the battle of Yamama. During the caliphate of Umar ibn al-Khattab, when he arrived at a gathering, his arm was still in a condition. He moved to a different area due to the wound or stump that was present. Umar called him back and remarked to those present: "There is no one on the face of the earth whose part of his body is in Jannah, except for 'Amr."
 - Though Uhud was a site of profound grief and loss of their loved ones, the Prophet (ﷺ) gave the Sahabah a new perspective from tragedy to affection, declaring love for the mountain, as it brought us closer to Allah. And every time we approach Uhud today, we feel the same love that the Prophet (ﷺ) spoke of.
 - Anas ibn Malik narrated: Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) cast a glance at Uhud and said:

"إِنَّ أَحَدًا جَبَلٌ يُحِبُّنَا وَنُحِبُّهُ ."

"Uhud is a mountain which loves us and we love it." (Sahih Muslim)