

THE BOOK OF ASSISTANCE - A SPIRITUAL ASCENSION



Imam Khalid Latif

The Book of Assistance – A Spiritual Ascension

- During his session, Imam Khalid Latif will be going over a text on Islamic spirituality, called the Book of Assistance, written by Imam Abdullah Al-Haddad.
- Before we go into the text, Imam Khalid explains to us what “spirituality” is. We understand the world around us through the meaning that we attribute to words, so it is important that we have the correct understanding.

What is spirituality?

- You may have heard a common phrase that is tossed around often, that you “find your purpose.” This is largely the spirituality that the West is subscribed to. Instead, Imam Khalid explains that spirituality is to create meaning in what you experience and see around you.

Hadith Jibreel

- حَدَّثَنَا مُسَدَّدٌ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، أَخْبَرَنَا أَبُو حَيَّانَ التَّمِيمِيُّ، عَنْ أَبِي زُرْعَةَ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بَارِزًا يَوْمًا لِلنَّاسِ، فَأَتَاهُ جِبْرِيلُ فَقَالَ مَا الْإِيمَانُ قَالَ " الْإِيمَانُ أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَبِلِقَائِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ، وَتُؤْمِنَ بِالْبَعْثِ " . قَالَ مَا الْإِسْلَامُ قَالَ " الْإِسْلَامُ أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكَ بِهِ، وَتُقِيمَ الصَّلَاةَ، وَتُؤَدِّيَ الزَّكَاةَ الْمَفْرُوضَةَ، وَتَصُومَ رَمَضَانَ " . قَالَ مَا الْإِحْسَانُ قَالَ " أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ، فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ " . قَالَ مَتَى السَّاعَةُ قَالَ " مَا الْمَسْئُولُ عَنْهَا بِأَعْلَمَ مِنَ السَّائِلِ، وَسَأخْبِرُكَ عَنْ أَشْرَاطِهَا إِذَا وَلَدَتِ الْأُمَّةُ رَبَّهَا، وَإِذَا تَطَاوَلَ رُغَاةُ الْإِبِلِ الْبُهِمُ فِي الْبُنْيَانِ، فِي خَمْسٍ لَا يَعْلَمُهُنَّ إِلَّا اللَّهُ " . ثُمَّ تَلَا النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ {إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ} الْآيَةَ. ثُمَّ أَدْبَرَ فَقَالَ " رُدُّوهُ " . فَلَمْ يَرَوْا شَيْئًا. فَقَالَ " هَذَا جِبْرِيلُ جَاءَ يُعَلِّمُ النَّاسَ دِينَهُمْ " . قَالَ أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ جَعَلَ ذَلِكَ كُلَّهُ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ.

- Narrated Abu Huraira: One day while the Prophet (ﷺ) was sitting in the company of some people, (The angel) Gabriel came and asked, "What is faith?" Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) replied, 'Faith is to believe in Allah, His angels, (the) meeting with Him, His Apostles, and to believe in Resurrection.'" Then he further asked, "What is Islam?" Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) replied, "To worship Allah Alone and none else, to offer prayers perfectly to pay the compulsory charity (Zakat) and to observe fasts during the month of Ramadan." Then he further asked, "What is Ihsan (perfection)?"

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) replied, "To worship Allah as if you see Him, and if you cannot achieve this state of devotion then you must consider that He is looking at you." Then he further asked, "When will the Hour be established?" Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) replied, "The answerer has no better knowledge than the questioner. But I will inform you about its portents. 1. When a slave (lady) gives birth to her master. 2. When the shepherds of black camels start boasting and competing with others in the construction of higher buildings. And the Hour is one of five things which nobody knows except Allah. The Prophet (ﷺ) then recited: "Verily, with Allah (Alone) is the knowledge of the Hour--." (31. 34) Then that man (Gabriel) left and the Prophet (ﷺ) asked his companions to call him back, but they could not see him. Then the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "That was Gabriel who came to teach the people their religion." Abu 'Abdullah said: He (the Prophet) considered all that as a part of faith.

Sahih al-Bukhari 50

Dimensions of Islam

- In the Hadith Jibreel, it is explained that Islam is of three components, imaan, islam and ihsaan.
- Rituals in Islam, prayer, fasting, etc., relate to the second component, islam. These are important practices that Imam Khalid compares to a straight line, however, without the other two components, the practice becomes flat. Imaan makes the faith two-dimensional, and ihsaan gives it depth. Ihsaan relates to our experiences and spirituality. It allows us to grow and gives us a deeper perspective of what is around us.
- These three concepts are bound by time, which Allah SWT gives to us.

Effects of Spirituality

- Among other things, spirituality allows us to see things the way the Prophet SAW did with his mercy and patience with human beings. We can correct our behavior from ills such as microaggressions and racism and we are able to truly connect with other human beings. It allows us to engage with other people's opinions without being fully enveloped by them.

Certainty, the Ultimate Goal

- In the book, Imam Haddad explains that the ultimate goal of spirituality is to create yaqeen (certainty). You can be anywhere on the spectrum of rituals, but it all leads to the same goal of yaqeen. That path to certainty looks different for every human being, but it all leads to the same destination. May Allah SWT allow us to develop this certainty within our faith. Ameen

Imam Khalid Latif will be beginning the material next week.

FAQs

- In Islam, what is meant by spirituality?
- In Islam, what are the four adversaries to our spirituality?
- What does dunya mean?
- What is the purpose of having multiple dimensions applied to our religion as opposed to having one dimension such as actions?
- What is displayed outwardly through our actions and speech?