

MIFTAAH SEMINAR

THE PRESCRIPTION FOR SUCCESS



Ustadha Zaynab Ansari

SESSION 1

The Role of the Quran

- The Quran has the role of correcting the theological mistakes that were being made by the People of the Book at that time.
 - By the time the Quran had come down, there were several various sects of Christianity which had all changed the original religion.
 - The message of the previous scriptures was distorted.
- The Quran also abrogates those previous revelations.
 - All scriptures that came before were not to be followed after the Quran was revealed.
- The Quran also gives us a window into the life of the Prophet SAW.
- The Quran's various roles make it very complex and diverse.
 - It is not linear and it does not follow a chronological order.
 - There are unifying themes throughout the Quran but they do not follow a chronological order.

- The Quran is explained through the life and the seerah of the Prophet SAW.
- The Quran was sent down from the Lawh Ul-Mahfoodh to the skies of this world at one time and then it was revealed to the Prophet SAW over the span of 23 years.
 - Revelations came down as a response to various situations that were happening throughout the life of the Prophet SAW.
- Ibn Al-Qayyim stated that the heart is the receptacle for the Quran.
 - The other faculties (eyes, ears, tongue, mind, etc.) are secondary.
 - This explains why a person who does not speak any Arabic and doesn't know much about Islam can feel such a big impact when they read the Quran.
 - The condition of their heart allows them to be impacted.
 - This concept is discussed in Surah Al-Hujurat:

قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ آمَنَّا ۗ قُلْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَلَكِنْ قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا وَلَمَّا يَدْخُلِ
 الْإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ ۚ وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَا يَلِتْكُمْ مِّنْ أَعْمَالِكُمْ
 شَيْئًا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

The Bedouins say: "We believe." (O Prophet), say to them: "You do not believe; you should rather say: 'We have submitted'"; for belief has not yet entered your hearts. If you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not diminish anything from the reward of any of your deeds. Surely Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Compassionate. (49:14)

- Allah SWT draws a distinction between Islam and Iman in this ayah.
- In the same way that the Quran was revealed gradually, the belief of a Muslim will gradually enter their heart.
- Islam is the actions which we do (salah, zakat, fasting, etc.)
 - It answers the question of 'what are we doing?'
- Iman answers the question of 'why are we doing what we are doing?'
- Ihsan tells us how we should be doing these actions.
 - Actions should be done with conviction in Allah SWT and with sincerity.

The Example of Prophet Yacoub AS

- In the story of Prophet Yusuf AS, he sees a dream in which the stars, the sun, and the moon bow to him.
 - Prophet Yacoub AS immediately recognized the symbolism of this dream and he told Yusuf AS not to tell his brothers because they would be jealous and plot against him.
- When the brothers threw Yusuf AS in the well and they told their father, Yacoub AS, that a wolf had eaten Yusuf AS, Yacoub AS knew that they were lying.
- Later on, Yusuf AS was put in prison and when he got out, someone told the king that Yusuf AS was able to interpret dreams.

- Yusuf AS was then placed in a high position. When his brothers came to Egypt for business, Yusuf AS recognized them and he placed an item in Bin Yameen's bag. People thought he was stealing and he was not allowed to go back home with the brothers.
- Now the brothers would have to go back to their father and tell him that they lost another brother of theirs.
- The lesson is in the reaction of Prophet Yacoub AS. He stated:

يٰۤاِبْنِيَ اذْهَبُوْا فَتَحَسَّسُوْا مِنْ يُّوسُفَ وَاٰخِيْهِ وَلَا تَاْيَسُوْا مِنْ رَّوْحِ اللّٰهِ
 اِنَّهٗ لَا يَآيَسُ مِنْ رَّوْحِ اللّٰهِ اِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ

My sons! Go and try to find out about Joseph and his brother and do not despair of Allah's mercy. Verily only the unbelievers despair of Allah's mercy." (12:87)

- Although Yacoub AS is deeply saddened by this news, he does not lash out at his sons.
 - Instead he reassured them that Allah SWT is merciful and he told them to go and find Yusuf AS and his brother.
- Allah SWT is teaching us through this story that the one who does not lose sight of Allah and the one who does not despair in the mercy of Allah is the true Mu'min (believer).
 - There is a difference between feeling a specific emotion, like sadness or anger, and processing it and giving in to that emotion to the point where a person becomes paralyzed and crippled.

- A Muslim will experience sadness and hardship, but the one who has true Iman will be able to process these emotions without letting it take over completely.
- This ayah gives us the correct example of how a Muslim should react in a time of hardship.

Advice From Surah Al-Mu'minun

- Surah Al-Mu'minun is a Meccan surah.
- Its subjects fall into 2 main categories:
 - Salvation
 - An examination of the categories of human beings
 - The believer vs the non believer
 - The one who is happy vs the one who is not happy
 - This happiness refers to both happiness in this world and the eternal happiness in Jannah.
- Allah SWT describes the believer as being eternally happy.
 - This does not mean that a believer can not happy in this life.
 - It is important to understand that our faith plays a role in the hereafter as well as in this life.
 - Islam teaches us how to deal with the various challenges of life.
 - It is not a religion which tells us to completely detach from society and isolate ourselves.
 - It is a religion of balance which teaches us that we are to live in this world but we are not to become completely immersed in worldly matters.

- The first ayah states:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

The believers have indeed attained true success (23:1)

- Allah SWT used the past tense form with the word أَفْلَحَ
 - This is the strongest type of verb.
 - It indicates that the Muslims were successful in the past, are successful in the present, and will be successful in the future.
- It is critical that we have the proper definition of what it means to be successful.
 - People have different tests and tribulations in this life and there is not one specific way, in terms of worldly matters, which makes a person successful.
- Allah SWT defines this success in the next ayahs. In Ayah 2 He states:

الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ

Those who, in their Prayers, humble themselves (23:2)

- The first thing that Allah SWT mentions when it comes to success is a private act.
 - Having humility in salah is not something that anyone else would know a person has.
 - Allah does not start off the definition of success with those who are knowledgeable or those who give zakat (both public acts of worship).

- Imam Ghazali considered humility/khushu' in salah to be a pillar of salah just like the standing position or reciting surah Al-Fatiha is.
- Ayah 3 states:

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ

Who avoid whatever is vain and frivolous (23:3)

- The believer is the one who takes active steps to remove that from their life which does not benefit them.
 - They will not waste their time indulging in useless talk.
- Ayah 4 states:

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلزَّكَاةِ فَاعِلُونَ

Who observe Zakah (23:4)

- The believer is the one who actively seeks out ways to help others.
 - They look for those who need help and go out of their ways to help them.
 - A believer would understand that it is the right of the poor to have a part in their success.
- The next ayahs state:

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأُزْوَاجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ

Who strictly guard their private parts (23:5)

إِلَّا عَلَىٰ أَرْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ

Save from their wives, or those whom their right hands possess; for with regard to them they are free from blame (23:6)

فَمَنْ ابْتَغَىٰ وَرَاءَ ذَٰلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعُدُونَ

As for those who seek beyond that, they are transgressors (23:7)

- Allah SWT then speaks about chastity and the importance of following the rules which Allah SWT has placed.
- Ayah 8 states:

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمْتِنَتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ

Who are true to their trusts and their covenants (23:8)

- Allah SWT reminds us that a believer is one who keeps their word.
- The Prophet SAW stated that the signs of a hypocrite are that when they speak they lie, when they become angry they become abusive, and they break their promises.
 - One should be very careful, even when speaking to children, not to break their promises.
- The next ayahs state:

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ

And who guard their Prayers (23:9)

أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْوَارِثُونَ

Such are the inheritors (23:10)

الَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

That shall inherit Paradise; and in it they shall abide forever (23:11)

- Allah SWT summarizes the success by stating that these people will be in Jennah eternally.