MIFTAAH SEMINAR

THE BRIDEGROOM'S CROWN: PART 2

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SESSION 3

Ibn Ata Allah said:

"The likeness of a servant of God that commits a sin is like a new pot, which has a flame placed under it. If you commit this act of sin once, there will be some darkening of the pot. Every time you sin, you're like that pot with a flame placed under it, and as a result, the pot darkens. If you rush to wash the pot, you will find that the darkness can be removed very easily. Similarly, if you wash the pot immediately after cooking in it, it removes the darkness very easily."

- This analogy emphasizes that when we fall into sin—and all of us inevitably will—we must rush to repent and cleanse our hearts.

- The Prophet Muhammad said:

كلُّ بَنِي آدَمَ خَطَّاءُونَ، وَخَيْرُ الخَطَّائِينَ التَّوَابُونَ

"All of the children of Adam make mistakes, and the best of those who make mistakes are those who repent."

- Arabic rhetoricians note that the term **إنسان** (human being) derives from the root **نسيه** (to forget). This reflects our nature as beings prone to forgetfulness and mistakes. Therefore, it is crucial to repent to Allah promptly to avoid the harmful effects of sins on our hearts.

- The Prophet Muhammad said:

اتَّقِ اللهَ حَيْثُمَا كُنْتَ

"Fear Allah wherever you are."

- This advice is profound and applicable in all circumstances. Whether at home, at work, in wealth or poverty, in power or weakness, one must maintain taqwa (consciousness of Allah).

Explanation of the Prophet's Speech

- The Prophet said:

إِنِّي أُوْتِيَت جَوَامِعَ الْكَلَامِ

"Truly, I have been given a concise speech that contains tremendous meanings."

  - For example, the Prophet said:

وَأَتْبِعِ السَّيِّئَةَ الْحَسَنَةَ تَمْحُهَا

"Follow a bad deed with a good deed, and it will erase it."

This demonstrates the merciful nature of Allah, who allows us to rectify our mistakes by performing good deeds.

Ibn Ata Allah advises:

"If you rush to cleanse the heart, it does not carry the impact of sin. When one does something wrong, rush to repent to Allah and ask for forgiveness. Do not delay."

- He compares delaying repentance to drinking poison and procrastinating on taking its antidote:

"The one who commits a sin and says, 'I'll get around to repenting,' is like the one who imbibes poison and then says, 'I'll get around to taking the antidote.' What if one time you imbibe the poison and do not reach its antidote?"

- This is why we constantly pray to Allah for a good ending and prompt forgiveness.

Ibn Ata Allah explains:

"But if you leave that pot, you cook in it over and over again, then that darkness cements itself onto the pot until the pot becomes of no use."

- Ibn Ata Allah uses the metaphor of a pot to illustrate the impact of recurring sin on the heart.

- **He explains:**
  - If a pot is used for cooking repeatedly without being cleaned, the darkness (residue) accumulates and hardens.
  - Similarly, committing sins continuously without repentance allows darkness to encrust the heart.
- **He references a hadith of the Prophet (ﷺ):**
  - Every time a person commits a sin, a mark of darkness appears on their heart.
  - If the person repents, the mark is removed.
  - However, if they persist in sin, the marks continue to accumulate until the heart is entirely covered in darkness.

Ibn Ata Allah states:

"That darkness is like encrustation upon the pot, and attempting to wash the pot now is of no use."

- **Tawbah (repentance)** is what removes this darkness from the heart.

Ibn Ata Allah explains:

“If God makes you a person of repentance, your actions will emerge, and upon them will be the traces of acceptance.”

- **Explanation:**
  - Actions are not accepted because of their perfection but because they are performed with a heart that repents to Allah.
  - The key to acceptance is seeking forgiveness and repentance.
- **Quranic Reference:**
  - Allah describes those who seek His forgiveness in the early hours of the morning as people of worship and goodness.
  - These individuals pray Tahajjud, perform Fajr, and engage in virtuous acts, yet remain diligent in seeking Allah's forgiveness.

Aisha (RA)'s Advice on Spiritual Awareness

- Someone once came to Aisha (RA) and asked for spiritual advice.
  - The Prophet (ﷺ) said about her:

خذوا نصف دينكم من هذه الحميراء

"Take half of your religion from this noble woman."

- **The Conversation:**
  - The person asked: "O Mother of the Believers, how will I know when I am sinful?"
    - Aisha (RA) replied:
    - **"You will know that you are sinful when you know that you are righteous."**
  - Then the person asked: "How will I know that I am one of the righteous?"
    - Aisha (RA) replied:
    - **"When you know that you are one of the sinful, then you will know that you are one of the righteous."**

The Prophet's ﷺ Example of Repentance

- The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is reported to have said:

"I seek Allah's forgiveness seventy times a day."

  - Despite being sinless, the Prophet ﷺ sought forgiveness regularly, modeling for us the behavior of a true servant of Allah.

Ibn Ata Allah says:

"Seek repentance from God, seek the ability to repent at all times; if you are successful with repentance, you have made good use of your time. Repentance is a gift from God. God places repentance wherever He wants among His servants. Maybe God will make an enslaved person a person of tawbah, and the person who owns him will not become a person of tawbah."

1. **Repentance is a Divine Gift:**
   - Repentance is not earned; it is a gift bestowed by Allah upon whom He wills.
   - Social standing, status, or association do not guarantee the gift of repentance.
2. **Examples of Repentance:**
   - A person of low social standing might be blessed with tawbah, while someone over them may not.
   - A woman may be granted repentance, while her husband is not.
     - Example: **Asiyah (AS)** was among the women promised Jannah despite her husband being Fir'awn.
   - A young person may be given tawbah, while an older person is not.
3. **Allah's Love for Those Who Repent:**
   - Ibn Ata Allah emphasizes that Allah loves those who turn to Him in repentance.

إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُحِبُّ ٱلتَّوَّٰبِينَ وَيُحِبُّ ٱلۡمُتَطَهِّرِينَ

"Indeed, Allah loves those who constantly repent and those who purify themselves." (Surah Al-Baqarah: 222)

Ibn Ata Allah explains:

"But only a person who understands the value of something envies it. The only person who envies someone for something is a person who understands the value of what they have."

- **Understanding Ghibtah vs. Hasad:**
  - **Hasad (Envy):** Wanting a person to lose the blessing they possess.
  - **Ghibtah (Aspirational Envy):** Desiring to have a blessing similar to what someone else has, while wishing for them to retain it.
- **The Importance of Valuing Repentance (Tawbah):**
  - A person can only envy others for something they truly

- understand and value.
- If one does not recognize the value of repentance, they will not long for it or envy those who have it.

- **Illustration of Value with an Example:**
  - Ibn Ata Allah gives a metaphor:

"If you took an emerald and threw it among animals, barley would have been preferable to them."

    - Animals cannot appreciate the value of an emerald and prefer barley due to their limited understanding.
  - Similarly, if one does not understand the worth of tawbah, they will not aspire to attain it or envy those who have it.
- **Misplaced Envy:**
  - Those who do not understand the value of repentance may only envy material possessions, such as:
    - Nice cars.
    - Big homes.
    - Large bank accounts.
- **Aspiration for Tawbah:**
  - If one truly grasps the significance of repentance, they will:
    - Envy those granted the ability (tawfiq) to repent.
    - Strive to become like them in seeking Allah's forgiveness and returning to Him (inabah).

Ibn Ata Allah says:

"So look at yourself and ask yourself, 'What team am I from?' If you make tawbah (repentance), you are among those beloved to Allah. If you fail to repent, you are among the oppressors. But in this case, the only person you are oppressing is yourself."

- **Evaluating Your Relationship with Mistakes:**
  - If you repent after making mistakes, you are among those beloved to Allah.
  - If you fail to repent, you are from the wrongdoers (ظالمون).

ومن لم يتب فأولئك هم الظالمون

"And those who do not repent are among the oppressors." (Surah Al-Hujurat 49:11)

- **Repentance as a Path to Success:**
  - Whoever repents is successful.
  - Whoever fails to repent is a loser, oppressing only themselves.

Avoid Despair in Tawbah:

- **Do Not Give Up Hope:**
  - Do not say, "How many times have I made tawbah only to break my commitment?"
  - Ibn Ata Allah advises:

"Be like a sick person who still desires to live as long as their soul is in their body."

- **Prophetic Teaching on Hope:**
  - The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ instructed giving positive reinforcement to the sick:
    - Encourage them, saying, "You will get better."
    - The goal is to instill a good opinion of Allah in their hearts.
  - Similarly, for the spiritually sick, never give up hope in Allah's mercy and forgiveness.

Ibn Ata Allah explains:

"Be like the person shooting at the target. Even if they do not hit the bullseye, they are emboldened to keep shooting. One of those shots may hit the target."

- Keep striving, even if you repeatedly fall into the same sin.
- The Prophet ﷺ, after finishing a meal, licked his fingers and said: *"We do not know where Allah has placed the blessing in the meal."*
- Similarly, you do not know where Allah has placed the tawfiq (divine enablement) in your repentance.

Hope is from the Sunnah:

1. **Hope in Allah and Yourself:**
   - Strive repeatedly, knowing that perhaps this time will be the moment of success.
   - Never close the door of tawbah yourself; Allah never tires of accepting repentance.
2. **Allah's Attributes of Forgiveness:**
   - **Allah is At-Tawwab:** The Oft-Accepting of Repentance.
   - **Allah is Ar-Raheem:** The Most Merciful.

Ibn Ata Allah reminds us:

"When a servant repents, their place in Paradise rejoices, and all creation —heavens, earth, birds, and even fish—celebrates."

- The Prophet ﷺ demonstrated this belief: rocks made tasbih in his hand (Sahih Bukhari), and a tree wept when he no longer stood on it for khutbah.

1. **A Living Universe**
   - Everything in existence glorifies Allah, either natiq (articulate) or sakit (silent).
2. **Being Loved by Allah**
   - Loving Allah is important, but greater is being loved by Him. This is achieved by following the Prophet ﷺ:

قُلْ إِن كُنتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

"Say, 'If you love Allah, then follow me, and Allah will love you.'" (Quran 3:31)

   - Ibn Ata Allah emphasizes that being the beloved is far more rewarding than merely being the lover.

Ibn Ata' Allah warns that **woe to the servant** who **knows God's goodness** and still sins against Him. How can one be aware of God's grace and still choose disobedience?

- **Analogy:** If someone treats you with dignity and generosity, and you fail to recognize that as a source of favor, instead seeing it as

- a weakness and abusing the one who treated you well, they are seen as a psychopath or sociopath.
- Similarly, if someone receives God's blessings—such as life, guidance, and sustenance—and still fails to serve Him, they are ungrateful and unresponsive to His goodness. In Islamic terms, such a person is called a kafir (disbeliever).
- **Kafir** comes from the root word meaning "to cover" or "to be ungrateful." It's the opposite of shukr (gratitude). Our faith is essentially an expression of gratitude before Allah. It is a recognition that everything we have, and everything we are, is from Allah. If He commands us to worship Him, we do so wholeheartedly. This is shukr.
- When a person displays **ingratitude** (kufr) toward human beings, they are labeled a sociopath or psychopath. However, if they display the same ingratitude toward Allah, some might call them free thinkers.
- The Arabic word for atheist is **ملحد** (mulhid), meaning one who has dug their own grave. Even in the language, this has a negative connotation, while in English, some prefer to call themselves free thinkers.

Ibn Ata' Allah emphasizes:

"Anyone who prefers disobedience does not truly know God's goodness."

- **Note:** This does not apply to those who make mistakes, as everyone will sin. It applies to those who **prefer sin** over obedience, which indicates a lack of awareness of God's blessings.

The Value of Serving Allah

"Whoever knows the value of serving God will never overlook it."

"The one who knows the value of serving God will never become preoccupied with anything else."

Key Takeaway: If one truly understands the value of worshiping Allah, it would become their primary focus—nothing else would take precedence.