



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.

Synopsis of Friday Sermon

Trials of the Last Days

الم أَحْسِبَ النَّاسُ أَنْ يُتْرَكُوا أَنْ يَقُولُوا ءَامَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ الْكَاذِبِينَ
“Alif Lam Meem. Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, “We believe”, and that they will not be tested. We certainly tested those before them. And ‘in this way’ Allah will clearly distinguish between those who are truthful and those who are liars.” [al-‘Ankabut, 29:1-3]

All praise is due to Allah, who created life and death to test which of us is best in deeds. And may peace and blessings be upon our beloved Prophet Muhammad (SAW), who guided us through the darkness of tribulations with the light of revelation.

Hudhayfah ibn Al-Yaman (RAA) narrated a profound hadith in which the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) described how tribulations will test the hearts of people. He (SAW) said: “Tribulation will be exposed to the hearts of people like a reed mat woven, stick by stick. Any heart afflicted by them will have a black mark put into it, but any heart that rejects them will have a white mark put into it. Thus, there will be two kinds of hearts: one is pure like a white gemstone; it will not be harmed by any trial as long as the heavens and earth endure. The other is black and dusty like a worn-out vessel, neither acknowledging good nor rejecting evil, rather absorbed in its desires.” (Muslim).

This hadith illustrates the transformative effect of trials on the human heart. Those who stand firm and reject the temptations of tribulation will have hearts purified and illuminated like white gemstones. On the other hand, those who give in to these tests will have hearts darkened, losing the ability to distinguish between good and evil.

It should not come as a surprise to those who are familiar of the Quran. Allah (SWT) promised to test His servants with tribulations in order to distinguish between those of us who are truthful and sincere versus those who are not. He says in the Qur’an, “Do the people think that they will be left to say, ‘We believe,’ and they will not be tested?” [Al-‘Ankabut, 29:2]

The trials of the Last Days reflect deeply on the events happening in Gaza, Syria, and other places where oppression, suffering, and tribulation are rampant.

The oppression, war, and humanitarian crises in Gaza, Lebanon and Syria are tests of faith and resilience for the entire Muslim Ummah. These events expose the hearts of individuals and communities to tribulations. For those who respond with patience, steadfastness, and unwavering commitment to Allah’s commands, their hearts are purified and strengthened. These are the hearts described as “pure like a white gemstone.”

The people enduring unimaginable hardships in Gaza and Syria exemplify this purity. Despite their trials, they remain steadfast in their faith, relying on Allah (SWT) and refusing to abandon their principles or belief in His justice. Their suffering becomes a testimony to their faith and their trust in Allah's ultimate plan.

On the other hand, this hadith warns of hearts that become desensitized to the suffering of others, especially in the face of such crises. For those who remain indifferent, turn away, or even justify oppression, their hearts risk becoming “black and dusty,” incapable of recognizing good or rejecting evil. This condition serves as a dire warning to the global community, to the ummah, urging self-reflection on how we respond to such calamities.

The Prophet (SAW) describes the blackened heart as "absorbed in its desires," which reflects the moral decay of those who prioritize personal gain, power, or worldly interests over justice and compassion. In the context of Gaza and Syria, this could refer to oppressive regimes, global powers, or individuals who perpetuate or enable the violence for political or material benefit. These actions are rooted in selfish desires and a disregard for human rights, human dignity and divine accountability.

As for those who strive to alleviate the suffering—whether through dua, activism, aid, or raising awareness—they demonstrate the rejection of tribulations that threaten to corrupt the heart. They embody the Quranic injunction to stand for justice, even against great odds, *“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness.”* [al-Ma'idah, 5:8]

The trials in Gaza and Syria are not limited to those living within these regions. They are a test for the entire Ummah. Allah (SWT) is exposing our collective response to the suffering of our brothers and sisters. Will we stand in solidarity with the oppressed, or will we turn away, consumed by our own distractions and desires? How we react to tribulations shapes the state of our hearts.

The people of Gaza and Syria are enduring immense hardships with extraordinary patience, embodying the Quranic description of those who are steadfast, *“Indeed, those who say, ‘Our Lord is Allah’ and then remained steadfast—the angels will descend upon them, (saying) ‘Have no fear and do not grieve but receive glad tidings of Paradise, which you were promised.’”* [Fussilat, 41:30]

Their resilience in the face of suffering is a reminder to us all that Allah’s justice will ultimately prevail, even if it is delayed. The Prophet (SAW) said, “Beware of the supplication of the oppressed, for there is no barrier between it and Allah.” (Bukhari and Muslim).

The oppressors in these regions may seem powerful now, but Allah’s justice will eventually manifest, and their wrongdoing will be accounted for. The situation overseas serves as a reminder to remain steadfast in faith, to avoid becoming desensitized to suffering, and to work actively to support the oppressed in whatever ways we can—through dua, financial aid, spreading awareness, or political advocacy. We are reminded of the Prophet’s (SAW) saying according to al-Nu'man Ibn Bashir, “The believers, in their mutual love, mercy, and compassion, are like one body: if one part of the body feels pain, the rest of the body reacts with sleeplessness and fever.” (Bukhari and Muslim)

If we do not feel the pain of our brothers and sisters in Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Sudan, Kashmir, Burma, and everywhere where Muslims are going through immense trials, then we have become numb, desensitized to suffering, our hearts are dead. We must reflect on the condition of our own hearts.

The trials of Gaza and Syria are a test of hearts, patience, and faith. Those enduring the suffering with steadfastness are exemplars of the ‘white gemstone’ hearts, while the oppressors and the indifferent risk blackened hearts consumed by desire.

Let us learn from this hadith to protect our hearts by rejecting evil, standing for justice, and supporting the oppressed. Let us also remember that Allah’s justice is inevitable and that He is the ultimate Helper and Protector of the oppressed, *“And never think that Allah is unaware of what the wrongdoers do. He only delays them for a Day when eyes will stare (in horror).”* [Ibrahim, 14:42]

May Allah (SWT) protect the people of Gaza, Syria, and all oppressed people, grant them steadfastness, and purify our hearts to always reject tribulation and stand for truth. Ameen.

In the Last Days, these trials will be immense, and faith will waver like a flickering flame. The Prophet (SAW) on the authority of Abu Hurairah (RAA) said, “Hasten to do good deeds before tribulations come like patches of a dark night. A man will wake up as a believer and go to bed as a disbeliever, or he will go to bed as a believer and wake up as a disbeliever, selling his religion for a small worldly gain.” (Muslim).

The trials will not only test our faith but also our values, ethics, and ability to distinguish between truth and falsehood. Some hearts will fall into darkness because they become desensitized to sin, prioritizing desires over divine guidance.

How to Protect the Heart from Trials

The trials of the Last Days are real, but Allah (SWT) has provided us with guidance to protect our hearts:

1) Hold Firm to the Qur'an and Sunnah:

The Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet (SAW) are our lifelines. Allah (SWT) instructs, "*And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided.*" [Aal Imran, 3:103] In times of confusion, the Qur'an provides clarity, and the Sunnah shows us the practical way forward.

2) Seek Knowledge and Awareness:

The Prophet (SAW) warned us about the signs of the Last Days, so we should seek knowledge to recognize these signs. We are living the days of Dajjal. He (SAW) said, "Whoever memorizes the first ten verses of Surah al-Kahf will be protected from the Dajjal." (Muslim)

3) Guard Your Heart Through Worship and Dhikr:

Regular worship, including prayer, fasting, and dhikr (remembrance of Allah), fortifies the heart against the whispers of Shaytan. Allah (SWT) reassures, "*Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find contentment.*" [al-Ra'd, 13:28]

4) Pray for Protection:

Um Salamah (RAA), the mother of the believers, shared a dua the Prophet (SAW) used to frequently make, "O Turner of the hearts, keep my heart firm upon Your religion." (Tirmidhi).

5) Enjoin Good and Forbid Evil:

Standing for truth and morality in times of fitnah is a duty upon all believers. The Prophet (SAW) emphatically warned on the authority of Hudhaifah bin al-Yaman, "By the One in whose hand is my soul, you must enjoin good and forbid evil, or Allah will soon send upon you a punishment. Then you will call upon Him, and He will not respond to you." (Tirmidhi).

What is The Wisdom Behind Tribulations?

Allah (SWT) tests us not to harm us but to purify us, strengthen our faith, and prepare us for the ultimate success of the Hereafter. Allah (SWT) assured us, "*And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and crops, but give good tidings to the patient.*" [al-Baqarah, 2:155]

The trials of the Last Days, as severe as they may be, are a means to distinguish the righteous from the wicked. "*Do people think that they will be left alone on saying, 'We believe', and that they will not be tested. We certainly tested those before them. And (in this way) Allah will clearly distinguish between those who are truthful and those who are liars.*" [al-'Ankabut, 29:2-3]

The trials remind us of the fleeting nature of this world and the importance of turning to Allah (SWT). Abu Huraira (RAA) reports, "The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, 'If Allah wills good for someone, He afflicts him with trials.'" (al-Bukhārī) In a similar hadith, the Prophet (SAW) said, "When Allāh loves a servant, He tests him to hear his supplication." (al-Tirmidhi)

The trials of the Last Days are a reality we must prepare for. These trials will test the strength of our hearts and the sincerity of our faith. Let us strive to protect our hearts through worship, knowledge, and steadfastness upon the Qur'an and Sunnah. Let us be among those whose hearts are purified like white gemstones, not darkened by desires and sin.

May Allah (SWT) protect us from the trials of this world and the Hereafter, keep our hearts firm upon His religion, and make us among those who meet Him with sound hearts. For, "Indeed, those who say, 'Our Lord is Allah' and then remained steadfast—the angels will descend upon them, (saying), 'Do not fear and do not grieve and have the glad tidings of Paradise, which you were promised.'" [Fussilat, 41:30]

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