



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

Ramadan: The Month of Mercy and Forgiveness

The Qur'an extends a beautiful and open invitation to repentance, urging us to turn back to Allah (SWT). He commands, *"O you who believe! Repent to Allah with sincere repentance."* [al-Tahrim, 66:8]

The Arabic word for repentance, *tawbah*, comes from the root word *taba*, meaning "to return." This signifies that true repentance is a heartfelt return to Allah (SWT), accompanied by a sincere commitment to amend one's ways in pursuit of His forgiveness. Hence, let us as believers return to our Lord with sincerity and remorse, for He is the Most Merciful and Forgiving.

The Prophet (SAW) also taught us a powerful supplication that guarantees forgiveness and Paradise. Who among us does not long for Allah's mercy and the eternal reward of Jannah?

Shaddad Ibn Aws (RAA) narrated that the Prophet (SAW) shared the supplication known as *Sayyidul Istighfar*—"The Master Supplication for Forgiveness":

"O Allah! You are my Lord! There is no god except You. You created me, and I am Your slave. I will uphold Your covenant and fulfill my promise to You as best as I can. I seek refuge in You from the evil of my deeds. I acknowledge Your countless blessings upon me, and I confess my sins before You. So forgive me, for none can forgive sins except You." (Sahih al-Bukhari)

The Prophet (SAW) further stated, *"Whoever recites this supplication with firm faith during the day and dies before the evening will be among the people of Paradise. And whoever recites it at night with firm faith and dies before the morning will be among the people of Paradise."*

Imagine the immense mercy of Allah (SWT)! If we sincerely invoke this supplication daily, with full awareness and conviction, we are promised Jannah. But it is not mere words that grant admission to Paradise—it is the sincerity of our hearts, the depth of our faith, and our absolute certainty that Allah (SWT) will accept our repentance.

As we immerse ourselves in the mercy of Ramadan, let us seize this opportunity to return to our Lord, seeking His forgiveness with sincerity. For indeed, He is *al-Tawwab* (The Acceptor of Repentance) and *al-Ghaffar* (The Forgiver).

The supplication begins with the powerful declaration:

"O Allah! You are my Lord (Rabb)"

This statement is not merely an acknowledgment of Allah (SWT) as our Master; it is also an acceptance of His authority over us. We recognize and affirm that He alone is our Lord (Rabb), Master, Sustainer, and Nourisher. This reflects the core belief of *Tawheed al-Rububiyah* (Oneness in Lordship)—the understanding that Allah (SWT) is the sole Creator and Controller of the universe.

The next phrase,

"There is no god except You,"

This statement establishes *Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah* (Oneness in Divinity), affirming that Allah (SWT) alone is worthy of worship. True servitude (*Ibadah*) in Islam is rooted in both obedience and love, and it necessitates dedicating our worship exclusively to Him. Just as *Tawheed al-Rububiyah* signifies recognizing Allah as the

only true Master, *Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah* requires that our devotion and submission be directed solely toward Him.

The supplication then humbles us before our Creator:

“You created me, and I am Your slave.”

While we acknowledge our parents as the means of our birth, it is ultimately Allah (SWT) who created us. This recognition reminds us that we belong entirely to Him; we are His slaves. Submission to our Lord is inevitable—whether willingly or unwillingly—but the true servants of Allah submit out of love, humility, and devotion.

Though the term slave often carries a negative connotation in human contexts, in relation to Allah (SWT), it is the most honored title one can attain. Every Prophet and Messenger was described as a *slave of Allah*. Even Jesus (AS), as an infant in the cradle, proclaimed: *“I am the slave of Allah.”* [Maryam, 19:30]

Achieving this status is not easy—it requires striving, patience, and unwavering sincerity.

After affirming our servitude, the supplication continues:

“I shall honor Your covenant and fulfill my promise to You as best as I can.”

But what is this covenant and what is that promise? The covenant refers to the heavenly “Covenant of *Alast*”, a profound moment that took place before the creation of the universe. The souls or spirits of all human beings—past, present, and future—stood before Allah (SWT). He then asked: *“Am I not your Lord?”* And in unison, all of creation responded: *“Yes, indeed! We bear witness.”* [al-A’raf, 7:172]

This divine agreement or covenant (*‘ahd*) serves as the foundation of our faith, a reminder that before entering this world, we already testified to Allah’s Lordship. It is now our responsibility to uphold that promise, living a life of obedience, sincerity, and devotion to our Creator.

It is essential to recognize that all humans in this world are being tested based on the great heavenly covenant of *Alast*. When we declare, “I shall honor Your covenant,” we are reaffirming our acknowledgment that Allah (SWT) is our Lord, and we pledge to do our very best to fulfill our duties toward Him. This includes obeying His commands, living righteously, and upholding an honorable life in accordance with His guidance.

Likewise, when we affirm, *“and fulfill my promise to You,”* we must be mindful of the promise we are making to Allah (SWT). What is that promise? Every believer who performs the daily prayers is constantly reminded of it. In each of the seventeen units (*rak’ahs*) we perform daily, we recite Surat Al-Fatiha and, after praising Allah (SWT), *“Praise be to the Lord of the Worlds, the Most Merciful, Ever Compassionate, the Owner of the Day of Reckoning,”* we make a solemn commitment: *“You alone we worship (and obey), and to You alone we turn for help.”* [al-Fatiha, 1:1-5]

This ayah signifies a renewal of our pledge to sincerely worship and obey Allah (SWT) out of love. To be true to this promise, we must strive to fulfill it in every aspect of our lives. Worshiping and obeying Allah is not limited to prayer; it extends to our character, our interactions with others, and our daily decisions.

A fundamental aspect of fulfilling this promise is acknowledging that all help ultimately comes from Allah (SWT). We must turn to Him first, before seeking assistance from people, because we recognize that He is the One in control of all affairs. The Prophet (SAW) emphasized this reliance on Allah (SWT) by teaching us that we should seek His help even in the smallest matters, such as the need for a shoelace.

Anas ibn Malik reported: The Messenger of Allah (SAW), said, “Let one of you ask his Lord for his needs, all of them, even for a shoestring when it breaks.” (al-Tirmidhi)

While there is no harm in seeking help from others in worldly matters, it is imperative to remember that true reliance should always be on Allah (SWT). He alone holds the power over all things, and He alone facilitates the means for assistance to reach us.

However, when it comes to matters of the supernatural realm or the unseen, there is only One source of assistance—Allah (SWT). Since He alone is the Knower of the unseen, the Prophet (SAW) taught us a special supplication for seeking divine guidance in uncertain matters. This supplication is known as *Dua’* or *salat al-Istikharah* (the prayer for seeking goodness from Allah), a profound way of placing our trust in Allah’s wisdom and divine decree.

Thus, when we recite, *“and to You alone we turn for help,”* we are reinforcing our unwavering dependence on Allah (SWT) in every aspect of our lives—both seen and unseen.

After reaffirming our promise to Allah (SWT), we naturally turn to Him for protection from our own shortcomings:

“I seek refuge in You from all the evil deeds I have committed.”

As human beings, we are not immune to sin. Each person, by nature, is prone to making mistakes and errors. However, what distinguishes a conscious believer is the recognition of one’s sins and the humility and sincere effort to seek Allah’s forgiveness. Thus, we humbly turn to Him, seeking refuge from the evil of our deeds, acknowledging that without His mercy and guidance, we would be lost.

By turning to Allah (SWT) in repentance, we demonstrate that we are not arrogant or heedless of our mistakes. Rather, we acknowledge our weaknesses and seek His divine mercy to cleanse us.

This act of seeking refuge also serves as a shield against future sins. When we genuinely seek Allah’s (SWT) protection, we express a sincere desire to change, improve, and draw closer to Him.

Seeking refuge in Him is an act of self-awareness, accountability, and sincere repentance.

At the same time, as grateful and humble slaves of Allah (SWT), we recognize and appreciate His countless favors and blessings upon us. We declare:

“I acknowledge before You all the blessings You have bestowed upon me.”

This statement is a profound admission that everything we have is from Allah (SWT). Without His immense generosity, we would not be able to sustain ourselves. He has granted us health, family, sustenance, shelter, and countless other blessings, many of which we often take for granted. If we were to attempt to enumerate His favors, we would soon realize that they are far beyond human comprehension. *“If you were to count Allah’s blessings, you would never be able to enumerate them.”* [Ibrahim, 14:34]

Just as we acknowledge Allah’s blessings, we must also acknowledge our shortcomings. We humbly admit:

“I confess to You all my sins. So forgive me, for nobody can forgive sins except You.”

This supplication is deeply personal and intimate, meant to be uttered in private between a servant and His Lord. Who are we attempting to hide our sins from? Certainly not Allah (SWT), for He is All-Knowing and fully aware of everything within us—our thoughts, actions, and intentions.

Confessing our sins to Allah (SWT) is not a sign of weakness, but rather a mark of humility and sincerity. With our heads bowed in shame and our hearts heavy with regret, we turn to Him in earnest repentance, pleading: *“O Allah! FORGIVE ME!”* Why? Because no one has the power to erase our sins except Allah (SWT). He alone is the Supreme Judge, the Most Merciful, and the Only One who can grant us true forgiveness and redemption.

Through this powerful supplication, *“Syed al-Istighfar,”* we renew our devotion, affirm our reliance on Allah (SWT), and acknowledge both our commitment to Him and our dependence on His mercy.

“O Allah! You are my Lord! There is no god except You. You created me, and I am Your slave. I shall honor Your covenant and fulfill my promise to You to the best of my ability. I seek refuge in You from all the evil deeds I have committed. I acknowledge before You all the blessings You have bestowed upon me, and I confess to You all my sins. So forgive me, for nobody can forgive sins except You.”

Reciting this powerful supplication with sincerity, both morning and evening, brings immense spiritual benefits. According to the Prophet (SAW), it increases one’s chances of entering Paradise. What is extraordinary about this dua is that it transforms the believer, awakening a heightened sense of accountability and self-discipline. A believer who truly internalizes its meaning becomes deeply conscious of their actions and the consequences that follow, striving to remain steadfast on the straight path.

However, uttering this supplication without embodying its message is mere lip service. One cannot seek Allah’s forgiveness while continuing to engage in sinful actions without remorse. This would be an act of hypocrisy, and Allah (SWT) warns against such behavior, *“Indeed, the hypocrites will be in the lowest depths of Hell, and you will find no one to help them.”* [al-Nisa, 4:145]

True repentance (*Tawbah*) is the ultimate proof of one's sincerity toward Allah (SWT). To determine whether one's repentance is genuine, five essential conditions must be met:

1. **Acknowledgment of sin** – Just as stated in the dua, one must humbly admit their mistakes before Allah (SWT) and take responsibility for them. This demonstrates humility rather than arrogance.
2. **Sincere remorse** – True repentance requires deep regret and sorrow for past transgressions. Without this, one's repentance lacks sincerity.
3. **Seeking forgiveness frequently** – A believer must continuously turn to Allah (SWT) for forgiveness. The Prophet (SAW) himself would seek forgiveness at least 100 times daily, saying: *“My Lord! Forgive and pardon me. Indeed, You are the Oft-Returning (Tawwab), Ever-Merciful (Rahim).”*
4. **Immediate cessation of the sin** – One must stop committing the sinful act immediately, regardless of its nature or severity. True reliance on Allah (SWT) means trusting that He will provide the strength to overcome any temptation.
5. **A firm resolve not to return to the sin** – Repentance is incomplete unless one makes a sincere commitment never to return to the sin. This firm intention is crucial in demonstrating sincerity to Allah (SWT).

Fulfilling these conditions qualifies a believer to receive Allah's boundless grace and mercy. The glad tidings of the Prophet (SAW) in the hadith regarding the “Master Supplication for Forgiveness” further affirm that sincere repentance brings divine success.

Allah (SWT) Himself assures the believers of His infinite mercy, *“O you who believe! Turn to Allah in sincere repentance. Your Lord may well cancel your bad deeds for you and admit you into Gardens graced with flowing streams, on a Day when Allah will not disgrace the Prophet or those who have believed with him. With their lights streaming out ahead of them and to their right, they will say, ‘Lord, perfect our light for us and forgive us: You have power over everything.’”* [al-Tahrim, 66:8]

There is no better time than now, especially while enjoying the blessings of Ramadan, to learn, memorize, and invoke *Sayyid al-Istighfar* daily. This is the perfect moment for a sincere migration toward Allah (SWT), seeking His guidance and mercy.

Alhamdulillah, we have been given complete guidance, *“It was in the month of Ramadan that the Qur'an was sent down as guidance for mankind.”* [al-Baqarah, 2:185] The Qur'an is a divine roadmap to success in both this world and the Hereafter. With such clarity before us, how can we possibly go astray?

May Allah (SWT) grant us the ability to honor our covenant, remain steadfast in worship, seek His help sincerely, and turn to Him in repentance. Ameen.

May Allah (SWT) accept our repentance, forgive our sins, and grant us the strength to remain steadfast on His path.

May our devotion during this blessed month help us create a sincere desire to change, improve, and draw closer to Him.

May Allah (SWT) grant us His mercy, and make us among the dwellers of Paradise. Ameen.

Have a very blessed Ramadan.

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