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The Muslim's Heart: Noble and Modest



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A noble hadīth, narrated by ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar RA, is among the Prophet’s concise and comprehensive sayings that guides the believer’s heart toward the Hereafter. It reminds us that the world is a temporary place of trial and preparation, while the Hereafter is the abode of permanence and recompense. Hence, the believer regards this life as a field of action and worship, from which he reaps the harvest of reward in the life to come. This world, by contrast, is fleeting and will inevitably come to an end sooner or later. Ibn ‘Umar reported that the Messenger of Allah SAW once took hold of his mankib; the joint of the upper arm and shoulder to draw his attention and prepare him for a weighty counsel. The Prophet SAW then said:

كُنْ فِي الدُّنْيَا كَأَنَّكَ غَرِيبٌ أَوْ غَائِرٌ سَبِيلٍ

“Be in this world as though you are a stranger or a traveller.”
(Sahih al-Bukhārī, 6416)

The Prophet’s touch signalled the importance of what he was about to say. The phrase “as though you were a stranger” (كَأَنَّكَ غَرِيبٌ) evokes an image of a person who has entered a foreign land far from home, without family or attachment. It reflects the believer’s view of this world full of chasing material wealth and normalising sin as something strange and alien. The one who is not distracted by its comforts or diversions though it may be very appealing and alluring. Such a person is free of worldly ties that deluded him from his Creator.

The Prophet SAW then added: “or a traveller (غَائِرٌ سَبِيلٍ).” This portrays an even higher level of detachment. A traveller is one who moves lightly across the earth, pausing only to gather provisions for his journey. Unlike the stranger, who may reside temporarily in a foreign land, the traveller stops only briefly and continues onward. His true destination lies far ahead, and he travels in a constant state of lightness; unburdened by possessions that would slow his progress. Interestingly enough, the Prophet SAW once described the majority of the inhabitants of paradise being those of poor people:

قُمْتُ عَلَى بَابِ الْجَنَّةِ، فَكَانَ عَامَّةُ مَنْ دَخَلَهَا الْمَسَاكِينُ، وَأَصْحَابُ
الْجَدِّ مَحْبُوسُونَ

“I stood at the gate of Paradise and saw that the majority of those who entered it were the poor, while the wealthy were being held back”

(Sahih al-Bukhārī, 5196 and Sahih Muslim 2736)

The statement does not condemn wealth, for there are many righteous Companions who were wealthy; ‘Uthmān, ‘Abd al-Rahmān ibn ‘Awf, Abū Bakr. Rather, it cautions against the heedlessness and arrogance that often accompany abundance. The Hadīth urges believers to cultivate humility and detachment, remembering that worldly status has no bearing on one’s standing before Allah.

It is well known that during the campaign of Battle of Tabuk, a time when the Muslim community faced extreme hardship and urgent need to finance the expedition. It was the first time the Muslims had to face the Byzantines; the very descendants of the Roman Empire. The circumstances leading to the campaign was extremely harsh for the Muslim that led it being known as the “expedition of hardship” (Ghazwat al-‘Usrah) because of the severe conditions. The Muslims had to prepare during the scorching heat of the summer, with little food and water, many were poor; even lacking in proper transportation. The Prophet called for donations to equip the army for battle.

Abu Bakar came with all of his wealth. The Prophet SAW asked him, “What have you left for your family?” He replied, “I left them Allah and His Messenger”. Abdul Rahman ibn ‘Awf gave away 200 dinars in gold to support the Prophet SAW. He used to say, “We were tested with hardship alongside the Messenger of Allah SAW, and we were patient; then we were tested with prosperity, and we were not as patient.” (Sunan Tirmidhi 2464). Ibn ‘Awf, one of the richest men in Madinah by then, recognized that ease and abundance can quietly weaken the soul as they distract from worship, breed complacency, and make one forget the fragility of life. His statement is a confession of spiritual humility; an acknowledgment that success and luxury bring subtle trials. It’s a warning that the test of comfort can be more severe than the test of suffering, because it tempts the heart away from God without pain or fear. It was Ibn ‘Awf’s way of saying, it was easier to stay true when we had nothing. But when Allah opened the world to us, the real struggle began to keep our hearts pure amidst abundance.

Though Abu Bakar al-Siddiq and ‘Abd al-Rahmān ibn ‘Awf RA had immense wealth and were actively involved in trade and business, they held the world lightly in their hearts. Their hands worked, but their souls remained free

unshackled by the love of wealth or the illusion of permanence. When the Prophet SAW called for charity, they gave generously, even to the point of relinquishing all that they owned, for they saw their possessions not as treasures to hoard but as trusts to be used in service of Allah and His cause. Their striving was not for worldly gain but for eternal reward; their work in the marketplace was an act of worship, their charity an act of liberation. From their example, the believer learns that true zuhd is not idleness or neglect, but effort without attachment. To work and earn with integrity, yet to give and let go with ease, knowing that the world is but a passing station and the Hereafter the true abode.

'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar RA deeply understood the lesson the Prophet SAW taught him. He used to remind himself and others, saying: "When evening comes, do not expect to see the morning; and when morning comes, do not expect to

see the evening. Take from your health for your sickness, and from your life for your death." His words mean: do not postpone, delay acts of obedience, good deeds and your work for death may come before it. Take advantage of your health before illness prevents you, and make use of your life before death overtakes you. Gather in this temporary world what will benefit you after your passing.

Islam teaches its followers to minimize indulgence in worldly matters and not to become complacent with them. Throughout history, the very religious and pious all led simple and modest lives. Yet they became giants and are still remembered after a thousand years. May Allah SWT be pleased with them.

SERAMBI WAHYU

Dakwah Dengan Al-Quran

Kata Ibnu Hajar al-Asqalani:

والدعاء إلى الله تعالى يقع بأمور شتى، من جملتها
تعليم القرآن، وهو أشرف الجميع.

"Berdakwah kepada Allah itu berlaku dengan berbagai cara, antaranya mengajar al-Quran. Ia dianggap antara cara dakwah yang paling mulia".

-Dr. Redha-