

## Discourse 10: Characteristics of a Righteous Servant of Allah – Part II

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ: قَالَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، مَنْ أَوْلِيَاءُ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ (لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ)؟ فَقَالَ: الَّذِينَ نَظَرُوا إِلَى بَاطِنِ الدُّنْيَا حِينَ نَظَرَ النَّاسُ إِلَى ظَاهِرِهَا، فَاهْتَمُّوا بِأَجْلِهَا حِينَ اهْتَمَّ النَّاسُ بِعَاجِلِهَا، فَأَمَاتُوا مِنْهَا مَا خَشَوْا أَنْ يُمِيتَهُمْ، وَتَرَكَوا مِنْهَا مَا عَلِمُوا أَنْ سَيَتْرُكُهُمْ فَمَا عَرَضَ لَهُمْ مِنْهَا عَارِضٌ إِلَّا رَفَضُوهُ، وَلَا خَادَعَهُمْ مِنْ رَفْعَتِهَا خَادِعٌ إِلَّا وَضَعُوهُ، خُلِقَتِ الدُّنْيَا عِنْدَهُمْ فَمَا يُجَدِّدُونَهَا، وَخَرِبَتْ بَيْنَهُمْ فَمَا يَعْمُرُونَهَا، وَمَاتَتْ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ فَمَا يُحِبُّونَهَا، بَلْ يَهْدُمُونَهَا فَيَبْنُونَ بِهَا آخِرَتَهُمْ، وَيُبِيعُونَهَا فَيَشْتَرُونَ بِهَا مَا يَبْقَى لَهُمْ، نَظَرُوا إِلَى أَهْلِهَا صَرَخَى قَدْ حَلَّتْ بِهِمُ الْمُثَلَاتُ، فَمَا يَرُونَ أَمَانًا دُونَ مَا يَرْجُونَ، وَلَا خَوْفًا دُونَ مَا يَحْذَرُونَ.

It has been narrated from Anas b. Malik that, “We said, 'O' Messenger of Allah! Who are the close, intimate friends of Allah who (Will have no fear upon them nor will they grieve)?' The Prophet replied, 'It is those people who look at the inner aspects of the transient world (the Dunya) while the other people are looking at its apparent aspects (the physical beauties and pleasures). These people (those who are the intimate friends of Allah) are concerned with their eventual outcome (and are thus working for it.) while the (other) people are concerned with this life (and are working for this life).

So then these people (the intimate friends of Allah) die while in the world (do not have the love of the transient world) through the fear that the world may kill them and they also refrain from it (the transient world). They also refrain from those things of the material world that they feel will abandon them and they refuse whatever is offered to them from it (the world). There is nothing in it that tries to cheat them

to make them higher except that they try to bring it down. The material world is worn out to them (like an old, worn out piece of clothing) and they refuse to renew it; and the world is demolished in their sight and they refuse to rebuild it.

The material world has died in their hearts and they have no love for it. However, these people (who are the intimate friends of Allah) demolish the material world in order to build their next life. They sell the material world in order to purchase something that will stay with them for eternity. They look at the people of the world and those who have already been brought down and they see these people (the inhabitants of the transient world) as (spiritually) fallen – experiencing the punishment of Allah. Thus they do not see any safety or security except that they have the hope (of Allah) and they do not see any fear except the one that they are afraid of (the punishment and Hell Fire of Allah).”<sup>1</sup>

The difference between “خوف” and “غم” is that the first word (خوف – fear) is used in relation to events that will transpire in the future, where as the second word (غم – grief) is used in relation to events that have already passed.

There is a very important question that has been mentioned in this tradition that all of us must sincerely ponder upon. It was asked: “Who are the intimate friends of Allah (SwT) who do not fear the future and do not have grief over what has transpired in the past? ”

The Imam introduced these people to us by saying that, “The intimate friends of Allah (SwT) (Awliya) are those people who have certain characteristics, one of which was that if some people worship this material world, those people (who have no fear nor grief) see the truth of the transient world.”

In relation to those who worship this temporal world, the Noble Qur`an mentions:

يَعْلَمُونَ ظَاهِرًا مِّنَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ عَنِ الْآخِرَةِ هُمْ غَافِلُونَ

“These people (who worship this material world) know the apparent aspects of the life of this world very well, however they are completely heedless of the next life.”<sup>2</sup>

If these people (who worship the material world) decide to give something in charity, they would first employ mathematical calculations in regards to their donations (to measure their benefit and loss) and then finally would come to the conclusion that, “I have definitely gone into loss as my wealth has now decreased (by giving such a donation).”<sup>3</sup>

The people who do not worship this temporal world look deep in their hearts and see the act of giving in charity in another way – just as the Noble Qur`an mentions:

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنْبَتَتْ سَبْعَ سَنَابِلٍ فِي كُلِّ  
سُنْبُلَةٍ مِائَةٌ حَبَّةٌ وَاللَّهُ يُضَاعِفُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

“The parable of those people who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is just as a grain which (is planted) and then grows seven ears. In each ear is one hundred seeds and Allah increases (the reward) for whomsoever He pleases and Allah is the All-Encompassing, All-Knowing.”<sup>4</sup>

Those people who simply judge and look at everything through the materialistic aspect of life say that: “If we take interest (Riba) then our wealth will increase.” However those who look at things in a deeper context and view things through the spiritual life would say, “Not only will our wealth not increase by taking interest, rather it will actually decrease!”

In regards to this, the Qur`an brings forth a very interesting phrase and says:

يَمْحَقُ اللَّهُ الرِّبَاَ وَيُرِي الصَّدَقَاتِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ أَثِيمٍ

“Allah removes all the good that comes from Riba (Interest) and makes charitable gifts (Sadaqah) prosper, and Allah does not love every sinning, disbelieving person.”<sup>5</sup>

When a person looks with precision, he will realize that the society in which interest is freely given and taken will end up in poverty and destruction and will also be plagued with insecurity. However, that society in which there is mutual help and assistance and one in which charity and monetary aid are given to one another is the society which will be successful, honoured and dignified (by Allah (SwT)).

During the time of the Hajj before the Islamic Revolution (in Iran), the newspapers were filled with articles asking why at the time of performing the Hajj, so much hard-currency was leaving the country? Why were the Iranians giving all their money to the 'Arabs during the Hajj season?

However since these people (those writing such articles) were simply looking at the material aspects of this life, they were not able to discern that in the place of the few thousand dollars that were leaving the country and being spent, what amount of spiritual benefits and profits the Hujjaj were bringing back into the country!

It is this Hajj which forms the greatness of Islam and which leads to the unity, self-respect and honour for the Muslims, and every heart that goes to that sacred land returns back pure and clean!

We see people who go through unimaginable difficulties, for the life of this world which is nothing more than the span of two (proverbial) days – they go through such difficulties not even knowing if they will be able to benefit and enjoy them in the future.

For example, there was a person who had built a house in Tehran which he spent one and a half years just painting and finishing up the interior of. However, this unfortunate person was not able to benefit from this house (as shortly after building it, he passed away). His “40th Majlis” (the gathering kept forty days after a person has passed away) was kept in that same house! We see how much people strive and struggle for the materialistic pleasures of this world in which they will not live for more than a few days, however, for the next life – which is eternal – they do not put forth any struggles, nor do they even think about it!

The tradition under discussion contains a series of characteristics of the true intimate friends of Allah (SwT) that if we want to summarize, we would divide them up into the following three categories:

- 1) The intimate friends of Allah (SwT) know this material world very well and they know that it is a temporary place in which they will not be staying long.
- 2) These people will never become slaves of the beauties of this world and will never be deceived by the gold and glitter of the temporary abode since they have a good understanding of this world. (Keep in mind that this point is a continuation of the first point).
- 3) They make use of this material world only for what they need and it is upon this ruined transient world through which they build their permanent everlasting abode. Thus, they sell this temporal abode and purchase the next world in its place.

Sometimes we see that Allah (SwT) grants a person a very high station and rank in this world. The question we need to ask is that from where did this great rank come from? When we look carefully at this person, we see that he lived his life in the correct and proper manner and thus transcended from the dirt of this world to the higher realms of the heavens – he went from the low ground to the high, spiritual plains.

On the day of the Battle of Khandaq, the Commander of the Faithful, 'Ali b. Abi Talib (as) struck such a blow with his sword that this act was referred to as being better than the worship of all of the Jinn and Mankind until the Day of Judgement. The Noble Prophet (S) said:

ضَرْبَةُ عَلِيٍّ فِي يَوْمِ الْخَنْدَقِ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ عِبَادَةِ الثَّقَلَيْنِ.

“The striking of the sword of 'Ali on the day of Khandaq was better than the worship of all the Jinn and Mankind.”

Why was this so? It is because on that day, the complete and perfect manifestation of true belief (Iman) was face to face with the complete manifestation of disbelief (Kufr). In the book, Bihar al-Anwar, we read the following tradition:

## بَرَزَ الْإِيمَانُ كُلُّهُ إِلَى الشِّرْكِ كُلِّهِ.

“The complete manifestation of true faith (Iman) was face to face with the complete manifestation of polytheism (Shirk).” 6

Thus, it is no surprise that the striking of the sword of 'Ali (as) was better than the worship of all of the Jinn and Mankind!

If we truly understand this issue then we would see that within half a day, the victory of all victories and the performance of an act of great importance just like those which the Martyrs of Karbala carried out, was enacted.

It is at this time that we would see the great value and worth of our lives, and in addition just like the intimate friends of Allah (SwT) (about whom we have been discussing in this talk of ours), we would no longer make the life of this material world our ultimate goal!

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1. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 74, pg. 181

2. Surat al-Rum (30), Verse 7

3. There is a tradition from the Messenger of Allah (S) where he has stated that:

أَغْفَلُ النَّاسِ مَنْ لَمْ يَتَّعِظْ بِتَغْيِيرِ الدُّنْيَا مِنْ حَالٍ إِلَى حَالٍ

“The most heedless person is one who does not take admonition from the changes in the material world.” (Tafsir-e-Namunah, vol. 13, pg. 13); Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 68, pg. 324, Section 80

4. Surat al-Baqarah (2), Verse 261

5. Ibid., Verse 276

6. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 17, pg. 215

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