

Ramadan Lesson 14: Fear of Hypocrisy

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(May Allah protect him)

I seek refuge in Allah from Satan, the accursed:

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O you who believe! Fasting has been prescribed for you as it was for those before you, that you may attain Taqwa. [They are] prescribed number of days."

All praise be to Allah, may good, pure and blessed praises. I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship but Allah, alone, without partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger.

The companions (radi Allahu anhum) despite the vastness of their knowledge and level of faith, despite the fact that Allah Most High praised them in the Noble Quran and was pleased with them, and despite the fact that they were the best people, despite all these things, they all feared hypocrisy for themselves. Ibn Abi Mulaika from the Tabi'een said, "I met thirty companions of Allah's Messenger (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam), and they all feared hypocrisy for themselves." They all feared hypocrisy for themselves! Thirty of the companions of Allah's Messenger (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam)

So nobody fears hypocrisy but the believer, and nobody feels safe from it but the hypocrite. The true believer fears being a hypocrite. As for the one who feels safe from hypocrisy, he is a hypocrite. If you ask one of us and say, "Do you fear hypocrisy?" it sounds to him like a strange topic: "How can I be a hypocrite? I pray, I fast, I give charity, I performed the pilgrimage in Makkah, I give alms to the poor." So it does not occur to him in his mind and heart to worry about being a hypocrite, while the companions (radi Allahu anhum) themselves worried about hypocrisy.

That is why we find that Imam Hassan al-Basri, may Allah have mercy on him, explained to us the truth of hypocrisy. He said: "Hypocrisy is the contradiction between the inner and the outer, and the contradiction between his word and deed." This is a very serious point. Each one of us has to take care. He says that if a person's inner contradicts his outer, in public, he appears to be most pious, strict, religious, and committed to the teachings of Islam. But as soon as he is alone, you find, we seek refuge from Allah, that he is disobedient and sinful. Imam Hassan al-Basri says that if your private life differs from your public life, or your inner differs from your outer, it is hypocrisy. The same applies in terms of words and deeds; that is, a person says what he does not do. He said that this is from hypocrisy.

So let us watch ourselves and make sure that we do not talk about everything. Many people talk through sermons and lectures and urge people to do some things, but he is the furthest from doing it himself. For this reason, Allah Most High said:

"O ye who believe! Why say ye that which ye do not? Grievously odious is it in the sight of Allah that ye say that which ye do not."

The word "maqt" here denotes a meaning more severe than anger. Our Messenger (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) described to us some signs of the hypocrites. He said of hypocrites: "When he speaks, he lies, when he is entrusted, when he makes a promise, he breaks it, and when he argues, he uses vulgarity."

These are signs of the hypocrite we should be wary of. When he speaks he lies. Lying has become part of some people's character, and part of their daily life, always lying. Especially among those who buy and sell, among business people. They have become habitual liars. When he is entrusted, he betrays. You give him a trust, he betrays it. He says by Allah, you did not give me anything. When he promises, he breaks it. He promises you something and then goes back on it. And when he argues, he uses vulgarity.

Among the signs of the hypocrites that Allah mentioned in the Quran and of which we should be very wary is abandoning promotion of virtue and prohibition of vice. Allah Most High said:

"The Hypocrites, men and women, are of each other: They enjoin evil, and forbid what is just." It is one of the signs and the qualities of the hypocrites that they neither promote virtue nor prohibit vice. Many Muslims have fallen into this. They think it's enough to pray, fast, and give charity. But promotion of virtue and prohibition of vice is nowhere to be found in what they do. Also my dear brothers, one of their qualities is that they make fun of the people of Islam. Today, satellite channels have been set up, and newspapers and magazines as well, whose main concern is to make fun of the people of faith, to make fun of the Mujahideen, the righteous people, and the scholars, either through the programs they air, or accusing them of being foolish, that they understand nothing about reality and other things. Plays and movies are also made to defame the Mujahideen and the righteous people.

These are qualities of the hypocrites, which are manifested nowadays in many secular people. Many secular people today have as their main occupation making fun of the people of faith and defaming the righteous people. Another sign of the hypocrites which Allah mentioned in the Quran is also delaying prayer from its time. This is a serious issue, of course, if there is no excuse. Allah Most High says:

"So woe to the worshippers who are neglectful of their prayers."

That is, those who delay it from its fixed time with no legitimate excuse, such as illness or travel. This is a sign of the hypocrites, that they delay... "Woe!" The word "woe" is a word of torment. Among the signs of the hypocrites is they only rise to pray lazily and only to seek a good reputation and praise. This is another sign. They do not do things for Allah Most High. They only do it to seek reputation and praise. Among their signs is that they only remember Allah a little. They talk a lot about the matters of the world and engage in gossip, but you do not find him mentioning Allah Most High. He does not allot some of his daily time to read the Quran or for supplications. All day, from morning to night, there is no mention of Allah Most High. No prayer, no reading the Quran, no words of remembrance. These are signs of the hypocrites which Allah Most High mentioned in his Holy Book when He said: "But little do they hold Allah in remembrance."

From the signs of the hypocrites that our Messenger (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) mentioned is the abstaining from Jihad in the cause of Allah. He (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) said in a Hadith from Sahih Muslim: "Whoever dies without having fought (in Jihad) or having a firm determination to fight, has died as a type of hypocrite."

For this reason, Imam Nawawi and Imam Ibn Taymiyya, may Allah have mercy on them, said that among the qualities of the hypocrites is refraining from Jihad, which is a kind of hypocrisy. So let us be extremely cautious from the qualities of the hypocrites, or even from the "piety of hypocrisy," as Abu Hureira and Abu al-Darda (radi Allahu anhu) said, "Fear from the piety of hypocrisy." He was asked: "And what is piety of hypocrisy?" He said: "When the body is seen worshipping with piety, but the heart is not." So, one of the qualities of the hypocrites is that you see their body engaged in pious worship, but their heart is not.

We ask Allah the Generous, the Lord of the Magnificent Throne, to purify us and to protect us from hypocrisy. And our final prayer is that all praise is for Allah, the Lord of all that exists.

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