Hadith #31: The Concept of Al Zuhd in Islam

26 September 2013

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عَنْ أَبِي الْعَبَّاسِ سَهْلِ بْنِ سَعْدٍ السَّاعِدِيّ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ:
جَاءَ رَجُلٌ إلَى النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه و سلم فَقَالَ:
يَا رَسُولَ اللهَِّ دُلَّنِي عَلَى عَمَلٍ إذَا عَمِلْتُهُ أَحَبَّنِي اللهَُّ وَأَحَبَّنِي النَّاسُ.
فَقَالَ:
ازْهَدْ فِي الدُّنْيَا يُحِبُّك اللهَُّ، وَازْهَدْ فِيمَا عِنْدَ النَّاسِ يُحِبُّك النَّاسُ.

On the authority of Abu al-‘Abbas Sahl bin Sa‘ad as-Sa‘idee (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: A man came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said, “O Messenger of Allah, direct me to an act which, if I do it, [will cause] Allah to love me and the people to love me.” So he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, “Renounce the world and Allah will love you, and renounce what the people possess and the people will love you.” A hasan hadeeth related by Ibn Majah and others with good chains of authorities.


**Question: What deed will make Allah and the people to love me?**

- Sometimes one question can open the door to goodness. A question can open the door to a book, a lecture, a workshop. In this case, one man’s question led to a hadith. Subhan Allah.
- Ibn Qayyim said Allah opens doors of good for all everyone. If Allah opens one door of good, you need to hold on to it, and don’t compare yourself to others, because Allah wants to make you reach paradise through this door. So focus on what Allah has opened for you and increase it.
- This man wants a deed for Allah’s love, it’s a high goal to seek Allah’s love and it’s not wrong to seek people’s love.
- The question is not if you love Allah because so many people love Allah, even disbelievers, but they have been deviated. The real question is, ‘Does Allah love me?’ So he wants to know a deed that will make Allah to love him. Subhan Allah.
- People need to be loved, so he wants to know a deed that will make Allah and the people to love him. Notice he did not say for the ‘muslimeen to love me’ but for ‘people to love me’. This means everyone. And clearly this man asked the right person, the Prophet Mohammed (Pbuh).

**Answer 1: You need to have zuhd in the duniya for Allah to love you**

- What is zuhd? People think that zuhd is someone who is poor and has given up all worldly things for the akhira, like an ascetic or monk. Zuhd is an action of the heart, not an action of the limb.
- Which means all things of the duniya should not be in your heart. Meaning the duniya will not occupy your heart and make you happy or sad or cry. It does not mean that you cannot wear good clothes, have a house, or car, it just means that it should not be in your heart. Why? If you keep the duniya in your heart, then you will lead a life of hardship, because this life is...
very deceiving, you can be happy one second, and crying the other. This is the duniya for you. And if you go chasing after it, it goes in another direction, just a zig zag.

- When Allah loves you, He will make you live a peaceful life. Allah loves when He sees what He has given you and you beautify yourself with it. Imagine what a noble intention when you are given a house, and you make it nice for His sake.

- Imagine we are perfectionist for the duniya, if something breaks, or the color is not right we get upset, imagine if we were perfectionist for our akhira, we would reach firdaous! Especially how we treat the housekeepers, it’s ok if she places the spoon in another place. Why do we argue and fight about the duniya? Because it is in the heart.

- Zuhd does not mean you stop using what Allah has given you. Allah gave you these blessings so that you use it for His sake.

- Al zuhd also means to abstain from the haram and to be satisfied with what Allah has given you.

- The Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) and the Followers were the best of the zahideen, and it does not mean that they are poor and begging. A person cannot give up everything and devote himself to Allah and expect people to start spending on him and live on charity. That is not zuhd. Why did the Quran mention that the Prophet (pbuh) was walking in the markets? To show that he had a livelihood and he was not living on charity. Since the akhira was in their heart, the duniya came to them, they did not have to chase after it.

- **Surah Al Qasas 77:**
  
  (But seek, with that (wealth) which Allâh has bestowed on you, the home of the Hereafter, and forget not your portion of lawful enjoyment in this world, and do good as Allâh has been good to you, and seek not mischief in the land. Verily, Allâh likes not the Mufsidûn)

- Use the duniya to make you reach the akhira, and don’t forget to enjoy the duniya in a halal way, and do good as Allah has been good with you. What does this mean? Don’t leave the duniya because we need it but use it for your good to reach Allah.

- The scholars gave an example of the duniya as a washroom. We need to have the washroom in our house, we can’t do without it, but we can’t sit there for too long either. That is similar to the duniya.

- Another example is when you get dressed for your husband. Sometimes you think the husband will or won’t appreciate it. But that is the not the right intention, imagine you are doing something for your husband and not for Allah, how is that fair? Your intention should be for the sake of Allah, not even to make you feel good.

- Ibn Taymiyyah said zuhd is to leave anything that will not take you to akhira. And this requires us to really account ourselves.

- Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal was asked, ‘can a zahid have 1000 dinar in his pocket?’ At that time it was a very large amount. He said yes, but there are two conditions:
  
  - Not to feel happy if it increases. Should feel happy that it is a provision from Allah and not that the money increases, because it means the desire for the money is there. Anything good that befalls, then immediately thank Allah.
  
  - Don’t feel sad when it decreases. And this is how you can have balanced emotions. Don’t be happy or sad with the duniya. You should be happy for Allah’s sake, sad for Allah’s sake, cry for Allah’s sake, and this is what will make you balanced.
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- Al Hasan Al Basri said zuhd is when you go out, you see everyone as being better than you. In his heart, he sees others better than him, and that no one has a favor upon him. The duniya is not his heart, if it was, he would see himself as being better than others.
- So when you have zuhd in the duniya, then Allah will love you. (ازْهَدْ فِي الدُّنْيَا يُحِبْكَ اللهُ)

Oh Allah, increase us in guidance and keep us on the way of guidance until the last moment of our lives. We ask Allah subhana wa ta‘ala for His forgiveness and His Mercy. Anything that is good from these notes is from Allah subhana wa ta‘ala. Any mistakes & misrepresentations are my own. I ask Allah subhana wa ta‘ala for His forgiveness and to put forgiveness in the hearts of those who read them. Ameen ya Rabb Al ‘Alameen.