

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Khutbah 15/9/17 – tawbah of the *jamā'ah*

تاريخ اليوم الرابع والعشرون من شهر ذي الحجة، في السنة ألف وأربع مائة وثمانية وثلاثين

Today is the 24th of Dhu'l-Hijjah 1438

يقول تبارك وتعالى: وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعاً أَيُّهَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

Turn to Allah every one of you, believers, so that hopefully you will be successful. (Sūrat an-Nūr 24:31)

في اللغة معنى التوبة هو الرجوع إلى الله أي من الذنوب، فإذا يقول تبارك وتعالى توبوا هو كأنه يقول ارجعوا إليّ. وكما أنّ التوبة فرض عين على كلّ مكلف، هنا يخاطبنا الله تعالى جميعاً ويأمرنا كأمة أو جماعة أن نرجع إليه من ذنوبنا.

Linguistically the meaning of tawbah is to return to Allah from one's wrongdoing. Thus when Allah, blessed and exalted is He, says “*Turn to Allah*” it is as if He is saying “Return to Me, come back to Me”. Just as tawbah is an individual obligation on every single responsible person, here Allah addresses us all as an ummah and as a *jamā'ah* and orders us to return to Him from our wrongdoing.

We have an important example of that in the Sunnah, for when there is drought and people suffer from lack of rain, the *jamā'ah* should go out of the city to the *musallā*, each person having made tawbah from their wrong deeds, and there perform a *ṣalāh* with an imam whose virtue and integrity they are sure of. This *ṣalāh* is performed up until today all over the Muslim world and has been widely witnessed to be blessed with success when people are sincere.

وفي تفسير الشيخ ابن عجيبة قيل: أحوج الناس إلى التوبة من توهم أنه ليس له حاجة إلى التوبة.

Shaykh Ibn 'Ajibah said in his *tafsīr*: It has been said that the people who have the most need to turn in tawbah to Allah are those who imagine they have no need of tawbah.

ومراتب التوبة سبع فتوبة الكفار من الكفر وتوبة المخلطين من الذنوب والكبائر وتوبة العدول من الصغائر وتوبة العابدين من الفترات وتوبة السالكين من علل القلوب والآفات وتوبة أهل الورع من الشبهات وتوبة أهل المشاهدة من الغفلات

Tawbah has seven degrees: the *kuffār* turn from kufr; those who mix matters [i.e. they consistently mix wrongdoing with right action] turn from major wrong actions; upstanding people (*udūl*) turn from minor wrong actions; devotees turn from gaps [in their devotions]; people who are travelling the path methodically (*salikun*) turn from the illnesses of the heart and its defects; people of scrupulousness turn from ambivalent matters; people of witnessing turn from moments of forgetfulness.

وقال الشيخ ابن عجيبة رحمه الله في تفسيره: والتوبة يحتاج إليها المبتدئ والمتوسط والمنتهى، فتوبة المبتدئ من المعاصي والذنوب، وتوبة السائر من الغفلة ولوث العيوب، وتوبة المنتهى من النظر إلى سوى علام الغيوب.

Shaykh Ibn Ajibah, may Allah be merciful to him, said in his *tafsīr*, “Tawbah is needed by the beginner; the person in the middle of the journey and the person reaching his journey’s end. The tawbah of the beginner is from acts of disobedience and wrong actions, the tawbah of the wayfarer is from neglectfulness, forgetfulness and the stain of defects, and the tawbah of the person reaching his journey’s end is from looking at other than the Knower of the Unseen.”

There are a number of matters that need tawbah even though they are not gross acts of disobedience: giving up extra optional acts that one had taken upon oneself, for although they are not obligatory one ought not to give them up once having established them. Among these are extra *rak‘ahs* that one performs or recitation of Qur’ān or dhikrs that one used to do. An important example is to give up working *fee sabilillah*.

عن ابن عمر قال سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول: "إذا تبايعتم بالعينة وأخذتم أذناب البقر ورضيتم بالزرع وتركتم الجهاد، سلط الله عليكم ذلاً لا ينزعه حتى ترجعوا إلى دينكم."

Ibn ‘Umar said, “I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saying, ‘When you trade using *‘inah*, and you take [to following] the tails of cows, and you are pleased with agriculture, and you give up jihad, Allah will give humiliation authority over you and will not remove it until you return to your *dīn*.’”

The Prophet ﷺ regarded these four matters as being equivalent to having given up the *dīn* thus necessitating a return to it.

‘Inah is a trade designed to circumvent the prohibition of usury. The most lenient position of the Shāfi‘ī madhhab is that it is deplorable but nevertheless a valid transaction. However, along with other imams many followers of Imām ash-Shāfi‘ī regard it as *ḥarām* because of this *ṣaḥīḥ* hadith.

Following the tails of the cows and being contented with agriculture are two further instances of neglecting jihad.

قال المناوي عن الجهاد هنا: أي غزو أعداء الرحمن ومصارعة الهوى والشيطان

Al-Munāwī said about the jihad mentioned in this hadith: “i.e. military expeditions against the enemies of the All-Merciful and wrestling with desires and *shayṭān*.”

Thus he joins together the two types of jihad. I spoke last week about two extreme positions on jihad, both of which have their Qur’ānic evidences: the first being the position that jihad only means military action and the second that it only means reform of the heart and the nafs, the former being held to be the Madinan position and the latter a Makkan, and I suggested that there is a resolution of this which is that when by the *sharī‘ah* there is no military jihad possible that nevertheless there remains the option of men working together to establish the *dīn* and when necessary leaving their families and livelihoods aside to do things together to advance the *dīn* and that in this they will also fulfil the Makkan definition of jihad of striving against their personal desires.

The beginning of such ventures will be the return of conversation about useful and beneficial things which is called in Arabic *مُذَاكِرَة* which is the necessary corollary of dhikr, and their absence is a symptom of the cessation of that conversation, for when Muslims talk together, they naturally incline to talk about Allah and His Messenger ﷺ and the affairs of the *dīn* and the community, and the conversation will naturally turn to ways to move things forward.

But this *āyat* calling us all to turn to Allah in tawbah is itself signal evidence of the extraordinary optimism of this *dīn*. Whereas for the Jews and the Christians, wrong action is a source of guilt, for the Muslims returning to Allah from wrong action is itself hope of success, for Allah says, “so that hopefully you will be successful”.

أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ لِي وَلِكُمْ وَلِسَائِرِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

وَأَنَّ الْمَسَاجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ أَحَدًا

All mosques belong to Allah so do not call on anyone else besides Allah. (Surat al-Jinn: 18)

It is important that we place the mosque in the right context in our thinking and in our behaviour because of its high importance in our deen. However, let us be aware that our mosque serves several functions besides that of a traditional jami’ masjid.

First, this mosque serves as a kind of community centre. We do not have a society with a muslim majority, and many of us live at some distance from each other. Therefore it is inevitable that this building should serve other purposes such as the place for ‘Īd feasts, eating together in Ramadan, sometimes weddings and ‘*aqiqahs*, etc., which would not traditionally be the function of a mosque.

It is also inevitable that parents will bring small children, even though they are not really able to observe the adab necessary for a mosque. This is not the best situation, but it is the lesser of two evils, since without that community life would suffer. It is not acceptable for parents to allow children to run wild. It is time that we as a community begin to observe some discipline and adab in this matter. Outside of ‘Īd celebrations, children should learn to be in the mosque with the proper adab or else they will ruin the mosque for people who are praying and thus ruin its benefit for themselves.

Ordinarily non-Muslims are not allowed in mosques because again “mosques are for Allah”. Because of our unusual circumstances here, it is important that the mosque be open to people who are being invited to Islam, or who are Muslims but weak in Islam. All these are factors which will lessen the adab that should be observed in a mosque and yet they are important in themselves too. So bearing that in mind, let us look at some matters of the adab of the mosque. As to the non-Muslim who may be interested in Islam, the first thing should be to invite him or her socially to one’s house or some suitable meeting place. Then they can be brought to the mosque when that will really be of benefit to them.

The mosque has the same significance in the geographical sense as our prayers do in our lives: by that I mean that they are spaces and moments in which to remember Allah. Now, these are concessions from Allah. Allah ought to be remembered and worshipped with every breath and at every moment, but from His generosity to us and out of His mercy, He has stipulated as a beginning and a legal minimum five prayers a day. Allah ought to be worshipped and remembered in every place and every situation, and this was A’ishah’s description of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, that he used to remember Allah at every moment and she shared some of the most intimate moments with him. For him ﷺ the whole earth was made a mosque and a means of purification - tayammum. However, Allah out of His mercy and generosity has made the institution of the mosque in particular a place for His remembrance and worship.

This does not mean that we only worship Allah and remember Him in mosques. This does not mean that we have one type of very high and noble behaviour in mosques and another type elsewhere. This means that the mosque can be a reminder to us so that we can go out into the world with our dhikr and our *‘ibādah* renewed. It is in that context that we have to see our behaviour and our adab in the mosque.

Allah says, *‘The mosques are for Allah’*, therefore we should make our intention pure and clear for Allah when we come to the mosque. But this is not a matter exclusive to mosques, for we should make our intentions pure and clear for Allah in every matter, even in the matters of eating, drinking and sexual intercourse, which are not included among the acts of worship. If in these acts one intends, for example, to eat and drink in order to have the strength to be able to worship Allah with much dhikr and recitation of Qur’an or to be strong to strive in His way, then these ordinary acts are acts of worship for which Allah will reward one.

Nevertheless, we lose focus in these ordinary matters in our everyday lives and so the mosque and the prayer are there as visible and tangible reminders to us. We should regard our going to the mosque as going there for Allah alone, and we should make our intention for that purpose. It is important to be careful in making appointments to meet at the mosque for other purposes. And when we forget, we should remember.

Something of the Sunnah which helps in that is to do two raka’at of greeting for the mosque on entering and before sitting with one’s companions except at the times *ṣalāh* is prohibited after the *ṣalāh* of *Ṣubḥ* and the *ṣalāh* al-*‘Aṣr*, and while the imam is delivering the *khuṭbah*.

Another matter that will help one to preserve the adab due in a mosque is not to talk while the adhan is called. And after the adhan is called, one should do the Sunnah raka’at that are due and then sit quietly in dhikr of Allah or reciting Qur’an and not engaging in unnecessary talk with people. It is not forbidden to talk after the adhan, but using that space to remember Allah will help in gathering our attention for the prayer.

Something we should be careful in the mosque is not buying and selling or talking about the world, and not discussing matters that are of no significance in terms of either worldly benefit or the deen. This is something that is important at all times. Matters that are of no benefit in the dunya or the akhirah are called *laghw*, and Allah describes the *mu’minūn* as:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ

It is the mu’minūn who are successful: those who are humble in their salat; those who turn away from worthless talk. (Sūrat al-Muminun 23:1-3)

And we could translate it as: *The mu’minūn have already succeeded...*

رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَؤُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

ج
إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَايَ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

وَقُومُوا إِلَىٰ صَلَاتِكُمْ يَرْحَمُكُمُ اللَّهُ