

Islam means submission

The primal and fundamental conflict in life is not with Shaytaan or society or any external force. It is with ourselves. Our Nafs. Our desires. This conflict is fundamental in the sense that when our desires oppose the orders of Allah ﷻ and the Sunnah of Rasoolullah ﷺ the question is, which do we give precedence to? This conflict is so fundamental that Allah ﷻ called it the worship of someone other than Himself. And prohibited Rasoolullah ﷺ from making dua for or interceding for such people. He said:

أَرَأَيْتَ مَنْ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ أَفَأَنْتَ تَكُونُ عَلَيْهِ وَكِيلاً

Furqan 25: 43. Have you (O Muhammad ﷺ) seen him who has taken as his ilah (god) his own desire? Would you then be a Wakil (a disposer of his affairs or a watcher or intercessor) over him?

Every Juma we hear this Ayah in the Khutba where Allah ﷻ ordered us and said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ

A'al Imraan 3: 102. O you who believe! Have Taqwa of Allah as it is His Right that you should have His Taqwa do not die except in a state of Islam (as Muslims)

Islam means submission. We can only die in the state we lived in. So, let us see what that is. Are we living in submission to Allah ﷻ or in rebellion against Him?

Zaid bin 'Arqam (رضي الله عنه) narrated that Rasoolullah ﷺ said: "Whoever says La ilaaha illal-laahu Muhammad-ur-Rasul Allah... sincerely will enter Jannah." They asked him, "And what is the [sign of] sincerity?"

He replied, "That this Kalima stops him from those things which Allahﷻ has forbidden." (Tabarani in Muajjam-Al-Wasat)

You will notice that I didn't translate the word 'Taqwa' and mentioned it as it is in the Ayah. Normally you will see that Taqwa is translated as 'Fear'... "Fear Allahﷻ as He should be Feared". I submit to you that this is an incorrect translation. The Arabic word for 'fear' is Khauf. Allahﷻ said about Shaytaan that he said:

كَمَثَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِذْ قَالَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ اكْفُرْ فَلَمَّا كَفَرَ قَالَ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ
مِّنكَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ

Hashr 59: 16. *(Their allies deceived them) like Shaytaan, when he says to man: "Disbelieve in Allah." But when (man) disbelieves in Allah, Shaytaan says: "I am free of you, I fear Allah, the Rabb of the 'Alamin (mankind, jinns and all that exists)!"*

Though Shaytaan says that he fears Allahﷻ, this doesn't stop him from disobeying Allahﷻ or from attempting to lead others to disobey Him.

Fear is a negative emotion which produces hatred. Ask any child who is cursed with a merciless teacher who beats him, if he fears that teacher. Ask him if he obeys that teacher. Ask him if he loves that teacher. Allahﷻ said about the believers:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَنْدَاداً يُحِبُّوهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّهِ
وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ يَرَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِذْ يَرُونَ
الْعَذَابَ أَنَّ الْقُوَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعاً وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعَذَابِ

Baqara 2: 165. *And of mankind are some who take (for worship) others besides Allah as rivals (to Allah). They love them as they love Allah. **But those who believe, love Allah more (than anything else).** If only, those who do wrong could see, when they will see the torment, that all power belongs to Allah and that Allah is Severe in punishment.*

Allah ﷻ declared that love for Him is the defining characteristic of the believer. And that too He didn't leave it to our imagination about the extent of that love. He said, '**But those who believe, love Allah most (more than anything else).**'

Allah ﷻ said this even more clearly in Sura Tawba and listed the things we normally love and spend time and resources in trying to acquire. He said:

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالٌ اقْتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسَاكِنُ تَرْضَوْنَهَا أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُمْ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِي سَبِيلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوا حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ

Tawba 9: 24. *Say: If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your kindred, the wealth that you have gained, the commerce in which you fear a decline, and the dwellings in which you delight ... are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger, and striving hard in His Cause , then wait until Allah brings about His Decision (punishment). And Allah guides not the people who are Al-Fasiqun.*

I submit to you that to love anyone you must first know them. You can't love someone you don't know. Therefore, Allah ﷻ introduced Himself in two ways: By mentioning His Glory and Majesty and by mentioning His

Grace and Generosity. The first set of attributes produces awe in the heart of the believer; the second, gratitude. He said:

Ayatul Kursi + Sura Al Hashr 22-24 + Sura Ikhlaas followed by Sura An-Naba 6-16 + Ar-Rahman 1-28

You all know these Ayaat. Please reflect on their meaning. We ask Allahﷻ to fill our hearts with His Glory, Majesty and Noor and gratitude for His blessings, the chief of them being His Messengerﷺ and the Message; Allahﷻ' s Kalaam, which he brought.

I remind myself and you that for us to have hearts that are responsive, our hearts must first be purified. Tazkiyyatun Nafs wa Tarbiyyatul Akhlaaq (purification of the heart and correction of our manners) are the prerequisite to building a connection with Allahﷻ. It is only the pure heart which can reflect the Noor of Allahﷻ and be conscious of it. It is only with a pure heart that we can build a connection with Allahﷻ and only a pure heart that will benefit us on the day when we meet Allahﷻ, the Day of Judgment. Allahﷻ said:

يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بُنُونَ
إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ

Shu'ara 26: 88. *The Day when neither wealth nor sons will be of any benefit, 89. Except him who brings to Allah a clean heart [pure from Shirk, Nifaq, rebellion].*

You will recall the series of lectures that I did on Qalbun Saleem in this masjid. Please listen to them again if you wish. They are on our website.

The question I ask myself and request you to ask yourself is, 'What are we doing to achieve Qalbun Saleem?' My brothers and sisters, the only proof of belief that is acceptable before Allah ﷻ is action. What we don't do, we can't claim to believe in. It is as simple as that. All goodness comes by building our relationship with Allah ﷻ for which we need to work. Love for Allah ﷻ is expressed only in obedience to Him. Nobody who deliberately disobeys Allah ﷻ can claim to love Him. That claim is a lie which will return to haunt us when we meet Him. Let us stop fooling ourselves and remember that we too will die.

It is the lack of this submissive spirit which is implied when Allah ﷻ said:

فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ
الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ

Ma'oun 107: 4. So woe unto those performers of Salat (prayers),
5. Who delay their Salat (prayer) from their stated fixed times

It is salutary to note that it is not those who don't pray at all who are being addressed, warned and criticized here. It is those who pray but delay the Salah to suit their convenience instead of praying as soon as the time for prayer comes in. Attitude precedes action and is its root. Therefore, it is our attitude towards Allah ﷻ, towards the Sunnah of Rasoolullah ﷺ and towards the Shari'ah of Islam that we must examine and change. Submission begins in the heart and is expressed in our actions.

It is submission; the attitude, which is the essence of Uboodiah, the worship of Allah ﷻ, which is the essence of Islam. Islam means

submission. That is the first lesson we must learn. This means to make our desires subservient to what Allahﷻ ordered.

Abu Muhammad 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn al-'Aas (رضي الله عنه) said; "Rasoolullahﷺ said; 'None of you believes until his desire follows that which I have brought.' " [Hujjah, Arbaeen al Nawawiyyah]

Allahﷻ told us what Shaytaan will say to those who chose to obey their desires (aided by Shaytan's whispers):

وَقَالَ الشَّيْطَانُ لَمَّا قُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَعَدَكُمْ وَعَدَ الْحَقُّ
وَوَعَدْتُكُمْ فَأَخْلَفْتُكُمْ وَمَا كَانَ لِي عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِلَّا أَنْ
دَعَوْتُكُمْ فَاسْتَجَبْتُمْ لِي فَلَا تَلُومُونِي وَلُومُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ مَا أَنَا
بِمُصْرِحِكُمْ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُصْرِحِي إِيَّيَّ كَفَرْتُمْ بِمَا أَشْرَكْتُمُونِ مِنْ قَبْلُ إِنَّ
الظَّالِمِينَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

Ibrahim 14: 22. *And Shaytân will say when the matter has been decided: "Verily, Allah promised you a promise of truth. And I too promised you, but I betrayed you. I had no authority over you except that I called you, so you responded to me. So, blame me not, but blame yourselves. I cannot help you, nor can you help me. I deny your former act in associating me as a partner with Allah (by obeying me). Verily, there is a painful torment for the Zalimun (wrong-doers)."*

Allahﷻ ordered:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ادْخُلُوا فِي السِّلْمِ كَآفَّةً وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُواتِ
الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ

Al-Baqarah 2:208 O you who believe! Enter perfectly in Islam (by obeying all the rules and regulations of Islam) and follow not the footsteps of Shaytân. Verily! He is your plain enemy.

Please notice once again the language of this warning: "Do not follow the footsteps"; not, 'Do not follow Shaytân.' Following someone implies that the leader you are following is present and therefore it is likely that there is some form of moral or physical compulsion which makes you follow him or her. But following footsteps means just that; the leader is not present. All you have are his/her tracks. You are the one who chooses to follow them. You need not have done that. You chose to do it. And so, you are solely responsible for the consequences of that.

When we choose to submit to Allahﷻ, we automatically refuse to submit to anyone else. That is the meaning of Tawhid. And thereby we are saved from following the footsteps of Shaytân. It is in submission that our safety lies, in this world and the next.

Rasoolullahﷺ made the issue of obeying people and producing that as a proof of disobeying Allahﷻ and said:

On the authority of an-Nu'man ibn Basheer (رضي الله عنه) who said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say, "That which is lawful is clear and that which is unlawful is clear, and between the two of them are doubtful matters about which many people do not know. Thus, he who avoids doubtful matters clears himself in regard to his religion and his honor, but

he who falls into doubtful matters [eventually] falls into that which is unlawful, like the shepherd who pastures around a sanctuary, all but grazing therein. Truly every king has a sanctuary, and truly Allah's sanctuary is His prohibitions. Truly in the body there is a morsel of flesh, which, if it is whole, all the body is whole, and which, if it is diseased, all of [the body] is diseased. Truly, it is the heart." [Bukhari & Muslim]

We are very concerned about physical cardiac health and get annual checks done and are prepared to undergo any amount of pain and expense to ensure that the pump keeps pumping. But what about the spiritual health of the heart, which Rasoolullah ﷺ mentioned here? What are we prepared to do to ensure that our hearts are healthy in a way that will outlast our death? One day the pump will stop. But the spirit will remain. I can say with total confidence that the single most dangerous creature to our everlasting life is the one we see in the mirror. That is the one who we must fight. As the Cherokee Chief said to his grandson, "There are two wolves fighting each other, inside every one of us. One is for goodness and the other is for evil." The little boy asked, "But who will win, Grandpa?" The Chief replied, "The one you feed."