

THE JOY OF WORSHIP (*ibadah*)

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ. وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا. مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ.

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ. اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ.

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴿٥٦﴾
أَمَّا بَعْدُ،

فِيَا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَوْصِيكُمْ وَأَيَّايَ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ، فَقَدْ فَازَ الْمُتَّقُونَ.

Let us increase our righteousness to Allah the Almighty by doing all that He prescribes and leaving all that He prohibits. May we be blessed by Allah the Almighty in this life and the hereafter.

Dear brothers and sisters,

Worship is the way to being close to Allah the almighty; whether it is a special worship that has certain rules established according to Islamic laws (*syarak*) or just a normal worship. Worship includes any good deed which is not contrary to Islamic law, that is carried out for the sake of Allah the Almighty. Allah the Almighty says in chapter 51 (surah Al-Dzaariyaat) verse 56:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ
وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴿٥٦﴾

Which means: *And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.*

Worship, whether compulsory or recommended, should make a person feel enjoyable and peaceful. When verses in the al-Quran are recited, the heart is touched. While the lips move when reciting the al-Quran, the heart is strengthened with iman. These emotions are also felt by those who perform prayers in the quiet of the night. Yet, do we always feel these emotions when we perform acts of worship?

Dear brothers and sisters,

What are the reasons that cause the pleasure of performing ibadah to disappear? If we are able to enjoy the solemnity of prayer, we will surely achieve tranquility outside prayer. Why does this serenity vanish? It will occur if we do not stay away from evil deeds as these bad deeds influence us deeply even when we repent. The traces of these bad deeds prevent us from savouring the pleasure of worship.

We need to work hard to find a way to achieve pleasure in ibadah again by making amends or atonement for our sins. Make sincere supplication to Allah the Almighty; seeking help from Him in order to assist us in being His obedient servants. A hadith by Abu Daud and al-Nasa'ie mentioned that the Prophet (pbuh) taught us an after prayer supplication which means: *Muaz bin Jabal RadhiAllahu anhu said the*

Prophet took his hand and said: “Oh Muaz... I swear by Allah I love you dearly! Let me recommend something to you that you may read at the end of each salat (before giving salam) and never refrain from reading it”

اللَّهُمَّ أَعِنِّي عَلَى ذِكْرِكَ وَشُكْرِكَ وَحُسْنِ عِبَادَتِكَ

“Oh Allah, with ease and abundance, allow me, to remember You, to thank You and to serve You in the best way possible”.

This supplication that the Prophet (pbuh) taught us is short but extremely meaningful in terms of the humbleness of a servant to his Lord; Allah the Almighty, in seeking continuous guidance from Him, so that we are not left unguided in our worship.

Dear brothers and sisters,

To attain the pleasure of worship, we must do it with utmost sincerity. Allah the Almighty says in chapter 98 (surah al-Baiyinah) verse 5;

وَمَا أُمْرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ حُنَفَاءَ وَيُقِيمُوا

الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَذَلِكَ دِينُ الْقِيَمَةِ ﴿٥﴾

Which means: *And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion, inclining to truth, and to establish prayer and to give zakah. And that is the correct religion.*

A sincere person will feel light in doing acts of obedience because a sincere heart always hopes for the pleasure of Allah and it is easy for him to abstain from sin.

Dear brothers and sisters,

Among the factors that cause our worship not to be pleasurable is doing something without knowledge. A person will not understand the true concept of his worship if the act is done without knowledge and highly likely, the worship is not done correctly too.

Therefore, we have to seek knowledge and practice with it, and not be proud with worship that is executed without proper knowledge. Allah the Almighty says in chapter 16 (surah al-Nahl) verse 97:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ
مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً
وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٧﴾

Which means: *Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.*

بَارَكَ اللهُ لِيْ وَلِكُمْ فِي الْقُرْآنِ الْعَظِيْمِ وَنَفَعَنِيْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ بِمَا فِيْهِ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ
وَالذِّكْرِ الْحَكِيْمِ وَتَقَبَّلَ مِنِّيْ وَمِنْكُمْ تِلَاوَتَهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ. أَقُولُ
قَوْلِيْ هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُوا اللهُ الْعَظِيْمَ لِيْ وَلِكُمْ وَلِسَائِرِ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ
وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ الْأَحْيَاءِ مِنْهُمْ وَالْأَمْوَاتِ فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ
إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَفُوْرُ الرَّحِيْمُ.