

PROUD GRADUATES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF YUSUF #1

IBN TAYMIYYAH

This life with all its luxuries is a prison. The Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam said:

الدُّنْيَا سِجْنُ الْمُؤْمِنِ وَجَنَّةُ الْكَافِرِ

Narrated by Abu Hurayrah, Salmaan, Ibn Umar, Ibn 'Amr and Anas radhiallahu 'anhum. You find it in Muslim, at-Tirmidhi, an-Nasaa'ee, Ibn Maajah, Ibn Hibbaan and Ahmad. Why is it a prison with all the luxuries? Why would the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam call this life a prison? As you know, a prisoner in prison is restrained and restricted from many things and many luxuries that me and you can do in the free world Alhamdulillah. And one in this life is restricted from things he will be able to do in Jannah, that is why he is called a prisoner. That is one reason why the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam called the believer a prisoner.

The second is because a prisoner gets limited privileges. You can get a phone call, you can go to recreation, you can get some food, but if you compare it to the one in the free world, those few privileges are nothing. Likewise, that which we get of luxuries in this life is nothing compared to what is in the life after that, which no eye has seen, no ear has heard and no mind has thought of. This life is a prison to a believer yet within this prison are the man made prisons, and that is our topic.

Sometimes, people deserve to go to prison. Sometimes, they are oppressed and wronged. Dhul-Qurnayn built what would be considered a prison, the barrier between us and Gog and Magog. They would do evil things so he put a barrier between us and them. Many are imprisoned for speaking the truth. Yusuf 'alayhis salaam went to prison, that is why it is called the University of Yusuf 'alayhis salaam. Yusuf runs away from the sin that they accuse him of committing, imagine, he gets charged, convicted and imprisoned for that sin which he ran away from. He is an honourable Messenger yet he gets accused in his honour. That is the trend and path of the tyrants and the oppressors of all times, whether Muslim or non Muslim oppressors and tyrants. They see that which you so much hate and avoid, and accuse you of it. Imprisonment, beatings, harassment, whips, torture and even death is more of an option to a righteous believer, if given the choice between that and Kufr in the Lord of the universe. Given a choice between oppression and prison or Kufr in the Lord of the universe, he chooses the first one. Even if it is a sin, perversion or immorality, he will choose prison over that.

Yusuf 'alayhis salaam could have fulfilled the strongest desire a man has. He could have done that with one of the most gorgeous and high ranking women of his time. And on top of that, he could have got all he wanted of luxuries and comforts, everyone would have imagined the lifestyle Yusuf would have been having. He could have done that and lived in a spacious palace with everything under his control, yet Yusuf 'alayhis salaam chooses prison:

قَالَ رَبِّ السِّجْنُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا يَدْعُونَنِي إِلَيْهِ... ﴿يوسف: ٣٣﴾

He said: "O my Lord! Prison is more to my liking than that to which they invite me." (Surat Yusuf: 33)

She gave him the choices, either prison or the sin of fornication, he chose prison.

Look at Fir'awn and the magicians. The magicians during the time of Musa were given the choice between Islam and Kufr, imagine, the choice between Islam and Kufr. Islam meant Fir'awn was going to imprison them, cut their hands and legs off, then crucify them and let them die a slow, painful death. Believing in the Lord of Musa and Haroon is going to entail that. Believing in Fir'awn meant that they get any of the luxuries anyone wants and anything they dreamed of, because he promised that prior to them entering the competition. If you win, you are going to get this and this.

... قَالُوا إِنَّ لَنَا لَأَجْرًا إِنْ كُنَّا نَحْنُ الْغَالِبِينَ ﴿١١٣﴾ قَالَ نَعَمْ وَإِنَّكُمْ لَمِنَ

الْمُقَرَّبِينَ ﴿١١٤﴾ ﴿الأعراف﴾

They said: "Indeed there will be a (good) reward for us if we are the victors." He said: "Yes, and moreover you will (in that case) be of the nearest (to me)." (Surat al-A'raaf: 113-114)

In Surat al-A'raaf and Surat ash-Shu'araa, he tells them verily, you will be among those brought near to me. Despite the fact that they lost, he was willing to bring them close and use them as a force against Musa. But the moment that they believed in Allah, their goals so suddenly changed, their life was different. The moment their blessed foreheads went down for the sake of Allah, in total servitude to Allah, they could no longer hit the ground in servitude to any human being.

وَأَلْقَى السِّحْرَ سَاجِدِينَ ﴿١٢٠﴾ قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٢١﴾

﴿الأعراف﴾

And the sorcerers fell down prostrate. They said: “We believe in the Lord of the ‘Aalameen (mankind, Jinns and all that exists).” (Surat al-A’raaf: 120-121)

All this happened while Imaan was still fresh and ripe, as fresh and ripe as can be. They said we have the choice of believing in you Fir’awn and getting all that we want, and believing in the true Lord of Musa with the consequence of prison, torture and death, we choose the latter.

قَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْتِرَكَ عَلَىٰ مَا جَاءَنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالَّذِي فَطَرَنَا ۖ فَاقْضِ مَا أَنْتَ قَاضٍ ۖ إِنَّمَا تَقْضِي هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا ﴿٧٢﴾

They said: “We prefer you not over the clear signs that have come to us, and to Him (Allah) Who created us. So decree whatever you desire to decree, for you can only decree (regarding) this life of the world.” (Surat Taha: 72)

Never ask for or seek prison. Just like the Prophet sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam said do not ever be eager to meet your enemy but if you do meet your enemy, be patient. Likewise, it is the same with prison. If you do enter prison, be patient and steadfast but do not ever seek it.

لَا تَتَمَنَّوْا لِقَاءَ الْعَدُوِّ وَاسْأَلُوا اللَّهَ الْعَافِيَةَ فَإِذَا لَقِيتُمُوهُمْ فَاصْبِرُوا

In Sahih al-Bukhari. Ask Allah to safeguard you from prison and hardship in meeting your enemy, do not ask for it and do not seek it. But if you are cornered into it, man up to the task. Today at times, especially with the youth, it has become a trend amongst some to think that it is cool to go to prison and it has become like a rock star thing. I say ask Allah day and night to never enter it, not even for a minute, but if someone’s destiny is that he enters it, be firm. Wallahil-‘Adheem there are those who supplicate day and night behind the dark walls of prison every night, that Allah takes their heart and soul. There are those who spend their nights in Du’aa saying that. There are those who have lost their faith behind the walls of a prison and there are those who lost their minds behind the walls of prison. Always ask Allah for ‘Aafiyah.

Ibn Battah said the reason for not wishing to meet your enemy (the Hadith that I mentioned) and likewise hardships or prison, is because you do not know what the consequence will be. It could be a defeat, it could be you lose your faith, you do not know what the consequences are going to be so do not ask for it. Others said it is because it may cause one to rely on himself, you put too much trust on yourself and do not focus on reliance upon Allah. Then you pay too much attention to your strength and not to reliance on Allah, and you lack attention on the strength of your enemy. Al-Hasan al-Basri used to

say, do not call another person to start fighting. Back then the wars used to start with one on one, two on two, three on three, as you know in the Battle of Badr. So do not ask one to start fighting but if they call you, be a man and Allah will make you victorious.

Many want to enter prison thinking it is cool but when they enter it, they break down in one way or another, begging and pleading, losing their minds or at times their faith. We ask Allah to guide them and hasten the release of every last one of our brothers. And sometimes they go to the point of lying about their brothers to get out early. There are the few who remain steadfast behind the walls. We ask Allah to hasten the release of every last brother and delight the hearts of the mothers and families with the release of their family members. Do not ask for it but if you are dragged into it then be steadfast. None of our scholars, Yusuf, or even the magicians of Fir'awn asked for it but when the choice was given to them, we are going to choose this one. We are going to choose Islam over Kufr, we are going to choose not committing the sin over this, that is how their trend was.

Al-Azeez orders Yusuf to be imprisoned because of an accusation against him. In prison he saw those who were oppressed, he met a new different kind of people that he was not used to meeting. People who were oppressed, people who were hungry, people who were tortured, people who gave up hope on life. He went to them and he was a mercy to them, he gave many of them new hope and a new life. That is what you need to do, encourage their morale, keep them going and remove the depression. He gave support to those who needed support, he taught them Tawheed and he gave them the interpretation of the dreams that they had.

He himself (Yusuf 'alayhis salaam) was imprisoned unjustly but he did not sit and nag and complain and say oh why am I here? Why did Allah put me here? Why should I do Da'wah to Allah when Allah put me here? Because a real Daa'iyah does not care about his personal cause. His ultimate goal of pleasing Allah is what he is concerned about, to promote the work of Allah and not his personal gain. The inmates saw this was a different man. Usually if you live with someone for some time you can tell he is different. You can tell those who are playful, you can tell those who are humorous, you can tell those who are depressed and you can tell those who are righteous. They play chess and he is there worshipping. They fight and he solves the problems, so there was something different about this man. That is why they told him:

...إِنَّا نَرَاكَ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿يوسف: ٣٦﴾

Verily, we think you are among those who are Muhsinoon (doers of good). (Surat Yusuf: 36)

What is it that makes you so different? You pray at night, you fast, why is it that you do that? They said who are you? Inform us, give us some information about you. This man laying in prison was the man that the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam said the

magnanimous, the son of the magnanimous, the son of the magnanimous, the son of the magnanimous.

Al-Bukhari Rahimahullah narrated from Ibn Umar radihallahu ‘anhuma that the Prophet sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam said about Yusuf ‘alayhis salaam:

الْكَرِيمُ ابْنُ الْكَرِيمِ ابْنُ الْكَرِيمِ ابْنُ الْكَرِيمِ : يُوسُفُ بْنُ يَعْقُوبَ بْنِ إِسْحَاقَ
بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ

They said what is your mission? What is your message? You look different. He said my mission is Tawheed.

...أَرْبَابٌ مُتَفَرِّقُونَ خَيْرٌ أَمْ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ ﴿يُوسُفُ: ٣٩﴾

Are many different lords (gods) better or Allah, the One, the Irresistible? (Surat Yusuf: 39)

Which is better, many lords or One? He made Da’wah in prison, he was not crying and nagging about why they put him in prison. Who do you think is really in prison, the one who put him in prison or Yusuf ‘alayhis salaam? Al-Azeez lived outside in the free world but he lived in agony, he was not content in life. Yusuf was in prison but he was content and happy. The people around Yusuf saw so much happiness in Yusuf that he brought them so much happiness. When some of them were released, they went back to be with Yusuf and spend more time with Yusuf. They chose to be in prison with Yusuf than to be in the outside free world. Yusuf interprets their dreams. Many who do not know, may Allah safeguard you from prison, in prison when you are under the oppressive tyrants who excommunicate you from the world, you do not know anything about your children, your mother, your father, or what is going on. Your dreams become a source of tranquility to you. One of the two he interpreted the dream for that are known in Surat Yusuf, he told him at the end:

...اذْكُرْنِي عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ... ﴿يُوسُفُ: ٤٢﴾

“Mention me to your lord (i.e. your king, so as to get me out of the prison).” (Surat Yusuf: 42)

What is said is not wrong, Yusuf did not say anything wrong. As long as one’s heart is attached one hundred percent to Allah and detached from everything else, he has the right to seek available means. That is for an average person, but not for Yusuf. The Messenger of Allah, the magnanimous son of magnanimous, he is held on a higher standard. Allah wanted to teach him other people can have their heart attached to Allah and seek means but you,

who rescued you Yusuf from your brothers? Who rescued you from being a slave in the house of the Azeez? Who is it that rescued you from that? He gets a lot more miracles, that means he is held to a higher standard. Who rescued you from committing adultery and fornication Yusuf 'alayhis salaam? Now you seek means from other than Allah, even though your heart is one hundred percent attached to Allah? You are held on a higher standard, you are an example Yusuf. You must seek both dependency, reliance and means only from Allah subhaanahu wa ta'aala.

... فَلَبِثَ فِي السِّجْنِ بِضْعَ سِنِينَ ﴿يُوسُفُ﴾ : ٤٢ ﴿﴾

So [Yusuf] stayed in prison a few (more) years. (Surat Yusuf: 42)

A lesson for Yusuf 'alayhis salaam and a lesson for us. He learned to never ask anyone but Allah for anything. Never depend on anyone but Allah, even in matters that other people are permitted to. All those who claim to love you, all the students you teach and you give them time, you better make sure your intention is only for Allah because all will flee away from you at times of hardship. It happened to the righteous scholars before and it will continue to happen, so make sure your aim is to please the One that you are going to depend on in the future in times of hardship. because everyone else you try to depend on is not going to be there. There are those who seek to be uplifted by leaders, groups and organisations, they want to be uplifted by entities. All that is going to crumble one day and it is going to drop like a bad habit, and you are going to drop like a bad habit with them because you sought in them. Go and depend on Allah because Allah never crumbles and when you are with Allah, you are going to remain high above the clouds. When everything else crumbles and you are with Allah, you are going to be high above.

As soon as they serve your search warrant, as soon as they begin to ask about you, as soon as the media begins to talk about you, the thousands of students, the friends, the colleagues, the partners, they will all disperse. But if you were aiming to please Allah, you will find Allah is the only One there for you. So always make it Allah you seek and please, in times of ease and in times of hardship. In every action, in every stop and milestone of your way. The phone that never stopped ringing, asking and seeking help, the hundreds of emails a day, now the inbox is empty and the phone no longer rings. This was a matter scholars faced back in the day and it is going to be a matter that is an ongoing thing that happens. That is the lesson, you make your aim and goal to be sincere for Allah, because He is the One you are going to put your reliance and dependence on and seek means from.

Haatim al-Asam was a wise man who visited Imaam Ahmad in Baghdad. Imaam Ahmad asked Haatim al-Asam, how can I be at peace from people? Haatim said to give them and not take from them. Give them wealth and do not take from them. They are going to hurt you, you do not hurt them back. Serve them with whatever you can serve them and do not

ask them to serve you anything. Imaam Ahmad said that is very difficult Haatim, it is very difficult to do.

Haatim said:

وليتك تسلم منهم

And you will still most likely not be at peace from them. That is how dealing with people is, so depend on Allah the One and do not ask anyone but Allah. That is what Allah wanted to teach Yusuf.

After learning this lesson, he spent seven years in prison because of this. Look at what happened after he was released. The first words he utters when he is released:

...وَقَدْ أَحْسَنَ بِي إِذْ أَخْرَجَنِي مِنَ السِّجْنِ... ﴿يوسف: ١٠٠﴾

He was indeed good to me, when He took me out of the prison. (Surat Yusuf: 100)

Who was good to me, that allowed me to leave out of prison? My Lord, my Lord, my Lord, our Lord. He did not attribute it to means that may have caused him to get out of prison. There were probably many means that took place but he put it only on Allah because it was Allah who took him out. It was not the lawyers who got him out, it was not technicalities in his case that got him out, it was not winning the lawsuit that got him out, it was Allah.

At times, prison is a refinery, it is a good school for one to better oneself. How many started to pray in prison and they never prayed before? How many turned to Allah in prison, whereas prior to that they did not turn to Allah? How many memorised the Qur'an who did not, could not or would not have memorised it outside of prison? How many gained Islamic knowledge in prison they could not have gained outside? How many began to follow the Sunnah and learn the 'Aqeedah in prison?

When you are a true believer, everything that happens to one (whether you think it is good or bad), you must believe it is good for you.

عَجَبًا لِأَمْرِ الْمُؤْمِنِ إِنَّ أَمْرَهُ كُلَّهُ خَيْرٌ

You may not know the wisdom, you may not understand the wisdom but it is good for you. Allah chooses at times to place the righteous in prison (for example the trial of prison) for a wisdom and a test only Allah knows. You do not ask for it, we are going to keep to repeating that. You do not seek it but if it happens, a believer has to have faith in Allah to accept it and not nag and complain about it. That is the ABCs of believing in Qadhaa' and Qadar.

Let me say this personal issue, even though I do not like to mention personal issues unless there is a lesson. Prior to me going to prison, one of my Da'wah activities was that I was visiting a youth camp and giving the young youth Da'wah. They had Muslim youth so I would go every two weeks or sometimes every week. I had no problems, no issues, suddenly one day they looked at me and said you have no clearance to come in here anymore. This was right around 2001. The scrutiny to be a chaplain in a youth prison is very small, nearly anyone can go. The investigation and background checks are very small and limited. So they told me you have no clearance and approximately less than a year after that, I myself was an inmate in a federal prison. Being a chaplain or teaching in a federal prison requires such high scrutiny and going through phases, and high confidence of the non Muslims in you. In order to be a chaplain for a federal prison and even a state prison, they strip you of your faith. Let me put it to you clearly, let me talk clearly. In fact, Wallahi, Wallahi, Wallahi, most of the time the Jewish and Christian chaplains were more merciful to Muslim inmates than the Muslim chaplains were to the Muslims. So those granted access to prison, those chaplains and those so called Muslims, know that they are more anti-Muslim than the non Muslims. Their harm to Muslim inmates is beyond that which one can imagine. The torture the non Muslims back away from, many of the Muslim chaplains take it upon themselves to do in federal prisons.

I always wanted to go teach in youth prisons, state prisons and federal prison. I was not given access to the smallest one where you need a little bit of clearance to teach, but imagine the work of Allah subhaanahu wa ta'aala. I do not have clearance to teach in a youth prison which requires a little bit of scrutiny and background checks, but now suddenly Allah snatches me from the free world and puts me among federal inmates to teach them day and night. Imagine that, not a single prison they took me Alhamdulillah, except that I taught a group of Muslims the foundation of their belief. The Qur'an, the Sunnah, many who memorised the entire Qur'an, Inshaa Allah maybe in the future we will talk about details of stuff like that. Those who did not speak a word of 'Arabi, suddenly within less than a year they would have the Qur'an memorised and speak 'Arabi because we were teaching and learning day and night. We went through the books of Tawheed from beginning to end. Classical style, not this couple of day trailer that they do here and think they are Shuyookh. The books of Seerah, Fiqh, 'Arabi, every minute Alhamdulillah was spent teaching and learning for the sake of Allah or getting our rest. Not sporadic teaching, this was not sporadic teaching but the old, systematic, classical style of teaching Alhamdulillah.

Then those in charge see the affect of the Da'wah in their prison so they want to harm and torture me in a way they deem is torturous, so they move me from one prison to another. As difficult as it is being moved from one prison to another where you go for days in foot shackles and cuffs and your hands to your stomach, you are driving in a bus then in an aeroplane for days and days and days. You do not know anything about your family, you do not know what is going on in the outside world, you ask why Yaa Allah subhaanahu wa ta'aala are you doing this? But you do not ask that as a true believer. All I was doing was

teaching Qur'an, should I say why Yaa Allah are you doing this when all I was doing is teaching Qur'an? My point is sometimes you do not know the wisdom so do not ask such questions, put your reliance on Allah. There are hardships there but you do not know the wisdom. Sometimes you know it at that point, sometimes you will know it in the future, sometimes you will not know it until you stand before Allah. The move from prison to prison was even better than putting me in prison because I got exposed to many other inmates all over the United States, whereas I could not have done it on my own. Repeating the steps over and over, Qur'an, Tawheed, Seerah and Fiqh. Going over the same curriculum again and again, to the point that many told me write us a curriculum so when you leave we can have that curriculum.

Some of those who were with me have been blessed and released. They are on my Facebook, you can ask them and they will tell you the situation that used to happen Alhamdulillah. At one point they took me to a solitary, nine months I spent in solitary and the reason is? This man cannot teach Islam. One of the worst solitary prisons in the United States and the reason it was one of the worst is because it was not structured to be a solitary prison. It was built in the 1930s and it is old school prison, it is a very difficult prison to stay in let alone the solitary portion of it. My crime, he cannot teach. The one who instigated this and wrote the report about me Wallahi, was a so called Muslim chaplain. Wallahi the Jewish and Christian chaplains were more sympathetic and apologetic to that situation, than the Muslim chaplain who wrote the report himself.

He would instigate and torture and say at the end of the day he is a Salafi. Wallahi the guards who returned from Iraq and Afghanistan and you know some of them may harbour personal experiences and they want to take it out on you, they used to tell him to leave me and my father alone. The non Muslim chaplains would refuse to talk to him at times because of what he did to us. This was a chaplain who he himself informed me of the fact that his ex-wife and daughter were students in two of my classes and some of the classes of my father prior to me going to prison. One day he said do you know so and so and so and so, I said yes. He said that is my ex-wife and my daughter, I said Subhan Allah. The Muslim chaplain told the authorities I should not teach in that prison, so they placed me in solitary.

This is the point of the story, a Muslim brother was placed in solitary a few cells down. He was in prison for another kind of cause (not an Islamic cause) but Alhamdulillah Allah guided him. So he is there, I am there and my father was up in the second level, my father seventy years old enduring the hardship of that solitary. The Muslim brother could not take the torture so one day in the morning, he sliced his wrists and attempted suicide. The guards go in and save his life Alhamdulillah. Do not say why did he do this and that, do not talk about that, say may Allah continue to guide them and hasten their release. Just so you know the hardship, that entire cell with the toilet and the sink is smaller than the size of your queen sized bed. Most of the time you spend twenty four hours there, maybe twenty three hours a day. There is no heat in winter, there is no air conditioning in summer. Approximately

twenty inmates or so are held there at one time, each one in a cell. Let me tell you how hard it is just so you know. In the nine months while I was there, they carried two out of there in body bags, that is how difficult it is.

When the brother threatened suicide, they got scared because they are afraid of lawsuits and other agencies from the outside come in and investigate. Then he told them I am not going to stop committing suicide unless you place me with the Shaykh (about me). Panic and discussion, the warden, the captain and the lieutenants have to meet. We cannot do this, we put this man in solitary so he will not teach and now by force we are going to place him with a man threatening suicide if he does not get put with him. He said you put me back, I am going on hunger strike. He said you put me with the Shaykh, they finally conceded and placed him in my cell.

We sat there Alhamdulillah for weeks and weeks making Salah, Dhikr, learning and teaching. So many never ending discussions and questions about Islam, all about Islam, nothing else to talk about Alhamdulillah Rabbil-‘Aalameen. The Imaan in that tight little cell was at an all time high Alhamdulillah Rabbil-‘Aalameen. Then as with many great brothers you meet in prison, we parted ways. Allah eased his situation and he finally went on that same compound and I was taken away to a further away, higher security prison. Just a few weeks ago, I got a message on my Facebook and I did not know who it was in the beginning. After I asked, it is Alhamdulillah this brother, he got released. He said brother I need your help to strengthen my Imaan like the days when we were in that tight cell together. I had forgotten I had given him a prayer carpet, he said that prayer carpet that you gave me I still cherish and hold on to, I never forget those days and moments that I spent. It was not that he spent it with me, he spent it with Allah. Free man, but his sweetest moments and sweet Imaan in that cell were more beloved to him than the freedom on the outside. At times you do not know the wisdom that Allah places in predicaments, so always be happy at whatever Allah does to you.

Look at Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, the monk of the night, the commander of the armies. Ibn Taymiyyah Rahimahullah, the warrior against the Tatar and the Mongols, the reviver of the Sunnah. The one who outlined the Sunnah, who cleared up the matters for us that the innovators put into this religion. The suppressor of the innovators and the deviants, the one who was fixed on the path of the pious predecessors radhiallahu ‘anhum. That is why he was like them in the trials that they themselves faced. Ibn Taymiyyah takes seven courses in the University of Yusuf ‘alayhis salaam, his total time in prison was approximately five years. He died Rahimahullah, in prison. Seven times in prison, five years he spent and he dies in prison, Ibn Taymiyyah Rahimahullah.

All the times he was in prison, it was either from envy, people trying to get closer to the rulers or the tyrants, or because they cannot handle the truth. They cannot face him in debates so they resort to putting him in prison. That is what they do today, like the scholars we see around us today. The tactic is used today and the same will be used in the future.

Envious scholars, those who want to spread deviance, they want the path cleared from them once they cannot face proof for proof. Come on, let us go in public and debate your deviance and corruption in 'Aqeedah. Instead of doing that because they cannot face you, they instigate authorities and imprison and harm you because they lack knowledge, they do not know knowledge.

The first time he went to prison was 693 years after the Hijrah of the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam. A Christian man called Assaaf an-Nasraani cursed the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam so Ibn Taymiyyah goes to another scholar called Zayn ad-Deen al-Faariqi who was a big scholar of his time. So al-Faariqi and Ibn Taymiyyah go to the leader 'Izz ad-Deen al-Hamawi and they say this man Assaaf is cursing the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam, you have to deal with him. He said I will deal with it. Ibn Taymiyyah and his crowd leave the mansion of the governor and on their way out, there is Assaaf and a Muslim guy who gave him refuge walking in. An argument breaks out, the Muslim guy with Assaaf tells the Muslims this Christian guy is better than you. So a fight breaks out and stones are exchanged, and the two get beaten up (not killed but they get beaten up). At the end Ibn Taymiyyah and al-Faariqi get blamed for this matter and these two scholars both get beaten up by the governor and thrown in prison, while the Christian guy goes free because he supposedly claims he is a Muslim.

What are the charges against Ibn Taymiyyah? Assault and battery, aggravated assault, maybe attempted murder, whatever you want to call it of the charges of today. This is what the governors, rulers and the masses propagated against Ibn Taymiyyah and that is what the ignorant people say, oh he is in their fort trying to kill this man. The leader then regretted what he did because he found out he was wrong, so he apologised to Ibn Taymiyyah and his friend al-Faariqi and they released him. Right after that, Assaaf gets into an argument with his nephew (a Christian) and his nephew ends up killing him. The people began to say that this was in honour of Ibn Taymiyyah because he falsely accused Ibn Taymiyyah. Because he did harm to Ibn Taymiyyah, Allah retaliated that his own nephew kills him. What came out of it? In that short stay he wrote the book *As-Saarim Al-Maslool 'Alaa Shaatim Ar-Rasool* (الصَّارِمُ الْمَسْلُوعُ عَلَى شَاتِمِ الرَّسُولِ). For centuries this book has been the icon, the ultimate reference, the ruling in depth and detail, verses and Hadith and sayings, for over seven centuries the best book on the topic of cursing the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam. When there is a Khilaafah and there is a Khaleefah and a judge and they want the ruling on the one who cursed the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam, you pick it up. It is in our references, it is in al-Fataawa, it is in nearly every library of every student of knowledge.

The second time he got into prison was not in Shaam, it was in Qaahira. It was 705 years after the Hijrah, on the twenty sixth day of Ramadhaan. This time they took him, his two brothers (Abdullah and Abdur-Rahmaan) and his student (Ibraheem al-Ghayaani). He used to always take these three with him wherever he went, so all three end up in prison. This

time it was because of his belief in Allah, the throne of Allah, the speech of Allah and the descending of Allah in the one third end of the night. Basically roaming around the qualities and attributes of Allah that Ibn Taymiyyah believed, that which the Salaf believed in. Now when they arrested him, do you think they said we have four men here who are defending the 'Aqeedah? Did they say these four men we have here are steadfast on the path of the Sahaabah, interpreting the attributes and qualities of Allah like the Sahaabah did? Is that what they said about them? No of course not. The accusation is we have four criminals here disrespecting and degrading Allah, Ibn Taymiyyah degrading Allah. Imagine the ongoing propaganda and the talk about Ibn Taymiyyah. The masses who listen to the media of back then, these four crazy people are disrespecting Allah, they really deserve prison. People cursing them and wishing evil upon them to the point that there were nearly no supporters of Ibn Taymiyyah and those with him, except maybe less than the number of fingers on one hand, maybe if you do not have a couple of fingers as well.

When they finally got Ibn Taymiyyah out, his brother Abdullah supplicated against those who unjustly imprisoned them, he made Du'aa against them on their way out of prison. When they finally reunited, Ibn Taymiyyah said:

اللهم هب لهم نوراً يهتدون به إلى الحق

He said brother, say O Allah give them brightness and guide them to the truth. Make Du'aa that Allah guide them instead of making Du'aa against them. This was the personality of Ibn Taymiyyah, always forgiving.

The third time he gets into prison is 707 after the Hijrah of the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam. This was because of a book he wrote on Istighaathah (إستغاثة). The Sufis in Qaahira got together, went to the leaders and stayed after them until they imprisoned Ibn Taymiyyah. So the first time it was a crime and abuse, the second time it was disrespecting Allah and this time it was disrespecting the Prophet Muhammad sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam. The Sufis always love to go and kiss up to the government, I am talking about the real hardcore Sufis and the examples today are many. They are always liars who love to kiss up to the government they are at and that is why governments love them. Governments love no one better than Sufis because they lack belief and they lack the entire Islamic system of belief in Allah, the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam and the Sharee'ah of the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam.

Look at what Kabbaani did here in America. In 1999, Kabbaani told the government that eighty percent of the mosques are being run by extremists. This was before the problems and before what is going on, he said you have to close all these Masaajid. He advised the government that they are extreme, the Muslims in the United States are extremists. He put the Muslim communities in the USA under suspicion, this was way before 2001 and his little

stooges are the same over here. What do you think the charges of Ibn Taymiyyah were, dealing with Sufis like these? A smear campaign, this is a man who just got out of prison for disrespecting Allah and now he curses the Prophet Muhammad sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam. He is degrading the Prophet Muhammad sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam, how could you like this man?

Do you think they said this was a hero defending Tawheed? This was a hero that does not want people to commit Shirk, is that what they said about him? Do you think they said he is a follower of Ibraheem 'alayhis salaam? Ibraheem 'alayhis salaam destroyed and crumbled the statues physically and this man is reviving the Tawheed that Ibraheem was following, without any deficiency of Shirk in it. Read this book, it outlines to you what Tawheed is, do not seek in other than Allah that which you are only supposed to seek in Allah. The charge against him was disrespecting the Prophet Muhammad sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam. He was just out of prison for disrespecting Allah, now it is degrading the Prophet Muhammad sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam. That is what was on the criminal record of Ibn Taymiyyah in Egypt and that is what the overwhelming majority thought of him because of the propaganda they insinuated against Ibn Taymiyyah Rahimahullah.

The fourth time Ibn Taymiyyah was placed in prison was 707 after the Hijrah. The Sufis were not happy that he was released so a man called Nasr al-Manbaji who believes in Hulool went to the leader al-Haakim al-Jashinkir and he told him you have to put this man behind bars. Hulool is the belief that the Creator may be indwelling in His creation, Exalted be Allah from what they say. No charges, pending investigation, that he is a dangerous man. The man did not do anything wrong. The scholars who cannot accept that they are worthless, lowlife traitors working for the dollar and spreading Kufr more than they do Islam, cannot handle a pious man spreading the truth so they say put him behind bars. Tell the ruler he is a dangerous man, put him behind bars and get him out of our way. Wallahi they do the same thing today, scholars do the same thing today.

The next time Ibn Taymiyyah goes to prison (the fifth time) was 709 years after the Hijrah in Egypt, for seven months and again by the same people. Nasr al-Manbaji and al-Jashinkir unite against Ibn Taymiyyah and put him in prison. This time they tried to oust him or send him to Cyprus, hoping this would kill his message. They threaten to kill him, they threaten to oust him and they threaten to keep him in prison. This fifth time was the time Ibn Taymiyyah said his famous quote that we all know and we have all heard of. If they kill me, you guys trying to threaten me to kill me, you make me a martyr, you do me a favour. If you oust me, it is tourism and migration. I get to see and meet other people, I get to make Da'wah in other places. Go ahead and take me to Cyprus like you are threatening, I will continue my Da'wah there. And if you imprison me, it is my seclusion for worshipping Allah. I get to spend time to reflect on my own, read Qur'an and worship. This his statement, I am like a sheep, no matter what side the sheep sleeps on, it sleeps on wool. Meaning I am comfortable, I am content, I am happy, there is nothing you can do that will discomfort me.

So they kept him in prison, struggling, what shall we do with this man. Shaykh al-Islam is in prison awaiting execution or to be exiled and at this time a huge event transpires, a huge problem happens. The leader al-Jashinkir is over toppled by a man called al-Malik an-Naasir Ibn Muhammad. Al-Malik an-Naasir Ibn Muhammad over topples the leader that put Ibn Taymiyyah in prison and now he took power. It was an ongoing feud between the two, al-Jashinkir and al-Malik an-Naasir Ibn Muhammad always had a feud. One time this guy gets power, one time this guy gets power. Now al-Malik an-Naasir Ibn Muhammad gets control so he takes Ibn Taymiyyah out of prison and he honours him. He said I over toppled that leader prior to me (al-Jashinkir), I am going to take you out and you are a free man to do whatever you want.

Now the new leader wanted to use Ibn Taymiyyah to get justification for personal revenge because the Sufi scholars and those who united with the Sufis against Ibn Taymiyyah, also helped take him out of power. So he had a personal revenge and al-Malik an-Naasir Ibn Muhammad was hoping by honouring Ibn Taymiyyah and knowing he and Ibn Taymiyyah have a common enemy, he can now get a Fatwa to behead them. He wanted a Fatwa for a personal reason because they over toppled him and he thought Ibn Taymiyyah would give him the justification because they put him in prison. So now we have a common enemy, all I need from you Ibn Taymiyyah is a Fatwa. Al-Malik an-Naasir Ibn Muhammad Ibn Qala'un wanted to use Ibn Taymiyyah to justify his actions, but a giant like Ibn Taymiyyah is not to be used by rulers. Even if he has a common enemy, a giant like Ibn Taymiyyah harbours no ill feelings for his opponents, that is not Ibn Taymiyyah. No matter what they did to him, that was not Ibn Taymiyyah, that is what made him a giant of his time. Even until this time, that why they call him Shaykh al-Islam. What does he do? Ibn Taymiyyah is gathered over here with the leader and the guys who put him in prison, the leader says give me a Fatwa to execute these people. He said these are the best of the scholars, some of these are the best people in your kingdom. You will not find better people and what they did to me I forgive them, and he goes on praising and praising the scholars that put him in prison.

That is why Ibn Makhloof (he is one of the biggest scholars of the Maaliki Madhab during the time of Ibn Taymiyyah) who repented and knew the value of Ibn Taymiyyah, he said he was among those Ibn Taymiyyah spared his life. After Ibn Taymiyyah said that statement, he said we never saw a man more fearful to Allah than Ibn Taymiyyah. This is a man who previously put him in prison. Everything we did to harm and imprison him when we had the control, we did it and we were happy about it. When he had the power with one word to cut our necks off, he spared our lives. The new leader allowed Ibn Taymiyyah to teach because Ibn Taymiyyah was not among the other ones, he was allowed to teach and do whatever he wanted to do. This was among the peak teaching times in the life of Ibn Taymiyyah, where he began to teach the masses. Even though their leader never gave up and he continued to ask Ibn Taymiyyah for a Fatwa to kill those previous scholars, Ibn Taymiyyah Rahimahullah adamantly refused to that. Ibn Taymiyyah continued to always say

I forgive whoever wronged me personally but whoever wronged Allah and His Messenger, Allah will avenge him.

The sixth time that Ibn Taymiyyah went to prison was in Damascus for six months. This was 720 years after the Hijrah of the Prophet Muhammad sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam and because of a Fatwa he gave on divorce. Pay attention, because of a Fatwa he gave on divorce. Now it was a stupid reason to be put in prison, a Fatwa given on divorce. Do you think one gets imprisoned for a Fiqh opinion on divorce which previous scholars agreed with him on? That is the ignorant layman way of thinking and that is a superficial way of reading history. If you are ignorant then that is what you think, he went in for an opinion on divorce. The present day scholar al-Qardhaawi said the Fatwa of Ibn Taymiyyah on divorce was more advanced beyond his entire era, so much so that none of the people of his time could comprehend it, he was too advanced for his time. Today, most courts in Muslim countries who adopt Islamic rulings on civil matters like divorce and marital issues, adopt the Fatwa of Ibn Taymiyyah. This Fatwa on divorce that he went into prison for, they adopt it as their ruling for divorce.

He was considered an outcast because of it, he was imprisoned because of it, he was accused of violating Ijmaa' because of it and now it is the most popular, widespread opinion on divorce. The reason for being in prison was not divorce, it was bigger than that. It was not a Fatwa on divorce that prior scholars of the four Imaams ruled on as well. Ibn Taymiyyah was gaining acceptance so some of the scholars get jealous, not only the scholars but the leaders feared him. Why are people going to his Halaqah? Why are people listening to him? Why is it that when we walk in the town we have less people than Ibn Taymiyyah has in his Halaqah? The result is let us find some stupid justification and put him in prison. Tyrants, oppressive rulers. During his stay, he wrote many books. One of them was a clarification to his Fatwa on divorce and that clarification is what is used in the Muslim countries, possibly from his time until today.

The seventh time he was in prison (the final time) was 726 years after the Hijrah. He was imprisoned in Damascus and this was the time he died in prison. There was a man called al-Hinnaa'ee and Ibn Taymiyyah wrote a Fatwa about him. Also, Ibn Taymiyyah gave the Fatwa that the four Imaams prior to him gave and he adopted one of the opinions, that one cannot visit other than the three shrines with a Niyah of reward (as an Ibaadah). He mentioned the other opinions which are from Shaafi'ee and Ahmad, permitting one to visit other than the three Masaajid. Even though he is a Hanbali, he selected the opinion of Imaam Maalik and he went to prison because of that.

His student Ibn al-Qayyim, this was the imprisonment that he so much benefited from him. It was really to shun him away, just like it was with the Fatwa on divorce. They wanted to take him away from the people so they put him in prison, and he teaches in prison. They saw it was not doing any good, so they put him in solitary. From solitary, he began to write and send it to his students. The guards would be sympathetic and take the notes and

smuggle it to his students. He wrote a lot of books in this time and he wrote volumes of information during this final stay in prison. And by the way, Ibn Taymiyyah wrote all his books from the top of his mind like his students say. He did not have the internet and references to pick and choose from, it was all from his mind. Solitary was not doing its job because he was still leaking information and it was spreading throughout the world, so the governors sent an order to take all the paper and ink of Ibn Taymiyyah and to not allow him to write.

With all that hardship, his student Ibn al-Qayyim said when they slammed the door on him, he would smile and he would say:

...فَضْرِبَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِسُورٍ لَهُ بَابٌ بَاطِنُهُ فِيهِ الرَّحْمَةُ وَظَاهِرُهُ مِنْ قِبَلِهِ
الْعَذَابُ ﴿الْحَدِيدُ: ١٣﴾

So a wall will be put up between them, with a gate therein. Inside it will be mercy, and outside it will be torment. (Surat al-Hadeed: 13)

The Day when the hypocrites and the believers will argue, the hypocrites say give us some brightness so we can get past. And then the believers will say go back and get brightness from back there, mocking them. While the argument is going on, a wall will be put between them (the believers and the hypocrites), inside is mercy and outside is torment.

So Ibn Taymiyyah is telling them inside my cell is mercy and outside is torment. You guys are in torment, I am in mercy. He is saying inside my dark cell, when you slam the gates, the mercy and Paradise is as though it is right here for me. If you knew that feeling, you would wish to be in my position, that is what Ibn Taymiyyah is trying to tell them. You on the outside, you the guards who slam that door, you are the ones in torment not me. That is what the understanding of that verse is. You think it is bad but inside my cell is the mercy that I need, the tranquility and peace that I have.

جنتي في صدري

He used to tell them what can you do to a man whose Heaven is in his breast?

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah Rahimahullah said:

إِنَّ فِي الدُّنْيَا جَنَّةً مَنْ لَمْ يَدْخُلْهَا لَمْ يَدْخُلْ جَنَّةَ الْآخِرَةِ

In this life is a Jannah, if you do not enter that Jannah in this life, you will never enter the Jannah of the life after. There is a Heaven on this earth, whoever does not enter this Heaven will never enter the Heaven of the life after. His life with all its hardship was as though he is in Jannah, he felt as though he was in Jannah. He felt like this life in prison, in that solitary cell was his Jannah, because that is the peace and contentment you have.

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِن بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ قَلْبَهُ... .

﴿التغابن: ١١﴾

No disaster strikes except by permission of Allah. And whoever believes in Allah - He will guide his heart. (Surat at-Taghaabun: 11)

Then Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah wrote his final statement using charcoal, charcoal that he used to heat. This was approximately two or three months before his death, he wrote a simple statement. He said as much as they hated for my works to be released and they did not want that to go, Allah blessed me that much of my work reached you and that is one of the biggest blessings of Allah upon me (that his work and his knowledge was able to be conveyed to them). There are matters that not many people know, so spread the knowledge that I taught you to the people.

And then he finished his statement saying:

مَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَمَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِنْ نَفْسِكَ... .

﴿النساء: ٧٩﴾

Whatever of good reaches you, is from Allah, but whatever of evil befalls you, is from yourself. (Surat an-Nisaa': 79)

That was the last paragraph he wrote and then around a month or so before he died, they stopped Ibn Taymiyyah from all forms of communication. They found out he smuggled that charcoal and he could not even do that anymore, so the scrutiny on him was big. He tried everything to convey, now they had him where he could not convey anything at all. As a Daa'iyah you agonise, Da'wah becomes like your heartbeat, like the blood in your vein. To a true Daa'iyah, that is how Da'wah is. So I assume Ibn Taymiyyah agonised, this was the most agony of his lifetime where he could not communicate and convey to his students. His health took a turn for the worse right after that and they knew he was going to die so the leaders began to plead that he forgive them. They wanted Ibn Taymiyyah to forgive them in secrecy. They would go in secret and ask please forgive us, we know we did wrong to you.

We do not know the result of that but we know the leaders went and asked for forgiveness and Ibn Taymiyyah Rahimhullah died nearly a month after that.

Ibn Abdil-Haadi, Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali and Ibn Katheer in Al-Bidaayah Wan-Nihaayah (البداية والنهاية) said Ibn Taymiyyah Rahimahullah read the Qur'an eighty to eighty one times in his final prison stay. Three different sources of three reputable scholars, the last verse he read:

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَنَهَرٍ ﴿٥٤﴾ فِي مَقْعَدِ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ مَلِكٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ
﴿٥٥﴾ القمر

Verily, The Muttaqoon (pious), will be in the midst of Gardens and Rivers (Paradise). In a seat of truth (i.e. Paradise), near the Omnipotent King (Allah, the All Blessed, the Most High, the Owner of Majesty and Honour). (Surat al-Qamar: 54-55)

فِي مَقْعَدِ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ مَلِكٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ

This was the last verse Ibn Taymiyyah Rahimahullah read, they found his mark on this verse, eighty one times he finishes the Qur'an.

When he died, they called on the Minaarat that Ibn Taymiyyah had died. Some estimate fifty thousand people attended, some say five hundred thousand. They said there was no funeral of their history that they know of comparable to that funeral. The only funeral comparable to the funeral of Ibn Taymiyyah was that of Ahmad Ibn Hanbal. Everyone went out and the only ones who were afraid to go out and they wanted to go out to his funeral, were the people who put him in prison. They were afraid to go out and attend, fearing the rage of the masses will kill them.

What came out of Ibn Taymiyyah going in and out of prison? He went in Ahmad Ibn Taymiyyah and he came out Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah. He taught generations in there and he wrote among his best works in prison. He wrote books that until today, no one could write on the topic like Ibn Taymiyyah wrote. Visitors would try to go into prison and learn from Ibn Taymiyyah, some who finished their time would ask to stay with Ibn Taymiyyah.

Al-'Allaamah Ibn Daqeeq al-'Eed Rahimahullah says:

رَأَيْتَ الْعُلُومَ كُلَّهَا بَيْنَ عَيْنَيْهِ

I saw the knowledges as though they are all in front of his eyes. Ibn Taymiyyah with his vast knowledge did not have the internet, all that was from the top of his mind.

يأخذ ما يريد ويدع ما يريد

He takes whatever he wants and he leaves whatever he wants.

ما ظننت أن الله بقي يخلق مثلك

He says I do not think Allah will create a man like Ibn Taymiyyah ever again.

The time is up so Inshaa Allah we will continue on the topic after Salah. This is possibly half of it so I urge you to attend to finish the other half.

PROUD GRADUATES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF YUSUF #2A

IBN TAYMIYYAH (CONTINUED)

Earlier we finished our talk about the imprisonment and life in prison of Ibn Taymiyyah Rahimahullah. A man who had no wife, no children, no house, no wealth and no position. A man who rented a room next to the Umayyah Masjid in Syria, he had a little room there but most of the time he would sleep in the Masjid. On a good day, his meal would be a loaf of bread. He used to have two Thobes, he ended up giving one Thobe to a beggar so he remained with one Thobe for the rest of his life. But in the darkness of his hardship, in the darkness of his torment in prison, he said Heaven was in his breast. He said killing him was making him a martyr. He said prison was his seclusion to worship Allah. He said ousting him, kicking him out of the land was tourism for him. He goes into prison seven times, five years in total, and he dies in prison. Ibn Taymiyyah, Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah. A man who in Manaaqib Ibn Taymiyyah (مناقب ابن تيمية), Abu Hafs al-Bazaar says I have not seen anyone glorify Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah like his own brother. He used to travel with him, he used to handle his worldly affairs and you remember one of the stories we mentioned about him in prison, his brother was with him in prison.

His brother used to sit in his presence like there was a bird on his head, listen to him and respect him. It is as though it was fear, it was respect but they saw it almost as it was fear. The other students would be amazed and say it is the custom and norm that a man's family are at ease and they are not as reserved as outsiders. A relative opens up to his relatives, especially a brother, yet when we see you with your brother Ibn Taymiyyah, your respect exceeds our respect as students. Why do you do that? So the brother said I see of him that