

Successfully Strengthen the Islamic Personality this Ramadan and Beyond

The blessed month of Ramadan has graced us once again Alhamdulillah, for it is truly a gift from Allah Almighty in His Infinite generosity who opens the way for His forgiveness. It is also, a suitable time for Muslims to reflect upon the ways and means in which we can at one level, work individually, to achieve the most successful outcomes in this Blessed Month and beyond, in accordance with our Islam inshaAllah.

Fundamentally, when we have a clear understanding of our ultimate purpose in life as Muslims, success can directly follow because we are thoughtfully carrying out that very defined God conscious purpose (taqwa). Allah (swt) has clearly stated the purpose of our existence when He (swt) said, ﴿وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ﴾ ***“I created the jinn and humans for nothing else but that they may worship Me.”*** [TMQ 51:56].

The word worship in this verse has not been used in the sense of only prayer, fasting and other kinds of such worship so that one may understand that the jinn and men have been created only for performing the Prayer, observing the Fast in Ramadhan and for praising and glorifying Allah (swt). Although this sense is also included in it, this is not its complete sense.

Its complete sense is that the jinn and men have not been created for the worship, obedience and carrying out of the orders of any other BUT Allah (swt). In addition, it is very familiar for Muslims to understand the linguistic meaning of the word Islam to be that of surrendering, being obedient and submitting to Allah (swt) without any resistance. In fact, this is the very heart of what it means to be a Muslim. Submitting one's very desires to Allah (swt) is the highest form of worship. Submission is what Allah (swt) asks of us and is the naturally sensible thing to do and the way in which this can naturally be achieved is by developing our unique Islamic personality within an intensive Halaqah.

To develop an Islamic personality, a person's mentality must be built upon the Islamic Aqeedah (creed). Thus, for a Muslim, it is his Lord and his Creator who defines good and evil, correct and incorrect, pleasant and ugly. Thus, these concepts also shape a Muslims emotions and desires, which results in a certain way of conducting actions, namely conducting good actions, and eventually gaining the Islamic personality. Indeed, the Messenger of Allah (saw) tells us how a Muslim's mentality and inclinations should look like. «لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّى يَكُونَ هَوَاهُ تَبَعًا لِمَا جِئْتُ بِهِ» ***“None of you (truly) believes until his desires are subservient to that which I have brought.”*** (Bukhari, Muslim).

Additionally, Allah (swt) demands from the Believers to prove consistency in their words and deeds. ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ * كَبِيرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ﴾ ***“O Believers! Why do you say what you do not do? How despicable it is in the sight of Allah that you say what you do not do!”*** [As-Saf: 2-3].

Thus, we see that Allah the Almighty urges and commands us to have a consistent Islamic personality and to gain a consistent Islamic personality requires us to make the Islamic Aqeedah the foundation of thinking. The Islamic personality can therefore only develop through building it upon the Islamic Aqeedah, that is taking the Holy Quran, the Sunnah and the Consensus of the Sahaba (ra) as the method of thinking.

This means, that prior to deciding on a situation or issue, or prior to deciding on an action we should;

1. Understand/comprehend the reality of the situation deeply.
2. Find the related evidences of the Sharia on the issue
3. View the Sharia evidences, Quran and Sunnah, as a whole

4. Embrace the derived sharia position.

The first feature of developing the Islamic mindset is the entrenched awareness of servitude to Allah, which grows with compassion and obedience. Allah SWT says, *﴿قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ﴾* **“He has succeeded who purifies himself, remembers the name of his Lord and prays”** [Al-A'la:14].

This is followed by the second feature which is to find out the Shari rule before taking any actions. Allah (swt) reminds us of this when He (swt) said, *﴿وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ﴾* **“Do not follow what you have no sure knowledge of. Indeed, all will be called to account for their hearing, sight and intellect.”** [Al-Isra:36].

The third view to developing an Islamic mentality is to view the result of the matter from the perspective of the Hereafter. This means that it is imperative to decide according to the measure of what is permissible or not permissible. Indeed, Allah (swt) ordered, *﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا * يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا﴾* **“O Believers! Be mindful of Allah, and say what is right. He will bless your deeds for you, and forgive your sins. And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, has truly achieved a great triumph.”** [Al-Ahzab: 70-71].

Whereas the behavioural disposition (nafsiyyah) of the Islamic personality is the method for satisfying man's instincts and organic needs. That is, the way they are satisfied according to a standard which man believes in and trusts. When the satisfaction is based on the Islamic Aqeedah then he has an Islamic disposition. Therefore, the importance of satisfying one's instincts and organics needs must be based on Islam. A Muslim must therefore endeavour to be as Allah (swt) wants him to be, by drawing closer to Him (swt) through the obligations that He (swt) has imposed and is eager to do the Nawaafil (supererogatory acts of devotion) to draw even closer to Him (swt).

Reflecting on the following Hadith Qudsi will help lighten up our path as we work to develop our Islamic disposition. *«إِنَّ آدَمَ، لَنْ تَذُرَكَ مَا عِنْدِي إِلَّا بِأَدَاءِ مَا افْتَرَضْتُ عَلَيْكَ، وَلَا يَزَالُ عَبْدِي يَتَحَبَّبُ إِلَيَّ بِالنَّوَافِلِ حَتَّى أُحِبَّهُ، فَأَكُونَ قَلْبُهُ الَّذِي يَفْعَلُ بِهِ، وَلِسَانُهُ الَّذِي يَنْطِقُ بِهِ، وَبَصَرُهُ الَّذِي يَبْصُرُ بِهِ، فَإِذَا دَعَانِي أُجِبْتُهُ، وَإِذَا سَأَلَنِي أُعْطِيْتُهُ، وَإِذَا اسْتَنْصَرَنِي نَصَرْتُهُ، وَأَحَبُّ عِبَادَةِ عَبْدِي إِلَيَّ النَّصِيحَةُ»* **“O Son of Adam! You will not obtain that which I have save by performing the duties I ordained upon you. My servant will continue to draw closer to me through the nawaafil until I love him. I will then be the heart with which he thinks, the tongue with which he speaks, the sight by which he sees. So, when he calls me I will answer him, when he asks me for something I shall give it to him, and when he asks for my help I shall help him and the most beloved of my servant's worship is the sincere advice (naseeha).”** (Reported by at-Tabaraani in al-Kabeer).

So my sisters and my brothers this Ramadhan, rush to the Good Pleasure of Allah (swt) to His Forgiveness, Paradise, victory and success in both abodes.

﴿وَفِي ذَلِكَ فَلْيَتَنَفَّسْ الْمُتَنَفِّسُونَ﴾

“And for this let all those strive who want to strive”. [Al-Mutaffifeen: 26]

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