



The importance of balance

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Why most people think that to follow Islam we have to stay away from all worldly desires and needs! Most of us believe that if we have to be religious and pious we must avoid all worldly requirements and wishes! In other words we can follow one at a time, either Deen or Duniya.

There is a misunderstanding among many people that Islam is tough and a difficult religion to follow. In fact, Islam is not an ascetic religion that expects its followers to abandon the world and worship Allah all day and night in a cave.

Instead Islam forbids such tendency in behavior to develop and encourages people to interact with society and live normal lives within the boundaries set by Allah.

Perhaps most of the people avoid meeting friends, relatives and neighbors, because they believe that if they indulge in meeting people they will not be able to perform their religious duties well.

Likewise we always hear women complaining about load of house-chores, husband's and children's everyday duties, so the excuse, they hardly find time to fulfill spiritual responsibilities.

Since Islam is a simple and straight forward religion, so it gives emphasis to all Muslims to live a simple and humble life as well. We are never asked to do something beyond our capacity, we are never asked to give up our genuine worldly desires, abilities, social lives or money, we are never asked to pray all day and night or fast the whole year—in fact such things are prohibited.

Allah ordains in the Quran:

“Allah intends for you ease, and does not want to make things difficult for you” (Surah Al Baqara: 185]; and “Allah does not want to place you in difficulty” (Surah Al Maedah: 06).

Islam emphasizes that we live a balanced life in this world, fulfilling our obligations and duties to Allah as well as our responsibilities towards society and even our own selves.

Thus Islam obliges us to worship Allah only, to be good to the rest of the creation, never harm others, stay away from all types of prohibited matters and have honest character and personality.

None of these things is beyond human capabilities or unusual, there is nothing prohibited that is necessary in our lives, rather only that which is defeating to accomplished human life.

If we see through Islamic point of view, every act we do whether big or small are counted in our good deeds (hasanat), like cooking, cleaning, bringing up kids, serving the family, visiting relatives and neighbors, helping the needy, visiting the sick, even a smile is a sadaqah to be rewarded by Allah.

Obviously Islam guides us to worship Allah only, pray five times a day, fast one month a year, give two and a half percent of our excess wealth in charity, make Hajj once in lifetime (if possible) and keep away from all forbidden acts. None of these is beyond human capability.

A man once asked the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), “Do you think that if I only perform the

obligatory prayers, fast the whole month of Ramadan, treat as lawful that which is lawful and treat as forbidden that which is forbidden, and do nothing further, shall I enter paradise?

He (pbuh) replied, "Yes!" (Muslim)

In fact, our prophet (pbuh) resisted any tendency towards religious excessiveness. He once said to his close companion Abdullah ibn 'Amr:

"Have I heard right that you fast every day and stand in prayer all night?"

Abdullah replied:

"Yes, O Messenger of Allah"

The Prophet (pbuh) said:

"Do not do that. Fast, as well as, eat and drink. Stand in prayer, as well as, sleep. This is because your body has a right upon you, your eyes have a right upon you, your wife has a right upon you, and your guest has a right upon you." (Al-Bukhari, 127)

Allah not only wants us to enjoy ourselves in the Hereafter but also in this world.

He mentions in the Quran to pray for both, this world and hereafter:

"Our Lord, give us what is good in this world and also what is good in the Hereafter" (Surah Al Baqara: 201)

Furthermore He says:

“O you who believe! Make not unlawful the good things Allah has made lawful to you. But commit no excess, for Allah does not like those given to excess. Eat of the things which Allah has provided you, lawful and good, but fear Allah, in whom you believe” (Surah Al Maedah: 87-88).

It is substantial to maintain a balance between the various obligations and our obligations to Allah, our obligations towards others and ourselves. Allah has formed a natural equilibrium amid what is easy to follow for humans and what is the minimal obligation needed to be a morally, ethically and spiritually pious person.

The most significant aspect of Islam is that it is a religion that is concerned with both this life as well as the hereafter. Islam is about moderation in each and every affair whether religious or otherwise.

Thus we, as Muslims and true believers, must be careful that our acts are within the framework set by Allah, and the essence of message in Islam is to lead a life in balance avoiding excessiveness and recklessness. This is very much practical, simple and rewarding too.

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