

## The Intention must not Replace Action in Order to Chase the Pleasure of Allah (swt) during Ramadan and after

There is much commentary in the sources of Islam that reference the importance of intention before any Muslim wants to do an action. For Muslims, it is important to focus on the rewards of Allah (swt) and not be distracted by the whisperings of Shaytaan that will divert the believer from their purpose in life. **﴿قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا﴾** **Say (O Muhammad (S): “I am only a man like you. It has been revealed to me that your Ilah (God) is One Ilah (God – i.e., Allah). So whoever hopes for the Meeting with his Lord. let him work righteousness and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord.”** [Surah Al-Kahf: 110].

There should be clear thinking that in every second of life, we are given time to serve Allah (swt) and this time is running out. **﴿وَهُمْ يَصْطَرِّخُونَ فِيهَا رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا نَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا غَيْرَ الَّذِي كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ أَوَلَمْ نُعَمِّرْكُم مَّا يَتَذَكَّرُ فِيهِ مَن تَذَكَّرَ وَجَاءَكُمُ النَّذِيرُ فَذُوقُوا فَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِن نَّصِيرٍ﴾** **“And they will cry therein, “Our Lord! Bring us out; we will do righteous (deeds) other than (that) which we used (to) do.” Did not We give you life long enough that (would) receive admonition therein whoever receives admonition? And came to you the warner. So taste, then not (is) for the wrongdoers any helper.”** [Surah Fatir: 37].

In numerous hadith, sincerity is matched with intention as a measure of the righteous Muslim. If one goes for Jihad for praise, his action is rejected, and if one gives sadaqah to show off, it is also dismissed. We are encouraged to seek praise and the highest place in the next life as the only valid measure of honour, as it is said, “Live for your life as if you’ll live forever and live for the Hereafter as if you’ll die tomorrow.”

This principle must not negate the need to take action for the sake of Allah (swt) for it is the matching of the action and niyyat (intention) that allows us to chase the pleasure of Allah (swt). **«إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ»** **“Actions are judged by motives (niyyah)”** (Sahih Al-Bukhari & Muslim)

The emphasis on the need to take action and not have excuses is clear in that there are great punishments linked to neglecting the action that is commanded by Allah (swt). Indeed hellfire is directly related to disobedience to Allah (swt). **﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ \* كَبِيرَ مَقْتًا** **“O you who have believed, why do you say what you do not do? Great is hatred in the sight of Allah that you say what you do not do.”** [Surah As-Saff: 2-3].

There are common misunderstandings held in popular culture that Allah (swt) is all-knowing and that forgiveness is linked to having good intentions, and that is enough. This is a great mistake in our thinking as commands of the Fard (obligatory), leaving haram deeds (forbidden) are clear. The Prophet (saw) spoke about the one who misses Jummah salat; he wished to burn the house down with the believer inside it. This is stated because the Prophet (saw) made dua’ that Allah (swt) spares the believer from the punishment of the fire and also is unlawful to burn anyone alive as a form of punishment, even in times of war.

Ramadan is a time where our actions are valued ten times more than any other month, not our intentions. Imagine what we would do if someone were eating in Ramadan and said, “I had the intention to fast!”. Of course this would sound ridiculous. Inshallah we will make the most of the glorious month of Ramadan and reap the blessing of Allah (swt) with righteous deeds for the rest of the year.

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