

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله رب العالمين , والصلاة والسلام على سيد المرسلين،

Taking Initiatives

Praise to Allah; and the Prayers and salutations to the Messenger of Allah, his family, companions and all those who follow till the Day of Judgement.

There are many verses and *ahadith* which emphasise taking the initiative in doing good works and in aspiring to worship Allah, offering Him sincere devotion and being true in faith. As Allah said in *surat* Ali Imran:

“Be quick in the race for forgiveness from your Lord and for a garden whose width is that (of the whole) of the heavens and of the earth, is prepared for the righteous”.¹

In another chapter, Allah said after describing the blissful life of the Righteous:

“The seal of their drink thereof will be musk: and for this let those aspire, who have aspirations.”²

In another verse:

“And say: ‘Do’ for Allah will see your deeds, His messenger and the believers.”

In the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ; it is narrated that he said:

“Allah says: ‘My servant will continue to come close to me with good works till I love him’.”³

In another *hadith*, the Prophet ﷺ said:

“There should be no envy between you except in two matters: the first is a man who Allah gave him Al-Qur’an, so he recites it and prays with it in the night and the day and follow its instructions and guidance; and a man who says ‘If Allah gives me what he has given him I’ll do the same’. The second matter is a man who Allah has given him wealth, and thus he spends his wealth in the cause of Allah; and a man who says, ‘If Allah gives me what He has given him I’ll do the same’.”

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¹ Qur’an: Chapter of Aali Imran 3:133

² Qur’an: Chapter of Those who give short Measure 83:26

³ Sahih: Narrated by Al-Bukhaari

⁴ Narrated by Imam Ahmed

That's why the companions gave their response to Allah and His Messenger ﷺ, when he called them to that which will give them life; and they displayed wonderful examples which are very rare in this life.

It has been narrated that Umar Ibn Al-Khattab ؓ said that the Prophet ﷺ encouraged us to donate and I was having some money at that time, so I said I can precede or pass Abu Bakr ؓ this time if I could pass him once, so I brought half of my money and gave it to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. The Prophet asked me, "What have you left for your family?" I said, "I have left a similar amount."

After a while Abu Bakr came with all of his money. So when the Prophet ﷺ asked him, "What have you left for your family?" He said, "I have left for them: Allah and His Messenger." Then I said, "I will never surpass you, Oh Abu Bakr!"⁵

The scholars of Islam gave this subject (taking the initiative to be ever quick in doing good works and aspiration in worshipping Allah with sincere and devotion) their concern, so they reported it in the books of belief to show how is it important.

As an example for that Abu Ishmael As-Sabooni (died in the 5th century) said in his book: (the belief of the Predecessors and people of *hadith*) that *As-Salaf* are enjoined upon their selves with praying in the night after sleeping, visiting relatives, spreading *salam*, feeding people food, mercy towards poor and needy people, being concern of Muslims issues and being ever quick in doing the whole of good works.

Another example is Ishmael Ibn Mohammad Al-Asfahani (died in the 6th century) said that "...part of the belief of *Ahlu Sunnah* is the encouraging of love in cause of Allah between Muslims, to fulfil the contracts which they have made; And aspiration in doing good works ...etc".

The importance of this issue can be indicated by some very important reasons:

Firstly: It is a response to what Allah and His messenger called us to that which will give our life. Look attentively to what Allah says in *surat* al-Mutafifeen:

"Truly the Righteous will be in bliss. On raised couches will they command a sight (of all things). You will recognize in their faces the beaming brightness of bliss. Their thirst will be quenched with pure wine sealed; The seal thereof will be musk: and for this let those compete, who have aspirations".

Secondly: The necessity and relation between the behaviour and the belief of the Muslim, so the behaviour of the Muslim good or bad is giving an indication for the hidden belief. Allah said in *surat* Al-Muminun:

"Verily those who live in awe for fear of their Lord. Those who believe in the signs of their Lord. Those who join not (in worship) partners with their Lord. And those who dispense their charity with their hearts full of fear, because they will return to their Lord; It is these are who hasten in every good work, and these are who foremost in them".

⁵ Narrated by Ad-Daarimi and others

Aishah, may Allah be pleased with her asked the Prophet ﷺ about these verses and said:

Does it belong to the person who steals, commit fornication; and drinking alcohol and fear Allah? The Prophet said: “No, daughter of As-Sideeq (Abu Bakr). Rather it is the person who prays, fasts, and spends while he fears Allah”.

Thirdly: that taking the initiative to be ever quick in doing good works and aspiration in worshiping Allah with sincere is a reason for getting love from Allah, Al-Bukhari narrated in a *hadith qudsi*, that Allah said:

“Nor my servant will cease to approach to me with good works till I love him”.

And the love of Allah is the most important thing which people could aspire to get it.

Fourthly: taking the initiative to be ever quick in doing good works and aspiration in worshiping Allah is an important evidence for the real love of the Muslim towards Allah and his messenger. Because who ever loves Allah and His messenger, this will impose loving of what Allah and His messenger love and do what Allah and His Messenger love.

Fifthly: that the Muslim should remember that nobody knows when he will leave this life, so he should prepare himself by doing good works. When we remember what Allah said in *surat Al-Hadid* (The Iron) about this life: “Know all, that the life of this world is but play and a pastime, adornment and mutual boasting and multiplying, (in rivalry) among yourselves, riches and children) then he reminded us that (Be all foremost (in seeking) forgiveness from your Lord, and a garden (of bliss), the width whereof is as the width of heaven and earth, prepared for those who believe in Allah and in his messengers”.

In a *hadith* narrated by Imam Muslim, Abu Hurairah said that the Prophet ﷺ said:

روى الإمام مسلم بادرُوا بالأعمالِ سِتًّا الدَّجَالُ والدُّخَانُ ودَابَّةُ الأَرْضِ وطلوعُ الشمسِ من مغربِهَا وأمرُ العامةِ وخُوَيْصَّةُ أَحَدِكُمْ.

“Take the initiative with good works before six things come: The rising of the Sun from the west, the fume, The Imposter Christ (*Ad-dajal*), The animal, your own personal affair (matter), or the issue of the common people.”

Some scholars described the meaning of your own personal affair is your death. In another *hadith* narrated by Imam Al-Bukhari, Abdullah ibn Umar said that the Prophet ﷺ put his hand on my shoulder and said: ‘Be in this life as a foreigner or a wayfarer!’, so Ibn Umar was saying that if you are in the evening, don’t think that you will reach the morning. And if you are in morning don’t think that you will reach the evening. And take from your health to your sickness and from your life to your death.

Rather and more appropriate in this meaning is what Allah says in *surat Al-Munafiqun* (The Hypocrites):

“And spend something (in charity) out of the substance which we have bestowed on you, before death should come to any of you and he should say, O my Lord! why didn’t thou not give me respite for a little while? I should then have given (largely) in charity,

and I should have been one of the doers of good. But to no soul will Allah grant respite when the time appointed (for it) has come; And Allah is well acquainted with (all) that you do).”

Also, the Prophet ﷺ said:

“Three things follow the dead person to his grave: his family, his wealth and his good deeds. Two will return back and one will remain with him. His family and his wealth will return, and with him will remain his good deeds.”

From this hadith (الحديث) we understand that the person’s action is his companion in the grave; and as has been mentioned in another hadith, that the good actions will come in the form of a nice good looking man, nice clothes and sweet smelling. And the bad deeds as an ugly man with bad clothes and awful smell.

Good actions are what the human wishes for when he is on his deathbed. Allah says, roughly translated:

“Until death comes unto one of them, He will say, ‘My Lord send me back, so that I can do good deeds in that which I have left...’”

Allah encourages many times in the Qur’an to do good deeds:

“And you will not be given except that which you have done.”

“I [Allah] am informant of what you do.”

“And over you are watchers. Honoured, Writers, recording. They know what you are doing.”

This life is the only chance we have to do good deeds, and our lives are short, and we don’t know when our time to depart is.

So, those who have made use of their time in this life, it will be said to them on the Final Day: **“Eat and drink, this is what you deserve for the action you did.”**

And those who wasted their time, it will be said, **“You have wasted your goods in your life, and you have enjoyed it, so today you shall be given the severe punishment for your arrogance in the land and for what you transgressed.”**

We must know the things which distract us from the good deeds, like the self, the Shaytaan (الشيطان) and his army, and the desires. So whoever seeks help from Allah, Allah will help him, and he will gradually overcome the problems and he who gives in to the distractions will surely lose.

So fear Allah, dear respected Brothers and Sisters; and start doing good deeds, so that you will be happy in the next life, before death comes to one of you and it will be too late.