

In the Name of Allah, The Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Islamic Education- Means of Access and Signs of Acceptance- Lesson (07-70): Believing in Allah is the Motivation to Become Steadfast.

Istiqamah:

Dear brothers, today we will discuss a new topic in our series Ways of Access and Signs of Acceptance, and it is about Al-Istiqamah (Steadfastness). Al-Istiqamah is the very Karamah (Dignity or honor bestowed by Allah upon someone). The Muslim will not reap the fruits of Islam unless he is steadfast, and he follows Allah's Path.

Like winning in commerce which is the ultimate goal of businessmen, Istiqamah is the gist of all the Islamic activities. Actually, Istiqamah by definition is to follow the Straight Path, so it includes offering all sorts of acts of worship, the apparent and the hidden. It is also manifested in leaving all prohibited things, both the apparent and the hidden, and it is about everything man says, does, performs and intends.

Istiqamah should be manifested in being devoted to Allah sincerely, in seeking Allah's Help and in applying His Orders. O Muslim, be steadfast instead of being Karamah seeker. However, be aware the believer who strives to draw close to Allah the Almighty shall be given Karamah by Allah (even if he does not ask for it). This Karamah, which Allah bestows upon the steadfast Muslim, has levels, the highest of which is the Karamah of being knowledgeable.

**﴿And taught you that which you knew not. And Ever Great is the
Grace of Allah unto you (O Muhammad PBUH).﴾**

[An-Nisa', 113]

As-Sirat Al-Mustaqeem (The Straight Way) is the Noble Quran:

The true Karamah is to get to know Allah:

Allah describes this bestowal (i.e. knowledge) as "Great":

﴿And taught you that which you knew not. And Ever Great is the Grace of Allah unto you (O Muhammad PBUH).﴾

[An-Nisa', 113]

When you offer Salah, you recite:

﴿All the praises and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of the 'Alamin (mankind, jinns and all that exists)* The Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful* The Only Owner (and the Only Ruling Judge) of the Day of Recompense (i.e. the Day of Resurrection)* You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help (for each and everything)* Guide us to the Straight Way﴾

[Al-Fatihah]

The Straight Way is but the Noble Quran, because after this exact Ayah, comes the following:

﴿The Way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, not (the way) of those who earned Your Anger (such as the Jews), nor of those who went astray (such as the Christians).﴾

[Al-Fatihah, 7]

﴿And say to My slaves (i.e. the true believers of Islamic Monotheism) that they should (only) say those words that are the best.﴾

[Al-Isra', 53]

The Ayat you recite after Al-Fatihah are the Straight Way which you ask Allah to guide you to. Hence, the Straight Way is the Noble Quran which is Allah's Book wherein Allah mentions the news of what happened

before you, the information about what comes after you, and the judgment of what happens between you. Furthermore, the Quran is the firm rope of Allah, the guiding light, the Straight Way, the healing cure, the protection to those who hold on to it and the salvation to those who follow it.

Moreover, the Quran is not a subject of correction, unlike any other human-made law which is a subject of adjustment, alteration, addition, deletion or even cancellation. The Quran is not crooked to be corrected, it is not deflected to be criticized and it never makes someone bored upon reciting it repeatedly, for every time you recite it, you are inspired by new reflections. In addition, the Quran's miracles shall never end, and it will never be doubted due to desires, but rather it is the absolute truth and knowledgeable people will never have enough of it. When Al-Jinn heard the recitation of the Noble Quran, they said as Allah the Almighty narrates:

﴿They said: 'Verily! We have heard a wonderful Recital (this Qur'an)!* 'It guides to the Right Path, and we have believed therein, and we shall never join (in worship) anything with our Lord (Allah).﴾

[Al-Jinn, 1-2]

If the tyrants use references other than the Quran to rule people, they will be destroyed, and if someone seeks guidance in other than the Quran, he will be gone astray. Furthermore, whoever uses the Quran as a reference is marked as "Honest", whoever acts upon the Quran will be rewarded and whoever follows it shall be guided to the Straight Way.

Istiqamah is man's respond to the Divine Assignment:

As I have just mentioned, the Straight Way is the Noble Quran which is a speaking universe, while the universe is a silent Quran and the Prophet PBUH is a walking Quran:

﴿And Allah guides whom He wills to a Straight Path (i.e. to Allah's religion of Islamic Monotheism).﴾

[An-Nur, 46]

Istiqamah is assigned to men, given man has the free will to fulfill or to not fulfill the Divine Assignment. In other words, he may choose to be steadfast or not, to be honest or not and to be trustworthy or not.

﴿And Allah guides whom He wills to a Straight Path (i.e. to Allah's religion of Islamic Monotheism).﴾

You have the free will, and if you say, "Allah preordained this error or that sin on me", you will be a liar.

﴿Those who took partners (in worship) with Allah will say: "If Allah had willed, we would not have taken partners (in worship) with Him,﴾

[Al-An'am, 148]

Who said that? The Mushrik (who worships partners beside Allah) did.

﴿Nor would our fathers, and we would not have forbidden anything (against His Will). Likewise belied those who were before them, (they argued falsely with Allah's Messengers), till they tasted of Our Wrath. Say: "Have you any knowledge (proof) that you can produce before us? Verily, you follow nothing but guess and you do nothing but lie.﴾

[Al-An'am, 148]

This means that you are liars if you say that your deeds are predestined by Allah. Once, a drunken was brought to our Master Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, and he ordered to inflict Hadd (the legal punishment for drinking intoxicants) on him. The drinker said, "By Allah, O Commander of the Believers, I have been predestined to drink intoxicants." Some people claim the same by saying, "Some people are predestined to do certain things, so it is out of their choice." Khalifah Umar said, "Inflict Hadd on him twice; the first time because of drinking alcohol, and the second one because of inventing a lie against Allah." Then, he said to him, "Woe to you! Allah's Qada' never deprives you of your free will, and it never imposes things on you." Allah the Almighty says:

﴿"Nay, Allah never commands of Fahisha. Do you say of Allah what you know not?﴾

[Al-A'raf, 28]

The majority of common people ascribe their errors to Qadaa' and Qadar (the Divine Predestination and Preordainment). This is not true.

Allah is the One who leads people to the Right Path:

Pay attention to this amazing fact, Allah the Almighty says:

﴿So plot against me, all of you, and give me no respite* "I put my trust in Allah, my Lord and your Lord! There is not a moving (living) creature but He has grasp of its forelock. Verily, my Lord is on the Straight Path (the truth).﴾

[Hud, 55-56]

Our Master Hud PBUH said:

﴿There is not a moving (living) creature but He has grasp of its forelock. Verily, my Lord is on the Straight Path (the truth).﴾

[Hud, 56]

This means that Allah is on the Straight Way, and when someone ascribes Istiqamah to Allah, this indicates that Allah the Almighty honored mankind by taking on His Divine Character the task of guiding them to the Straight Way (upon being sought from Him).

﴿My Lord is on the Straight Path (the truth).﴾

Allah describes His Exalted Character as follows:

﴿On the Straight Path (the truth).﴾

Opposition is an evidence of lacking knowledge of Allah:

Listen to the following Ayah, please:

﴿Why should Allah punish you if you have thanked (Him) and have believed in Him.﴾

[An-Nisa', 147]

Allah is on the Straight Way, and as for the prophet PBUH, he is on the Straight Way as well, as mentioned in the following Ayah:

﴿So hold you (O Muhammad) fast to that which is inspired in you. Verily, you are on a Straight Path.﴾

[Az-Zukhruf, 43]

Before the battle of Badr started, the Prophet PBUH said:

(Do not kill my uncle Al-Abbas.)

One of the companions was upset about his order considering this a kind of discrimination, so he said, "One of us kills his father and brother, while he orders us not to kill his uncle?!" He did not know the secret behind such an order. Al-Abbas lived in Makkah, and he was a Muslim. He used to convey to the Noble Prophet the talks and conspiracies of

Quraish. Thus, had the Prophet said, "Do not kill my uncle Al-Abbas, because he is a Muslim", he would have revealed his secret and ended his task, and if he had not given an order to the companion to avoid killing his uncle Al-Abbas who were fighting with Quraish against them, they would have killed him. Therefore, he just had to give that order without explaining the reason.

The companion knew the reason later on, so he said, "I remained paying alms for ten years in the hope that Allah Almighty would forgive my misguided thought about the Prophet PBUH."

﴿So hold you (O Muhammad PBUH) fast to that which is inspired in you. Verily, you are on a Straight Path.﴾

The Da'wah (calling people to Allah) of the Prophet PBUH is described as follows:

﴿And certainly, you (O Muhammad PBUH) call them to a Straight Path (true religion Islamic Monotheism).﴾

[Al-Mu'minun, 73]

He, who accepts this Da'wah, shall be given its details by the Prophet PBUH (through his Sunnah).

﴿And verily, you (O Muhammad PBUH) are indeed guiding (mankind) to the Straight Path (i.e. Allah's religion of Islamic Monotheism).﴾

[Ash-Shura, 52]

Allah the Almighty says in the following Ayat:

﴿Verily, you are on a Straight Path.﴾
﴿And verily, you (O Muhammad PBUH) are indeed guiding (mankind) to the Straight Path (i.e. Allah's religion of Islamic Monotheism).﴾

[Ash-Shura, 52]

﴿And verily, you (O Muhammad PBUH) are indeed guiding (mankind) to the Straight Path (i.e. Allah's religion of Islamic Monotheism).﴾

Worship:

Dear brothers, pay attention to these Ayat, please:

﴿You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help (for each and everything). Guide us to the Straight Way﴾

[Al-Fatihah, 5-6]

What is worship? It is about following the Straight Way rather than offering Salah only. Thus, worship is to follow the Straight Way in Halal (whatever is permissible) and Haram (whatever is impermissible), in giving and withholding, in strengthening ties and breaking them and in being pleased or displeased about things or people.

Man is undoubtedly mistaken if he assumes that worship is just about offering the ritual acts of worship. Be aware that Allah's Method consists of more than 500.000 rulings, and Istiqamah is manifested in abiding by all of them in every aspect of man's life whether in his marriage, commerce, trips, donations, or happy and sad occasions.

﴿You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help (for each and everything). Guide us to the Straight Way﴾

[Al-Fatihah, 6]

The Straight Way is the detailed Method of Allah. Allah the Almighty says:

﴿And that you should worship Me [Alone Islamic Monotheism, and set up not rivals, associate-gods with Me].﴾

[Ya-Sin, 61]

What does worship mean according to the Ayah above?

﴿That is a Straight Path.﴾

[Ya-Sin, 61]

Worship is to follow the Straight Path.

Unless your faith motivates you to obey Allah, it is worthless:

Man by nature abides by laws and rulings out of fear, but Allah the Almighty expects from the believer to follow His Orders out of longing to reach Him and to draw close to Him. Allah the Almighty says:

﴿Say (O Muhammad PBUH) : "I am only a human being like you. It is inspired in me that your Ilah (God) is One Ilah (God - Allah), therefore take Straight Path to Him (with true Faith Islamic Monotheism) ﴾

[Fussilat, 6]

Hence, believing in Allah entails following the Straight Way to reach Allah. Not to mention, believing in the existence of Allah is meaningless as long as man does not follow His Path.

The practical and subtle stance towards his faith is to abide by Allah's Method. Unless your faith motivates you to obey Allah, this faith is pointless, and it is like the faith of Shaitan (Satan) who said as Allah the Almighty narrates:

﴿By Your Might﴾

[Saad, 82]

He also said as Allah the Almighty narrates:

﴿You created me from fire﴾

[Saad, 76]

Despite Shaitan's acknowledgment to Allah's Might and Creating Power, Allah the Almighty cursed him.

Consider these two Ayat:

﴿Say (O Muhammad PBUH) : "I am only a human being like you. It is inspired in me that your Ilah (God) is One Ilah (God - Allah), therefore take Straight Path to Him (with true Faith Islamic Monotheism) ﴾

[Fussilat, 6]

Allah the Almighty says:

﴿Say (O Muhammad PBUH) : "I am only a man like you. It has been inspired 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."﴾

[Al-Kahf, 110]

The results of Istiqamah:

What are the results of Istiqamah?

﴿Verily, those who say: "Our Lord is Allah (Alone)," and then they Istaqamu , on them the angels will descend (at the time of their death) (saying): "Fear not, nor grieve! But receive the glad tidings of Paradise which you have been promised!* "We have been your friends in the life of this world and are (so) in the Hereafter. ﴾

[Fussilat, 30-31]

Let me shed light on this part:

﴿"Fear not, nor grieve! ﴾

This Ayah embraces the past, the present and the future:

﴿"Fear not ﴾

The believer never fears the future, or the bad things it may have.

﴿Say: "Nothing shall ever happen to us except what Allah has ordained for us.﴾

[At-Taubah, 51]

The believer is under Allah's Providence.

Keep in mind that expecting the calamity is a graver disaster than the calamity itself, fearing poverty makes man lived in poverty and fearing illness makes man ill. Allah the Almighty says:

﴿"Fear not ﴾

This word embraces the future.

﴿Nor grieve! ﴾

This means that you should not regret what is in the past, nor should you fear the future. Hence, the steadfast person is amazingly blessed by Allah, for he never fears the future and never regrets anything he missed (in worldly life).

﴿"Fear not, nor grieve! ﴾

"Lao" (If only) does not exist in the believer's dictionary.

(Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: "... If anything afflicts you do not say, 'If I had done such and such things, such and such would have happened.' But say, 'Allah decrees and what He wills He does,' for (the utterance) 'If I had' provides an opening for the deeds of the devil.")

[Related by Muslim]

﴿On them the angels will descend (at the time of their death) (saying): "Fear not, nor grieve! ﴾

Allah the Almighty then says:

﴿But receive the glad tidings of Paradise ﴾

Due to the high rank the believer has in Allah's Sight, he receives Allah's Graces in the worldly life, and he will keep receiving them in the Hereafter as well.

﴿"Fear not, nor grieve!﴾

When the believer dies, he will receive the following glad tidings:

﴿But receive the glad tidings of Paradise which you have been promised!﴾

The one who chooses the worldly life over the Hereafter loses them both:

Allah the Almighty says:

﴿So stand (ask Allah to make) you (Muhammad PBUH) firm and straight (on the religion of Islamic Monotheism) as you are commanded and those (your companions) who turn in repentance (unto Allah) with you﴾

[Hud, 112]

The Prophet PBUH said:

(Surah Hud and similar surahs have made me old)

[At-Tirmizi, on the authority of Ibn Abbas]

He meant this Ayah:

﴿So stand (ask Allah to make) you (Muhammad PBUH) firm and straight (on the religion of Islamic Monotheism) as you are commanded﴾

[Hud, 112]

He longed to eat that date, only he feared that it might be from the ones of charity. This is the status of the believer.

(Two Rak'as (of Prayer performed) by a pious person are far better than a thousand Rak'as by someone who mingles (good deeds with evil ones).)

[On the authority of Anas]

(Whose piety is not enough to make him refrain from disobeying Allah in private, Allah will pay no attention to all his righteous deeds.)

[Musnad Ash-Shihab, by Anas Ibn Malek]

A brother I knew, may Allah have mercy upon his soul, used to be in business management in USA, and he said to me upon reciting an Ayah, "By Allah all my major is summed up in this Ayah." The following is the Ayah I recited to him:

{Is he who walks without seeing on his face, more rightl guided, or he who (sees and) walks on a Straight Way (i.e. Islamic Monotheism). }

[Al-Mulk, 129]

The one who follows the Straight Way sees the big picture, while the one who does not look farther than his footsteps, will see only small pieces of this big picture. Unfortunately, the majority of people see only pieces of the big picture, and they are trapped in endless worldly concerns. Let alone, they will be taken aback when death comes, because they forget about this moment, given moving from everything to the grave is frightful.

When I pay respects if someone I know or a relative of mine dies, I enter very luxurious houses, and at that moment I say to myself, "The deceased chose the tiles, the breathtaking views, the decorations and the carpets, but where is he now? He is in the grave". Pay heed while reflecting on this fact.

Allah's Punishment sometimes befalls man in the worldly life:

Allah the Almighty says:

﴿Is he who walks without seeing on his face,﴾

This man is heedless in his life, in buying, in selling and in picking on others. A man I know filed a lawsuit against another person, and he demanded to be paid 50 million, so he had to hire two attorneys, and he was drowned in worldly concerns. It is related in Qudsi Hadith:

(O My slave, I created to you the heavens and earth and I was not wearied by their creation, does a loaf of bread that I bring to you every time wear Me? O My slave I have Faridah (obligatory duty) on you, and you have a livelihood on Me, so, if you disobey Me (in respect of) My Duty (My Right on you) I do not oppose you in your livelihood (sustenance), I (swear) by My Glory and Loftiness, if you do not assent to what I portioned out for you, I will authorize the worldly life that you will run in as the wild animal, then you will not get from it but what I portioned out (assign to) for you and I will not care)

[Narrated as a hadeeth]

This means that Allah punishes some of His servants in the worldly life by overwhelming them with worldly concerns, meetings and endless worries until they forget their Lord and the Hereafter. As a result, a heart attack overtakes one of them, and he ends up in the ICU, then he dies and everything is over.

The purpose of the one who follows the Straight Way is very clear.

The good results of Istiqamah are countless:

The results of Istiqamah are countless.

﴿If they (non-Muslims) had believed in Allah, and went on the Right Way (i.e. Islam) We should surely have bestowed on them water (rain) in abundance. ﴾

[Al-Jinn, 16]

In Damascus, Barada River used to overflow causing drowning accidents sometimes.

﴿If they (non-Muslims) had believed in Allah, and went on the Right Way (i.e. Islam) We should surely have bestowed on them water (rain) in abundance* That We might try them thereby. And whosoever turns away from the Reminder of his Lord (i.e. this Qur'an, and practice not its laws and orders), He will cause him to enter in a severe torment (i.e. Hell). ﴾

[Al-Jinn, 16-17]

Dear brothers, the entire religion can be summed up in one word, "Istiqamah". Unless you follow the Straight Way, you will not reap the fruits of this religion. When religion becomes only a concept that is not applied, it turns into folklore, background, tendencies, sentiments, interests, Islamic architecture, decorations and orientations. Can you believe that some Quran reciters went to Paris to recite the Quran as an orient folklore? By Allah, this is what happened.

Dear brothers, the Quran is but the Straight Way, and Allah guides by the Quran those who follow it to the ways of peace. Accordingly, the believer has peace at home with his children and at work with his partners. Hence, the believer has peace on the personal level and on the public level. Besides, he has peace in his own health. Therefore, Allah guides by the Quran those who follow it to the ways of peace.

﴿Wherewith Allah guides all those who seek His Good Pleasure to ways of peace, and He brings them out of darkness by His Will unto light and guides them to a Straight Way (Islamic Monotheism).﴾

[Al-Ma'idah', 16]

Al-Batil is multiple, while Al-Haqq is not:

The Straight Way is one only, and it is like the straight line between two dots, for you cannot draw more than one straight line. There is only one Haqq (truth) on earth.

﴿"And verily, this (i.e. Allah's Commandments mentioned in the above two Verses 151 and 152) is my Straight Path, so follow it,﴾

[Al-An'am, 153]

The singular pronoun is used for the Straight Path.

﴿And follow not (other) paths, for they will separate you away from His Path.﴾

[Al-An'am, 153]

On the other hand, the plural pronoun is used for Al-Batil (falsehood). Accordingly, man should know that his life span is enough only to pursue the one Haqq, while Al-Batil is endless. Furthermore, if we put together the life span of all people on earth, they will not be enough to pursue the endless paths of Al-Batil. Thus, the paths of Al-Batil are endless and various.

Keep in mind that the battle between two truthful things never occurs, because there is only one Haqq, whereas the battle between Al-Haqq and Al-Batil never lasts for a long time, because Allah is on the side of Al-Haqq. On the other hand, a battle between two Batil never ends, because Al-Batil never ends.

Seeking Allah's Path is Divinely protected from Shaitan's plot:

When man reconciles with Allah and starts following the Straight Way, he will be seduced by Shaitan.

﴿Because You have sent me astray, surely I will sit in wait against them (human beings) on Your Straight Path.﴾

[Al-A'raf, 16]

When man is deviated, Shaitan has nothing to do with him, but when man follows Allah's Orders, Shaitan never leaves him, trying to tempt him all the time. Shaitan said as Allah the Almighty tells us:

﴿Then I will come to them from before them﴾

[Al-A'raf, 17]

This means that Shaitan will seduce man in so many ways, making use of the advanced science, the satellites, the computers, the social media websites and information revolution.

﴿And behind them,﴾

[Al-A'raf, 17]

When Shaitan seduces man, and the latter rejects Islam, we will be benighted, just like the old nations, such as the Aramaic nation and the Egyptian Pharaohs.

﴿From their right﴾

[Al-A'raf, 17]

Shaitan instills doubts in the believer while the latter is offering Wudu or Salah, so the Muslim starts to doubt whether he recites Al-Fatihah as it should be or not, and if he doubts that, he will doubt his Salah, so he will be lost in that maze of doubts.

﴿And from their left,﴾

[Al-A'raf, 17]

Shaitan will seduce man to commit sins.

﴿And You will not find most of them as thankful ones (i.e. they will not be dutiful to You).﴾

[Al-A'raf, 17]

Shaitan seduces people to keep whining about everything instead of being grateful to Allah for the graces they have. Nevertheless, the Straight Path to Allah is protected from Shaitan, but how? This path has six directions, and Shaitan seduces man from his right, left, north and south (four directions), but he can never seduce man from above or beneath, for those two directions are protected by Allah from Shaitan, so that this Straight Path leads the believer to Allah. Allah the Almighty says:

﴿(Iblis) said: "Because You have sent me astray, surely I will sit in wait against them (human beings) on Your Straight Path* Then I will come to them from before them and behind them, from their right and from their left, and You will not find most of them as thankful ones (i.e. they will not be dutiful to You).﴾

[Al-A'raf, 16-17]

When you sit with a rich man, who owns houses and cars and earns astronomical income, he starts complaining to you about the stagnant market and how awful this country is.

﴿And You will not find most of them as thankful ones (i.e. they will not be dutiful to You).﴾

[Al-A'raf, 17]

On the other hand, when you sit with the believer, he praises Allah every second though his income is very limited.

﴿And You will not find most of them as thankful ones (i.e. they will not be dutiful to You).﴾

[Al-A'raf, 17]

Treat the other party politely as long as he is polite:

Dear brothers, Allah gives us an instruction here in the following Ayah to show us how we should treat the other party (the Kuffar):

﴿So long, as they are true to you, stand you true to them.﴾

[At-Taubah, 7]

If a disbeliever treats you nicely, fairly and kindly, you should treat him the same way.

﴿So long, as they are true to you, stand you true to them.﴾

The believer should never be harsh to others.

Believing in the Hereafter is the foremost motivation for man to be steadfast:

Dear brothers, pay attention to the following Ayah:

﴿And verily, those who believe not in the Hereafter are indeed deviating far astray from the Path (true religion Islamic Monotheism).﴾

[Al-Mu'minun, 74]

It seems that the greatest motivation for man to be steadfast is to believe in the Hereafter wherein there will be subtle reckoning.

﴿And verily, those who believe not in the Hereafter are indeed deviating far astray from the Path (true religion Islamic Monotheism).﴾

Dear brothers, Istiqamah embraces the entire religion. The Muslim is distinguished by being steadfast, by controlling his tongue, by

conquering his desires, by seeking lawful income, by spending his money lawfully and by looking after his work, his house and his expenditure. Unless you follow the Straight Path, you will not reap the fruits of this religion (i.e. Islam).