

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

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Faith, Belief and Action

Faith, belief and action are all irrevocably intertwined. You cannot have one of the three without the other. There are many who have strong religious beliefs but little faith. What is faith? It is a trust in a belief when put into practice. People very eagerly cling onto a long list of beliefs but this remains just mere information if there is lack of certainty to put it into practice. What is belief? Belief is a set of propositions. It is not meant just for mere information; it constitutes the code of life that we submitters are required to apply.

Some take belief and faith to mean one and the same thing whereas others do see a similarity but define them differently to suit their own lifestyle. Hence, they search for God unsuccessfully because they

lack conviction and reverence. The inevitable result is uncertainty, disappointment and frustration. If you do not act on your beliefs you cannot attain faith or God's blessings and mercy.

Some of us are fortunate that we are born into a "Muslim" family and as a result our beliefs are by and large in built. But when it comes to faith there is something lacking. If our faith were firm in God's omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence then our deeds and actions would have been in accord with the limits prescribed by the Quran.

What should we do? Go to the Quran which is straightforward, clear-cut and unequivocal. We all understand that Islam means a complete submission to God and His

injunctions. It is a complete code of life consisting of belief and faith on one hand and performance and actions on the other. If we do not act on every principle and instruction of Submission it is perhaps comparable to disbelief.

Performance is the link between belief and faith. Without performance this belief loses its credibility. Many of us do not realize that without enactment our beliefs cannot save our souls, as they do not attain accomplishment.

[9:105] Say, "Work righteousness; GOD will see your work, and so will His messenger and the believers. Ultimately, you will be returned to the Knower of all secrets and declarations, then He will inform you of everything you had done."

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God Himself makes a distinction between submitters and believers. In this case, it would mean mere submitters who do not act or practice. In no uncertain terms does God say a warning to people who believe that a mere declaration of faith is enough. You have to act on the belief that you accept.

[49:14-15] The Arabs said, "We are Mu'mens (believers)." Say, "You have not believed; what you should say is, 'We are Muslims (submitters),' until belief is established in your hearts." If you obey GOD and His messenger, He will not put any of your works to waste. GOD is Forgiver, Most Merciful. Mu'mens (believers) are those who believe in GOD and His messenger, then attain the status of having no doubt whatsoever, and strive with their money and their lives in the cause of GOD. These are the truthful ones.

Similarly speaking, the Quran talks a great deal about knowledge and its acquisition. But knowledge without its good use is useless. With education you acquire knowledge and attain some wisdom but it is futile and worthless if not accompanied with actions to match.

One of the many dark sides to the human character is to profess things we do not ourselves practice. This is because of our instinct to present ourselves as role models of morality and respectability. It does not cost much to profess ourselves as the epitome of all virtue. However, this is a dangerous habit because it does not contribute any good to society and it propagates false pretense and deceit.

[61:2-3] O you who believe, why do you say what you do not do? Most abominable in the sight of GOD is that you say what you do not do.

A true submitter must make his deeds and actions a true reproduction of his utterances. We should not profess what we do not practice. We should not project what we are not.

Even more dangerous is to advise and preach to others without practicing the same ourselves. Sometimes this may not have an effect because people may realize that you are not a follower of that code. However, these habits are counterproductive because people lose faith not only in the preacher but sometimes in the virtue of the good act as well.

[2:44] Do you exhort the people to be righteous, while forgetting yourselves, though you read the scripture? Do you not understand?

[3:188] Those who boast about their works, and wish to be praised for something they have not really done, should not think that they can evade the retribution. They have incurred a painful retribution.

We have to follow every injunction of the Quran faithfully in letter and spirit; every word is sacrosanct.

Hence, it is absolutely vital that we should not preach to others about virtue unless and until we ourselves do the same. Also, you will notice that we will, God willing, find people more receptive when they are assured that we are "in the forefront of righteous." Any expectations beyond would be self-deception.

Our thinking should be set right too. If we think that our belief is right and this is sufficient to win

over God's mercy and blessings then we would commit the same error as the Children of Israel:

[7:163] Remind them of the community by the sea, who desecrated the Sabbath. When they observed the Sabbath, the fish came to them abundantly. And when they violated the Sabbath, the fish did not come. We thus afflicted them, as a consequence of their transgression.

They did not pay heed to what was asked of them to perform and enact.

We have to remember and accept that belief and faith are essential fundamentals and the starting point of Submission, but we also have to mold our life completely with the teachings and injunctions of the Quran. This has to be included with your belief and faith. Belief and faith without righteous actions and deeds would be akin to a body without a soul. God puts great emphasis on this. The Quran mentions about *those who believe* over 140 times but qualifies the statement -- *those who believe and lead a righteous life* over 90 times. From this we understand that the latter is as important as the former. Our faith otherwise would be incomplete; the two go in tandem as they are inseparable.

Take the example of a person who is unwell and goes to see a doctor. He has full faith and trust in the doctor whom he has carefully chosen. The doctor gives him a prescription but instead of taking the medicine he puts the prescription in his drawer and looks at it every day very religiously. He hopes that he will get well soon. But will he? So the mere trust and faith in the doctor cannot cure the patient unless he heeds the advice that the doctor has given.

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If we feel content and satisfied by accepting beliefs but do not care to practice them then we should keep in mind the Quranic verse:

[29:2] Do the people think that they will be left to say, "We believe," without being put to the test?

Many people believe that the sword brought about the conquest of Islam. While this might be true in some cases there were also many who embraced Islam due to the strength of character and noble conduct of "godly" people that influenced society.

Belief and faith could rightly be considered the basic fundamentals like the foundation of a building. They form the first step in the doctrine of Submission. By God's leave, they help guide us to the right path without which we would be lost in the wilderness. Acceptance of beliefs and faith are not the end but the means to reach the end. Beliefs help you attain faith only if they are practiced upon. Only then can we aspire to be closer to God and do what is most pleasing to Him.

[9:109-110] Is one who establishes his building on the basis of reverencing GOD and to gain His approval better, or one who establishes his building on the brink of a crumbling cliff, that falls down with him into the fire of Hell? GOD does not guide the transgressing people. Such a building that they have established remains a source of doubt in their hearts, until their hearts are stilled. GOD is Omniscient, Most Wise.

Why is Islam called not just a religion but also *a way of life*? This is because the Quran offers us a total and all encompassing package for beliefs, deeds and actions all together. There is an action and deed called for at every step of the way. We have to follow the teachings with dedication and in all sincerity. We can only do this when belief is ingrained deeply in our heart. We know that our deeds and actions will be weighed with the resultant reward and punishment in the Hereafter.

The Contact Prayer (Salat), Obligatory Charity (Zakat), Fasting and Hajj are all obligatory on us as these are God's commands. Undoubtedly, they will bring upon us God's blessings. However, they do not absolve us from being righteous and performing our obligations to fellow human beings like parents, relatives, feeding the poor and the traveling alien etc. Fulfilling one does not absolve us from carrying out the other. By denying them their due share we are in fact usurping their rights and we could face God's wrath both in this life and most certainly in the Hereafter. No piecemeal performances are allowed and there is no part time submission:

[2:208] O you who believe, you shall embrace total submission; do not follow the steps of Satan, for he is your most ardent enemy.

[26:89] Only those who come to GOD with their whole heart (will be saved).

Alim C. /India

"For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You." Psalm 86:5

Readers' Comments

Asalamu 'Alaykum,
Thank you very much for your help. I have also been concerned about another problem in the modern Muslim world. I don't think that the Hadith is an acceptable guideline, because in today's Muslim world, it has caused corruption, misunderstanding of the True Islam, a destruction of its perfection, and has also given Non-Muslims and other Muslims a bad impression that Islam is very strict, causing them to hate the Religion itself.

And is it possible that the terrible position Muslims are in today, as in Iraq, Lebanon, Afghanistan, etc., is because they are in error and on misguidance for following a book other than the Qur'an? Because such people are accepting another book in place of the Qur'an's authority, it is almost as if they are following a completely different religion, or are they?

The True Islam has been concealed under a cloak. I have come to realize that the majority of the Muslims that exist today have been completely misguided. Those who only follow the Qur'an are the ones who are hated and interrogated. The Prophet, being only one man, was under the same circumstance as today's minority Qur'an-Only Muslims; these are the Muslims that are constantly being picked at, which is unfair because they're only doing what Allah told them to do and none other than that. All of my relatives have been misguided by the Hadith, even when I explain to them about the Truth, they are ignorant and do not listen. How far are such people from the Truth and are they truly Muslim? I would appreciate it very much if you helped me on this issue.

Thank you very much for your help and may Allah be pleased with you!

Asalamu 'Alaykum
Sister in Islam,
S. S. A.

[3:99] Say, "O followers of the scripture, why do you repel from the path of GOD those who wish to believe, and seek to distort it, even though you are witnesses?" GOD is never unaware of anything you do.

MASJID TUCSON United Submitters International

PO Box 43476 Tucson AZ 85733-3476 USA

Tel/Fax: (520) 323 7636

internet web sites www.masjiduntucson.org www.submission.org www.submission.info

e-mail: info@masjiduntucson.org masjiduntucson@gmail.com

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Empathy

The dictionary defines empathy as “the identification with and understanding of another’s situation, feelings, and motives.” It has also been described as the ability to put oneself in the other fellow’s place. So empathy requires first of all that we comprehend the circumstances of someone else and second that we share the feelings that those circumstances provoke in him.

Most everyone has a degree of natural empathy. But not all suffering is readily discernible. How difficult it is to comprehend the feelings of someone who is experiencing a problem if we have never had such problem ourselves.

The most powerful way to stimulate empathy is to ask ourselves: If we were in this situation, how would we feel? How would we respond? What would we need? According to the Bible, Job’s three false comforters proved incapable of putting themselves in his position. Hence, they condemned him for imaginary sins that they assumed he must have committed. As imperfect humans, we often find it easier to judge the mistakes than to understand feelings.

Empathy is invaluable in helping us overlook the failings of others

within the congregation. If we endeavor to understand the feelings of someone who has offended us, we will undoubtedly find it much easier to forgive him or her. Possibly we would have reacted in the same way had we been in the same situation and had we had his background.

We should also be able to view ourselves and the world through the eyes of others. This means examin-

ing beliefs and circumstances of others, keeping in mind the goal of enhanced understanding and appreciation. In this way, empathy is what allows us to treat other people as we ourselves would like to be treated—which is what ethics and morality tend to be about.

Author unknown

[6:62] Then everyone is returned to GOD, their rightful Lord and Master. Absolutely, He is the ultimate judge; He is the most accurate reckoner.

[11:29] “O my people, I do not ask you for any money; my wage comes only from GOD. I am not dismissing those who believed; they will meet their Lord (and He alone will judge them). I see that you are ignorant people.

[39:46] Proclaim: “Our god, Initiator of the heavens and the earth, Knower of all secrets and declarations, You are the only One who judges among Your servants regarding their disputes.”

[22:17] Those who believe, those who are Jewish, the converts, the Christians, the Zoroastrians, and the idol worshipers, GOD is the One who will judge among them on the Day of Resurrection. GOD witnesses all things.

God Willing

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God willing mark your calendars and make plans for the 2007 Annual Conference of the Submitters.

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God willing, the page will be updated as more details become available.