

'Do you mean the Jews and Christians?' He replied, 'Who else?'⁹

What the early nations took to shall also be taken to by my nation, cubit by cubit and handspan by handspan. They said, 'Do you mean the Persians and the Romans.' To which he replied, 'Who else from amongst the people could it be.'¹⁰

Ibn Abī Mulaykah said,

I met thirty of the Companions of Muḥammad (ﷺ) all of them fearing hypocrisy for themselves.¹¹

And from 'Alī - or Hudhayfah - that he said,

The heart are of four types: the clear heart that is illuminated by a torch - this is the heart of the believer. The encased heart - this is the heart of the disbeliever, the inverted heart - this is the heart of the hypocrite, and the heart that has two attractions, a time when it is called to faith, and a time when it is called to hypocrisy - these are a people that have mixed good actions with evil ones.

So when this is understood, it becomes known that every servant benefits from what Allāh mentioned concerning faith, either extolling the branches of faith or censuring the branches of disbelief.

⁹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* [Eng. Trans. 9/314 no. 422], *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* [Eng. Trans. 4/1402 no. 6448], Aḥmad [2/450].

¹⁰ Refer to *Iqtiḍā' Sirāṭ al-Mustaqīm* of Ibn Taymiyyah.

¹¹ Reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim

The case mentioned above is similar to what some of them ask concerning His saying,

أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿٦﴾

Guide us to the Straight Path.

[*Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* (1): 6]

saying: ‘Allāh has already guided the believer, so what benefit is there in seeking guidance?’ Then some of them reply by saying that the meaning is ‘keep us firm upon guidance’ as the Arab would say to the one who is asleep, ‘sleep until I come to you.’ Others from amongst them say that the meaning is, ‘keep our hearts firm upon the guidance’ and that the request for firmness has been omitted. Yet others from amongst them say that it means, ‘increase me in guidance.’

This question really occurs due to the absence of their contemplating upon the Straight Path to which the servant seeks guidance to, for the meaning [of the verse] is [seeking guidance to] act according to what Allāh ordered, and leave what He forbade in all matters.

[1.9 The Need for Beneficial Knowledge]

This is because the person, even if he has believed that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh and that the Qur’ān is the truth in a general way, is commonly in need of knowledge of that which would benefit him and harm him. He is in need of knowledge concerning what he has been commanded to do and forbidden from doing in the finer aspects of the matters and in those areas of which he has no knowledge. [Not only this but we find that] that which he does have knowledge of, he does not put the greater part of it to practice! Assuming that all of

the commands and prohibitions contained in the Qur'ān and Sunnah have reached him, then the Qur'ān and Sunnah contain laws that are general and universal for which it is not possible to specify to every individual person - therefore the person has been commanded due to the likes of this to ask for guidance to the Straight Path.

Guidance to the Straight Path includes all of the following matters: cognizance of what the Messenger (ﷺ) came with in detail, cognizance of what comes under his general orders and concern for acting according to ones knowledge, for indeed just having knowledge is not a cause for attaining guidance if one does not act according to his knowledge. This is why He said to His Prophet after the treaty of *Hudaybiyyah*,

إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُّبِينًا ﴿١﴾ لِيُغْفِرَ لَكَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِكَ
وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ وَيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ وَيَهْدِيَكَ صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا ﴿٢﴾

Indeed We have given you a manifest victory.
That Allāh may forgive you your sins of the past
and future, complete His Favour upon you, and
guide you on a Straight Path.

[*Sūrah Fath* (48): 1-2]

And He said with respect to Mūsā and Harūn,

وَأَنزَلْنَا لَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ
الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿١٧٧﴾ وَهَدَيْنَاهُمَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿١٧٨﴾

and We gave them the clear Scripture, and
guided them to the Right Path.

[*Sūrah as-Sāffāt* (37): 117-118]

The Muslims have differed as to what Allāh Willed from the

textual matters - matters of knowledge, belief and action while all of them are agreed that Muḥammad is the truth and the Qur'ān is the truth. If all of them were to have attained guidance to the Straight Path in totality then they would never have differed. Furthermore the majority of those who know what Allāh has ordered disobey Him and do not follow His Way. If they were guided to the Straight Path in these matters then they certainly would have performed what they had been commanded to do, and left what they had been forbidden from. As for those whom Allāh guided from amongst this nation until they became from the God-Fearing Friends of Allāh, then the greatest reason for this was their supplicating to Allāh with this supplication,

أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿٦﴾

Guide us to the Straight Path.

[*Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* (1): 6]

in every prayer along with the knowledge of their continuous need of Allāh that He guide them on the Straight Path. So due to their continually saying this supplication and their acknowledging their continuous need of Him they became God-Fearing Friends of Allāh.

Sahl bin 'Abdullāh at-Tustorī said,

There is not route between a servant and Allāh closer to Him than need.

The one who has attained guidance in the past is in need of guidance in the future, this is the real meaning behind the saying of those who say that it means: 'establish us and guide us to being firm upon the Straight Path.' The opinion of those who say that it means: 'increase us in guidance' includes what has

preceded. But all that has been stated refers to His guidance to the Straight Path that is to be granted in the future, for indeed action in the future is upon knowledge that is not yet attained. And the person is not considered to be one who is guided until he acts according to his knowledge in the future, but it is possible that this knowledge not be there in the future, rather it could be removed from the heart, and if it still be there it is also possible that it not be acted upon. Therefore all of mankind is in dire need of this supplication, this is why Allāh made it obligatory upon them in every prayer and they are not in need of any other supplication as they are of this one. When guidance is obtained to the Straight Path then help, provision and all of the happiness that the soul seeks are obtained [from Allāh]. Allāh knows best.

[1.10 The Reality of the Life of the Heart]

Know that the life of the heart and other than it is not merely one of sensation, movement and intent, or merely one of knowledge and ability as assumed and intent, or merely one of knowledge and ability as assumed by a group of investigators into the Knowledge of Allāh and His power such as Abū al-Ḥusain al-Baṣrī. They said:

He can only be considered to have Life as long as
He Knows and is Able.

This is not the case, rather life is an attribute existing independently in the described, and it is a condition for the existence of knowledge, intent and the ability to perform actions out of choice. Life is also a necessary outcome of these - so every living thing has understanding, intention, and everything that has knowledge, intent and performs actions and performs actions out of choice is alive.

The noun 'modesty' is derived from 'life', so the heart that is alive - it's owner is also alive - and it contains modesty which prevents it from performing evil and despicable actions, because in the modesty of the heart lies its immunity from these types of actions. This is why the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

Modesty is from faith.¹²

and he said,

Modesty and bashfulness are two branches from
amongst the branches of faith, and obscenity and

¹² *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* [Eng. Trans. 8/89 no. 139], *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* [Eng. Trans. 1/27 no. 57].

boasting are two branches from the branches of hypocrisy. ¹³

This is why the living being is clearly affected by despicable actions and he has an intent that prevents him from performing them in contravention to the one who is shameless because he is not alive and therefore has no modesty and therefore no faith that would restrain him from evil. So if the heart is alive and the person dies in its separation from the body, then the death of the soul lies in its separation from the body not in the fact that it, in and of itself, has died - with the meaning of life leaving it. This is why Allāh the Exalted said,

وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمُوتَ بَلْ أَحْيَاءُ

Do not say those who are slain in the Way of Allāh: 'they are dead', rather they are alive...

[*Sūrah al-Baqarah* (2) : 154]

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمُوتًا بَلْ أَحْيَاءُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ ﴿١٦٩﴾

Think not of those who are slain in the Way of Allāh as dead. Nay they are alive...

[*Sūrah Āl 'Imrān* (3) : 169]

Despite the fact that they have died are included in His sayings,

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ

¹³ Reported by at-Tirmidhī and al-Baghawī in *Sharḥ as-Sunnab* [12/366], declared *ṣaḥīḥ* by al-Ḥākim and *hasan* by al-'Irāqī.

Every soul shall taste of death...

[Sūrah *Al 'Imrān* (3) : 185]

إِنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ وَإِنَّهُمْ مَيِّتُونَ

Indeed you will die and they will die...

[Sūrah *az-Zumar* (39) : 30]

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَحْيَاكُمْ
ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَكَفُورٌ ﴿٦٦﴾

He is the One Who gave you life, then will cause you to die, then give you life.

[Sūrah *al-Hajj* (22) : 66]

Therefore the death that is affirmed is not the same as the negated death.

The affirmed death is the separation of the soul from the body, and the negated death is the leaving of life in totality from the body and soul. This is similar to the fact that sleep is the brother of death. Allāh said,

اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنْفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِي
لَمْ تَمُتْ فِي مَنَامِهَا فَيُمْسِكُ الَّتِي قَضَىٰ عَلَيْهَا الْمَوْتَ
وَيُرْسِلُ الْأُخْرَىٰ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى

It is Allāh Who takes away the souls at the time of their death, and those that die not during their sleep. He keeps those (souls) for which He ordained death and sends the rest for a term appointed.

[Sūrah *az-Zumar* (39) :42]

The Prophet (ﷺ) used to say when he awoke from sleep,

«الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَحْيَانَا بَعْدَ مَا أَمَاتَنَا وَإِلَيْهِ النُّشُورُ».

All praise is due to Allāh Who gives us life after He had caused us to die and unto Him is the resurrection.¹⁴

In another *ḥadīth*,

«الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي عَافَانِي فِي جَسَدِي، وَرَدَّ عَلَيَّ رُوحِي، وَأَذَنَ لِي بِذِكْرِهِ».

All praise is due to Allāh Who restored to me health and returned my soul and has allowed me to remember Him.¹⁵

When he lay down to sleep he said,

«اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ خَلَقْتَ نَفْسِي وَأَنْتَ تَوَفَّاهَا، لَكَ مَمَاتُهَا وَمَحْيَاهَا، إِنَّ أَحْيَيْتَهَا فَاحْفَظْهَا، وَإِنْ أَمَتَهَا فَاغْفِرْ لَهَا. اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْعَافِيَةَ».

O Allāh, verily You have created my soul, and You shall take its life, to You belongs its death and life. If You should keep my soul alive then protect it, and if You should take its life then forgive it. O Allāh I ask You to grant me good health.¹⁶

¹⁴ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* [Eng. Trans. 8/217], *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* [Eng. Trans. 4/1422 no. 6549], *Sunan Abū Dāwūd* [Eng. Trans. 3/1402 no. 5031].

¹⁵ Reported by at-Tirmidhī [no.3401]. It is *ṣaḥīḥ*, refer to *Muḥadḍḥab 'Amāl al-Yawm wa Laylā* of Shaykh 'Alī Ḥasan [pg. 33] [Translator's Note].

¹⁶ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* [Eng. Trans. 4/1422 no. 6550] from the *ḥadīth* of Ibn 'Umar.

He said,

«بِسْمِكَ اللَّهُمَّ أَمُوتُ وَأَحْيَا»

With Your Name, O Allāh, I die and live.¹⁷

¹⁷ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* [Eng. Trans. 8/217 no. 324], *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* [Eng. Trans. 4/1422 no, 6549].