

The Value of Intention in Islam

As-salámu ‘alaikum wa rahmatul láhi wa barakátuh!”

“A-úthu billáhi minash shaytánir rajeem. Bismilláhir rahmánir raheem.

Al hamdu lillahi nahmaduhu wanasta’eenahu, wanastagh-firuhu, wanatoobu ilayhi, wana’oothu Billaahi min shuroori an-fusinaa, wamin sayyi aati a’maalinaa.

May- Yahdillahu fa huwal muhtad, wa may- yudlill falan tajidaa lahu waliyan murshida. Wa ash-hadu an Laa ilaaha ill-Alláh, wahdahoo laa shareeka lah, wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan ‘abduhoo warasooluh”

In the Name of Allah, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We all know that we are responsible for all that we do. Have you considered how and if we are responsible for what we think?

We, as Muslims, sometimes forget the element of thought and intention, and think that it is simply doing good deeds and sacrificing our money and time that really matters.

The intention is as important as the deeds, and in fact it is the intention that gives the deeds its wings – the wings that lift the deed into the realm of a good deed that Allah the Almighty will accept.

Our beloved Prophet (SAW) said:

“The deeds are considered by their intentions, and a person will get the reward according to his intentions. So whoever emigrated for Allah and his Messenger, then his emigration will be for Allah and his Messenger; and whoever emigrated for worldly benefits or for a woman to marry, his emigration would be for what he emigrated for.” (Al-Bukhari, 1).

From the above hadith we see that the Prophet (SAW) was addressing those who emigrated in the first years of Islam. We have to realise that at that turbulent and difficult time, emigrating from your original place of residence it was an almost incomprehensible thing to do. The tribal links that the Arabs had were never broken in such a way, so it was most difficult to do.

However the Prophet (SAW) here reminds them that their reward will only be in accordance with that for which they have emigrated. If anyone had done so for the sake of being recognized as having done so then the true, pious deed and its reward cannot be his. He might be seen as brave and as an extremely pious and humble servant of Allah, but this will be only in the eyes of people and therefore will not serve any purpose.

The intention of a believer brings him closer to his Creator. If he does a certain thing just for the sake of the Creator then that is an act of obedience.

And in a hadith of the Prophet Mohammad (SAW), he said: ***“Whoever asks Allah (SWT) for martyrdom with sincerity Allah (SWT) will put him at the***

level of the martyrs in paradise even if he dies in his sleep.” (Muslim, 1909).

See, dear Brothers and Sisters that Allah Almighty is flowing with mercy for his sincere servants. For it is the intention when doing the deed that separates those who truly believe and submit from those who seek worldly pleasures.

Furthermore, the Almighty has given us such a bargain that whoever refuses is at loss. If a believing person performs good deeds with pure intention regularly but is prevented from doing so at some point by an illness or due to a situation beyond his control (travel, for example) then Allah (SWT) will reward him as if he actually performed the deed.

In a hadith, the Prophet (SAW) said: ***“The one who intends to do a good deed and he does not do it, he will get rewarded for it as if he did it. And if he does it, his reward will be multiplied ten times.” (Muslim, 130).***

The important thing here, dear Brothers and Sisters, is to remember that, while intentions give validity to deeds, the intention alone is not enough. We need to be obedient to our Lord and to perform good deeds whenever this is possible through our efforts. We need to be sincere in our prayers, pay alms and do good to others without forgetting why we are doing this. And we need to pray to the Almighty to accept our deeds and to forgive our trespasses and sins.

May Allah (SWT) make us of those who are sincere believers and who perform deeds for the sake of the Creator.