

Perform Noble Deeds

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Allah (SWT) says in *Surah Jumu'ah*, *Aayah* 1: “Everything in the heavens and the earth glorifies Allah, the Controller, the Most Exalted Holy, the Almighty, [and] the Wise.”

We find the universe and every object in it in complete unison with each other in Allah's divine scheme. There is a momentum of action in the moving stream of time; an endless chain of action permeates the cosmos. The Creator Himself is busy and “Every day He (Allah Almighty) is engaged in some new work” (*Aayah* 29, *Surah Al-Rahman*). Galaxies known and unknown with billions of stars, planets, moons and suns are in action and float in their destined orbits. The churning oceans and the revolving earth is each on its own course of action. Action is the very pulse of the universe and it the very heart beat of life. Action can be noble if it is in complete harmony with the dictates of Allah (SWT) and His Messenger, and ignoble otherwise. Allah (SWT) says: “[We] have shown him [man] two clear ways [of good and evil]” (*Aayah* 10, *Surah Al-Balad*). It is up to us to make the choice.

Aayah 105 of *Surah Tawba* reads: “Say [Rasul Allah], Take action! Allah will see your actions – as will His Messenger and the believers – and then you will be returned to Him who knows what is seen and unseen, and He will tell you what you have been doing.” Allah (SWT) exhorts his slaves to act, to exert physical and mental powers to achieve results. Action is result oriented; it is a continuous struggle to achieve goals. These goals, which can be multi-dimensional, may be about material well being, physical, mental, educational and professional excellence, upbringing of children, providing livelihood to family, contributing to the neighbors, the community and the *Ummah*. The action that is rewarded in both worlds is one that focuses on the growth and well being of the soul.

Poet philosopher Iqbal says about action: “Action makes our life. We can make it heaven, or we make it a hell; In the clay that we are made of, neither light (of virtue), nor darkness (of evil) dwell.”

Our beloved Prophet (SAW) used to explain complex issues through simple examples. Once he told his companions that a person had three brothers. All of them were very close and loved each other. On his death bed, the person said to his elder brother: “My brother, you are elder to me and I have always respected you and served you well. At this critical moment of death, I request you to please help and relieve me of these pangs of death.” The brother refused point blank, saying: “You are in self-deception; I can not be of any help to you at this time.” Feeling sad and dejected, he called his middle brother and repeated the same request to him. This brother replied: “You are mistaken; I am in no position to assist. I can, however, arrange for your burial after you die. That is the maximum I can do.” Disappointed and dismayed, the dying person lastly called his younger brother and pleaded for help. The younger brother's reply was a relief to the dying person. He said: “Do not worry the least my brother. I am here to help you out.”

Prophet (SAW) then asked: “Do you realize who these three brothers were?” The companions submitted: “*Ya Rasul Allah*, Allah and His Messenger know the best.” He clarified: “The elder brother is the material wealth to which a person attaches importance and devotes much attention. Material wealth is the first to say good buy to the dying man. The middle brother represents relatives who at the most can do the burial. The younger brother is the personification of noble deeds, which one does during his life and are the only assets which a person takes along with him to the next world.” The Prophet (SAW) thus emphasized that virtuous deeds are the true companions of a person before death, in death and after death. According to a Sunnah, the angels, even at the time of death, ask the dying person to do noble deeds. And the only noble deeds a person can do at that time are to recite the *Kalimah*, remember Allah (SWT), and seek His forgiveness. Noble deeds are also the best companions in the grave.

In yet another tradition, Prophet (SAW) said that when a man will be resurrected, he will have five shields protecting him: *La Ilaaha illaLaah* will be in the front, *Allah u Akbar* over his head, *Subhaan Allah* on his right, *Alhamdulillah* on his left, and *La hawla wala quwaata illa bilLaah* behind him. *Aayah* 11 in *Surah Ra’ad* reads: “...each person has guardian angels before him and behind, watching over him by Allah’s command...”

Only good deeds come to the rescue of man. When a person conscious of Allah faces hardships, He resolves his problems and makes things easy for him: “Allah will find a way out for those who are mindful of Him, and will provide for them from an unexpected source...” (*Aayah* 2, *Surah At-Talaaq*).

The ultimate truth is that material wealth should be used only to serve man and man should not be its servant. The heart should be the exclusive abode of Allah’s love and remembrance; the only care one should have is to seek knowledge about Allah (SWT).

In Islam, we believe that wife and children can be a source of comfort and pleasure if they tread the right path and perform noble deeds; otherwise they too can cause frustration and strain. The Prophet (SAW) use to supplicate thus:

“Ya Allah, I seek refuge in You and seek Your protection from the offspring that becomes a burden on my soul, and a woman who may make me old before old age.”

Virtuous deeds give hope, while and vices create hopelessness. A disbeliever is scared to die, while a Momin is not afraid of death. Poet philosopher Iqbal says:

“The sign of a Momin, let me tell you is this,
on meeting death, a smile adores his lips.”

Absence of Iman in disbelievers makes them loose hope of any reward in the Hereafter, hence the Holy Qur’an says in *Aayah* 96 of *Surah Al-Baqarah* about them:

“[Rasul Allah] you are sure to find them clinging to life more eagerly than any other people, even the polytheists. Any of them would wish to be given a life of a thousand years, though even such a long life would not save them from torment: Allah sees everything they do.”

Disbelievers focus on this world alone, and face nothing but, depression, dejection and doom in the Hereafter. A Momin, on the other hand, has contentment, trust and hope. The world is after him and he is not after the world. Poet philosopher Iqbal highlights the difference between the two. He says:

“The disbeliever loses himself in the universe
While the universe itself is lost in the Momin!”

Proud in their belief of noble deeds, followers of Hazrat Musa (AS) claimed that they were Allah’s friends. Allah (SWT) in Aayah 764-8 of Surah Al-Jumu’a says:

“Say [Rasul Allah], you who follow the Jewish faith, if you truly claim that out of all people you alone are friends of Allah, then you should be hoping for death. But because of what they have stored up for themselves with their own hands they would never hope for death – Allah knows the wrongdoers very well – so say, ‘The death you run away from will come to meet you and you will be returned to the One Who knows the unseen as well as the seen: He will tell you everything you have done.’”

Whatever a man does – good or bad, cannot remain hidden. Actions always expose themselves both here as well as in the hereafter. Allah (SWT) says in Aayahs 6-8 of Surah Al-Zilzal:

“On that Day [of Judgment], people will come forward in separate groups to be shown their deeds: whoever has done an atom’s weight of good will see it, but whoever has done an atom’s weight of evil will see it.”

You will see that bad people receive punishment even in this world. They are looked down upon in society, and Allah (SWT) softens the heart of people for the virtuous and the pious. Aayah 96 of Surah Maryam says:

“But the Lord of Mercy will give love to those who believe and do righteous deeds.”

The following verse from Surah Tawbah also exhorts us to be pro-active: “Say [Rasul Allah], Take action! Allah will see your actions – as will His Messenger and the believers – and then you will be returned to Him who knows what is seen and unseen, and He will tell you what you have been doing,” Aayah 105 of Surah Tawba.

Poet philosopher Iqbal says:

“Allah hates soulless bodies, He is a living Allah and hence He is Allah of those who are really alive, the people of action.”

Take action to acquire the knowledge of Iman (Faith). Act upon and practice the acquired knowledge. Do not stop there, but make efforts to learn more. Invest temporary life for preparation of the permanent life. Subject yourself to accountability before Allah (SWT) holds you accountable. The time to act is here and now, tomorrow is too late and uncertain. Seize the present moment before it turns into past and becomes history. Overcome the hurdles of temptations, struggle to achieve piety and seek Allah’s help. He crowns those with success who strive to act and struggle for the betterment of life here and the hereafter. May Allah enable us to be the people of action for the good of both the worlds, Amin!

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