Hadith 21: The Concept of Istiqamah

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On the authority of Abu `Amr — and he is also called Abu `Amrah — Sufyan bin Abdullah ath-Thaqafee (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: I said, "O Messenger of Allah, tell me something about al-Islam which I can ask of no one but you." He (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Say I believe in Allah — and then be steadfast." It was related by Muslim.

- The companions always want to ask and know about more Islam. So this particular companion wanted to know something about Islam to make him satisfied. So the companion asked the Prophet (pbuh) and he said he will not ask anyone after you. So the Prophet (pbuh) said 2 things, (آمنت بِاللهِ ثُمَّ اسْتَقِمْ).

- (آمنت بِاللهِ): So the Prophet (pbuh) took the first pillar of faith, to believe in Allah. And when you have faith, it comes in the heart and is supported by the limbs. The Prophet (pbuh) said (قُلْ) say, so this means say it in your heart and on your tongue. Why (إِبْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ) and not (إِبْنُ عَدِيْ) so to believe in the divinity and the oneness of Allah. How do you believe in the oneness of Allah? You will see that everything in your life will point you to the direction that Allah is One. He is the One who can reward me, who can take care of your affairs, who can forgive you etc.

- (آمنت): will make you secure, when you know Allah is the One who is taking of everything, whom you can turn to, whom you worship alone, so this makes you secure. The opposite of security is doubts, making you insecure. So the faith is something your hear heart is secure about and believe in it, so it will make you act on it.

- (إِمانَةُ بِاللهِ): is a trust (امانه) from Allah. You have the choice to accept this trust or not. All the trials in your life are a test for your faith. Don’t think that trials are a tragedy, they are there for your faith. Nothing is important in this life except to be saved from hell and to enter paradise. If you see yourself getting stressed or sad about other matters, just remind yourself there is nothing more important than (إِمانَةُ بِاللهِ).

- (ثُمَّ اسْتَقِمْ): then become upright, and for this you need to believe more in Allah than anything else, more than yourself, so that you may be on the straight path. You cannot go on the straight path before having faith. So after your belief is correct, then you need your life to be on the straight path. Your tongue, your limbs, your heart will all be on a straight path — so do what Allah ordered you to do, and avoid what Allah forbade you from.

So what makes you to be straight? To believe in Allah. So when you are (مستقيم) this means that you are upright and you are moving forward in straight direction. You are not living life alone, isolated. We are all moving, but the point is to go straight. You can also go right or left, but these are extremes. And these are two misguided ways.

Then when things come along your path that are not your choice, you have to react in a straight way, but most people take the extremes. Ie: in traffic and a car cuts you off, its not your choice to have the car cut you off, but you must be patient. How we deal with our emotions and how we deal with people can make us go right or left. As long as you don’t expect from people then you can continue
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on your straight path. But as soon as you have expectations from people then it will cause you to deviate.

- “Therefore stand firm (in the straight Path) as thou art commanded” – Hud: 112. Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) said Surat Hud made the Prophet’s (pbuh) hair turn gray, and Ibn Abbas said this was the most difficult ayah on the Prophet (pbuh). Also it is difficult to be on the straight path because it is a matter of faith. So first your heart must be straight, then you will see your tongue will be straight, your thoughts will be straight, etc.

- So when you want to be straight, you have to do it for the sake of Allah. (فَاسْتَقِيمُوا إِلَيْهِ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ) “so stand true to Him, and ask for His Forgiveness” – Fussilat: 6. If you find that it is difficult for you to be just, to be upright, then make istighfar, ask for forgiveness from Allah. Istiqamah is difficult, but Allah gave us a solution, to make istighfar so that Allah will bring back the balance and istiqamah back in our lives.

Need to be constant in uprightness (الاستمرار على الاستقامة)?: “Guide us to the straight way” Al Fatiha: 6. There is a hadith, if you cannot act in a perfect straight manner, then at least (المقارب), at least be near to it. Ie: if you cannot pardon people, then at least try, but don’t give up.

Means to Istiqamah (أسباب الاستقامة):

1. Allah’s will (قدر الله): The biggest reason is that Allah wills that that person becomes mustaqueeem. Ie: a family all in the same house, everyone is eating the same food, but one child because mustaqueeem and the rest are disobedient. So how do you react to this? Ask Allah to put the istiqamah in your heart. Allah knows who deserves it, maybe the person never thought about istiqamah, but in his life he is mustaqueeem

2. Asking forgiveness (استغفر): Seeking forgiveness and repentance. So whenever you have moments of sitting alone or free time, just constantly say ‘istighfar Allah’

3. Hold yourself accountable (محاسبة النفس): What makes you to even hold yourself accountable, it’s your faith in Allah. And you need to account yourself so that you are not exposed in front of other human beings. It’s better to account yourself then to be accounted by others. So you will talk less, argue less, judge others less. Omar bin Khatab (may Allah be pleased with him), said account for yourself now before you are accounted for on the Day of Judgement. (حاسبوا أنفسكم قبل ما تحاسبوا) When you account yourself now, then it will be less for you on the Day of Judgement. And ‘fadhl min Allah’, Allah gave us detectors to make us feel if we said something wrong or reacted wrong, or when we feel guilty, or depressed. Sometimes without a reason you feel sad, so this is a detector to make you think about what you did wrong and Allah will show you. When you want to account yourself, ask Allah and He will show you.

4. The five obligatory prayers (الصلوات الخمس) (إن الصلاة تنهى عن الفحشاء و المنكر): “for Prayer restrains from shameful and unjust deeds” - Al Ankaboot: 45 So your prayers should be the highlight of your day. If everyone prayed their prayers ‘mustaqueeem’ then the whole society will be ‘mustaqueeem’. So this is the blessing of the five prayers which keeps you away from shameful sins.
5. **Seeking the knowledge** (طلب العلم): because seeking knowledge is a type of discipline, coming, sitting, writing, taking out time for the sake of Allah. All the angels, ants, and fish will also seek forgiveness for you.

6. **Good company** (الصحبة الصالحة): the good company and sisterhood in Islam will make you upright and will help you to pick up good habits from each other.

7. **Knowing the steps of the devil** (معرفة خطوات الشيطان): Need to be aware of the shaitan and know his steps which can keep help you to remain steadfast.

- **Fruits of the istiqamah** (ثمرات الاستقامة):

> إن الذين فَقَهُوا رَبِّنَا اللهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلْتَحْزَنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ / نَحْنُ أَوْلِيَاؤُكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الْدُّنْيَا وَفِي الآخِرَةِ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهِي أَنْفُسُكُمْ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَدهَعُونَ / نُزُلًا مِنْ غَفُورٍ رَحِيمٍ

In the case of those who say, "Our Lord is Allah", and, further, stand straight and steadfast, the angels descend on them (from time to time): "Fear ye not!" (they suggest), "Nor grieve! but receive the Glad Tidings of the Garden (of Bliss), the which ye were promised! / "We are your protectors in this life and in the Hereafter: therein shall ye have all that your souls shall desire; therein shall ye have all that ye ask for! / "A hospitable gift from one Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful!" (Fussilat 30-32)

Fusilat 30, 31, 32 Allah will give those who are mustaqeem, they will be given glad tidings at the time of death. The angels will come down and tell them you do not need to worry about what you left or your future, because you will be given glad tidings of paradise and all that your desire, and your Guardian will be Allah.

May Allah give us the istiqamah and give us glad tidings of His paradise. Ameen ya Rabb Al’Alameen

Oh Allah, increase us in guidance and keep us on the way of guidance until the last moment of our lives. We ask Allah subhana wa ta’ala for His forgiveness and His Mercy. Anything that is good from these notes is from Allah subhana wa ta’ala. Any mistakes & misrepresentations are my own. I ask Allah subhana wa ta’ala for His forgiveness and to put forgiveness in the hearts of those who read them. Ameen ya Rabb Al ‘Alameen.