
Lessons of Creed Acquired From the Hajj - Chapter 13

Translated by Abbas Abu Yahya

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

This Highly beneficial booklet was compiled from a series of lectures that the Shaykh delivered in Masjid Quba for the visiting pilgrims. It was translated by Allaah's blessings in 1423 A.H. (2002 CE) in the Prophetic City of al-Madeenah.

Chapter 13:

Warning Against Having Extremism in the Deen

From the great lessons of benefit for the pilgrim during his Hajj to the House of Allaah is the important lesson of taking the **middle course and being just in all matters**, keeping away from extremism, negligence, falling into excess or heedlessness. Allaah Ta'ala has said regarding this:

[Thus We have made you a just and the best nation, that you be witnesses over mankind and the Messenger be a witness over you.]¹

The meaning of His saying [just and the best nation] is: trustworthy witnesses, who do not shy away from the truth, so that they exaggerate, nor that they become unmindful but are balanced and are just.

The Hajj is full of great experiences and magnificent lessons which show the great importance of the straight path and of being balanced. From the most important circumstances in this great issue is looking to the guidance of the Prophet -sallallahu alayhi wa sallam- and his Sunnah regarding stoning the Jamar and considering it in light of what has been mentioned by the Prophet – sallallahu alayhi wa sallam. After that, look at the state of the people in comparison to the Prophet's Sunnah and you will see that the condition of these people is either that of exaggeration and excess or shortcoming and negligence, except for those whom Allaah has given the understanding of the religion and has honoured with adherence to the Prophetic Sunnah and imitation of his guidance and example.

¹ [Soorah al-Baqarah 2:143]

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It is narrated by Imaam Ahmad, Nasaa'ee and Ibn Maajah on the authority of Abdullah bin 'Abbaas -Radhiallaahu anhuma- who said:

'The Messenger of Allaah -sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam- said to me on the morning of 'Aqaba while he was on his she-camel: **'Collect small stones for me.'**

So I collected seven small stones for him from the little stones and began to shake off their dust from his palm while he was saying: **'Throw stones the likes of these (type and size stones).'**

Then he said: **'O you people beware of exaggerating in the Deen because what destroyed those before you was indeed exaggeration in the Deen.'**²

This chain of narration is authentic according to the conditions of Muslim as Shaykh-ul-Islam -Rahimullaah- and others have mentioned.

His -sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam- saying in the hadeeth: **'Throw stones the likes of these (type and size stones).'** i.e. the stones that were gathered for him had a specified size as is mentioned in the hadeeth. The stones were the size of those used for stoning.

The word al-Hassa (stone) does not carry the meaning of small sized stones, such as pebbles, nor does it carry the meaning of a large sized stone, such as a rock but rather, what has been legislated is in between.

Even though this issue has been clearly discussed with detailed explanation, if you were to compare this to the actions of some Muslims ignorant of the Prophet's -sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam- Sunnah you would find their actions relating to stoning the Jamaarat to be very strange. You will find them fluctuating between exaggeration and deficiency, increase and falling short or between excess and negligence. The truth, however, is found somewhere inbetween them. The Muslim does not have shortcomings regarding the Sunnah of the Messenger -sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam- unlike those who are negligent and incompetent or those who are excessive and exaggerate. The Muslim is just and balanced.

As regards the saying of the Prophet -sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam -: **'Beware of extremism.'** then this statement is general and it applies to all types of extremism in all aspects of belief and actions because the ruling derived is taken from the general wording of this hadeeth and not the specific reason for which the statement was revealed. The Muslim is prohibited from extremism in all circumstances and in all his affairs. He is ordered to follow the way of the Noble Messenger -sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam- and adhere to his Sunnah in all circumstances.

² Al-Musnad, Sunan Nasaa'ee & Sunan Ibn Maajah

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Indeed the Shaytaan strives absolutely to turn the believers, the slaves of Allaah, away from the right path and keep them far away from Allaah's straight path either through extremism or negligence. The Shaytaan uses every which way he can to be victorious.

Just as some of the Salaf said:

'Allaah did not command anything except that Shaytaan incites evil with two commands; either negligence and shortcoming or exceeding the limits and extremism and he does not mind with which of the two he is victorious.'

The Shaytaan is seated in the path of the Muslim. He does not become lax, nor does he become bored of his relentless plotting or his wait to ambush the Muslim. He strives absolutely to increase the Muslim in misguidance and to divert him from the straight path and clear guidance.

Ibn al-Qayyim -Rahimullaah- said in his great book 'Ighatha allhaffan min Masayid ash-Shaytaan' :

'From his (Shaytaan's) plots (may Allaah have protect us and you from him) is that he scrutinises the soul until he knows which of the two strengths can be overcome, the strength of boldness and courage or the strength of abstention, humility and shame.

If Shaytaan sees that the soul leans towards humility and abstention, he begins to hinder him and weaken the Muslim's endeavour and resolve in what he has been ordered and charged with. So Shaytaan makes it easy for him to leave that off until he regularly leaves off (what he has been ordered with) or lessens his (following) and neglects Allaah's orders.

If Shaytaan sees that the soul leans towards the strength of boldness, zeal and lofty aspirations, he causes him to undervalue the commands of Allaah and makes him imagine that what he has is insufficient such that he needs to exaggerate and do extra along with that.

Therefore, the Shaytaan causes the first to reduce in what Allaah has commanded and causes the second to exceed. Most people, except very few, fall either reduction or excess – these two valleys – the valley of shortcoming and the valley of extremism. Only a very small number are steadfast on the path the Messenger -sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam- and what his Companions were upon.³

Then Ibn al-Qayyim -Rahimullaah- cites many examples of this, from different angles of the Deen, dividing the people into three groups: the extremists, the negligent and the people of the middle and straight path.

³ Ighatha allhaffan

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Indeed being upright in all matters, taking the middle course and being far away from extremism and negligence is the correct methodology and the straight path which the believers are required to follow, just as Allaah commanded in His Book and His Messenger - sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam- ordered. So truly being in the middle and being upright is holding onto the restrictions Allaah has laid down for His slaves, such that whatever is not from the religion is not added to it nor is anything from the religion excluded. This is what Allaah entrusts the believers with and what He commands them with.

Allaah Ta'ala said:

[And those, who, when they spend, are neither extravagant nor niggardly, but hold a medium (way) between those (extremes)]⁴

Allaah Ta'ala said:

[And let not your hand be tied (like a miser) to your neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach (like a spendthrift), so that you become blameworthy and in severe poverty]⁵

And Allaah Ta'ala said:

[And give to the kindred his due and to the poor and to the wayfarer. But spend not wastefully (your wealth) in the manner of a spendthrift]⁶

And Allaah Ta'ala said:

[and eat and drink but waste not by extravagance]⁷

Allaah Ta'ala said:

[And be moderate (or show no insolence) in your walking, and lower your voice]⁸

Also, it is authentically reported in the hadeeth of the Prophet -sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam- that he said:

'The middle course, the middle course will make you reach paradise.'⁹

⁴ [Soorah al-Furqaan 25:67]

⁵ [Soorah al-Isra 17:29]

⁶ [Soorah al-Isra 17:26]

⁷ [Soorah 'A'raaf 7:31]

⁸ [Soorah Luqmaan 31:19]

⁹ Saheeh al-Bukhaaree

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Which means: it is binding on you to take the middle course in all matters of speech and action. Moderation is being in the middle, between two extremes.

It is also authentically reported in Musnad and others that the Prophet – sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam- said:

'Take the middle course of guidance, indeed the one who is severe in the Deen, then it will overcome him.'¹⁰

Ibn Mas'ood –Radhiallaahu anhu- used to say:

'Being restrained within the Sunnah is better than striving in Bida'.'¹¹

So the Deen of Allaah is in the middle, between the one who goes to extremes and the one who is negligent. The best of people are those in the middle who have raised themselves above the shortcoming of the neglectful, but do not join the exaggeration of those who go beyond the limits. Rather the best of people stick to the guidance of the leader of the Messengers, the one chosen by The Lord of the Worlds who is an example for all people, Muhammad bin Abdullah, may Allaah's Peace and Prayers be upon him, his Family and all his Companions.

¹⁰ Narrated by Ahmad in al-Musnad and authenticated by al-Albaanee in Saheeh al-Jaami'

¹¹ Narrated by Lalaka'ee in Sharh al-I'tiqaad (1/88)