

Relying on Allaah and abiding by the means

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

Furthermore, relying upon Allaah does not mean that you abandon the means and entrust all of your affairs to Allaah. So (for example) you should not abandon seeking (your daily) sustenance, saying: “If Allaah wanted us to have sustenance, it would come to us even if we are sitting.” We should also not abandon seeking knowledge, saying: “If Allaah wanted us to have knowledge, it would come to us even if we are sitting in our homes.” This also applies to abandoning all of the other necessary things that we must have, saying: “If Allaah had decreed it for us, it would come to us without us embarking on the means for it.” This is extremely wrong.

So there must be a combination of the two: (1) Putting one’s trust in Allaah and (2) Abiding by the necessary means.

So a person must embark on the means when seeking after sustenance, whilst at the same time putting his trust in Allaah to achieve his objective.

A person plants crops while putting his trust in Allaah that his crops will grow and produce fruit. At the same time, he protects his crops from threats. In order for you to reap the benefits of the crops and for them to be useful to you, you must plant the crops, sow the seeds, water them and care for them. At the same time, you should put your trust in Allaah that He will protect them, make them grow, allow them produce fruit, enable you to reap their benefits and use them.

Similar to this is when a person forsakes marriage, saying: “This is part of putting one’s trust in Allaah since if Allaah intended children for me, they would come to me without me getting married.”

We say: This is wrong. No one with any common sense, let alone a believer, says such a thing. Allaah has placed means for all things. Marriage is a means for procreating and producing offspring. Allaah has ordered us to abide by the means, so you must implement the means. Marriage is a means and it comes from your actions. You are the one who does it and who seeks after it. As for the actual achievement of children, that comes from Allaah. And that is the fruit of marriage. So the result is in the Hand of Allaah, but as for the means, it comes from you.

Relying on Allaah and abiding by the means

So there must be a combination of the two: (1) Embarking on the means while (2) Relying on Allaah. As for one who relies solely on the means without putting his trust in Allaah or who relies solely on putting his trust in Allaah without implementing the means, both of them are wrong and in error.

This is why the scholars, may Allaah have mercy on them, said: “Relying solely upon the means is shirk (polytheism), while abandoning the means is a defamation of the Religion.” This is since the Religion commands us to abide by the means. So denying and abandoning the means is a defamation of the Religion and a failure to enact what Allaah has ordered.

Allaah says:

[“So seek provision from Allaah and worship Him (alone).”]¹

His statement: **“So seek provision from Allaah and worship Him (alone)”** means: “Look for sustenance and do not sit around in the masaajid claiming that you are putting your trust in Allaah. Do not sit in your homes and claim that your daily sustenance will come to you.” This is wrong and a true believer doesn’t say such things.

When ‘Umar (May Allaah be pleased with him) once saw a group of people that claimed they were putting their trust in Allaah while at the same time they were abandoning the means, he said to them: “Who are you people?” They replied: “We are the Mutawakkiloon (those who put their trust in Allaah).” So he said: “No, rather you are Muta’akkiloon (those who look to be fed)” – meaning: You want to be dependent upon the people.

Allaah says:

[“So when the (Friday) prayer is completed, spread throughout the land and seek after Allaah’s Bounty.”]²

This means: Buy and sell and seek your sustenance by implementing the practical means. Allaah orders them (in this ayah) to perform worship and to pray at the proper time and designated location, which is the masjid. Then He orders them to seek sustenance in its designated location, which is outside of the masjid: **“So when the (Friday) prayer is completed, spread throughout the land.”**

This is since remembering Allaah is a means for obtaining sustenance as well. In fact, it is the greatest means for attaining sustenance and facilitating matters. Allaah says:

[“And whoever is dutiful to Allaah, He makes a way out for him (from every difficulty). And He will provide for him from places he never could imagine. And whoever puts his

¹ Soorah al-Ankaboot [29:17]

² Soorah al-Jumu’ah [62:10]

Relying on Allaah and abiding by the means

trust in Allaah, He will suffice him. Verily, Allaah will accomplish His purpose. Indeed, Allaah has set a measure for all things.”]³

‘Umar (May Allaah be pleased with him) went on to say: “You know for sure that the sky does not send down silver and gold.” He reprimanded this group that had sat down to worship and become dependent upon others. He presented them with this gem of advice, saying to them: “You know for sure that the sky does not send down silver and gold.”

Gold and silver can only be achieved through hard effort, seeking after sustenance and implementing the means. As for the one who claims that he is putting his trust in Allaah but yet denies the means, it should be said to him that he is debilitated – meaning that he is lazy. This comes from the word debility, which refers here to laziness and inactivity. The Prophet [(sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him] would seek refuge in Allaah from debility and laziness.⁴

A person may have no recourse in being debilitated due to the lack of the functionality of one of his body parts or one of his senses. Such a person is excused. He is debilitated and deserves assistance. As for debility that comes about due to laziness, inactivity and failing to abide by the means, whilst one believes that he is relying upon Allaah, such debility is condemnable. The Prophet [(sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him] sought refuge from this as well as from cowardice, miserliness, overwhelming debt and the subjugation of people.

Some people would go on the pilgrimage (Hajj) with Muslims and not bring any provisions or supplies with them. They would do this claiming that they were putting their trust in Allaah and that they would be provided for without them having to bring provisions along with them. So Allaah said:

[“And take provision with you for the journey, but indeed the best provision is Taqwaa (righteousness)”]⁵,

ordering them to take provisions.

Provisions are of two types: The Provision of this world and the provision of the Hereafter.

The provision of the worldly life comes in the form of food, drink, clothes, and all of the other things that a person needs when he travels.

As for the provision for the journey in the Hereafter, then it is Taqwaa. Allaah says:

[“But indeed the best provision is Taqwaa.”]⁶

³ Soorah at-Talaaq [65:2-3]

⁴ Refer to the Saheeh of Imaam al-Bukhaaree 7/158) from the narration of Anas bin Maalik.

⁵ Soorah al-Baqarah [2:197]

⁶ Soorah al-Baqarah [2:197]

Relying on Allaah and abiding by the means

So take provisions for your worldly life and take provisions for your Hereafter. Take provisions for your worldly life with food, drink and the necessary supplies for travelling so that you will not need to depend on others. And take provisions for your Hereafter with Taqwaa, which can be defined as implementing Allaah's commandments while abandoning His prohibitions.

So what is meant by Taqwaa is taking a wiquayah, or a defence that protects you from Allaah's punishment and anger, and protects you from the Fire. Such a defence can only be achieved by performing righteous actions. And with the Taqwaa of Allaah you will be able to save yourself from the Hellfire, as Allaah says:

["Then We shall save those who used to fear Allaah and were dutiful to Him. And We shall leave the wrongdoers therein (humbled) to their knees (in Hell)."]⁷

So therefore, nothing grants salvation except for righteous deeds. Faith in Allaah and righteous deeds are the provisions of the Hereafter, and they are a protection from His anger, His fire and His punishment. The servant is commanded to seek after the requirements of his religious and worldly affairs. He is obligated to seek after the requirements of his affairs of this life and the next. He is obligated to put his trust in Allaah and to implement the means. So there must be a combination of this and that.

No one should understand the meaning of relying upon Allaah to be: Abandoning the require means. This is wrong. Nor should anyone understand that implementing the means suffices over putting one's trust in Allaah. Rather, both – (1) relying upon Allaah and (2) implementing the required means – must be present.

The Prophet [(sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him] said:

"If you were to put your trust in Allaah as He deserves, He would surely provide for you just as He provides for the birds: They set out in the morning with empty stomachs and return at the end of the day full."⁸

His [(sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him] statement: **"If you were to put your trust in Allaah"** means: If you were to rely on Him, cling your hopes to Him, and trust in His promise, **"He would surely provide for you just as He provides for the birds: They set out in the morning with empty stomachs."** The birds go out at the beginning of the day seeking sustenance. They set out from their nests with their stomachs empty, i.e. hungry, and return at the end of the day full, i.e. with their stomachs filled with sustenance.

⁷ Soorah Maryam [19:72]

⁸ Reported by Ahmad and At-Tirmidhee, who declared it sound. Reported by Imaam Ahmad in his Musnad (1/30), At-Tirmidhee in his Sunan (7/92), Ibn Maajah in his Sunan (2/1394), and Al-Haakim in his Mustadrak (4/318), all of them from the narration of 'Umar bin al-Khattaab

Relying on Allaah and abiding by the means

Notice how a bird does not sit back and remain in its nest. Rather, it seeks after the means by leaving its nest and going to the places where it can find its daily sustenance.

So the birds – due to their natures which Allaah created them upon – are aware that they must abide by the means, and as a result they go out to seek sustenance. As a result, Allaah provides for these birds and they return home with stomachs full of Allaah’s sustenance.

Therefore, O son of Aadam, if you were to act in the same way as these birds do, Allaah would provide for you just as He provides for them. On the other hand, if a person fails to do this, he will encounter discrepancies and deficiencies. So if he relies upon only the means, Allaah will entrust him to that as is stated in a hadeeth:

“Whoever is dependent upon something will be entrusted to it.”⁹

It may also be that a person relies on the means but yet these means are unproductive and produce no benefit. On the other hand, if he disregards the means, yet puts his trust in Allaah, or so he thinks, he has made a mistake and not acted in accordance with what Allaah has commanded. This is since Allaah has ordered us to implement the means. He says:

[“And prepare against them all you can of power including steeds of war to threaten the enemy of Allaah and your enemy.”]¹⁰

Allaah has the ability to aid the Muslims and destroy the disbelievers, as He says:

[“Thus (you are commanded). But if it had been Allaah’s Will, He Himself could certainly have punished them (without you).”]¹¹

⁹ Reported by Imaam Ahmad in his Musnad (4/310), At-Tirmidhee in his Sunan (6/262), Ibn Maajah in his Sunan (2/1394), and Al-Haakim in his Mustadrak (4/216), all of them from the narration of ‘Abdullaah bin ‘Ukaim

¹⁰ Soorah al-Anfaal [8:60]

¹¹ Soorah Muhammad [47:4]