

Core Curriculum

6 Measuring Good and Bad in Islam

6.5 **Guidance According to Islam**

INTRODUCTION

Bismillāhir Rahmānir Rahīm, As-salāmu ‘Alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh. Peace be upon you brothers and sisters.

Welcome back to our channel!

What is the point of religion? More precisely, what is the point of Islam? The question is rather simple, but how we answer it can either make or break someone’s Islam. Many Muslims today make the claim that Islam is the solution to all of humanity’s problems and hence the point of Islam is to solve all of humanity’s problems.

Although at face-value this may be correct, we believe that unqualified answers like these are not helpful. Think of it this way, can Islam, as a religion, directly solve and provide answers for the coding problems of my website? Think about it ...

So we need to be a bit more precise when we talk about the “point” or “goal” of Islam. Strictly speaking, the point or goal of Islam is guidance towards God, that is, closeness and intimacy with the Creator and Sustainer of the universe.

A good word to sum this up is the word salvation. The point of Islam is the salvation of the human soul.

In this lesson, we will overview some of the basic characteristics of

salvation in Islam.

BODY OF TEXT

The Qur'an is the best source in explaining what salvation in Islam means. Here we will outline some verses in the Qur'an and hold a brief discussion on them.

Guide us to the straight path (Chapter 1, verse 6 of the Holy Qur'an)

Say, "Come, I will recite what your Lord has prohibited to you. [He commands] that you not associate anything with Him, and to parents, good treatment, and do not kill your children out of poverty; We will provide for you and them. And do not approach immoralities - what is apparent of them and what is concealed. And do not kill the soul which Allah has forbidden [to be killed] except by [legal] right. This has He instructed you that you may use reason."

And do not approach the orphan's property except in a way that is best until he reaches maturity. And give full measure and weight in justice. We do not charge any soul except [with that within] its capacity. And when you testify, be just, even if [it concerns] a near relative. And the covenant of Allah fulfill. This has He instructed you that you may remember.

And this is My path, which is Straight, so follow it; and do not follow [other] ways, for you will be separated from His way. This has He instructed you that you may become righteous. (make sure to emphasize and look hard at the camera on this word my path)

(Chapter 6, verses 151-153 of the Holy Qur'an)

Guidance and salvation comes under many names in the Qur'an. The word for guidance is called hidāyah. But perhaps the most all-encompassing term for guidance and salvation in the Qur'an is something called Sirāt al-Mustaqīm, which means the Straight Path.

What the above verses teaches us is that being on the Straight Path, that is, being in a state of guidance is not simply a matter of belief. Indeed, one must be strictly monotheistic and not associate any other gods to Allah.

But in addition to belief, what is integral to guidance in this world is also developing moral character, leading the morally good life which above all means to choose what is good and right over wrong and evil no matter how difficult it may be. Without the moral life, one cannot be guided and simple beliefs (no matter how correct the beliefs are) are of little value.

What is the moral life? What are the right choices? What is evil? The verse gives us a few good examples. They are: being good to parents, our families as a whole, treating people with dignity and helping them when they are in need. It is also being kind to those who are weaker than us. When doing the good, avoiding pretentiousness and being sincere is necessary in Islam.

Proper moral character in Islam also includes not shedding blood or being part of a system that facilitates the killing of innocent people. It is also being kind, just and fair to others and looking after the most vulnerable members of our society. It is also managing our expectations of people and not burdening them beyond their capacity.

Salvation and moral character is knowing that Allah is our only true sustainer and that we must not sacrifice our honor, dignity or moral standing due to the fear of loss either in wealth or in our relationships.

The moral life, that is, doing what is right and avoiding harm is what strengthens and purifies the heart. Good and bad essentially stems from the human heart according to Islam. The Qur'an says:

The Day when there will not benefit [anyone] wealth or children. But only one who comes to Allah with a sound heart." (Chapter 26, verse 88-89 of the Holy Qur'an)

So when you are reciting Surah al-Fātihah and you reach the 6th verse, remember that being on the Straight Path is not just about belief and rituals, but also leading the morally good life. As our 6th Imām Ja'far al-Sādiq (as) once stated:

If you want to know the religion of a man, do not look at how much he prays and fasts. Look at how he treats people.

Until Next Time, Thank you for watching. As-salāmu 'Alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh