

Siraat Bridge

Siraat is in the meaning of a 'path'. The pathway between two houses is called as Siraat, which is mostly marked with a sign. But the words of 'Siraat' and 'path' are also sometimes used for things other than pathways related to space or place. It is often said: Path of life, path of prosperity, path of progress...and this term is also used in the sense of the medium of reaching ones destination.

In this world, willingly or unwillingly, man is headed to death and the world of the hereafter.

The Holy Quran says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَدْحًا فَمُلَاقِيهِ

O man! surely you must strive (to attain) to your Lord, a hard striving until you meet Him. (84:6)

The distance between birth to death and all beliefs, views, morals, speech, character and behavior of man, during this period is a real route, but it is not confined to space; and willingly or unwillingly, one has to traverse it. It can be called as the path or way of life.

In order to traverse this path, man walks on a straight line which is the shortest, smoothest and easiest and free of danger way and in the Holy Quran it is called the straight path (Siraat Mustaqeem). Or he deviates from the straight path, going into valleys of misguidance and continues to wander aimlessly.

The Holy Quran has introduced worship of only one God and submission to His commands, according to pure nature of man and to which the divine prophets have called people as the straight path (Siraat Mustaqeem).

إِنَّ اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ

Surely Allah is my Lord and your Lord, therefore serve Him; this is the right path. (3:51)

وَهَذَا صِرَاطُ رَبِّكَ مُسْتَقِيمًا قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَذَكَّرُونَ

And this is the path of your Lord, (a) right (path); indeed We have made the communications clear for a people who mind. (6: 126)

قُلْ إِنِّي هَدَانِي رَبِّي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ دِينًا قِيمًا مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا ﴿٩﴾ وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

Say: Surely, (as for) me, my Lord has guided me to the right path; (to) a most right religion, the faith of Ibrahim the upright one, and he was not of the polytheists. Say: Surely my prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are (all) for Allah, the Lord of the worlds. (6: 161-2)

قُلْ إِنِّي هَدَيْتَنِي رَبِّي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ دِينًا قِيمًا مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ * قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

Did I not charge you, O children of Adam! that you should not serve the Shaitan? Surely he is your open enemy. And that you should serve Me; this is the right way. (36:60-61)

Therefore, the straight path (Siraat Mustaqeem) can be interpreted as referring to Almighty Allah and entry into Paradise from: the right beliefs, good morals, laws and rules of Shariat sent through divine prophets. The straight path (Siraat Mustaqeem) is one, not more and every other way other than it is deviated. The Holy Quran says in the following verses:

وَأَنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ عَنِ الصِّرَاطِ لَنُكَبَرُونَ

And most surely those who do not believe in the hereafter are deviating from the way. (23:74)

وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعِ الْكُفْرَ بِالْإِيمَانِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ

...and whoever adopts unbelief instead of faith, he indeed has lost the right direction of the way. (2: 108)

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَضِلُّونَ عَنِ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ بِمَا نَسُوا يَوْمَ الْحِسَابِ

...(as for) those who go astray from the path of Allah, they shall surely have a severe punishment because they forgot the day of reckoning. (38:26)

احْشُرُوا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا وَأَزْوَاجَهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا يَعْبُدُونَ * مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَاهْدُوهُمْ إِلَى صِرَاطِ الْجَحِيمِ

Gather together those who were unjust and their associates, and what they used to worship Besides Allah, then lead them to the way to hell. (37:22-23)

Therefore the Siraat is the way of life, which begins in this world and continues till Judgment Day. This way can be divided into two: straight path and wayward path. The straight path is a collection of right beliefs, good morals, laws and rules of Shariat and wayward paths consist of invalid beliefs, bad morals and unethical speech and action, which are against Shariat.

The seeker of this way is a man who through his free will, chooses one of these two paths and walks on them.

These paths are real and not notional. Every person by choosing the type of faith, morals and intentions in his inner being or in path of humanity performs servitude to gain divine proximity, perfection and illumination. Or he proceeds on path of bestiality and darkness and seeks distance from Allah to fall into terrifying valleys of materialism. Every person in this world treads on one of these paths, even though he might be unaware of it.

The same path continues after death in the world of Barzakh and Qiyamat and it end either at Paradise or Hell; in other words it can be said: Siraat in Qiyamat is the unseen version of this same worldly Siraat, which would become clear there. The same meaning is indicated in traditions.

Mufaddal bin Umar says: I asked Imam Ja'far Sadiq (as): "What is Siraat?"

He replied:

"It is the path of divine recognition and knowing Allah, the Mighty and Sublime. Siraat is of two types: Siraat in the world and Siraat in hereafter. As for Siraat in the world it denotes obedience of the Imam whose obedience is necessary; whoever recognizes him in the world and follows his commands, would be able to cross the Siraat in hereafter which is like a bridge over Hell. And one who does not recognize him in the world (and does not benefit from his guidance) he would stumble in the hereafter and fall into Hell."¹

It is narrated from Imam Hasan Askari (as) that he said:

"True paths are two: One is in this world and another in the Hereafter. The Siraat Mustaqeem in this world is one, which does not contain excessiveness, defects and shortcomings. It is the straight road, which never drifts to untruth. Siraat of Hereafter is one, which leads the faithful believer straight to Paradise. Those following this path, will never turn from Paradise towards Hell, but will reach it straight away."²

Abu Huraira has narrated from the Holy Prophet (S) that he said:

Jibraeel (Archangel Gabriel) came down to me and said: “Shall I not give you glad tidings of Paradise, through which you may cross the path (Siraat)?” I asked: “Why not!” He said: “You will cross it by effulgence (Noor) of Allah; and Ali by your effulgence (Noor), which is effulgence (Noor) of Allah. And your community will cross it through effulgence (Noor) of Ali, which is your effulgence (Noor); and one who is not given a light by the Almighty Allah would have no light.”³

Shaykh Mufeed says:

Siraat literary means a pathway and that is why religion is called Siraat, since it is the way of gaining divine rewards and for the same reason guardianship (Wilayat) and following Imam Ali (as) and the Holy Imams (as) is called Siraat. Therefore Amirul Momineen (as) said: I am the straight path (Siraat Mustaqeem) of Allah and a stable handle which will not break.” He means to say that his recognition and attachment to him is the path to Almighty Allah.⁴

Abu Basir has narrated from Imam Ja'far Sadiq (as) that he said:

“Different types of people would cross the Siraat Bridge. Siraat is finer than hair and sharper than sword. Some would pass over it like a flash of lightning and some would gallop over it like a horse, some would crawl over it on their four limbs and chests; some would traverse it on foot; some would be hanging from it; sometimes the fire of Hell would apprehend them and sometimes it would leave them.”⁵

Therefore the crossing of Siraat Bridge is not same for all. On the contrary it depends on their cognition of religion and Shariat and is subject to their familiarity with the law of Shariah and avoidance of disobedience and sins.

The accurate recognition of the straight path; honesty, sincerity for it and being bound to it and absence of deviation from it is a difficult job. That is why it requires divine help; and that is why Muslims in all obligatory and recommended prayers always beseech Almighty Allah to keep them on the straight path:

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

Keep us on the right path. (1:6)

Imam Khomeini says with regard to Siraat:

Presently we are in the Siraat Mustaqeem; it is the same path on one end of which is the world and on the other is the hereafter and we are walking on this Siraat Mustaqeem. The curtain, which is raised at that time, is the path of Hell (Siraat Jahannam), which passes through Hell; that is it engulfs the fire of Hell; it passes through the middle of this place. You have to cross it from here. World is this same kind. Corruption is that same fire, which has surrounded you, you have to cross this same corruption in such a

way that you cross it safely.[6](#)

And he says:

All of us are on the straight path and it crosses over Hell, its reality would be exposed in that world. In this matter every person has a particular path with him, and is on a journey (wayfaring) or is on the straight path, which ends at Paradise or higher; or the deviated path to the left or deviated to the right; both would end at Hell.[7](#)

He also says:

The path which is stretched to Hell; if you walk straight in this world, you would be rejected from that path straight away, the inward Hell of this world; if you walk straight from this path and do not deviate to the left or the right, you would cross the Siraat Bridge of this world also directly; but you should neither turn left nor right; if you turn to the left there is Hell and if you turn to the right it is Hell.[8](#)

[1.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol. 8, Pg. 66.

[2.](#) Tafsir Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.), Pg. 44.

[3.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol. 8, Pg. 69.

[4.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol. 8, Pg. 70.

[5.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol. 8, Pg. 64.

[6.](#) Maad az Deedgah Imam Khomeini, Pg. 278.

[7.](#) Maad az Deedgah Imam Khomeini, Pg. 278.

[8.](#) Maad az Deedgah Imam Khomeini, Pg. 281.

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