

## The Disciplines of Islam

( Verse 1 )

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

***O' you who have true faith! Do not give preference (to your own words and deeds) above those of Allah and His Messenger (the Prophet Muhammad, blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny). And have consciousness of Allah. Unquestionably, Allah is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing.***

The purpose of this verse is to establish moral discipline in the principles of Islam within every single person who possesses true faith. This verse serves to create a sense of moral discipline that would prevent the true believer from enacting any sort of precedence or priority in his or her own life over the orders of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and His Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny).

This discipline would also prevent the person from developing any sort of doubt or uncertainty in relation to the orders of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and His Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny).

The spirit and reality of the disciplines of Islam dictate that every individual must take the rules, regulations and convention of laws that he follows, which are related to both the individual and the society, from the Divine Source. In addition, he must thoroughly satiate himself with these laws and must follow the one thought (the laws of Allah) which are much more superior and higher than all other thoughts and ideologies.

Why do we say this? We know that the legislations and Islamic commandments that have to be followed must be brought by one who first and foremost recognizes and understands the human being. Therefore, such a legislator must know all of the secrets, hidden issues and finer points of the human and his soul.

There must not remain a single atom of ambiguity in the life of mankind that a law has not been prescribed for. In addition to this, such a legislator must also be free from all types of sins and errors and there cannot be any type of interest or benefit for him in the society such that this benefit would lead him to formulate laws that suit his own self.

Just as we know, there is not a single person who has these characteristics except for the Creator of the Universe. It is He alone who has complete knowledge of both our inner and outer thoughts. It is He alone who is free from all sin and error and who derives no benefit from the society.

Therefore, everyone must have true faith in such an Entity and the Islamic disciplines that He sends down. They must not consider their own interests or wishes above that of what has been decided by Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and they must take inspiration from Him alone.

If we give up such Islamic disciplines and solely rely on our wishes and desires to formulate laws and regulations, then the sphere of our lives would resemble an army with multiple leaders. Even if such an army was fully equipped and ready to fight a battle, they would definitely fall into confusion and disorder since they are being led by various leaders and commanders, and after a short period of time, they would fall to the prowess of the enemy thus being destroyed.

The stage that we live our life upon is just like the battle-front and the wishes and desires of each person, each stratum of people or each group are similar to having multiple commanders for an army. If there was to be any difference of opinion within the commanders, then this would lead the people into great conflicts and would drag them into confusion and disorder which would ultimately result in the disregard of justice amongst one another.

Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) has explained the necessity of maintaining such a discipline in this introductory verse where He has mentioned:

لَا تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ...

***“...do not give preference (to your own words and deeds) above those of Allah and His Messenger (the Prophet Muhammad, blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny).”***

Later on in the seventh verse of this Surah, Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) stresses on the infallibility of the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) and his inability to fall into error or make a mistake where He says:

وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ فِيكُمْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَوْ يُطِيعُكُمْ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ لَعَنِتُّمْ

***“Know that the Messenger of Allah (Muhammad, blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny)***

***is amongst you. Had he yielded to you on many matters, you would have definitely been in great trouble.”***

By stating this, Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) means to say that since the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) takes all of his information and guidance from the Springs of Revelation and Divine Inspiration, there will never be even the smallest amount of error in his leadership.

However, if the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) were to follow the people – since they may fall prey to the wishes of their own desires – then whether they know it or not, they would fall into harm and loss.

Therefore, if we sincerely wish to be a society of believers and true Muslims, then we must take the following verse as an example as to how to pattern our lives:

لَا تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ...

***...do not give preference (to your own words and deeds) above those of Allah and His Messenger (the Prophet Muhammad, blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny).***

## **Examples in History of Those who have Taken Precedence over Allah and His Prophet**

A great number of the faithful believers have followed the primary rule of obeying the One who has legislated the laws for humanity, and if the Islamic verdict was not found for a particular issue, then they would not act upon it nor would they express their own opinion (on that issue).

However, by exercising and using their own judgement and conclusions, these same people have given precedence to their own desires over those of the Heavenly rulings – the rulings of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and His Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) – and unknowingly, they did not act upon the verse that states:

لَا تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ...

***“...do not give preference (to your own words and deeds) above those of Allah and His Messenger (the Prophet Muhammad, blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny).”***

It is possible that sometimes by people acting upon that which is a figment of their own imagination or due to being under the pressures of their environment; they resort to acting on their own thoughts and personal judgements which go against the laws that have been explicitly mentioned in the religion.

Thus, they have given their own ideas the colour of sanctity and placed these above the Heavenly commandments. The problem with the Muslims (of today) is mostly within this sphere – meaning that we place our own ideas ahead of those of the religion, such that we are not ready to accept the truth and reality for what it truly is.

Even now, we can bring forward examples in which the Muslims are trying to place their own opinions and ideas – which in reality is equivalent to placing their own beliefs above the shining commandments of the religion – above those of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and His Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny). Sometimes, due to the fear of being classified as open sinners or disbelievers in the faith amongst the people, they hide their opinions (though they still keep such ideas in their hearts).

Nevertheless, in order to keep this discussion brief, we will only relate a few examples of this act in which Muslims have placed their own thoughts and ideas ahead of those of the teachings of the religion that had occurred in the beginning of Islam. We leave it up to the readers to research and study examples of this attitude that is taking place in the present day.

1) During the blessed month of Ramadhan in one of the years after the Hijrah to Madinah, the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) travelled with a group of his companions towards Makkah.

When they reached the place known as *Kara` al-Ghamim*, the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) requested a glass of water and between the Salat of Zuhr and `Asr, broke his fast and commanded all of those with him to also break their fast, since Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) had not commanded fasting for those who are travelling.

However, a group of his companions who presumed themselves to be holy people thought that if they were to fast while travelling, they would receive a greater reward. These people thought that they would act according to their own desires and place their wishes above the orders of the Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) and thus remained fasting. This group of Muslims was actually referred to as the *group of sinners*<sup>1</sup> by the Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny)!

The greatest calamity for these people was that at the time of going forward for Jihad (struggle) in the way of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He), they had not taken even one glimmer of guidance from the Divine revelations, and thus each one of them proceeded to follow their own commander and leader (which was their own wishes).

2) During the time of Ignorance (Jahiliyah) of the `Arabs (before the coming of Islam), a man was prohibited from marrying his adopted son's wife after they had divorced. In order to destroy this wrong custom and tradition, Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) commanded the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) to remove this belief (from amongst the people) and therefore commanded

him to marry Zainab, the divorced wife of his adopted son Zaid.

The Prophet proceeded to marry Zainab at which time, a group of those who (apparently) had faith in Islam and who knew very well that the actions and speech of the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) are never carried out without reason and who knew that he takes inspiration from the World of Revelation in all of his actions, started to launch criticisms upon him. By employing sarcastic remarks and comments, they began to say that the marriage of the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) was unlawful!

The motive of these people to start such criticisms was their own cultural thoughts and personal discretion that had been inherited (from the days of Ignorance) and as such, they believed that it was not permitted to marry the ex-wife of one's adopted son.

In order to destroy these types of unfounded criticisms which are rooted in lack of faith in the reality of the Prophetic mission and the illuminating teachings of Islam, the Qur'an brings forth various verses, of which we relate one here from Surah al-Ahzab:

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا لِمُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا مُّبِينًا

***“And it is not permitted for the believing men nor for the believing women that when Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad, blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) decide on an issue that they express their own opinion on this issue (once it has already been decided for them by Allah and His Messenger). And the one who disobeys Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad, blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) is definitely in manifest error.”*** [2](#)

The late Tabrisi (may Allah be pleased with him) has stated that, “The sentence, ...***do not give preference (to your own words and deeds) above those of Allah and His Messenger*** (Muhammad, blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) has a very deep and extensive meaning, that those who have true faith must not take their own opinions above that of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) or the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny).”

In reality, that which we have mentioned and explained above is one of the meanings of the comprehensive meanings of this verse.

## **The True Meaning of Islam is Submission**

The true meaning of Islam is the (complete) state of submission to Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He). Amir al-Mu'minin `Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) has defined the reality of Islam by summarizing it in one sentence where he said:

*“Al-Islam is (simply) complete submission (to the laws and commandments of Allah)”<sup>3</sup>*

Thus, a true Muslim is one who submits entirely to Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) – whether it entails benefit or loss for him; if it is according to what his own soul desires; or if it goes against his own desires and wishes. Such a person (who is a true Muslim) submits to Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) in order to earn His pleasure.

However for those people who do not have such a demeanour within themselves, whenever they see that the religion and the teachings protect their own benefits, then they claim that (part of the) religion. By this we mean that any time they see that the teachings and the wisdom of the faith are in accordance with their internal wishes and desires, then they defend Islam and the teachings of the religion.

However, when it goes against their own benefits, inner desires and passions, then by using various excuses, they devoid themselves of all affinity to the religion. In such people, there is no form of true submission which is the basis and foundation of Islam just as we will be able to see clearly in the story mentioned below.

Tamim ibn Jarasha, along with a group of others representing the tribe of Thaqif were making their way to Madinah and were preparing their tribe for the acceptance of the religion of Islam under the conditions which they had previously decided upon. When they reached the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) he said to them, *“Write down your conditions so that I may go over them.”* They were referred to `Ali (peace be upon him) and requested him to write down the conditions and instructed `Ali (peace be upon him) to write the following provisions:

*“The Tribe of Thaqif will accept the religion of Islam if the following conditions are met: Giving and taking of interest and performing adultery are permitted and the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) will excuse them from performing the Salat.”*

`Ali (peace be upon him) could not bring himself to write such conditions and thus they were sent to Khalid ibn Sa`id ibn `As. He drew up the contract and thereafter they returned back to the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) and read the conditions to him. At this point, the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) became very upset, and with his own hands, changed what was written on the paper and then signed it.<sup>4</sup>

Keeping in mind the quote from Amir al-Mu`minin `Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) in relation to what Islam truly is, we see that such people (those of the tribe of Thaqif) were devoid of the true Islam – which is complete submission to the Truth. These people wanted a form of Islam that was conducive to their own lustful desires and one which suited them and if this was not possible, then Islam would hold no place in their lives.

Ibn Hisham has narrated that this group of `Arabs had requested the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) that their large idol – Lat – not be destroyed for a period of three years and that the most important obligatory act of Islam (the Salat) should not be made incumbent upon them.

The Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) replied to these people that he would not permit – even for one minute – that idols be worshipped and told them that any set of spiritual beliefs which lack the Salat – communication with Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and other acts of servitude – would be like a body without a soul and this would serve no benefit.<sup>5</sup>

Even more amazing than this event was the objection that was raised by some of the companions of the Messenger of Allah (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) to some other companions who had come out of their Ihram and had sexual relations with their wives.

This group of companions (after finishing the rites of the `Umrah) had performed a ghusl (after having sexual relations with their wives) and while the water was dripping from their faces they were addressed by another group of companions: “Do you not have any shame? The Messenger of Allah is still in the state of Ihram and you have come out of your Ihram and (after having relations) have the water of your ghusl dripping from your face and head?”

The Prophet of Allah (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) heard this being said and got very upset and told his companions, “I myself told them to do this and if I had not brought an animal to sacrifice with myself, I too would have come out of the Ihram.”<sup>6</sup>

The greatest calamity and the most severe blow against the Heavenly teachings is that man – who is a creature and is prone to commit errors – adds and introduces his own ideas and beliefs within the religion, since he is not able to completely replace the teachings of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) with his own thoughts.

How many times have we ourselves seen that in our lives, many forbidden acts have later on taken the form of being permitted? How many barriers and limitations (in the religion) have we seen that were brought into effect which were later broken by those same people who introduced them?

All of these types of interventions and interferences with the laws of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) stem from one source and that is that we do not have the correct understanding of the disciplines of Islam and this sentence of the Surah is the true expression of this:

لَا تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ...

**“...do not give preference (to your own words and deeds) above those of Allah and His Messenger (the Prophet Muhammad, blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny).”**

In the year that the Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) performed the Final Hajj (Hajjatul Wida`), after performing the Sa`i between the mountains of al-Safa and al-Marwah, he turned towards those who were visiting the house of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and said, "Whoever has not brought a sacrifice along with him should trim his hair or cut his nails a little bit and come out of the Ihram. However, anyone who has brought along an animal to sacrifice just as I have, must stay in the state of Ihram until the sacrifice is given in Mina."

This was something difficult for a group of the companions to accept and their excuse for not listening to the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) was that it was not agreeable to them that they should come out of the Ihram and those things that were still prohibited for the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) should be permitted for them.

Some of them even said that it is not correct that those who are classified as people who are visiting the House of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) should have the drops of water from a ghusl (due to sexual relations) dripping from their head and face!

The eyes of the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) fell on `Umar (ibn al-Khattab) while he was still in the state of Ihram. The Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) asked him if he had brought along a sacrifice to which `Umar replied that he had not.

The Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) then asked him why he had not yet removed his Ihram? To this `Umar replied that, "I am not willing to come out of the Ihram while you are still in the state (of Ihram)." The Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) replied to him, "Not only now, however until the day you die you will always follow this same belief (of disobeying the Prophet)."

The Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) was very upset at the doubts and hesitations of the people and said:

لَوْ كُنْتُ إِسْتَقْبَلْتُ مِنْ أَمْرِي مَا اسْتَدْبَرْتُ لَفَعَلْتُ كَمَا أَمَرْتُكُمْ

*"If I had given this issue previous thought then just like you, instead of bringing the animal to sacrifice with me, I would have left it at home and would have come to perform the visitation rites of the House of Allah (without the animal). However what can I do now that I have brought this animal to sacrifice, I must act in accordance to the commandment of Allah which states:*

حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ الْهَدْيُ مَحَلَّهُ

***(You must remain in the state of Ihram) until you reach to the place where you must offer the sacrifice (that you have brought with you).***

*Thus, I must remain in the state of Ihram until the day of Mina when I can go to the area of sacrifice and slaughter this animal. However, anyone who has not brought an animal with them to sacrifice must come out of their Ihram and whatever acts they have performed would be considered as their `Umrah and then later on, they can again put on their Ihram for the Hajj.”<sup>7</sup>*

In this section, we have given four different examples of people who placed their own opinions and views above those of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and the Messenger (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny). In addition, in the pages of the history of Islam, especially the history of the first three Khulafa (Abu Bakr ibn Al-Quhafah, `Umar ibn Al-Khattab and `Uthman ibn al-Affan), we see very distinct examples relating to the topic under discussion which have been discussed in a separate book.<sup>8</sup>

After writing this section of the commentary, an article<sup>9</sup> that had been written by one of our friends who had done research on this topic was given to us which (in reality) is a continuation of our discussion (here). Below, we present a summary of what he has mentioned:

“The true meaning of Islam is that when a person is at the crossroads of either following what his religion tells him to do or what own internal desires command him towards, he gives preference to what his religion states since submission in other than this way means that he would be superseding the teachings of the religion with his own desires which is a sign of not having true submission (Islam).

For example, the love and affection that a person shows for another is only indisputable and proved when a disagreement comes up between the two people at which time, he prefers the opinion of his friend over his own.

If in this instance, he prefers his own opinion and gives it precedence, then it is clear that his agreement with his friend in other instances and circumstances was based on ulterior motives and not due to the love and affection that he has for his friend. Rather, it was due to some other sort of (material or spiritual) benefit for himself that he saw in his friendship. In reality, this is explained very well in this verse of the Qur’an:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُفَرِّقُوا بَيْنَ اللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَيَقُولُونَ نُؤْمِنُ بِبَعْضٍ وَنَكْفُرُ بِبَعْضٍ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ  
يَتَّخِذُوا بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلًا أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ حَقًّا

***“Those people who disbelieve in Allah and His Messengers and who intend to create differences between Allah and His Messengers (by rejecting their message) and say, ‘We believe in some and disbelieve in others’ and (through this) they intend to find and follow a middle way Without doubt, such are the disbelievers in the truth.”<sup>10</sup>***

This verse clearly shows that those who wish to differentiate between the commandments of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) are the true disbelievers and even the smallest amount of faith will never be seen within them. When Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) commanded Shaitan to prostrate to Adam

(peace be upon him) which he rejected to do, he replied to Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He):

لَئِن أُعْفِيْتَنِي مِنْ سَجْدَةِ آدَمَ لَأَعْبُدَكَ عِبَادَةً لَا يَعْبُدُهَا أَحَدٌ مِنْ قَبْلِي

*“If you excuse me from prostrating to Adam then surely I will worship You such )a worship( that no one before has ever worshipped You.”*

He was heedless of one fact of reality which was that the true meaning and spirit of worship and devotion is (complete) submission and that which he thought was worship (Ibadat) was nothing and it possessed no value whatsoever.

Therefore, Islam is like one unit that is connected together such that it can never be separated into individual parts and sections. In actuality, true belief in Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He); true belief in the prophetic mission of His Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny); true belief in those who are his successors and acting upon the rulings and teachings that they have conveyed are all one compound unit which is made up of various commands. To separate these or split them up from one another in relation to beliefs or practical laws would take one out of true submission, which makes up the foundation of Islam.

On this same foundation, Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) has classified those who deny the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) as being the same as those who deny Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He). The roots of denying the Prophetic mission of the Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) is equivalent to denying Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He), as has been mentioned in the following verse of the Qur’an:

فَأِنَّهُمْ لَا يُكَذِّبُونَكَ وَلَكِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ يَجْحَدُونَ

***“So then surely they do not deny you (O’ Muhammad, blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny), however the oppressors disagree with the signs of Allah.”***[11](#)

If the people were to be submissive in the presence of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He), then they would not have objected to the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny).

By seeing the miracles that the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) was performing and the sufficient proofs that he had brought, they should not have remained at the head of the two roads (of belief and disbelief).

However, since Allah, the Greatest, is higher than that He should oppose them (due to their disbelief), in relation to such people, He has accepted their outward act of submission and has mentioned that it is these people (who inwardly deny Allah, Glorified and Exalted is He) however they outwardly show that

they deny the Prophets that Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) has sent.”

1. The hadith (narrated in Wasail ash-Shi`a, Volume 7, Page 125) states that the Prophet was quoted as saying about them:

سَمَّاهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ عَصَاةٌ

2. Refer to Surah al-Ahzab (33), Verses 4 and 5; 36 and 40.

3. Nahjul Balagha, Short Saying 125.

4. Ibn Athir, Asad al-Ghabah, Volume 1, Page 216.

5. Sirah ibn Hisham, Volume 2, Page 540.

6. Bihar al-Anwar, Volume 2, Page 386.

7. Bihar al-Anwar, Volume 21, Page 319; Late Faizh al-Kashani, Kitab al-Wafi, Volume 8, Page 32 has explained the words of the Prophet in a different manner.

8. The renowned Scholar and the great soldier of Islam, the Late Sayyid Sharaf al-Din al-`Amuli has discussed the main points leading to this type of opposition in his work, Al-Nass wa al-Ijtihad.

9. This article can be found in the Persian Journal entitled Maktab-e-Islami, number 1, Year 9.

10. Surah al-Nisa (4), Verse 150 & 151.

11. Surah al-An`am (6), Verse 33.

---

**Source URL:**

<https://www.al-islam.org/islamic-moral-system-commentary-surah-al-hujurat-jafar-subhani/disciplines-islam#comment-0>