

# The Islamic Precepts

## Definition of the Precept

Man, in his everyday life, does many different acts, and utters many different sayings. Looking into one's sayings and actions, we realize that some are good and useful to people, such as eating, drinking water, cultivating, manufacturing, as well as greeting and peace-making among the people, etc. Other actions we judge to be bad and harmful, such as lying, drinking alcoholic drinks, robbery, murder, cheating, backbiting, etc.

Furthermore, we know that man is a sociable creature by nature, he enjoys social relationships with the members of his family, the society in which he lives and the world around him, such as relationships between a man and his children, parents, and wives, or the relationship between the Islamic State and the members of the *Ummah* and other countries, the relationship between an employee and his employer, a farmer and his land, a worker and his master, a seller and a buyer, etc.

Now, as man has connections with the other members of his society, he also has connection with his Creator, as He had created him, made him complete, favoured him with blessings and provided him with provisions, etc. In this way, man's life is a collection of actions, activities and human relations, which, naturally, need to be explained and regulated, in order to separate the useful from the harmful, and the good from the bad. Without such an organization, life and social relations would be a total chaos, a futile life endangering man and his interests.

In order to organize man's life, Allah, the Exalted, sent down the Divine laws and precepts, to save humanity from disorder and futility, and to protect its interests and make it worship Him. Therefore, the Islamic precepts are the Divine legislations and laws which organize man's life and define his different relations and responsibilities.

These precepts, as you have already been informed, are to explain man's actions and relations whereby the Islamic *Shari'ah* prohibits the bad and harmful actions which destroy human life, and hinder its development and progress, and enjoins the good deeds without which human life cannot proceed orderly. They also allow other deeds, preferring some of them to others, or leaving others out. Therefore,

the prescribed Islamic precepts have been divided into five categories:

1. Obligation, i.e. The *Wajib*.
2. Recommendation, i.e. The *Istihbab*.
3. Undesirability, i.e. The *Karahah*.
4. Prohibitibility, i.e. The *Hurmah*.
5. Permissibility, i.e. The *Ibahah*.

## **Kinds of Human Actions**

All the acts which can be done by man, whether good, such as the *Salat*, invocation, treating people with justice, seeking to acquire knowledge, eating, drinking of liquids like water, etc., travelling, marriage, farming, industry... and the like, or bad, such as lying, gambling, being unjust, cheating... and the like, are divided into the following five categories, according to the good or bad qualities of the actions:

### **The Obligatory [Al-Wajib]:**

The obligatory duties are those which Allah has ordered us to do, promising to reward us, if we do them, and threatening to punish us, if we neglect them. These include, the *Salat*, the *Hajj*, the *Jihad*, enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong, defending the truth, administering justice.... and the like.

### **The Recommended [Al-Mustahhab]:**

The recommended acts are those which, cause goodness but are not binding, and Allah, the Exalted, has encouraged us to do, promising to reward us for doing them, but there would be no punishment for neglecting them. Such as invocation, fasting during the month of *Shabban*, greeting people, performing the Friday *Ghusl*... and the like.

### **The Undesirable [Al-Makruh]:**

The undesirable acts are those which cause evil and corruption, but are not binding, and Allah, the Exalted, has encouraged us not to do, promising to reward us if we avoid them, but there would be no punishment for doing them, such as urinating in stagnant water, sleeping between dawn and sunrise, and the smelling of fragrant plants by a fasting person, etc.

### **The Prohibited [Al-Haram]:**

The *Haram* [prohibited] acts are those which Allah, the Exalted, has prohibited us from doing, threatening us with punishment if we do them, such acts as drinking alcoholic drinks, killing people, lying,

betraying, cheating, and the like.

## The Permissible [Al-Mubah]

The *Mubah* [permissible] acts are those which Allah, the Exalted, has left to our option to do or not to do, such as choosing the type and place of our lodging, work, food, drinking of water, etc., provided that they do not lead to committing *Haram*.

Thus, all the acts of man are subject to certain regulations and limits, prescribed by the Islamic *Fiqh*. There is no act, big or small, without there being an Islamic precept or a clear and open law for it. The aim is to preserve the welfare of humanity and to assure servitude to Allah, the Exalted, as referred to by a noble *Hadith*. *Imam As-Sadiq* (a.s.) is quoted to have said: "There is nothing unless it is described in the Book or in the *Sunnah*".

So, it is our duty to think about every act before doing it, so as to do what pleases Allah and what Allah has allowed us to do, and refrain from doing what He has forbidden us to do.

## Discussion

Q1. Define the following: The Islamic Precepts, the *Haram*, the *Wajib*.

Q2. What do we learn from the *Fiqh* lessons? Explain briefly.

Q3. Explain the noble *Hadith*: "There is nothing unless it is described in the Book or in the *Sunnah*."

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