

The Seven Responsibilities

We are not eternal; we have a beginning and an end. Also, we are not self-existing; someone must have created us, must have brought us into being. That Creator is Allah, Who is free from all defects and short-comings.

Doing a work without any reason or purpose is a defect; we do not like anyone to accuse us of working aimlessly. Obviously Allah too must have created us for some good purpose. He points to this fact when He asks mankind in the Qur'an, "What! Do you then think that we have created you in vain and that you shall not be returned to us? (Surah 23, ayah 115). So there is a purpose behind our creation.

We come into this world, live a life full of worries and tension and then die. Is this the aim of our life? No; it is the life, not the aim of life; the aim should be different from the life itself.

Are wealth, health and power the aims of life? No; these are the means to support the life; but not its aim. Is acquiring honor, fame and authority purpose of our creations? No; these are various facets of life, and not its purpose. The purpose behind our creation must be something higher than the life itself.

Let us ask the Creator Himself why He has created us. If He tells us, that would be the really authentic and genuine reason. And He, in His mercy, has already told us without our asking. He says: And I have not created the jinn and the human beings except that they should worship Me. (Surah 51, ayah 56)

Every man and woman must fulfil the purpose of his or her creation; everyone should submit him or herself to the Will of Allah and worship Him. When we worship Allah, we acknowledge His majesty and power and confess our helplessness and neediness, in a manner prescribed by Him; and we do it with sincere intention and pure heart in obedience to Allah, in order that we may come nearer to Him.

Allah has sent Prophets, appointed Imams, revealed Books and prescribed laws of sharia in order to guide us to the Right Path, and to teach us the proper way of the divine worship. We must follow their guidance, because it is the only way by which we may attain to the goal of our life, fulfil the purpose of our creation.

Allah, in His mercy, has not ordered minor children or mad persons to fulfil this duty. Only when a child

attains majority and is of sound mind, he or she is obligated to follow the above-mentioned divine guidance, i.e. the rules of sharia.

A boy attains majority (becomes baligh for adult) when he reaches the age of fifteen years, or semen is ejaculated from him (in sleep or when he is awake), or pubic hair starts to grow.

A girl attains majority when she is nine years old, or when pubic hair starts to grow. When a boy or girl attains majority and is sane (i.e. not mad), he or she is called mukallaf (feminine = mukallafah). We may translate this term as, one who is obligated to follow the rules of sharia; one who is considered responsible for his/her words and deeds.

As soon as one becomes mukallaf, one is responsible for one's belief, words and actions. Before that, generally speaking, one is really neither a believer nor a disbeliever. But a Muslim's child is considered Muslim, and a non-Muslim's child is considered non-Muslim. It is based on the principle of taba'iyat (following), by which children are governed by the rules that govern their parents. [1](#)

It is incumbent on every person to have correct faith the moment he or she becomes baligh. Therefore, for all practical purposes, he/she must acquire correct knowledge of fundamental beliefs – Usul al-deen, roots of religion – long before the expected time of attaining bulugh (= majority, adulthood).

There are SEVEN things which the mukallaf must look into at the moment of his/her attaining majority:

1. Roots of Religion, Usul al-deen
2. Learning Salaat (practical, if not learned earlier)
3. If he or she had done anything, during childhood, which makes a ghusl compulsory (e.g. had touched a dead body), he or she must do ghusl at once in order that his/her salat and other such actions may be correct
4. Learning important rules of salat and other obligatory things like fast, etc (if not learned earlier)
5. If there are other people's right due on him or her, they must be repaid to those persons, or they should be requested to forgive him/her
6. He/she must learn necessary rule of shari'ah regarding his/her occupation or profession, (like trade, partnership, employment, rent etc.), in order that his/ her earnings may be lawful
7. He/she must know the major sins, in order to avoid them; also other unlawful things, so that he/she may protect him or herself from them.[2](#)

The same rules apply to the one who accepts Islam after spending some time, in kufr.

For a logical explanation of the Roots of Religion, the reader may study my booklet "Islam".[3](#) But a short

description of its most essential aspects is given here. It will be followed by a list of the major sins.

[1.](#) The above statement is based on a general observation. But there are cases of boys of about ten years of age having got enough understanding and intelligence to differentiate falsehood from truth, to distinguish wrong from right; and they have chosen right and truth against wrong and falsehood. Such children are Muslims, and their parents' disbelief would not be held against them. That is why Shaykh Tusi (a .r.) has said that "Responsibility of the boys is of two kinds :

Responsibility to acquire true belief and correct faith – It begins for the boys at the age of ten.

Responsibility to follow and perform the rules of sharia – It begins for the boys at the age of fifteen:'

The same is the import of the fatwa of Sayyid Kazim Yazdi in al-Urwatu 'l-wuthqa, with which all other Mujtahidin agree. Sayyid Mohsin al-Hakim had gone a step further. According to him, even if that child's Islam was not based on logical understanding (i.e., he was influenced by some individual or society), it would be acceptable and he would be a Muslim.

[2.](#) The original book mentions only six responsibilities, combining the "Knowledge of unlawful things" with the sixth heading. I have listed it separately because of its utmost importance

[3.](#) It has been translated into Italian, Japanese, Thai, Indonesian and Hausa languages, by the World Organization for Islamic Services (WOFIS), Tehran; and Swahili translation has been published by the Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania, Darussalam.

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