

On Righteousness

“Righteousness is not just to turn your faces towards the East or the West (in prayers). But the true righteous is he who believes in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the Book (Qur’an) and the prophets; and gives his wealth, for love of Allah, to the kindred and the orphan and the poor and the traveler and to those who ask (for help), and for ransoming the captives;” (Qur’an 2: 178).

Just to observe some external rites is not Islam. True faith and good actions are the primary requisite of a Muslim. Faith is the seed which gives birth to good deeds; and if the faith does not create an urge in us to perform noble deeds, our faith is dormant, and we must try to awaken it by conscious efforts.

If a Muslim does not help needy persons, if he does not bestow love and kindness upon the orphans, if he turns out the people who are in need of assistance, then his claim of righteousness is just a claim and nothing more.

Often we have seen our kith and kin in distress; several times we have been approached by stranded travelers seeking shelter and food; daily we hear the cries of starving persons in famine-stricken areas; so many times we have looked upon a child whose very countenance was a monument of affliction and hardship. What has been our usual reaction in these circumstances? Have we parted with some of the wealth to help the poor fellows. And have we done it with kindness and a sense of gratitude? And above all, have we done it “For love of Allah”? Let us search our soul!

The above-mentioned Ayat of Qur’an exhorts us to have faith, and to support that faith by charity and good deeds, based upon ‘Love of Allah’: We should realize that the fellow human-beings are in the eyes of Islam, dependents of Allah’, and that our wealth is, in fact, a property of Allah, given to us in trust. When we help our fellow brethren, we should remember that we are giving the property of God to the dependents of God. It should be based upon love of Allah, without any shade of worldly motives. A secret desire to enhance our social prestige by a charity destroys the fiber of that charity. A help given with a motive to gain political advantage is a body without soul.

Alas, how many good actions are ruined by unworthy motives!

Have faith, bestow charity; and bestow it 'For Love of Allah', That is the basic teaching of Islam.

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