

Be a Spark in the Dark- Sh. Mohamed Mahmoud

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The prophet (S) would say this to the righteous people who carry the knowledge of deen: "Those who can clear the side of religion from any misconceptions or any wrong understanding or any misinterpretation, they have a duty to do."

A lot of people misunderstand the idea of volunteering. They think, when they have free time, they will do it. They don't realize that it is a duty set upon us, a command from Allah (swt). In the Quran it says "bil biree wa taqwa".

Think of it like this: when I am in the help of others, Allah will fulfill my needs.

"If you help somebody remove their calamity, Allah will be with you in this life and the next. He will remove on your calamities."

Allah is the source. You are the means.

For ex: The doctor is the means of helping others but the cure is from Allah.

You ask the help of Allah, not from others, but He will send help through others. This is an essential part of our deen. Every day, we should find someone and help them. The prophet (S) mentioned this: "in every day, when the sun rises, you have to give a charity." Your volunteering is a charity. When you help somebody, it is a charity for you. Give as much sadaqah as the number of joints in your body. How do you do that? By your volunteer actions.

Islam is 3 levels: islam (level 1), iman (level 2), ihsan (level 3). The level of Islam is easiest to reach, say the shahadah. The level of ihsan is not easy to reach. To be in the level of iman, you have to work, show you are devoted to your obligations. Your obligations, salah, the 5 daily prayer, will make you reach the level of imaan. You have to prove that by your actions. In order to reach ihsaan, you have to be amongst those few, those that are doing the extra, doing the volunteering actions. Proof: In Sura Dhariyat, Allah describes the believers. He describes them as among the people with Ihsaan. He describes their three actions: they spend their nights in prayer and supplication, ours before they would ask forgiveness, and from their properties was giving the right of the needy.

Haq ma3loom- it is the portion of your money you have to spend → zakah is mandatory

The other ones; the general spending , not the specific one, the volunteer sadaqah, not the zakah.

How can I reach haq ihsaan- do something for the community, do the extra, optional good deeds.

If you want to be in the sight of Allah, know your position in dunya. What position Allah placed you, for what reason you are spending your time. If you want to know your position in the sight of Allah you need to see what your position is now.

One sign of His love is that he makes you wake up to worship him.

Hadeeth qudsi: “there is nothing you could offer to please Allah better than your obligations.” Nothing can fit and fill that place. You can’t do your volunteering actions and then not do your obligations- it doesn’t match. When you do extra, from salah, or whatever, Allah encouraged you to do it. There is a rule in shariah that encourages you to invest your time in something good. If you are doing that, you reach the love of Allah, until He loves you.

Now you are asking how can you gain the love of Allah? After you take care of your Waajib (obligations), you should do the extra nawaafil. If you want to get more, you have to do extra. If anyone asks you for help, make yourself available. The volunteering actions in many cases are more rewardable than the fardh obligations. This is a surprise for many. It doesn’t mean it is more important - your fard actions come first, BUT the volunteer actions can be more rewardable than even your mandatory actions.

Solve the conflict of people at the time of dispute- try to bring people together. Even though you don’t have to, when you try to solve the problem between them, you will gain the love of Allah and more reward, more than any type of actions just by offering your help in the need of others. This is something you cant reach with more salah and zakah.

One of the old traditions was that people would come and present their poetry to kings and leaders. They spend time reciting good lines in front of the king and then the king will order his workers to "give the poet xxx money.” That worker will give the poet the money but the worker will be upset. He will say I was working for you, spent all my time for you everyday and in the end, I will get nothing, while you just gave all this money to this poet for what he just did one time.

Salah and zakah - your rewards for those actions are fixed. Whereas fasting, for example, Allah swt says the reward is with him, those types of actions are different. In the first action, Allah will deal with you according to his justice, you prayed so he will give you the exact reward for praying. The other, he will deal with you according to his generosity, his mercy. That is why you say oh Allah, judge us and deal with us according to your mercy, not according to your justice. “Oh Allah. Deal with us according to your generosity not just according to your justice”

One of the benefits of doing the volunteer actions is that it can act as compensation for you. Imagine someone limiting his actions to only the mandatory actions. When he is weak, he is only limited to those actions that are fardh. If he is weak he is going to fall below the level of mandatory actions. He is going to have problems, shortcomings. But if he used to do the extra actions and became weaker and did not have high imaan, that weakness will be compensated by those extra actions . Doing extra good deeds is not just good for others, it is good for yourself. The best of actions is beneficial and is bound to reach the others; if it reaches others, that is the best of actions. When you make good actions to help others, Allah will keep you away from bad.

It is even ok to disrupt your i3tikaf and leave the mosque because to offer yourself in the need of your brothers is better for you than to stay in the masjid for a month. It's very important to understand the real concept of offering yourself in the help of your community, why would you want to be in Jannah alone? In surat al insan, “when allah addressed the people of Jannah, they will be all together forever (khalideena - plural) but when he addressed the people of hellfire he

said they will be alone (khalid) – the people of hell will be isolated as extra punishment and the people of Jannah will be together as an extra reward. The people of Jannah it's an extra reward for them being together, being a community – being alone will never help you or relax you and the people will never leave you alone or stop bothering you. Do not think that being alone will help you, it's very important to seek that sense of community.

Ramadan is different because the spirit is different. We need the feeling of Ramadan the entire year, the feeling of Jannah as if the spirit is there the entire year. If you want to be among those special people that carry this religion as the Prophet (S) describe “3adoolouh”, the Prophet (S) is the final messenger, he is the seal of the message, there is no other message after him. The quran is a final message. There is no other message, no other messengers. No one who will invite for the sake of Allah. Who is going to take that lead? Us! What is the reward? Imagine only one thing you did that guided someone, what reward will you gain? Just one person. When Umar (RA) accepted himself to Islam, he offered himself for duaa. He encouraged the Prophet and Sahaba to do so as well. If you invite someone for khair, it is as if you did that same khair. You are not gaining for today, you are gaining for the hereafter.

Abdulrahman Sumayd - he would collect money from others. He was thinking about his wife living in Africa. She called him and said what do you think Allah will give us in Jannah and the happiness. One thing that he left behind when he died was over 3,000 running schools, over 2 million Muslims. His son and wife are still looking after those schools. He is in his grave. Look at the reward he received.

Muhammad (S) - all the reward for this ummah is in his record.

Work for Allah's sake.