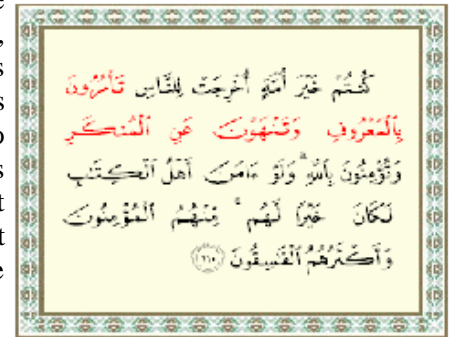


Enjoining good and forbidding evil: (الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر)

If we were to analyze the Muslim World then we will realize that wherever we look then there is chaos and disarray throughout, be it at a political, religious, spiritual or educational level. Throughout the Qur'an Almighty Allah mentions many attributes of the believers, but one of the salient features of the Ummah is that they enjoin good and forbid evil. In order for progression and for society to flourish people must initiate, advise and attempt to guide each other, towards righteousness and deterring each other away from misconduct. Enjoining what is good (*al-ma'ruf*) and forbidding what is evil (*al-munkar*) is one of the most important Islamic duties, indeed it is the noblest and most sublime. This is the task of the Prophets and Messengers.



(1) Meaning of (*al-ma'ruf*):

The good (*ma'ruf*) includes everything both internal and external which has been enjoined by Allah and His Prophet. These include: absolute sincerity to Allah (*ikhlaas*), dependence on Allah (*tawakkal*), that Allah and His Prophet be more beloved to the believer than anyone else, hope for Allah's mercy and fear of His punishment, patience with the decree of Allah and complete surrender to His order, truthfulness of speech, fulfilling of obligations, returning trusts to their owners, good behavior toward parents, maintaining of family ties, cooperation in all acts of righteousness and good, benevolence and generosity toward one's neighbors, orphans, poor people, stranded travelers, companions, spouses, and servants, justice and fairness in speech and actions, calling people to good character, and acts of forbearance such as establishing relations with those who cut you off, giving those who deny you, and forgiving those who oppress you. Enjoining people to be close together and cooperative, and forbidding them differing and dividing themselves is also a part of enjoining what is right.

(2) Meaning of (*al-munkar*):

As for the bad (*munkar*) which Allah and His prophet have forbidden, its ultimate and worst form is the association of partners with Allah. Associationism means to pray to someone or something else along with Allah. This partner could be the sun, the moon, stars or planets, an angel, one of the prophets, a righteous man or saint, one of the jinn, images or graves of any of these, or anything else which is called to other than Allah the Exalted.

Associationism is also to seek aid or succor from any of the above, or to prostrate to them. All of this and anything like it is the associationism (*shirk*) forbidden by Allah on the

tongues of all of His prophets. Everything which Allah has forbidden is also part of the *munkar* such as unjustified killing, taking people's property by unlawful means, taking of property by force or intimidation, interest, or gambling, all types of sales or contracts which the Prophet has prohibited, breaking of family ties, cruelty to parents, cheating in weights and measures, and any form

of transgression on the rights of others. Also in this category are all innovated acts of "worship" which Allah and His prophet have not ordained or

sanctioned.

(3)Importance:

There are many Quranic verses and Sunnatic guidance regarding its importance:

a. Allah and his Messenger`s orders:

Allah, the Exalted, Says (what means): *"Let there arise out of you a group of people inviting to all that is good (Islam), enjoining Al-Ma`roof (i.e., Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam orders one to do) and forbidding Al-Munkar (polytheism, disbelief and all that Islam has forbidden). And it is they who are the successful."*[Quran 3:104]

"You (true believers in Islamic Monotheism) are the best of peoples ever raised up for mankind; you enjoin Al-Ma`roof (i.e., Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam has ordained) and forbid Al-Munkar (polytheism, disbelief and all that Islam has forbidden)".[Quran 3:110]

"Show forgiveness, enjoin what is good, and turn away from the foolish (i.e., don't punish them)."[Quran 7:199]

"...We (i.e. Allah Almighty) rescued those who forbade evil, and with a severe torment We seized those who did wrong because they used to rebel against Allah's Command (disobey Allah)."[Quran 7:165]

Abu Sa`eed Al-Khudri, may Allah be pleased with him, reported: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, *"Whoever amongst you sees an evil, he must change it with his hand; if he is unable to do so, then with his tongue; and if he is yet unable to do so, then with his heart; and that is the weakest form of Faith"*. [Muslim]

This Hadeeth (narration) contains a very important prescription to prevent the Muslim society from all things which are forbidden in Islam. So long as Muslims adhered to it and ceaselessly and fearlessly performed their obligation of enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong, their society was largely safe from many evils and sins.

b. Logical cause:

Man is very forgetful and makes a lot of mistakes. His own self (nafs) tells him to do evil and the Shaytaan tempts him to commit sin. When bodies get sick and are afflicted with disease, one has to find a doctor who can prescribe the appropriate medicine so that the body may be restored to full health. Similarly, souls and hearts may be afflicted with the diseases of desire and doubt, so people do things which Allaah has forbidden, such as shedding blood, committing adultery, drinking alcohol, oppressing people and consuming their wealth unlawfully, preventing people from following the way of Allaah and disbelieving in Allaah. The diseases of the heart [psychological and spiritual diseases] are worse than diseases of the body. This means that one must find a doctor who is skilled in treating such diseases. Because the diseases of the heart are so many and cause the spread of evil and corruption, Allaah has enjoined the believers to treat these diseases, by enjoining that which is good and forbidding that which is evil.



(4) Consequence of, if it`s duty not be observed:

Almighty Allah informs those who oppose the commands of Holy Prophet that they will suffer from severe consequences in this world and the world hereafter. If the ummah fails to do its duty it will deserve


the curse of Allaah. For Allaah cursed those among the Children of Israel who disbelieved because they failed in this important duty. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

(a) *“Those among the Children of Israel who disbelieved were cursed by the tongue of Dawood (David) and ‘Eesa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary). That was because they disobeyed (Allaah and the Messengers) and were ever transgressing beyond bounds.*

They used not to forbid one another from Al-Munkar (wrong, evildoing, sins, polytheism, disbelief) which they committed. Vile indeed was what they used to do [al-Maa’idah 5:78]

(a) Nu`maan Ibn Basheer  reported: The Prophet  said: *"The likeness of the man who observes the limits prescribed by Allah and that of the man who transgresses them is like a group of people who get on board a ship after casting lots. Some of them are in its lower deck and some of them in its upper (deck). Those who are in its lower (deck), when they require water, go to the occupants of the upper deck, and say to them: 'If we make a hole in the bottom of the ship, we shall not harm you.' If they (the occupants of the upper deck) leave them to carry out their design they all will be drowned. But if they do not let them go ahead (with their plan), all of them will remain safe".* [Al-Bukhari]

We learn from this Hadeeth that the consequences of committing acts which are forbidden in Islam are not confined only to those persons who commit them, but the whole society has to suffer the consequences. It is, therefore, essential that the people who are in the habit of committing sinful acts and violate Divine injunctions, should be checked to save the whole society from destruction. If this is not done, the entire society will have to face the Divine punishment.

(b) Huthaifah, may Allah be pleased with him, reported: The Prophet  said, *"By Him in Whose Hand my life is, you either enjoin good and forbid evil, or Allah will certainly soon send His punishment to you. Then you will make supplication and it will not be accepted".* [At-Tirmithi]

To abandon the practice of enjoining virtue and forbidding vice is likely to incur the displeasure of Allah and the rejection of prayers and supplications.

(5) Ruling:

Enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil is a mission which will never end until the Hour begins. It is obligatory upon all the ummah, rulers and subjects, men and women, each according to his or her circumstances. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: *“Whoever among you sees an evil action, let him change it with his hand [by taking action]; and if he cannot, then with his tongue [by speaking out]; and if he cannot, then with his heart [by feeling that it is wrong] – and that is the weakest of faith.”* (Narrated by Muslim, 49)

The Muslim ummah is one nation, and if corruption becomes widespread in it and its circumstances turn bad, then all the Muslims are obliged to reform it, rid it of evil things, enjoin what is good and forbid what is bad, and offer sincere advice to all.

The ummah which establishes the symbols of Islam, enjoins what is good and forbids what is evil, will attain happiness in this world and in the Hereafter. Allah will send them His support and grant them victory.

Therefore, those who seek success in the Hereafter and aspire to Allah's Pleasure must take note into account this issue due to its great benefit, especially since it has mostly been abandoned. He must also make intention sincere and fear no-one who may oppose his attempt.