

Khutba

Friday 02.07.10

English

Be In This Life as If You Were a Stranger... Or A Traveler On A Path

Dear Muslims,

During summer time, people used to spend their holidays by travelling to different destinations. They aim to spend their free time relaxing, exploring other places, exposing them selves to other cultures.....etc. According to Islam, there are no drawbacks for this travelling, or any other activities, during the leisure time unless it involves violation to the Islamic rules. Furthermore, the person may even be rewarded if the trip, or the activity, was connected to worship or any good deeds (e.g. visiting parents and taking care of them).

Islam does not aim to minimize our pleasure and enjoyment of life but rather to put it in the context of religion and within the allowed borders. Hanzala (may Allah be pleased with him) reported: *(I met Abu Bakr. He said: how are you? He (Hanzala) said: Hanzala has turned to be a hypocrite. He (Abu Bakr) said: Hallowed be Allah, what are you saying? Thereupon he said: I say that when we are in the company of Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) we ponder over Hell-Fire and Paradise as if we are seeing them with our very eyes and when we are away from Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) we attend to our wives, our children, our business; most of these things (pertaining to After-life) slip out of our minds. Abu Bakr said: By Allah, I also experience the same. So I and Abu Bakr went to Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) and said to him: Allah's Messenger, Hanzala has turned to be a hypocrite. Thereupon Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) said: What has happened to you? I said: Allah's Messenger, when we are in your company, we are reminded of Hell-Fire and Paradise as if we are seeing them with our own eyes, but whenever we go away from you and attend to our wives, children and business, much of these things go out of our minds. Thereupon Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) said: By Him in Whose Hand is my life, if your state of mind remains the same as it is in my presence and you are always busy in remembrance (of Allah), the Angels will shake hands with you in your beds and in your paths but, Hanzala, time should be devoted (to the worldly affairs) and time (should be devoted to prayer and meditation). He (the Holy Prophet) said this thrice.) Narrated by Al-Bukhari.*

However, Islam also reminds us that we are created for a very important and great task, to worship Allah. This should be the main aim and focus throughout our lives. Hence, all the pleasures and blessings we enjoy in this life should not exceed, interfere with or make us neglect our main task. It should neither be prioritized nor given more time or interest than that purpose. Having said that, it is obvious that we then, as we planed for our trips and travel, have to carefully plan our trip in this life in order to fulfill our role and survive the punishment at the Judgment Day.

So, as we prepare our food and drinks for a trip, we should also prepare good deeds and worships for our main journey. Allah Almighty says in Quran “**...And take a provision (with you) for the journey, but the best of provisions is right conduct. So fear Me, o ye that are wise.**” *Al-Baqarah 197.*

In this verse, Allah commands us to make preparations for a time in the future, a time that will definitely come. This Command has a deeper meaning. The verse tells us to think of the future. Yes! It is the Quran that tells us to be forward looking, to have a vision, to solve problems for the long term; not to plan just for the short term. We are told not to just live for the moment. No! We are told to plan and prepare for our future.

Allah also teaches us something else to hold on to: He tells us that if we can truly plant taqwa in our hearts, we can be true Muslims and our journey will end successfully. That is because, with Taqwa, we can tell the right from the wrong, the Truth from the false and we can persist on the right path until we end our trip, to the next life, safely and successfully.

Ibn Umar (May Allah be pleased with him) said: Allah's Messenger (PBUH) once took me by my shoulder and said: *"Be in this life as if you were a stranger or a traveler on a path."*

Ibn Umar also used to say:

"If you reach the evening, then do not expect to reach the morning, and if you reach the morning then do not expect to reach the evening. Take from your health before your sickness, and from your life before your death."

Alî ibn Abi Tâlib used to say,

"Certainly this life has begun travelling away, and the hereafter has begun travelling forward, and each has its children. So be from the children of the hereafter, and don't be from the children of this life. For indeed today there is action with no account, and tomorrow there will be account with no action."

Umar ibn Abdul Azîz said in one of his khutbah,

"This life is not your permanent abode. Allah has prescribed for it to come to an end and He has prescribed for its people to depart from it. How often has a thriving population been ruined for something insignificant, and how often has a joyful resident been made to depart for something insignificant. So prepare well, may Allah have mercy on you, for the journey with the best of what you have of preparations, and take provisions, for the best of provisions is Taqwâ."

Dear Muslims,

Since, this life is not a permanent residence or homeland for us, prophet Mohamed suggested to us and gave us two choices to live our lives. Either to live as if we are strangers residing in a strange land with our main concern being to take provisions for our return to our real homeland; or as if we are travelers, in no way residing in it, spending every night and day on our way to our land of residence.

The first choice requires that the believer abandons himself as if he is a stranger in this life, appearing to be a resident, yet really in a strange land. So his heart is not attached to this strange land. Rather, his heart is attached to his homeland that he is returning to. He is only staying in this life to fulfill his objective - preparing for the return to his homeland.

The second choice requires that the believer lowers himself in this life as if he is a traveler, in no way residing in it. He is only moving from point to another consuming as few as possible and enjoying as little as possible until he finishes his journey to its end, which is death.

In both cases the success of the journey is granted and the good rewards and blessings will be waiting for you. If you want these rewards and blessings you better follow your Prophet advise, *Be in this life as if you were a stranger or a traveler on a path*, before you come to regret ***"(In Falsehood will they be) Until, when death comes to one of them, he says: "O my Lord! send me back (to life),- * "In order that I may work righteousness in the things I neglected." - "By no means! It is but a word he says."- Before them is a Partition till the Day they are raised up. " Al-Muminun 99-100.***

I urge you to steadfast on your religion and hold on to Allah's path until you meet Him in the Judgment Day.

Amen.