

Answer to those who ask "If religion is between Allah and His servant, why do we communicate Islam's message to other people?"

In the Qur'an, Allah commands Muslims to enjoin the good and remind people of the truth. Those believers who are aware of an unbeliever's vulnerability or of a new believer who does not practice Islam correctly, feel responsible and therefore warn that person. All conscientious believers are told to give such warnings and admonitions. The Qur'an refers to this as "**enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong.**" Allah's Messenger (pbuh), called attention to the same issue by saying: "*By Him in Whose hands my soul lies, you should enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, otherwise He (Allah) will descend punishment upon you, and then you will ask Him but your supplications will never be answered.*" (Tirmidhi)

Similar to other acts of worship (e.g., prayer, fasting, or giving alms) specified in the Qur'an, enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong is a religious obligation for every Muslim, and fulfilling it is one of the believers' basic attributes, for:

The male and female believers are friends of one another. They command what is right and forbid what is wrong, perform prayer and pay alms, and obey Allah and His Messenger. They are the people on whom Allah will have mercy. Allah is Almighty, All-Wise. (Qur'an, 9:71)

They believe in Allah and the Last Day, enjoin the right and forbid the wrong, and compete in doing good. They are among the righteous. (Qur'an, 3:114)

Those who repent, those who worship, those who praise, those who fast, those who bow, those who prostrate, those who command the right, those who forbid the wrong, and those who preserve the limits of Allah: give good news to the believers. (Qur'an, 9:112)

In another verse, Allah informs us that attaining salvation is associated with enjoining good and forbidding evil:

Let there be a community among you who call to the good, enjoin the right, and forbid the wrong. They are the ones who have success. (Qur'an, 3:104)

No Muslim is entirely irreproachable, for all Muslims can sin or make mistakes. Making mistakes out of ignorance, forgetfulness, or giving in to one's lower-self is a means to attain perfected faith and spiritual maturity. However, what distinguishes believers from unbelievers in this matter is that once believers recognize their mistakes, they abandon them and adopt what is right. This is revealed in the Qur'an, as follows:

Those who, when they act indecently or wrong themselves, remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their bad actions [and who can forgive bad actions except Allah?] and do not knowingly persist in what they were doing. (Qur'an, 3:135)

Therefore, it is incumbent upon Muslims to advise other Muslims to abandon their mistakes or wrong actions. When a believer's rationale or attitude reveals any degree of incompatibility with the Qur'an, other believers must remind him or her of the truth immediately. This is the best service that one believer can offer another.

As this explanation suggests, enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong is one of the major acts of worship in Islam. People who are constantly under the supervision and control of other Muslims will purify themselves of all their mistakes, attain the perfection of faith described in the Qur'an, and thereby draw nearer to Allah. For this reason, Allah praises the compassionate believers who duly fulfill this act of worship in the following terms:

You are the best nation ever to be produced before mankind. You enjoin the right, forbid the wrong, and believe in Allah. (Qur'an, 3:110)

Among those We have created is a community who guides by the Truth and acts justly according to it. (Qur'an, 7:181)

The scope of enjoining good and forbidding evil is quite broad, for communicating Islam's message to people who are far from it, summoning them to live by the values of true religion, and describing the Qur'an's values are essential acts of worship. Inviting people to the true path has been one of the major responsibilities of all Prophets and their followers. As the Qur'an tells us, the Prophets devoted their lives to carrying out this act of worship by inviting people to the truth and never yielding to any difficulty. The Qur'an quotes Prophet Nuh (Noah) (pbuh), as follows:

He said: "My Lord, I have called my people night and day, but my calling has only made them more evasive. Indeed, every time I called them to Your forgiveness, they put their fingers in their ears, wrapped themselves up in their clothes, and were overweeningly arrogant. Then I called them openly. Then I addressed them publicly and addressed them privately." (Qur'an, 71:5-9)

As stated in the Qur'an, there is no compulsion or oppression in religion, for faith is a matter of conscience that is left to people's preference after they have been provided with all of the relevant evidence and explanations. Those who convey this information have done their duty, and in no way will be held accountable if the people reject faith. Many verses relate this fact, among them the following:

We are only responsible for clear transmission. (Qur'an, 36:17)

So remind them! You are only a reminder. You are not in control of them. (Qur'an, 88:21-22)

Calling people to Islam and conveying the Qur'an's message do not interfere with humanity's bond with Allah. On the contrary, conveying the message is a religious obligation that makes it possible for all people to become informed of Islam's values and observe Allah's orders and prohibitions.