

Islam is Deen of Discipline

(Friday speech delivered by Imam Mohamed Baianonie at the Islamic Center of Raleigh, NC on June 9, 2000)

The regulation of man's conduct within one system of life is one of the most important reasons of success and stability. The absence of this regulation is one of the greatest crises a man suffers from in his life. This happens when man is left without guidance from Allah (S.W.T.) or without proper upbringing based on that divine guidance. Under these circumstances, man's life becomes miserable on this earth and he will be amongst the losers in the Hereafter.

The Noble Qur'an teaches us about the nations of people and individuals that were blessed with financial wealth, and physical strength, but they refused to live their lives according to the regulations of Allah (S.W.T.), so He destroyed them and their wealth. This happened in the past it is happening now, and sure it will happen in the future until the Day of Judgment.

From the mercy of Allah (S.W.T.) is that He did not leave man without a system to regulate his conduct and behavior. So, He (S.W.T.) sent legislation to make man's life the best on this earth so that he will be happy in this life and in the Hereafter. Allah (S.W.T.) says about Qur'an in surat At-Takwir, (verse 27&28), which is translated as, "Verily, this (the Qur'an) is no less than a reminder to (all) the Alamin (mankind and jinn), to whomsoever among you wills to walk straight."

Allah (S.W.T.) ordered His prophet (S.A.W.) and the believers to be disciplined based on Islam and taught them not to transgress: Allah (S.W.T.) says in surat Huud, (verse 112), which is translated as, "So stand (O Muhammad) firm and straight (on Islam) as you are commanded and those who are with you (your companions) and do not transgress..." Ibn Abbas (R.A.) said: "There was no verse in the Qur'an harder on the prophet (S.A.W.) than this verse." For this reason, when the companions of the prophet (S.A.W.) said: "Your hair is getting gray early", he replied: " Surat Hood and its sisters made my hair gray."

Allah (S.W.T.) ordered His prophet (S.A.W.) in another verse in surat Ash-Shuora, (verse 15), which is translated as, "So unto this (Islam) alone then invite (people) (O Muhammad) and stand firm and straight (on Islam) as you are commanded..."

Imam Muslim reported that a man said O Messenger of Allah; tell me something of Islam, which I will not ask anyone else about it. He (S.A.W.) said: "Say, I believe in Allah and then be steadfast." Imam An-Nawawi said: "This hadith is one of the great ones that Islam is based on." To be steadfast is to abide by Islam and it is a high degree that shows complete belief and great strength. Omar (R.A.) said: "Steadfast is enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil and not deceit like the deceit of the fox." This means discipline according to the Islamic system.

Islam teaches us how to regulate our behavior and conduct in all aspects of the Deen; in the Aqeedah, in the Ibadat, in human relations, and in the rules of Halal and Haram.

(1 of 3)

In the Aqeedah, We must believe what Allah (S.W.T.) requires us to believe without additions, deletions, or changes.

In the Ibadat, Islam teaches us how to perform Ibadat. Islam did not leave the Ibadat to be performed according to someone's whims and desires. The person cannot worship Allah (S.W.T.) in whichever way he chooses, nor can he worship Allah (S.W.T.) whenever he wants. This is the best discipline. The prophet (S.A.W.) says: "Pray as you see me pray." He also said: "Take from me your rituals of Hajj." Islam also clarified to us the rules of Zakah and fasting.

If we take, as an example, Salah, which is a frequent Ibadah one that is performed 5 times a day, we will find it to be a set of specific acts that were handed down to us from the prophet (S.A.W.). So, it is not allowed for anyone to add to it, or delete from it. This teaches us to discipline our life because Ibadat is to follow and not to invent.

If we look into the prayer of Jama'ah (prayer in congregation) and its rules, we will find a great lesson of discipline. The Imam stands in front of the people, lines the people in straight rows. If he says Allah Akbar, they say Allah Akbar, and if he says Ameen, they say Ameen. If he bows down, they bow down. If he prostrates, they prostrate. If he stands up, they stand up. If he says Assalamu Alaikum, they say Assalamu Alaikum.

There are many authentic Ahadiths that order the Muslims to follow the Imam and order them not to differ with him during the prayers and not to perform any act of the prayer before he does. All this shows that Islam teaches us discipline and regulates our conduct, actions and behavior. This is one of many benefits we derive especially from the prayers. However, it does not end there, discipline involves all acts and worship.

Islam also taught us to be precise with the time of all Ibadat. Allah (S.W.T.) did not order us to perform prayer only, but He (S.W.T.) ordered us to perform it at specific times in surat An-Nisa', (verse 103), which is translated as, "...Perform As-Salat. Verily, As-Salat (the prayer) is enjoined on the believers at fixed times." Jibreel clarified to the prophet (S.A.W.) the beginning time and the ending time of every prayer. If someone wanted to pray prayer only minutes before it is due, it will not be accepted. This is a great lesson. It occurs five times a day and teaches us discipline.

The same thing applies to fasting. Allah (S.W.T.) ordered us to fast the month of Ramadan. The prophet (S.A.W.) told us how to begin fasting the month of Ramadan and how to end it. He also forbade us to start fasting the month of Ramadan before it is due and forbade us to fast the day of Eid. He specified to us that fasting is from dawn to sunset. The prophet (S.A.W.) commanded us to delay Souhoor (special meal before

dawn) till sometime before dawn, and commanded us to break fast immediately after sunset. All of these injunctions aid to the disciplining process.

(2 of 3)

The same thing applies to Zakah. If it is the Sadaqatal fitr (break fast charity), the prophet (S.A.W.) specified the time when it should be given away, and that it must be paid before the prayer of Eid. He also specified all the kinds of things from which we can give Sadaqatal fitr. If it is the Zakah of Money, he (S.A.W.) specified to us that it be once a year upon the rich. He also specified to us the amounts of Zakah prescribed for gold, silver, farm, animals and all kinds of monetary possessions. Islam specified to us whom Zakah should be given to. So, none of us can spend it as he wishes. This teaches us discipline.

As to the Udhiyah (sacrificing animal), Islam specified its rules to us all. It is to be done after the Eid Salah, and if it is done before the Salah, it will not be accepted. This teaches us discipline.

As to Hajj, it is an obligation that cannot be performed except within a certain period of time and in a specific place. If someone wanted to perform Hajj when it is not due or in a different place, it will not be accepted. This teaches us discipline.

These examples show that Islam teaches us to discipline ourselves and to regulate our actions, sayings, conduct and behavior so that we become disciplined individuals, families, and societies within the system of Islam.

Islam also taught us to abide by all its rules concerning human relations, and business transactions. Some of them are not allowed. They have conditions that must be met before they become valid. The same applies to the rest of the rules of Halal and Haram. This teaches us discipline.

Islam also taught us to discipline ourselves through its political system that is followed by the Islamic state, starting from electing the ruler, his conditions, qualifications, responsibilities, to appointing governors, judges to their positions, responsibilities and how to terminate them and so on. All this teaches us discipline.

Islam is the Deen of Allah (S.W.T.) and it is a complete way of life to all humanity. Whoever believes in it and acts accordingly will be raised to discipline his life and regulate his actions and stay away from chaos.

So, it is a must on all of us, (old, young, parents, children, male, and female) to be disciplined and our conduct is to be regulated and also to call others to do the same.