

Combination Lock

My brothers and sisters, imagine that you are standing before a safe which contains a billion dollars. If you get that money, it will be tax free and you can do whatever you want with it. The catch is that the safe, like all safes, has a combination lock. If you know the combination and feed it in, the safe will open and all in it will be yours. The problem is that you must feed in all the numbers in the right sequence for the safe to open. If you miss a number or you change the sequence, then the safe will remain locked. That will be the case even if you miss a single number or change the sequence of the combination by a single digit. For the safe to open, both the numbers and the sequence must be absolutely correct. If you have any difficulty with imagining this, imagine the same with your phone screen lock combination.

Now let us come to Islam. What do we need to do to unlock the door to Jannah? What are the numbers and sequence for the door to Jannah to open? What is that combination? Allah ﷻ told us the combination:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا
يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ
فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا

Ahzab 33: 70. *O you who believe! Have Taqwa of Allah and speak (always) the truth. 71. He will direct you to do righteous deeds and will forgive your sins. And whosoever obeys Allah and His Messenger ﷺ he has indeed achieved great (and permanent) success.*

How must that be done?

Allah ﷻ told us to enter Islam fully, not partially.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ادْخُلُوا فِي السِّلْمِ كَآفَّةً وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ
الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ

Baqara 2: 208. *O you who believe! Enter completely (perfectly) in Islam and do not follow the footsteps of Shaytaan. Verily! He is your plain enemy.*

I am sure we all understand that lock combinations won't open if dialed in partially. Then why is it difficult to believe that this is also the case with the door to Jannah? Selective obedience is disobedience. When we selectively obey Allah ﷻ then we are choosing to disobey some of His orders. And the reason we do that is because we don't like those orders. That means that we are saying that what we like, or dislike takes precedence with us over what Allah ﷻ likes or dislikes. If this is not arrogance, then pray, what is?

Please reflect on what Allah ﷻ said about those who pray but delay their Salah. Remember, this is not about those who don't pray. It is about those who pray but do so at their convenience and not when they are called to pray. Allah ﷻ told us about them:

فَوَيْلٌ لِّلْمُصَلِّينَ
الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ

Ma'oon 107: 4. *So woe unto those performers of Salat (prayers) (hypocrites), 5. Who delay their Salat (prayer) from their stated fixed times*

And Allah ﷻ warned those who insist on disobeying Him and indulge in selective obedience, fooling themselves that it is enough:

أَفْتُمِنُونَ بِبَعْضِ الْكِتَابِ وَتَكْفُرُونَ بِبَعْضٍ فَمَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ يَفْعَلُ
ذَلِكَ مِنْكُمْ إِلَّا خِزْيٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ أَشَدِّ
الْعَذَابِ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ

Baqara 2: 85....*Then do you believe in a part of the Book and reject the rest? Then what is the recompense of those who do so among you, except disgrace in the life of this world, and on the Day of Resurrection they shall be consigned to the most grievous torment. And Allah is not unaware of what you do.*

This brings us also to the difficult and tricky question of what we must do when we see selective obedience among those we love? Our socialization tells us to do nothing. We are told that it is not our job to tell people how to live their lives; not for us to 'interfere'; people are free to choose, so let them do so. But what if people make fatal choices because they don't know the consequences of their choices? I agree that we must not try to force anyone, but how about alerting them to the cost of their choice? Maybe they wouldn't choose that if they knew what it costs. Take for example a person experimenting with drugs or getting radicalized into a violent way of life or getting criminalized because of the company he or she has fallen into. Should you simply sit by and watch them self-destruct? Or should you try to warn them of the consequences of their choices, if you truly love them?

And finally, if they still to go on the path that they have chosen, what must you do? Continue to relate with them, visit them, invite them, go to their meetings and gatherings? Or to break off your relationship because you are afraid for yourself? However, we find ourselves responding, ask why we apply a different standard when it comes to disobedience of Allah ﷻ? Is it because we fear the reaction of the world more than we fear Allah ﷻ's anger? And if so, what does that tell us about our faith in Allah ﷻ and in our meeting with Him? Do we really have faith in this? What is the evidence?

'Abdullah bin Mas'ud (RA) reported: *Rasoolullah ﷺ said, "The first defect (in religion) which affected the Children of Israel in the way that a man would meet another and say to him: 'Fear Allah ﷻ and abstain from what you are doing, for this is not lawful for you.'* Then he would meet him the next day and find no change in him, but this would not prevent him from eating with him, drinking with him and sitting in his assemblies. When it came to this, Allah ﷻ (allowed) their hearts to go into evil ways on account of their association with others." Then he (ﷺ) recited the Ayaat of Sura Al-Ma'aida 5:78-81.

Then he (ﷺ) continued: *"Nay, by Allah ﷻ, you either enjoin good and forbid evil and catch hold of the hand of the oppressor and persuade him to act justly and stick to the truth, or, Allah ﷻ will involve the hearts of some of you with the hearts of others and will curse you as He had cursed them".* [Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi].

The wording in At-Tirmidhi is: Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, *"When the Children of Israel became sinful, their learned men prohibited them, but they*

would not turn back. Yet, the learned men associated with them and ate and drank with them. So, they were cursed at the tongues of Dawud and 'Isa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary), because they were disobedient and were given to transgression." At this stage Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) who was reclining on a pillow sat up and said, *"No, By Him in Whose Hand my soul is, there is no escape for you, but you persuade them to act justly."*

<https://sunnah.com/riyadussaliheen/1/196>

Nu'man bin Bashir reported that Rasoolullah ﷺ said, "The example of the person abiding by Allah ﷻ's order and restrictions in comparison to those who violate them is like the example of those persons who drew lots for their seats in a boat. Some of them got seats in the upper part, and the others in the lower. When the latter needed water, they had to go up to bring water (and that troubled the upper deck passengers), so they said, 'Let us make a hole in our share of the ship (and get water) so that we do not trouble the upper deck passengers.' If the people in the upper part left the lower deck passengers to do what they had suggested; then all the people of the ship would be destroyed, but if they had prevented them, then both parties would be safe." [Bukhari]

Today we live in a world where the concept of privacy, personal freedom and independence has been taken to an extreme. We fool ourselves that we can do whatever we like without facing the consequences of that. See what's happening with global warming. The fires in Australia have killed 1 billion animals. And that is an estimate. Not a physical count. Do we think this won't affect us just because of the distance between us and Australia?

This world is one ship. And it is the only ship we have. There is no other ship. If we allow this ship to be destroyed, we will all be destroyed with it. Responsibility is not an option. It is a critical necessity. This is what we must teach in our schools and homes and before that, convince ourselves. That is what Rasoolullah ﷺ reminded us, fourteen centuries earlier. If only we listen to him. Our choices, on the other hand, have resulted in loneliness, isolation, depression and various forms of mental illness. Mankind was not created to live in isolation. We are social creatures. We need one another like we need food and water. Affiliation is a psychological as well as a physical need. Loneliness kills.

Please see my podcasts: "Loneliness kills" and "How to kill loneliness before it kills you."

<https://yawarbaig.com/seewithyourheart/loneliness-kills/>

<https://yawarbaig.com/seewithyourheart/kill-loneliness-before-it-kills-you/>

Being alone (Khilwa) is a very important thing in life as it enables us to reflect and introspect. But even people who like to be alone; if we see something beautiful, if we suddenly understand a line of poetry in a deep and meaningful way, if we experience something wonderful, our first thought is, "I wish so-and-so was here to share this with me." This is why Rasoolullah ﷺ taught us to live responsibly. Because our life and our actions touch others. No matter how independent I may think I am, what I say and do, affects others. Islam therefore teaches us to live thoughtfully and responsibly.

The first claimants for this on us are our own brothers and sisters in Islam.

Al-Nu'man ibn Bashir reported: Rasoolullah ﷺ said, "The parable of the believers in their affection, mercy, and compassion for each other is that of a body. When any limb aches, the whole body reacts with sleeplessness and fever." [Bukhari 5665, Muslim 2586]

My brothers and sisters, Allah ﷻ sent us into the world to spread goodness. That can't happen unless we take responsibility of being citizens. A citizen is one who acts. Not one who simply looks on. A spectator is not a citizen. We are citizens. Allah ﷻ sent us to act. That is why He told us what to do and sent His Messenger ﷺ who showed us how to do it. As Rasoolullah ﷺ said, there is no escape. We must live Islam and persuade our near and dear ones also to do so. Persuade, not force. But also, not simply sit and watch. Say what needs to be said, with love and without fear. Let us act. Now.