

12804 - Understanding the Essence of Islamic Life

the question

The Islamic life is the best life that a person could live, but sometimes things get so difficult that I feel that I have no hope of carrying on.

Summary of answer

The Islamic life is the best life that a person could live. This life requires patience and forbearance. Adherence to Islam is not something easy, rather it is like holding on to a live coal. What will help a person to do that, after guidance from Allah, is being patient in adhering to this path until he meets his Lord not being negligent or heedless. One should be certain of the promise of Allah to this Ummah of support and help.

Detailed answer

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Understanding the essence of Islamic life

You have done well by realising that the [Islamic life](#) is the best life that a person could live. This is a great truth which few people understand, let alone become convinced of. Allah has stated that in more than one place in his Book.

Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Whoever works righteousness — whether male or female — while he (or she) is a true believer (of Islamic Monotheism) verily, to him We will give a good life (in this world with respect, contentment and lawful provision), and We shall pay them certainly a reward in proportion to the best of what they used to do (i.e. Paradise in the Hereafter).” [An-Nahl 16:97]

And Allah has stated that whoever turns away from faith in Allah and remembrance of Him exposes himself to a [life of hardship and misery](#) , as He says (interpretation of the meaning):

“But whosoever turns away from My Reminder (i.e. neither believes in this Quran nor acts on its teachings) verily, for him is a life of hardship, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection.”

He will say: ‘O my Lord! Why have you raised me up blind, while I had sight (before).’

(Allah) will say: ‘Like this: Our Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) came unto you, but you disregarded them (i.e. you left them, did not think deeply in them, and you turned away from them), and so this Day, you will be neglected (in the Hell-fire, away from Allah’s Mercy).’

And thus do We requite him who transgresses beyond bounds [i.e. commits the great sins and disobeys his Lord (Allah) and believes not in His Messengers, and His revealed Books, like this Quran], and believes not in the Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) of his Lord; and the torment of the Hereafter is far more severe and more lasting.” [Ta-Ha 20:124-127]

Islamic life requires patience and forbearance

Once you have understood this, and it has become deeply rooted in your heart and you are at peace with it, then you will know that Allah has not created this universe, with the earth and the heavens, the seas and the rivers, the mountains and plains, the oases and the deserts, except for your sake, O poor, weak creature. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“He is Who created for you all that is on earth.” [Al-Baqarah 2:29]

Then you will realise that the great purpose for which you exist in this world is to worship your Lord and Creator, Who has created all things well:

“And I (Allah) created not the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me (Alone).”
[Adh-Dhariyat 51:56 – interpretation of the meaning]

He has only created life and death in order to test His slaves in their performance of this duty of worship:

“Who has created death and life that He may test you which of you is best in deed. And He is the All-Mighty, the Oft-Forgiving” [Al-Mulk 67:2 – interpretation of the meaning]

Then Allah honoured His slaves and promised those who do good in this world that in the Hereafter theirs will be Paradise as vast as the heavens and the earth, in which is that which no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard, nor has it ever entered the mind of man. By the same token, He has warned those who do evil and neglect His rights over them that theirs will be a blazing Fire, in which they will neither live nor die, in which He has created all kinds of punishments and torments, hearing of which would turn a child’s hair white, let alone seeing them and suffering them. We ask Allah to keep us and you safe from that... amen.

Once you know this with certainty, then you will know that succeeding in this test is a serious matter which can only be achieved with a measure of effort and hardship which [requires patience and forbearance](#) . But this is hardship which passes swiftly and difficulty which soon comes to an end, because it is followed by eternal rest and happiness. So what is an hour of hardship and a moment of pain when compared to that eternal delight. We ask Allah to bless us and you with His grace and Paradise...amen.

Islam started as something strange

You should also note – may Allah guide you – that the more religious commitment becomes something strange and the fewer people there are who truly adhere to it – as is the situation nowadays – the more difficult it becomes to remain steadfast. It is hard to be different from the vast majority of people. Hence Allah in His wisdom increases the reward of the sincere believers

who remain steadfast in adhering to the truth, those who give precedence to pleasing Him over everything else and sacrifice that which is most precious to them for the sake of achieving that. Muslim (145) narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Islam started as something strange and will go back to being something strange as it began. So glad tidings to the strangers.”

In Sunan At-Tirmidhi (3058), it is narrated from Abu Tha`labah Al-Khushani (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “After you there will come days during which being patient will be like holding on to a live coal. The one who strives during those days will have a reward like that of fifty men who strive as you do.” According to another report: It was said: “O Messenger of Allah, the reward of fifty men like them or like us?” He said: “No, the reward of fifty men like you.” (Classed as authentic by Al-Albani in Sahih At-Targhib wat Tarhib, 3172)

These Hadiths and others indicate that at the end of time, there will be many evil and corrupt people, and few who are good and righteous and fear Allah. That is because there will be so much Fitnah (temptation and tribulation) and because sin and temptation will be so widespread that adhering to Islam will become something strange and may even become something strange among the Muslims themselves.

These Hadiths also indicate that adherence to Islam is not something easy, rather it is like holding on to a live coal. What will help a person to do that, after guidance from Allah, is being patient in adhering to this path until he meets his Lord not being negligent or heedless, so he will meet a Lord Who is pleased with him and not angry with him, and will give him a great and much-multiplied reward. If a person truly understands this, he will regard as insignificant whatever he encounters for the sake of that which is waiting for him with his Lord, by the will and grace of Allah.

What we have said applies if you feel that things are too difficult for you and you fear that your patience is weak and that you are slipping and not remaining steadfast.

Beware of letting despair enter your heart

However, if you are feeling that you have no hope of spreading this [Islamic life](#) that you live among those who are around you, and bringing them back to Islam as you are obliged to do, because of the opposition and resistance that you encounter, you should know that every step that you take in that direction is a victory and an act of charity. A good word is a charity, and you do not know when a word that you have spoken may take effect in the heart of the one who hears it and be of some benefit to him, even if that is after some time. So you should not give up hope that it will do some good one day.

“And when a community among them said: “Why do you preach to a people whom Allah is about to destroy or to punish with a severe torment?” (The preachers) said: “In order to be free from guilt before your Lord (Allah), and perhaps they may fear Allah.” [Al-A`raf 7:164 - interpretation of the meaning]

Beware of letting despair enter your heart. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Certainly no one despairs of Allah’s Mercy, except the people who disbelieve.” [Yusuf 12:87]

Beware of despair for it is misguidance:

“And who despairs of the Mercy of his Lord except those who are astray?” [Al-Hijr 15:56 - interpretation of the meaning]

Remember that your efforts will never be lost, so long as you remain on the right path. The point where your life ends, this is your destination:

“He who emigrates (from his home) in the Cause of Allah, will find on earth many dwelling places and plenty to live by. And whosoever leaves his home as an emigrant unto Allah and His Messenger, and death overtakes him, his reward is then surely, incumbent upon Allah. And Allah is Ever Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” [An-Nisa’ 4:100 - interpretation of the meaning]

Then will come the turn of those who come after you, to take the flag from you and continue the rest of the journey. How many of this Ummah are still left: “Allah will continue to plant new people in this religion and use them in His obedience.” (Narrated by Ibn Majah and classed as sound by Al-Albani in Sunan Ibn Majah, 1/5)

Be certain of the promise of Allah to this Ummah of support and help

“And indeed We have written in Az-Zaboor [i.e. all the revealed Holy Books the Tawrat (Torah), the Injil (Gospel), the Psalms, the Quran] after (We have already written in) Al-Lawh Al-Mahfuth (the Book that is in the heaven with Allah) that My righteous slaves shall inherit the land (i.e. the land of Paradise).” [Al-Anbiya’ 21:105 - interpretation of the meaning]

“This matter (i.e., Islam) will reach as far as the day and night reach, and Allah will not leave any house of mud or hair but He will bring this religion into it ... and Allah will bring glory to Islam and humiliation to kufr.” (Narrated by Ahmad and classed as authentic by Al-Albani in As-Silsilah As-Sahihah, 32)

I urge you to remain steadfast in your religious commitment and not to turn away from it despite the many trials and temptations and the many obstacles. Remember that the good end will be for those who fear Allah (the pious).

You should strive to find all means that will help you to remain steadfast in adhering to the religion of Allah. On this website you will find an essay which describes ways and means of remaining steadfast in Islam. I advise you to read it and study it.

Verses which encourage steadfastness in faith

In conclusion, I would like to leave you with these great verses from the Book of Allah which He revealed to His slave Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to be a healing for the believers’ hearts and a remedy for their ills. Read them and ponder them, and if you can look up the commentary on them in one of the books of Tafsir such as the Tafsir of Shaykh `Abd Ar-Rahman ibn Sa`di or Tafsir Ibn Kathir (may Allah have mercy on him) then that will be good.

Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Or do you think that you will enter Paradise without such (trials) as came to those who passed away before you? They were afflicted with severe poverty and ailments and were so shaken that

even the Messenger and those who believed along with him said, ‘When (will come) the Help of Allah?’ Yes! Certainly, the Help of Allah is near!” [Al-Baqarah 2:214]

“Alif-Lam-Mim.

[These letters are one of the miracles of the Quran, and none but Allah (Alone) knows their meanings.]

Do people think that they will be left alone because they say: “We believe,” and will not be tested.

And We indeed tested those who were before them. And Allah will certainly make (it) known (the truth of) those who are true, and will certainly make (it) known (the falsehood of) those who are liars, (although Allah knows all that before putting them to test)” [Al-`Ankabut 29:1-3]

“And for those who believe (in the Oneness of Allah and the other articles of Faith) and do righteous good deeds, surely, We shall make them enter with (in the entrance of) the righteous (in Paradise).

Of mankind are some who say: ‘We believe in Allah.’ But if they are made to suffer for the sake of Allah, they consider the trial of mankind as Allah’s punishment; and if victory comes from your Lord, (the hypocrites) will say: ‘Verily, we were with you (helping you).’ Is not Allah Best Aware of what is in the breasts of the ‘Alamin (mankind and jinn).” [Al-`Ankabut 29:9-10]

“And among mankind is he who worships Allah as it were upon the edge (i.e. in doubt): if good befalls him, he is content therewith; but if a trial befalls him he turns back on his face (i.e. reverts to disbelief after embracing Islam). He loses both this world and the Hereafter. That is the evident loss.” [Al-Hajj 22:11]

“Verily, those who say: ‘Our Lord is Allah (Alone),’ and then they stand firm, on them the angels will descend (at the time of their death) (saying): ‘Fear not, nor grieve! But receive the glad tidings of Paradise which you have been promised!’” [Fussilat 41:30]

“Verily, those who say: ‘Our Lord is (only) Allah,’ and thereafter stand firm (on the Islamic Faith of Monotheism), on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.

Such shall be the dwellers of Paradise, abiding therein (forever) a reward for what they used to do.” [Al-Ahqaf 46:13-14]

And there are other verses which encourage us to remain steadfast in our religious commitment and describe what Allah has promised to the sincere believers. The Book of Allah is filled with verses which state this and explain it in the most eloquent manner. So I advise you to read and ponder the Quran. By Allah’s Leave you will find in it the best help in remaining patient and not despairing or finding the way too long. For this world will quickly come to an end, then each person will find that which he has sent on ahead with his Lord; it is good, all well and good, but if it is bad then the outcome will be bad:

“On the Day when every person will be confronted with all the good he has done, and all the evil he has done, he will wish that there were a great distance between him and his evil. And Allah warns you against Himself (His punishment) and Allah is full of kindness to (His) slaves.” [Al `Imran 3:30]

I ask Allah to open your heart to goodness and to make you steadfast in adhering to the truth until You meet Him. May he divert all evil away from you, for He is All-Hearing, Ever Near. And Allah knows best.

May Allah send blessings and peace upon His slave and Prophet Muhammad and upon his family and companions.

And Allah knows best.