

Islam Question & Answer

General Supervisor:
Shaykh Muhammad Saalih al-Munajjid

140972 - He wants to enter Islam but he cannot give up coffee when fasting!

the question

I am a woman and I have a friend who wants to embrace Islam, but when he found out that he would have to fast, and that when fasting he would have to avoid eating and drinking, he backed off, because he is addicted to coffee and he drinks it all the time, because he suffers from migraines and headaches, and it is like a remedy for him. How can I help him? Do you have any suggestions?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

The greatest of blessings that Allah bestows upon His slave, which is also a sign of his being blessed and his success, is that his Lord guides him to His religion, and opens his heart to believe in Him and submit to Him. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And whomsoever Allaah wills to guide, He opens his breast to Islam; and whomsoever He wills to send astray, He makes his breast closed and constricted, as if he is climbing up to the sky. Thus Allaah puts the wrath on those who believe not”

[al-An'aam 6:125].

Shaykh al-Sa'di (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Here Allah says, describing to His slaves the sign of a person's being blessed and guided, and the

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sign of his being doomed and misguided, that for the one whose heart is open to Islam and is filled with the light of faith and certainty, that he feels at ease with it, so he loves to do good and finds it easy to do it. This is a sign that Allah has guided him and blessed him by enabling him to follow the straight path.

The sign of the one whom Allah wills to send astray is that his heart becomes constricted and closed, so it rejects faith, knowledge and certainty, and his heart is filled with specious arguments and whims and desires. So nothing reaches him, and his heart is not open to doing good deeds. It is as if he is “climbing up to the sky”, i.e., as if he is asked to climb up to the sky when he has no means of doing so.

The reason for this is their lack of faith, because of which Allah “puts the wrath on them”, because they have blocked the door of mercy and kindness. That is the way that does not change, because the one who gives (in charity) and fears Allah, and testifies to the best, Allah will indeed make smooth for him the path of bliss, but for the one who is greedy miser and thinks himself self sufficient, and gives the lie to the best, Allah will make smooth for him the path to misery.

End quote.

Tafseer al-Sa'di, 272.

We ask Allah to guide this seeker and open his heart to Islam, and to enable him to repent to Him and submit to His religion.

Secondly:

It should be noted that fasting the month of Ramadan is not something to be taken lightly; rather it is one of the five pillars of Islam and one of the great foundations on which this faith is built, as it says in the well-known hadeeth from Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Islam is built on five (pillars):

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testimony that there is no god except Allaah and that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger, establishing regular prayer, paying zakaah, pilgrimage to the House and fasting Ramadaan.”

Narrated by al-Bukhaari (8) and Muslim (16).

It should also be noted that uttering the twin declaration of faith (al-shahaadatayn) and entering Islam means that the person submits with his heart and physical faculties to the Lord of the Worlds, and that he believes in Him and in what came from Him; he submits to his Lord and accepts His rulings, commands and prohibitions, and he believes what He tells us of stories. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“We sent no Messenger, but to be obeyed by Allaah’s Leave. If they (hypocrites), when they had been unjust to themselves, had come to you (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) and begged Allaah’s forgiveness, and the Messenger had begged forgiveness for them, indeed, they would have found Allaah All-Forgiving (One Who forgives and accepts repentance), Most Merciful.

65. But no, by your Lord, they can have no Faith, until they make you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept (them) with full submission”

[al-Nisa’ 4:64-65].

Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

In the words “But no, by your Lord, they can have no Faith, until they make you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) judge in all disputes between them”, Allah is swearing by His holy Self that no one believes until he makes the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) judge in all his affairs. So whatever he rules is the truth to which he must submit both inwardly and outwardly. Hence He says “and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept (them) with full submission” i.e., if they appoint you as judge, they should obey you in their hearts and not

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find any resistance in themselves against your decision and submit to it both outwardly and inwardly. Thus they should submit completely, without any resentment or dispute.

End quote.

Tafseer Ibn Katheer (2/349)

There are very many verses in the Holy Qur'aan which confirm this principle and explain it.

Thirdly:

Once we have understood this important principle of faith, which is submission to and acceptance of everything that comes from Allah, may He be exalted, and submitting to Him both inwardly and outwardly, then we will also understand that fasting Ramadan is an important pillar of faith, and no person's faith is valid unless he accepts it. So what we have to do, when calling this seeker to the religion of Allah, is explain to him that there is no problem that would prevent him from entering Islam; Allah does not put any hardship upon His slaves in their religion; rather He makes it easy for them and relieves them of what that may cause them of hardship and difficulty .

Is this man drinks coffee because of what he suffers of headaches and migraines, then he can consume the sufficient amount of it during the night, then when he begins to fast during the day, he should stop doing that until the sun sets. He can also seek help by using the medication that will help him with his headache or reduce its effects.

But it is well known that if a sick person is affected by his sickness during the day, and his sickness will be affected by fasting, then it is well known that such individuals are exempted in the religion of Allah. So if he gets a headache and needs to take medicine, and cannot fast that day, he can break the fast for that day, then when the month has ended he should make up the days that he did not fast because of the excuse of being sick. As Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

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“O you who believe! Observing As-Sawm (the fasting) is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become Al-Muttaqoon (the pious).

184. [Observing Sawm (fasts)] for a fixed number of days, but if any of you is ill or on a journey, the same number (should be made up) from other days. And as for those who can fast with difficulty, (e.g. an old man), they have (a choice either to fast or) to feed a Miskeen (poor person) (for every day). But whoever does good of his own accord, it is better for him. And that you fast is better for you if only you know”

[al-Baqarah 2:183-184].

But if a person wants to drink coffee because he loves it, and he does not want to forsake his desire for it during the day for one month of every year, then this person is not ready to believe and submit or to adhere truly to any religion, whether it is Islam or any other, because religion -- any religion -- requires its followers to be able to obey and submit, and to give up the whims and desires of the self. This is the test and it is the obstacle that many people fail to overcome, the obstacle of whims and desires and going against what the nafs (self) desires. This is what Allah mentioned in His Book to His Prophet, as He said (interpretation of the meaning):

“Have you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) seen him who has taken as his ilâh (god) his own vain desire? Would you then be a Wakîl (a disposer of his affairs or a watcher) over him?”

[al-Furqaan 25:43].

Fourthly:

Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, is more compassionate towards His slaves than a mother to her child. When a person turns to his Lord, Allah turns to him and more so, as it says in the hadeeth narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Allah says: ‘I am as My slave thinks I am,

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and I am with him when he remembers Me. If he remembers me to himself, I remember him to Myself; if he remembers Me in a gathering, I remember him in a gathering better than it; if he draws near to Me a handspan, I draw near to him an arm's length; if he draws near to me an arm's length, I draw near to him a fathom's length; if he comes to Me walking, I go to him at speed." Narrated by al-Bukhaari (7405) and Muslim (2675).

So be confident, O slave of Allah, that when you turn to Allah sincerely, Allah will turn to you and will help you, make things easy for you, open your heart, suffice you against what distresses you and support you in ways you never imagined. Perhaps Allah will heal you of your sickness, or perhaps He will suffice you and relieve you of that addiction to what you drink [coffee]. So turn to Allah and think positively of your Lord, and tell Him of your need. But the condition is that you should be serious about submitting to the command of Allah and accepting what has come from Him. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

"As for him who gives (in charity) and keeps his duty to Allaah and fears Him,

6. And believes in Al-Husnaa [The Best, (i.e. either Lâ ilâha illAllaah: none has the right to be worshipped but Allaah) or a reward from Allaah (i.e. Allaah will compensate him for what he will spend in Allaah's way or bless him with Paradise)],

7. We will make smooth for him the path of ease (goodness)."

[al-Layl 92:5-7].

Fifthly:

It should be noted that if a person is sincere in his belief in his Lord, then is unable to do some of the duties, or he is overwhelmed by his nafs and whims and desires, and falls into sin, that is not the end of the road. Rather the gate of repentance and turning to his Lord is open. Moreover, he -- despite his sin -- may be forgiven by Allah and has to hope that his sin and error will be pardoned.

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But the problem for which there is no solution is if a person remains in a state of shirk (associating others with Allah) and turning away from the religion of his Lord. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Verily, Allaah forgives not that partners should be set up with Him (in worship), but He forgives except that (anything else) to whom He wills; and whoever sets up partners with Allaah in worship, he has indeed invented a tremendous sin”

[al-Nisa’ 4:48].

Sixthly:

It is very important to note that it is not acceptable for there to be a relationship or friendship between a man and a woman in Islam; rather this is one of the actions of jaahiliyyah (ignorance) and the Muslim should be above doing that. Islam forbids free mixing of men and women, men entering upon women or being alone with them.

This has been explained previously in numerous answers under the heading “Relationships between the sexes” on this website; please refer to that.

And Allah knows best.