143946 - How can a person protect himself from fitnah with regard to his religious commitment?

the question

How can a person protect himself from fitnah (trials, temptation) with regard to his religious commitment? If he falls into that, what must he do to ward off this fitnah from himself?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

The soundness of a person’s religious commitment in this world means happiness and triumph in the hereafter. The capital of the Muslim is his religious commitment, so whoever neglects it and exposes it to trials and temptations is doomed to failure, whereas the one who preserves it and takes care to strengthen it will prosper and succeed. Therefore one of the supplications of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was: “O Allah, set right for me my religious commitment, which is the safeguard of my affairs. Set right for me my worldly affairs in which is my living. Set right for me my Hereafter in which will be my final abode. Make this life a means of increase in all that is good, and make death a relief for me from all evil.”

Narrated by Muslim (2720).

Al-Mannaawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“O Allah, set right for me my religious commitment, which is the safeguard of my affairs” means: it is what protects all my affairs, for if a person’s religious commitment is spoiled, all his affairs will be spoiled and he will be doomed to failure in this world and the hereafter.

Fayd al-Qadeer (2/173)

Secondly:

The Muslim – with the help of Allah – can protect his religious commitment from trials and temptations, by following the path of the believers with regard to what they were enjoined to adhere to. That includes the following:

1. Keeping away from any environment that will corrupt one’s religious commitment and morals.

So he should avoid living in the lands of kufr, and avoid mixing with the evildoers. Whoever keeps away from anything that may lead to corruption will protect his religious commitment from being lost, by Allah’s leave. It is almost certain that living in environments of kufr and mixing with disbelievers will have an impact on the Muslim who dwells among them. We have seen and heard shocking stories of those who drifted away and sold their religious commitment for some fleeting worldly gain. That was because of being so dazzled and impressed by the environment of kufr and the disbelievers, and because of hearts becoming spiritually dead as a result of living among them or mixing with them.

The same may be said with regard to keeping away from any involvement in the battles between Muslims over controversial issues, especially when arguing about those differences leads to boycotting one another, turning their backs on one another and fighting.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Whoever examines the stories of turmoil and arguments that take place among Muslims will realise that no Muslim ever got involved in that and was happy with the consequences of his involvement, because of what may happen to him of harm affecting his religious commitment and his worldly interests. Therefore it is something to be forbidden, and refraining from it is something to be enjoined, concerning which Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And let those who oppose the Messenger's (Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)) commandment (i.e. his Sunnah— legal ways, orders, acts of worship, statements) (among

the sects) beware, lest some Fitnah (disbelief, trials, afflictions, earthquakes, killing, overpowered by a tyrant) should befall them or a painful torment be inflicted on them”

[an-Noor 24:63].

Minhaaj as-Sunnah an-Nabawiyyah (4/410)

2. Another thing that may help the Muslim to protect his religious commitment is strengthening his faith, by doing obligatory acts of obedience and refraining from that which is forbidden and prohibited.

One of the greatest obligatory acts of obedience is prayer, so the Muslim should pray regularly and on time, fulfilling all the necessary conditions and doing all the obligatory parts of prayer, with proper humility and focus. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“and perform As-Salât (Iqamât-as-Salât). Verily, As-Salât (the prayer) prevents from Al-Fahshâ' (i.e. great sins of every kind, unlawful sexual intercourse) and Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief, polytheism, and every kind of evil wicked deed)”

[al-‘Ankaboot 29:45].

The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) enjoined doing all kinds of acts of obedience and worship in order to be saved from trials and temptations with regard to one’s religious commitment, and he warned against worldly temptations such as wealth, women and status, lest they be the cause of selling one’s religious commitment for their sake. He stated that a man may be a Muslim during the night then end up apostatising during the day, or he may be a Muslim during the day then end up apostatising during the night!

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Hasten to do good deeds before there emerges fitnah like a piece of black night, when a man will be a believer in the morning and a disbeliever in the evening, or he will be a believer in the evening and a disbeliever in the morning, and he will sell his religion for worldly gain.”

Narrated by Muslim (118).

Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al-'Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The point is that the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) warned us against these trials that would be like a piece of black night, in which a person would be a believer in the morning and a disbeliever in the evening – Allah forbid; in a single day he would apostatise from Islam and exit the faith, he would be a believer in the morning and a disbeliever in the evening – we ask Allah to keep us safe and sound – and why would that be so? Because he would sell his religious commitment for worldly gain. Do not think that what is meant by worldly gain is merely wealth, for every worldly pleasure is worldly gain, whether it is wealth, status, leadership, women, or anything else. Every worldly pleasure comes under the heading of worldly gain.

These people who will be believers in the morning and disbelievers in the evening, or will be believers in the evening and become disbelievers in the morning – all of them will sell their religious commitment for some worldly gain.

We ask Allah to protect us and you from trials and temptations. You should constantly seek refuge with Allah from trials and temptations.

Sharh Riyadh as-Saaliheen (2/20)

For more information on means of strengthening the Muslim's faith, please see the answer to question no. 34171.

3. Supplication (du'aa').

Our Lord, may He be exalted, has guided us, and our Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) has taught us concise supplications that are of benefit to the one who wants to protect his religious commitment from trials and temptations. These supplications include:

The phrase "ihdina as-siraat al-mustaqeem (Guide us to the Straight Path)" in every rak'ah; and the supplication: "Allaahumma ihdini feeman hadayta wa 'aafini feeman 'aafayta wa tawallani

feeman tawallayta wa baarik li feema a’tayta, wa qini sharra ma qadayta … (O Allah, guide me among those whom You have guided, pardon me among those whom You have pardoned, turn to me in friendship among those on whom You have turned in friendship, and bless me in what You have bestowed, and save me from the evil of what You have decreed…).” Narrated and classed as hasan by at-Tirmidhi (464); also narrated by Abu Dawood (1425). This is what the Muslim says in Qunoot al-Witr and in many other situations, because it includes seeking the help of Allah, may He be exalted, to guide the worshipper to the path of Islam and the straight path, and to make him steadfast in adhering to that, and to show him the best and shortest way of attaining His pleasure.

4. Keeping away from bad company

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “A man will follow the way of his close friend, so let one of you look at who he takes as a close friend.”

Narrated by Abu Dawood (4833) and at-Tirmidhi (2378), who classed it as hasan.

Do not take anyone as a close friend except one who is pleasing in terms of his religious commitment and honesty, for if you take him as a close friend, he will lead you to his religion and his way. So do not take risks with regard to your religious commitment or gamble with your soul by taking as a close friend someone who is not pleasing in terms of his religious commitment and his way.

Al-‘Izlah, (p. 141)

5. Learn Islamic knowledge and consult trustworthy scholars

One of the greatest means by which a Muslim may ward off trials and confusion with regard to his religious commitment is Islamic knowledge. Therefore the ignorant person is more prone to drifting away from the right path of Islam. Look at those who circumambulate graves, or believe that the dead have the power to bring benefit or cause harm. If you reflect on the situation, you will see that they are ignorant people, and whoever among them has any knowledge is one of

those who has sold his religious commitment in order to attain some fleeting worldly gain.

Thirdly:

If anyone has fallen into any kind of temptation with regard to his religious commitment:

1. Let him hasten to get out of it and free himself from it completely, by repenting sincerely to Allah, may He be exalted, regretting his neglect of his duty towards Him, and resolving never to go back to it again.

2. Let him change his environment for one that is pure and wholesome.

3. Let him call upon his Lord, may He be exalted – with the utmost sincerity – and ask Him to save him from that.

4. Let him follow it with righteous deeds, and do a lot of them, as much as he can.

Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And perform As-Salât (Iqâmat-as-Salât), at the two ends of the day and in some hours of the night [i.e. the five compulsory Salât (prayers)]. Verily, the good deeds remove the evil deeds (i.e. small sins). That is a reminder (an advice) for the mindful (those who accept advice).

And be patient; verily, Allâh wastes not the reward of the good-doers”

[Hood 11:114-115].

5. The individual should have an honest estimation of how he is faring, and he should be aware of his shortcomings and the causes thereof, and how the Shaytaan was able to gain control over him. If the cause of his drifting away was sexual desire, then let him strive to protect himself by getting married, and if he is not able to do that, then let him fast a great deal, for it will be a shield for him, as the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) told us.

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: What is meant here is that fasting will reduce

sexual desire.

If the temptation has to do with other desires, or specious arguments, let him hasten to deal with it and counteract it with the opposite.

What we have mentioned above are among the means of protection against trials and temptations, as the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) taught us.

And Allah knows best.