

(Note: Wherever the word “you” or “your” is singular and refers to one human being, it is printed with an italic y, as in: you. Wherever such a word refers to God, the letter y is printed in capital, as in: You.)

For Fast 11 – August 22

Topic: (G) Goodness, good deeds

Purpose of creation is to do good:

- “Blessed is He in Whose hand is the Kingdom, and He is Powerful over all things, Who created death and life that He might try you (as to) *which of you is best in deeds*. And He is the Mighty, the Forgiving” — 67:1-2

The law of life and death or growth and decay works throughout nature, but in case of man death does not end his life, but is really the starting-point for a new life of spiritual progress. Life to him below is a trial, i.e., *a means of bringing to light his hidden qualifications for the performance of good*. There is also the life and death of nations. Nations that work evil are swept away, and others are raised in their place that they may do good.

Doing of good deeds along with believing is mentioned throughout the Quran as basic requirement for Muslims:

- “And give good news to those who believe and do good deeds, that for them are Gardens in which rivers flow.” — 2:25

The gardens and rivers represent their inner state of mind in this life, in which they dwell here, and these become apparent in the next life as the abode of their souls.

- “And those who believe *and do good*, We shall certainly do away with their afflictions and reward them for the best of what they did.” — 29:7

These words may signify either *doing away with their afflictions or trials*, or *doing away with their evil deeds*. The first may apply because it is of the trials and afflictions of the believers that the context speaks. If the second significance is adopted, it would mean that the evil deeds which the believers did before they accepted the Truth would be effaced, because the course of their lives was now changed.

- “And it is not your wealth, nor your children, that bring you near to Us in rank; but whoever believes and does good, for such is a double reward for what they do, and they are secure in the highest places.” — 34:37
- “But those who were given the knowledge said (to those who were impressed by a man’s wealth and status): Woe to you! Allah’s reward is better for him who believes and does good, and none is made to receive this except the patient.” — 28:80

The Quran also refers to doing good to others (as distinct from doing good deeds in general):

- “And they say: None shall enter the Garden except he who is a Jew, or the Christians. These are their vain desires. Say: Bring your proof if you are truthful. No, whoever submits himself entirely to Allah and he is the doer of good to others, he has his reward from his Lord, and there is no fear for such nor shall they grieve.” — 2:111-112

Jews and Christians each claimed salvation for themselves. But the Quran replied that salvation is attained not by calling yourself by some name, but by submitting to God and doing good to others.

- “And who is better in religion than he who submits himself entirely to Allah while doing good to others and follows the faith of Abraham, the upright one? And Allah took Abraham for a friend.” — 4:125

The Quran also tells Muslims, and in fact people of all religions, to vie with one another in the doing of good works (rather than vying with one another in boasting):

- “And everyone has a goal to which he turns himself, so vie with one another in good works.” — 2:148.
- “They are not all alike. Of the People of the Book some are upright — they recite Allah’s messages in the night-time and they adore Him. They believe in Allah and the Last Day, and they enjoin good and forbid evil and vie with one another in doing good deeds. And those are among the righteous. And whatever good they do, they will not be denied it. And Allah knows those who keep their duty.” — 3:113-114

These verses speak of the good among the Jews and the Christians. The Quran does not deny that there is good in others, its own eminence lying in the fact that it makes man attain the highest degree of perfection in goodness.

- “For everyone of you We appointed a law and a way. And if Allah had pleased He would have made you a single people, but that He might try you in what He gave you. So vie with one another in good works.” — 5:48

These words indicate that all religions, though they are different, set before their adherents the same goal of *doing good works*, and therefore the followers of each religion should try to excel followers of other religions, or *vie with them*, in the doing of good works. That is how God *tries* adherents of every religion in this life.
