

### Fast 12: Guidance for those who make efforts

- In the last Study, we noted that the Quran makes those people advance in guidance who make an effort to attain guidance. In this connection we read:

“Then as for those who believe in Allah and hold fast by Him, He will admit them to His mercy and grace, **and guide them to Himself** on a right path.” — ch. 4, v. 175

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَاعْتَصَمُوا بِهِ فَسَيُدْخِلُهُمْ  
فِي رَحْمَةٍ مِّنْهُ وَفَضْلٍ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطًا  
مُّسْتَقِيمًا ﴿١٧٥﴾

“And those who strive hard for Us, **We shall certainly guide them in Our ways.** And Allah is surely with the doers of good.” — ch. 29, v. 69

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ  
لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٦٩﴾

Allah promises here, as His law, that for those who make sustained efforts to reach Him, He will advance them in guidance so that they acquire closeness to Him in their hearts. It does not matter where their starting point is. Therefore, it is wrong to conclude from the words which we were discussing (“this Book is a guide to those who are *muttaqeen*”) that the Quran only guides those who have already reached a high stage in their practice of the religion.

- We turn back to the original passage under discussion, which was as follows:
 

“This Book, in which there is no doubt, is a guide to those who keep their duty (*muttaqeen*), who believe in the Unseen and keep up prayer and spend (on good works) out of what We have given them, and who believe in what has been revealed to you (O Prophet) and what was revealed before you, and of the Hereafter they are sure.” (ch. 2, v. 2–4)
- This lists some requirements of *belief* and *practice* for those to whom the Quran will be a guide. These are:
  - belief in the “Unseen”,
  - belief in the revelation sent to the Holy Prophet Muhammad and to the prophets before him,
  - belief in the Hereafter,
  - practice of prayer,
  - practice of giving charity.
- Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad has discussed the following question about this:
  - “The puzzle remains to be resolved that if there are already such *muttaqqi*

persons who believe in the hidden God, perform their prayers, keep fasts, spend in the way of Allah from their wealth, and believe in the Quran and the earlier scriptures, then what does it mean that this Book will be a guide for them? They are already rightly-guided. It is futile to give guidance to those who already possess it.”

- He writes that the answer to this puzzle is that the people who are fulfilling the above requirements of belief and practice are doing so to the limit of human conception and effort. The meaning of the Quran being a guide to them is that it takes them to higher levels which can only be granted by God and cannot be attained by human exertion.
- Take belief in God. Through human thinking, knowledge and effort, a person can come to believe in the God whom he cannot see. But the Quran promises to raise his belief beyond this level by creating certainty in his heart that God exists. As a result of doing his humanly-best, he will be guided to a deeper faith, a better understanding and enlightenment, as regards his beliefs.
- Take prayer. A person can fulfil the physical requirements of being clean for prayer, adopting certain bodily postures, uttering certain words, and even paying attention to what he is doing and saying. But it is not in his power to create enjoyment, zeal, fervour, exhilaration and pleasure in his heart for prayer, and to feel as if prayer is his nourishment like food. However, it is promised here that, those who treat the Quran as their guidance will be brought up to this stage. Prayer will no longer appear to them as a burden they have to perform but as a means of fulfilment and satisfaction.
- Take spending in the way of God for good works and to help others. A person can give a certain amount out of his wealth as a duty. But its higher stage, writes Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, is when a person considers all that he has as belonging to God. So he would never make his beneficiary feel under an obligation to him for providing him with some financial or material assistance, because what he has given did not belong to him! He would have the same sympathy towards humanity in general as a mother feels for her children, so even the slightest and most fleeting expectation of *a return* from them disappears from his heart.
- As to believing in the revelation from God, Hazrat Mirza sahib writes:

“Human effort can only lead a person to formally believe in the Book of God and to try acting on it. But in the words “a guide to those who are *muttaqeen*”, God has promised that anyone who believes in His Book and His Prophet will progress in guidance. God will open his eyes and bestow His own communication on him, so much so that he will come to know in this world that God exists. The word of God says: If you have full belief in me, I will be revealed to you as well. It is on

this basis that Imam Jafar Sadiq says: 'I read the Quran with such devotion, love and zeal that it was revealed back to me on my tongue'."

*(Note: Imam Jafar Sadiq, d. 765 C.E., a descendant of both Hazrat Ali and Hazrat Abu Bakr, was the sixth Shiah Imam but holds an important position also among Sunni schools of thought, as well as in Sufism.)*