

## Discourse 7: Commentary Of “Keep Us On The Straight Path”

فِي تَفْسِيرِ قَوْلِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ ( إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ) يَقُولُ الصَّادِقُ: أَرْشَدَنَا إِلَى الطَّرِيقِ الْمُؤَدِّيِّ إِلَى مَحَبَّتِكَ، وَ الْمُبْلَغِ دِينِكَ، وَ الْمَانِعِ مِنْ أَنْ نَتَّبِعَ أَهْوَاءَنَا فَنُعْتَبَ، أَوْ نَأْخُذَ بِأَرَائِنَا فَنَهْلِكَ.

In the exegesis of the words of Allah, the Noble and Grand, (Keep us on the Straight Path (as-Sirat al-Mustaqim)), [Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad] as-Sadiq (as) said that this means, “Guide us to the path whose result is Your love and which reaches to Your religion (complete code and way of life) and which would prevent us from following our lower desires or in which we would take other views and opinions (over Yours) which would result in our destruction.”<sup>1</sup>

In the exegesis of this verse of the Qur'an which we read a minimum of ten times within a 24 hour period, Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has stated the following points:

1. The first sign of the Straight Path is that it leads to the love of Allah (SwT). If day after day, our love for Allah (SwT) increases, then this is a sign that we are on the Straight Path.
2. The Straight Path is that which makes us reach to the religion of Allah (SwT) and the truth of His teachings. If we see that, gradually, we are becoming closer to the truths of the faith, then it should be clear that we are on the Straight Path.
3. The Straight Path is the road that prevents us from following our lower, base desires and our personal opinions and judgements.

Therefore, if we see that we have these three characteristics within ourselves, then we should know that we are definitely on the Straight Path.

On the other hand, if we see that there is no effect of the love of Allah (SwT) in our being or that our sincerity and presence of heart in the Salat is becoming less, then it is clear that we have gone astray from the Straight Path.

In addition, if we see that there is no increase in our knowledge in regards to the Usul (fundamental beliefs) or the Furu' (practical actions) of the religion of Allah (SwT), then it is perfectly clear that we have lost our direction from the Straight Path!

We seek refuge in Allah (SwT) that we, due to our lower desires, destroy the color of the faith and our religious responsibilities as this is something very dangerous!

When we stand for the Salat, we must seek guidance to the Straight Path from Allah (SwT) with our entire presence and must also ask for an increase in love for Him to be instilled within our hearts.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Masnad al-Rida, vol. 1, pg. 314

2. A question may come up that: What is the Straight Path (siratul Mustaqim) and secondly, why is it that we are constantly seeking guidance to the Straight Path from Allah (SwT) – are we currently misguided? Furthermore, supposing that these words of ours are true, then what about the Prophet (S) and the Aa'immah (as) who are examples of perfect human being – what does it mean in relation to them?

First, the Straight Path is the path of purity and goodness; the path of justice and equality and the path of true faith and righteous actions.

Secondly, in response to the question raised, we must state that: While a person is traversing upon the path of guidance, there is a fear that at any moment, he may slip off of the path and become misguided. It is because of this fact that we must resign ourselves to our Lord and ask Him to keep us firm and steady on the Straight Path.

In addition, travelling upon the path of guidance is the path towards perfection upon which, stage by stage, a person passes through the stages of difficulties so that he can reach to a higher level.

We also know this fact that the paths towards perfection are limitless and that they lead to the Limitless Entity. Therefore, there is no room for amazement that even the Prophets and Aa'immah used to ask Allah (SwT) for guidance to the Straight Path (siratul Mustaqim) since it is only Allah (SwT) who is the Purely Perfect Entity and without exception, all others are travelling upon the path to reaching complete perfection. Thus, what harm is there if these personalities also ask Allah (SwT) to reach to a higher level of perfection!?! (Tafsir-e-Namuna, vol. 1, pg. 46)

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