

الإِسْتِقَامَة

Al'Istiqaamah

Uprightness & Steadfastness

Taken from the greatest ever Scholars in Islaam

ابن قيم الجوزية

Ibnul Qayyim Jowziya

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Shaykh Ibn Uthaymeen

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INTRODUCTION

Indeed, all praise is due to Allah the Exalted and High. Peace be upon His noble Prophet and Messenger, upon his Companions and those who follow in their footsteps.

What is before your very eyes is taken from a *Khutba* (sermon done on Friday in the *Masjid*) I was asked to do in Brixton *Masjid*, (*Masjid* Ibn Taymiyah) five years ago. I thought it would be of some benefit, if I made it into a book in order that I am of those who spread and convey the beautiful message of *Islaam*.

I thank Allah greatly for always helping me to be able to translate the works of our Scholars, at a time that we are in great need of more works to be out there, that deal with the rectification of the soul or the heart. The topic is on *Istiqaamah* (steadfastness) a topic which we all are in need of due to our laziness and slackness we have with regards to our *Deen* (Religion). Due to the importance of the topic, I do not think that my *Khutba* covered even a quarter of the topic, or that it gave the topic its due right due to the topic being so lengthy. So, I have just covered the surface and given quotes for those who want to further their study on the subject.

As always I have tried to mention any *Hadith* in Arabic so that those who want to memorize the text can do so. I advise all the *Muslimoon* to visit Abdul Haqq and Khalid Knight's web site *Salafimanhaj.com* as Allah has blessed this web-site with much good.

Lastly I thank my wife and my close and beloved brother Dawood Stanley Soyza for correcting this treatise, may Allah reward them both and I ask Allah the Exalted to make this be a benefit to my brothers and sisters. I also ask Allah to make it be a proof for me and not against me. Indeed He has the power to do all things.

طالب ابن تايسون البريطاني

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إن الحمد لله ، نحمده ونستعينه ونستغفره ، ونعوذ بالله من شرور أنفسنا ومن سيئات أعمالنا ، ومن يهده الله فلا مضل له ، ومن يضلل فلا هادي له ، وأشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له ، وأشهد أن محمدا عبده ورسوله.

Indeed, all praises are due to Allah. We praise Him and seek His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allah from the evil of our souls and our wrong doings. He whom Allah guides, no one can misguide and he whom He misguides, no one can guide.

I bear witness that there is no true god except Allah Alone without any partners. And I bear witness that Muhammad is His *Abd* (servant) and Messenger.

(يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ)

“O you who believe! Fear Allah as He should be feared and do not die except as Muslims.”

(Suratu Aali‘Imraan 102)

(يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا)

“O mankind! Be dutiful to Your Lord Who created you from a single soul and from him created its mate, and from them both He created many men and women; and fear Allah through Whom you demand your mutual rights and do not sever the relations of the wombs (Kinship) Indeed, Allah is Ever an All-Watcher over you.”

(Suratun Nisaa 1)

(يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا)

“O you who believe! Fear Allah and say just words. He will then rectify your deeds

and forgive your sins. He who obeys Allah and His Messenger has certainly achieved a great victory.”

(Suratul Ahzaab 70-71)

أما بعد :

فإن أصدق الحديث كتاب الله ، وخير الهدي هدي محمد ، وشر الأمور محدثاتها ، وكل محدثة بدعة ، وكل بدعة ضلالة وكل ضلالة في النار

Verily, the best speech is Allah's Speech; the best guidance is Muhammad's guidance; and the worst matters (in creed or worship) are those innovated (by the people), for every innovated matter is a *Bid'ah* (prohibited innovation), and every *Bid'ah* is an act of misguidance that (whoever initiated it) will reside in the fire.^{1,2}

Allah the Exalted says in the *Quraan*:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ نَحْنُ أَوْلِيَاؤُكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهُي أَنْفُسُكُمْ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَدَّعُونَ نُزُلًا مِنْ غَفُورٍ رَحِيمٍ

“Verily, those who say: “Our Lord is Allah (Alone),” and then they stand firm, on them the angels will descend (at the time of their death) (saying); “Fear not, nor grieve! But receive glad tidings of Paradise which you have been promised! We have been your friends in the life of this world and are (so) in the Hereafter. Therein you shall have (all) that your inner-selves desire, and therein you shall have (all) for which you ask. “An entertainment from (Allah), the Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”

(Suratul Fussilat 30-32)³

¹ *Muslim*

² A full discussion of the various reports of this sermon is provided by Shaykh Al'Albaani in his booklet, “*Khutba Tul Haajah*” published by Al-Maktabul Islaami, Beirut.

³ The great *Imaam* Ash'Shauwkaani from Yeman, mentions in his excellent *Tafsir* book about this noble Verse that Hasan Al Busri says *Istiqaama* means: The slave is steadfast and firm upon what Allah the Exalted has ordered him to do. They do this

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with obedience to him, strictly avoiding and staying away from committing acts of disobedience.

Fath'Hul'Qadir v4 p672 Muwa'Sasa'Tur'Rayyaan.

Allah the Exalted says:

فَاسْتَقِمَّ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ

“So stand (ask Allah to make you (Mohammed) firm and straight (on the Religion of Islamic Monotheism) as you are commanded.”

(Suratu Hood 112)

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ نَحْنُ أَوْلِيَاؤُكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهُي أَنفُسُكُمْ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَدَّعُونَ نُزُلًا مِّنْ غَفُورٍ رَّحِيمٍ

“Verily, those who say: “Our Lord is Allah (Alone),” and then they stand firm, on them the angels will descend (at the time of their death) (saying); “Fear not, nor grieve! But receive glad tidings of Paradise which you have been promised! We have been your friends in the life of this world and are (so) in the Hereafter. Therein you shall have (all) that your inner-selves desire, and therein you shall have (all) for which you ask. “An entertainment from (Allah), the Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”

(Suratul Fussilat 30-32)

Shaykh Ibn Uthaymeen says regarding this noble Verse, ‘the Scholars have said *Istiqaama* means to adhere firmly to the *Islamic* injunctions.’

So Allah says in the *Quraan*:

فَاسْتَقِمَّ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ

“So stand (ask Allah to make you (Mohammed) firm and straight (on the Religion of Islamic Monotheism) as you are commanded.”

(Suratu Hood 112)

This Verse addresses the Prophet as well as his *Ummah* (his followers) unless there comes proof, saying it is strictly for the Prophet.

And if there is no proof, then it is for the Prophet and his followers.

And that which is specific (i.e. for the Prophet) is the statement of Allah the Exalted:

أَلَمْ نَشْرَحْ لَكَ صَدْرَكَ وَوَضَعْنَا عَنكَ وِزْرَكَ الَّذِي أَنقَضَ ظَهْرَكَ

“Have We not opened your breast for you (O Muhammed)? And removed from you, your burden, which weighed down your back.”

(Suratul Shar 1-3)

Again Allah the Exalted says:

وَلَقَدْ أَنبَأْنَاكَ سَبْعًا مِنَ الْمَثَانِي وَالْقُرْآنَ الْعَظِيمَ

“And indeed, We have bestowed upon you seven Al'Mathaani (seven repeatedly recited Verses), (i.e. Suratul Faatiha) and the Grand Quraan.”

(Suratul Hijr 87)

The notable Shaykh Ibn Uthaymeen says after mentioning these Verses: ‘So, if there is no proof to say that the afore mentioned Verse’:

فَاسْتَقِمَّ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ

“Stand firm as you are commanded.”

(Suratu Hood 112)

Was just for the Prophet alone, then it is for the Prophet and his followers.

And this is a known principle (amongst the Scholars) that many things are built upon.

Allah further says:

رَبُّنَا

“Our Lord is Allah”

(Suratul Fussilat 30)

This means He (Allah) created us. He is our Lord and the disposer of our affairs, we are sincere to Him.

Then Allah says after:

ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا

“And then they stand firm”

Those who utter these two statements (i.e. our Lord is Allah, then stand firm)

اسْتَقَامُوا تَنْزِلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ

“On them the Angels will descend”

Meaning: At the time of their death.

Saying to them:

أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا

“Fear not, nor grieve!”

Meaning: Fear not what you will face in the next life nor be grieved over your past affairs, (things you have left behind you in this life).

Allah the Exalted then says:

وَأَبَشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ

“But receive the glad tidings of Paradise which you have been promised!”

The one who says their Lord is Allah then is steadfast upon *Islaam*: Verily he is of the people of *Jenna* (Paradise) *Insha 'Allah*.

Allah further goes on to say:

نَحْنُ أَوْلِيَاؤُكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ

“We have been your friends in the life of this world and are (so) in the Hereafter.”

(Suratul Fussilat 31)

Meaning: The Angels are protectors and helpers of those who say; their Lord is Allah and then stand firm. The Angels help them in this world and make them firm (by Allah's will).

Allah then says:

وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهُي أَنْفُسُكُمْ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَدْعُونَ

“Therein you shall have (all) that your inner selves desire”

This means: In the next life, whatever you wish for, will be presented to you, also Allah says in another *Surah* (chapter) of the *Quraan* regarding this:

لَهُمْ مَا يَشَاءُونَ فِيهَا وَلَدَيْنَا مَزِيدٌ

“There they will have all that they desire and We have more (i.e. for them a glance at Allah, the Almighty).”

(Suratul Qaaf 35)

Then Allah says (at the end of the Verse before this last Verse):

نُزُلًا مِّنْ غَفُورٍ رَّحِيمٍ

“An entertainment from the Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”

(Suratul Fussilat 32)

So Allah the Exalted bestows upon His Slaves a great blessing, which is forgiveness for (their) faults and a high station they will be raised to.

So these noble Verses show the greatness of *Istiqaamah* (steadfastness upon ones Religion (*Islaam*))

It is narrated that Sufiyan Ibn Abdullah said to the Prophet:

يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، قُلْ لِي فِي الْإِسْلَامِ قَوْلًا لَا أَسْأَلُ عَنْهُ أَحَدًا غَيْرَكَ.
قُلْ آمَنْتُ بِاللَّهِ ثُمَّ اسْتَقِمَّ

“Oh Messenger of Allah, tell me something of *Islaam* which I will not ask anyone else about it.”

He said. “Say, ‘I believe in Allah’ and then stand steadfast.”⁴

The Prophet’s intention by his statement to this Companion, was not merely words (i.e. statement of the tongue), because how many people say they believe in Allah and the next life and do not believe.

But rather, what the Prophet intended was belief in the heart and to testify with your tongue and both are required. The Prophet used to say when calling the people to *Islaam*:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قُولُوا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ تَفْلَحُوا

“Oh people! Say your Lord is Allah and you will be successful,”

⁴ Muslim

Meaning: Belief in the heart and testification of the tongue.

And the meaning of

قُلْ آمَنْتُ بِاللَّهِ

“Say your Lord is Allah”

To have belief in the Oneness of Allah, to believe in His Names and Attributes, to practise (*Ikhlaas*) (sincerity), to be firm upon following the Prophet, praying, paying the *Zakat*, performing *Hajj* and the likes.

Then the Prophet said:

ثُمَّ اسْتَقِمَّ

“Then stand steadfast”

This shows that there will be no steadfastness till one believes and has faith in Allah, because a condition for righteous deeds to be accepted is that faith has to be built upon a firm foundation.

The *Ulama* (Scholars) are in agreement that for an individual's deeds to be accepted, he has to first be a *Muslim* (a believer).⁵

The great Ibn Rajab mentions a few sayings of the *Salaf* about the statement of Allah the Exalted, to the Prophet:

فَاسْتَقِمَّ كَمَا أُمِرْتُ

“Stand firm as you are commanded.”

(Suratu Hood 112)

⁵Shaykh Ibn Uthaymeen's *Sharh Riyaad'us'Saaliheen* v1 p395-396 Daarul Bas'sira

What Allah meant by this statement, Qataada says, is:

“This means, O Muhammed! Stand firm upon what you have been ordered to do.”

At'Thu'ri said it mean's:

“Stand firm upon the Quraan (i.e. in implementing it).”

Ibn Rajab said it meant:

“Tread the right path (O Muhammed).”

Ibn Rajab says Allah the Exalted says:

فَاسْتَقِيمُوا إِلَيْهِ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ

“Therefore stand firm (take the straight path to Him (Allah) and seek forgiveness of Him.”

(Suratul Fussilat 6)

“Here Allah the Exalted and High orders the slave to stand firm (and to be steadfast). However in spite of the slaves steadfastness, he may fall short of this from time to time. So from this above Verse, Allah orders him to ask forgiveness for his shortcomings.”

He (Ibn Rajab) also says that the Prophet said:

اتَّقِ اللَّهَ حَيْثُمَا كُنْتَ، وَأَتَّبِعِ السَّيِّئَةَ الْحَسَنَةَ تَمَحُّهَا، وَخَالِقِ النَّاسَ بِخُلُقٍ حَسَنٍ

“Fear Allah wherever you may be, follow up a bad deed with a good deed and it will wipe it out, and behave towards the people in a good way.”⁶

⁶ At'Tirmidi and others, Shaykh Al'Albani authenticated it *Hasan* in his *Sahih Jamma Sagear Wa Zeyaada Hadith 97 v1 p81* Maktaba Islaamiya. Also for further references please refer to Shaykh Saleem Al'Hilali's checking of *Jami Ul Aloom Wal*

Ibn Rajab said:

*“This Hadith shows that the slave must seek forgiveness from time to time.”*⁷

The famous *Quranic* commentator Ibn Kathir said regarding Allah’s statement:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ نَحْنُ أَوْلِيَاؤُكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهِي أَنْفُسُكُمْ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَدْعُونَ نَزَّلْنَا مِنْ غَفُورٍ رَحِيمٍ

“Verily, those who say: “Our Lord is Allah (Alone),” and then they stand firm, on them the angels will descend (at the time of their death) (saying): “Fear not, nor grieve! But receive glad tidings of Paradise which you have been promised! We have been your friends in the life of this world and are (so) in the Hereafter. Therein you shall have (all) that your inner-selves desire, and therein you shall have (all) for which you ask. “An entertainment from (Allah), the Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”

(Suratul Fussilat 30-32)

Regarding Allah’s above statement:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا

“Verily, those who say: “Our Lord is Allah (Alone),” and then they stand firm”

Ibn Rajab said:

*“This means, they do good deeds sincerely for the sake of Allah, and they obey Allah, doing what Allah has prescribed for them.”*⁸

The great Ibn Kathir says:

Hikam by Ibn Rajab *Hadith* 18 p241.

⁷ Shaykh Saleem Al’Hilali’s checking of *Jami Ul Aloom Wal Hikam* by Ibn Rajab *Hadith* 21 p309-313

⁸ Shaykh Saleem Al’Hilali’s checking of *Jami Ul Aloom Wal Hikam* by Ibn Rajab *Hadith* 21 p310-313

Jarir recorded that Sa'id Bin Imraan said, Abu bakr said about this *Ayah* (Verse):

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا

“Verily, those who say: “Our Lord is Allah (Alone),” and then they stand firm”

*“They are those who say, Their Lord is Allah and do not turn to other gods besides him.”*⁹

This is the view of Mujahid, Ikrima, As'suddi and others.¹⁰

Ibn Kathir further says, Allah then says:

تَنْزِلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ

“On them the angels will descend (at the time of their death)”

Mujahid, As'suddi, Zayd Bin Aslam and his son said *this means*:

“At the time of death and they will say:”

أَلَّا تَخَافُوا

“Fear not”

Mujahid, Ikrima and Zayd Bin Aslam said:

*“This means not to fear that which you will face in the Hereafter.”*¹¹

وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا

“Nor grieve!”

“For what you have left behind of worldly things, children, family, wealth and debts, for

⁹ *At'Tabari v21 p264*

¹⁰ *At'Tabari 465*

¹¹ *Ibid 467*

we will take care of it for you.”

Allah then says:

وَأَبَشِّرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ

“But receive the glad tidings of Paradise which you have been promised!”

“So they give glad tidings to the ending of bad things and the arrival of good things.”

نَحْنُ أَوْلِيَاكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ

“We have been your friends in the life of this world and are (so) in the Hereafter.”

Ibn Kathir goes on to say this means:

“The Angels will say to the believers when death approaches:

“We have been your friends, (i.e.) your close companions, in this world, protecting you and helping you by the Command of Allah, and we will be with you in the Hereafter, keeping you from feeling lonely in your graves and when the trumpet is blown; we will reassure you on the day of Resurrection and will take you across the Siraat (the bridge) and bring you to the Gardens of delight.”

Allah the Exalted next says:

وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهُي أَنْفُسُكُمْ

“Therein you shall have (all) that your inner-selves desire”

This means, in Paradise you will have all that you wish for and that which will delight you.”

Allah the Exalted then says:

وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَدَّعُونَ

“And therein you shall have (all) for which you ask”

“This means that whatever you ask for, it will appear before you as you wish it to be.”

Allah lastly says:

نُزُلًا مِّنْ غَفُورٍ رَّحِيمٍ

“An entertainment from (Allah,) the Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”

(Suratul Fussilat 30)

This means:

“A welcoming gift and a blessing from the One Who has forgiven your sins and Who is Merciful and Kind towards you. Who has forgiven you, concealed your faults and has been Kind and Merciful to you.”¹²

Ibnul Qayyim mentions many statements from the *Salaf* about the meaning of *Istiqaama* (steadfastness) by saying:

Abu Bakr was asked about the meaning of *Istiqaama* to which he replied:

“That you do not associate partners with Allah.”

Umar Bin Khataab was asked what the meaning of *Istiqaama* means, to which he also said:

“That one is sincere to Allah (in his actions).”

Ali and Ibn Abbas were also asked: What is the meaning of *Istiqaama*? To which they both replied:

“It means to fulfil your duties to Allah.”

¹² *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, the English version by Darussalaam v8 p537-540*

Ibn Taymiyyah was (also) asked and he said:

“It is to love Allah and worship Him in the strictest form.”

Al'Mujahid was asked the same question and said:

“It means standing firm upon the Shahadatain (the bearing witness to the fact that Allah is the only true God worthy of worship and the bearing witness that Prophet Muhammed is the last and final Messenger) until one meets Allah.”

And Hasan ul Busri was also asked and said:

“It is that the slave is firm upon what Allah has ordered the slave to do and avoid what Allah has prohibited the slave.”¹³

¹³ *Madaarij'us'Saalikeen v2 p103-111 Daarul Kitaabul Arabi*