

# THE REAL IDENTITY OF A MUSLIM

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## The Request of Some Sahābah

On one occasion, some new muslims (who were previously Jews) namely Abdullāh bin Salām, Tha'labah and Asad ibn Ubaid asked permission from our beloved Rasul if they could continue following a few teachings of the Torāh that were not contrary to Islām in any way. This way, they could combine aspects of both religions to a certain degree. For example, they said that observing Sabbath (reverence of Saturday) and abstaining from the meat & milk of camels is mubāh (allowed) in Islām and compulsory in Judaism. Therefore, whilst practicing the injunctions of Islām, as a precautionary measure they could also practice these few aspects of Judaism.

Allāh Ta'ālā replied via revelation, "O you who believe, enter into Islām in its totality." (2:208) This was a clear explanation for them to enter into Islām entirely, considering the teachings of Islām alone and discarding that which is not part of Islām. Islām alone is the one true religion and adopting that which is not part of Islām is nothing but a cunning plan of shaytān to water down ones deen, dwindle ones identity as a muslim and weaken ones imān. That is why Allāh Ta'ālā mentions further in this verse, "And do not follow in the footsteps of shaytān. Verily, he is your open enemy." (2:208)

Commenting on this verse, Mufti Muhammad Shafi Uthmāni writes, "One must keep nothing but the teachings of Islām in sight and practice Islām in its entirety. This will in turn make muslims independent of all other religions and nations." He also mentions, "This verse holds a stern warning for those that deem Islām to be limited to ibādāt and do not take their personal and business dealings, akhlāq (character) and social life to be part of Islām." (Ma'āriful Qur'ān 1:499)

From this, we can understand that our deen encompasses every aspect of life and is completely inclusive of every walk of life. We do not need to look anywhere else as our deen has every correct answer and solution. All we need to do is find a god-fearing ālim to guide us in the right direction.

## No Scope for Imperfection

These aforementioned points show how our Islām is perfect and complete in every way. It has no scope for that which is not Islām, nor does it have room for improvement.

Therefore, anything that someone adds onto it will make it imperfect. Take the example of a spotless pristine pane of clear glass; no dents, no chips, no scratches and no streaks. However, if someone was to even put a fingertip on the glass, it will become imperfect. The same goes for our pristine and pure deen; if a muslim brings into practice that which is not part of deen, it is in fact an adaptation of another sect or religion, then in essence, he is tarnishing his own deen and weakening his identity of being a muslim. Just before the

demise of our beloved Rasul, Allāh Ta'ālā - the creator of everyone and everything, the all-knowing and most merciful - revealed the verse, "Today I have perfected for you your deen." (5:3) This meant that from this point onwards, nothing

remained ambiguous or unanswerable. The solution to every problem and the answer to every question could be found within the teachings and commandments of our deen.

## The Display of Identity

The identity of a person are those characteristics and qualities that distinguishes them from others throughout their day to day lives. As muslims, we are on constant duty to our Lord and therefore, every aspect of our lives represents a part of our identity as a muslim; the way we dress, walk, talk, eat, drink, meet, greet, act, interact and so on. It is merely, the grace and mercy of Allāh Ta'ālā that he has outlined precisely how everything should be done and placed it all on a plate for us so we live accordingly and maintain our identity.

However, it is worrying to see that many have fallen at the hands of shaytān and now wholeheartedly accept foreign concepts and details to the degree that our own imān and core beliefs are in danger. As we adopt methods and routines of those other than our beloved Rasul, the sahābah and the god-fearing 'ulamā, our identity is fading. It is fading so much that unfortunately some Muslims are unrecognisable. They have been influenced by shaytān to this extent that they themselves do not remember their muslim identity; they can not see right from wrong, truth from false and good from evil. Their thoughts have become clouded and decisions have become bizarre. Their perception of success turns towards worldly assets rather than piety and taqwā.

## How to Build Our Identity

In order for us to strengthen our identity and bring our thinking back into focus, we need to use that will power within us to push away the fitnahs (trials) & vice of the world and walk away from the disobedience of Allāh Ta'ālā. We must understand that Islām is a religion of freedom which is freeing us from the shackles of nafs and shaytān. It is just that the skewed ideology of this world has beautified these shackles so much that we cannot comprehend the imprisonment, rather we have began to think of Islām as the shackles holding us behind!

We need to educate ourselves and arm ourselves with authentic knowledge from authentic 'ulamā. We must sit in the lessons and gatherings of the pious, take on board what they say and implement these things in our lives. It will not just happen, we must use our will power and make it happen! It is the promise of Allāh Ta'ālā that all we have to do is try a little and Allāh will lead the way, "And those who strive for our sake, we will certainly guide them to our paths." (29:69)

Let us all make new resolutions; to better ourselves physically, to strengthen ourselves mentally, to build ourselves spirituality etc. But above all else, let us resolve to make our identity as muslims stronger and mould every aspect of our lives according to the teachings of our beloved Rasul and ultimately accomplish the purpose of our lives which is to attain the pleasure of Allāh Ta'ālā.