

Intention (Niyat)

All praise are due to Allah (s.w.t) and I bear witness that there is no God worthy of worship except Allah (s.w.t) and I bear witness that Mohammad (s.a.w) is His Servant and Messenger.

Brothers and Sisters in Islam!

Intention in our Shari'ah is the base, the foundation upon which ALL Ibadah are based and built whether the Ibadah is an obligatory or Nafal. Sheikh Abu-Bakr Al-Jaza'iry said in his book 'Minaj Al-Muslim':

“The Muslim believes in the great importance of intention and its implication as regards his deeds both for this world and the hereafter. This is so because all deeds are based on intention. Due to it, the deed is strengthened or weakened. Depending on the intention, the deed is either valid or void. This belief of the Muslim – concerning the necessity of intention for every deed and the obligation to make the intention proper – is based first of all on Allah’s (s.w.t) world.”

-meaning-: “And they were commanded not but that they should worship Allah (s.w.t) making religion purely for him alone.”-98/5

This belief is also based on the words of the Messenger of Allah (s.w.t) in the Hadith reported by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim (r.a), narrated Ameer-ul-Muimuneen Omar ibn Al-Khattab (r.a) ‘I heard the Messenger (s.a.w) say: “Verily, all deeds (actions) are but driven (considered) by intentions and a person attains (will get) the reward according to his intention.”-Riyad 2:4:6, Minaj1/14

Brothers and Sisters in Islam,

A sincere honest Niyat (intention) for doing a good deed can still attract great reward even when the action itself goes wrong by making an undeliberate mistake. As the following Hadith explains, reported by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim (r.a) that Abu-Hurairah (r.a) relates that the Prophet (s.a.w) said:

“A man (from amongst the people before you) said: ‘Indeed, I will give something in charity.’ So, he took his Sadaqah out and placed – unknowingly – in the hands of a thief. The next morning the people were talking (about this incident) saying: ‘Sadaqah was given to a thief last night.’ The man said: ‘O Allah (s.w.t)! Praise be to You. I have given Sadaqah to a thief! Indeed, I will give charity again.’ So, he took his Sadaqah and placed it in the hands of a prostitute. In the morning people were talking (about this incident) and saying: ‘Sadaqah was given to a prostitute last night.’ On hearing this, the man said: ‘O Allah (s.w.t)! To Thee belong all Praise! I gave alms to a prostitute. Indeed, I shall now give alms again.’ So, he took his Sadaqah out and put it in the hand of a wealthy (rich) man. The next morning, people once again were talking (about this last incident) and saying: ‘Sadaqah was given to a rich man last night.’ On hearing that, the man said:

'O Allah (s.w.t)! All Praise be to You (for helping me) give Sadaqah to a thief, to a prostitute and to a wealthy man.' Then he had a dream in which he was told that his alms (Sadaqah) to the thief might result to persuade the thief to stop stealing. His Sadaqah to the prostitute might help her abstain from her immorality and misconduct and as for his Sadaqah to the rich man might draw a lesson and help him spend from the wealth that Allah (s.w.t) has bestowed upon him."-Riyad 1871

Brothers and Sisters in Islam,

Our Ullama (Scholars) derived many lessons and benefits from this Hadith such as:

1. It is really the intention behind deeds that is counted in the sight of Allah (s.w.t). Of course, the visible signs of the deed are also considered so if the intention of the person giving away something in charity is good, it will be accepted and rewarded by Allah (s.w.t) even though it may be given to an undeserving person. This is confirmed by the saying of the Prophet (s.a.w): *"The intention of a Believer is better (or superior) to his deed."*-Stories from the Hadith#35, pg. 227-228
2. It is better to give Sadaqah in secret because that leaves no room for ostentation; however, it is also proper to give it publicly if there is a reason for that. –meaning-: *"If you disclose acts of Sadaqah (alms giving or charity) it is well. But if you conceal them and make them reach those really in need (i.e. poor) that is best for you. It will remove from you some of your (stains of) evil. And Allah (s.w.t) is Well-Acquainted with what you do."*-2/271
3. The door of Tawbah (repentance) is wide open for all the wrongdoers to return to it with sincere, honest Tawbah from all sins minor or major. And no Muslim sinner should ever despair from Allah's (s.w.t) Mercy. –meaning-: *"And never give up hope of Allah's (s.w.t) Soothing Mercy except those who have no faith."*-12/87