

Tamīm al-Dārī narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

- 1 Religion is sincerity.
- 2 We asked: To Whom?
- 3 He said: To God,
- 4 His Book,
- 5 His Messenger,
- 6 to the leaders of the Muslims
- 7 and their common folk.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by Muslim, 55.

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Let there become of you a nation who invite to all that is good, enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid what is wrong. Such are they who shall prosper.﴾ (3: 104)
- ﴿You are the best community that has ever been raised for mankind; you enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid what is wrong, and you believe in God.﴾ (3: 110)
- ﴿Why do not their devout and their rabbis forbid them to make sinful assertions and to devour the fruits of unlawful gain? Evil indeed is that which they contrive.﴾ (5: 63)
- ﴿No blame shall be attached to the weak, the sick or those who do not have the means, if they are sincere towards God and His Messenger. There is no cause to reproach those who do good.﴾ (9: 91)

The Narrator

Abu Ruqayyah Tamīm ibn Aws ibn Khārijah al-Dārī belonged to the Lakhm tribe, but one of his ancestors was called al-Dār. He was a Christian from Syria and visited the Prophet (peace be upon him) in Year 9 AH, 631 CE. He embraced Islam and the Prophet gave him the land of Ḥabrā and Bayt 'Aynūn in Syria. Tamīm became a companion of the Prophet and joined him on military expeditions. He also narrated his hadiths. He remained in Madinah but later left for Syria. He died in Palestine in Year 40 AH, 661 CE.

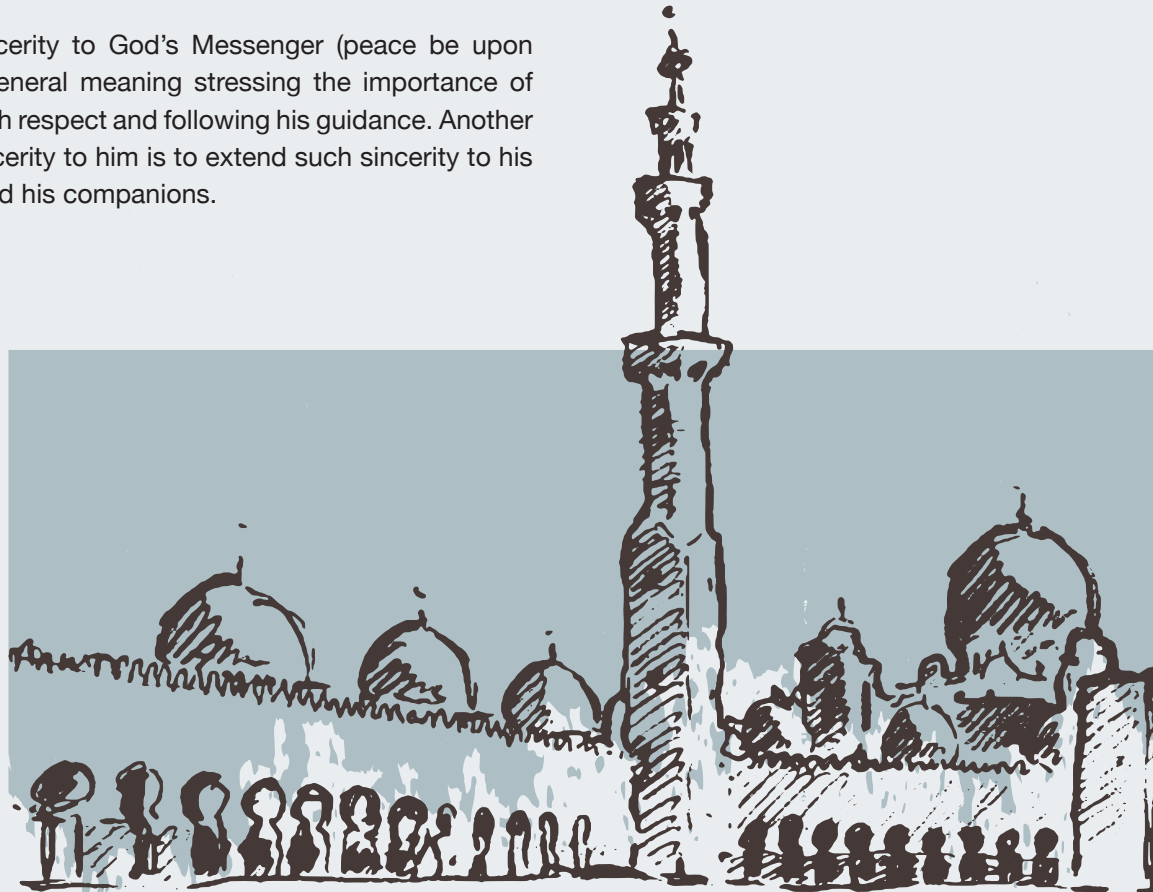
Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) emphasizes that religion is based on sincerity. Every person should do whatever they can to establish the truth towards God, His Book, His Messenger and the leaders and common folk of the Muslim community.



Message and Meaning

- 1** The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us that religion is sincerity. This is a general word which implies that a Muslim sincerely extends goodness to other people, just like honey which is both curative and nutrient. The Prophet expresses his meaning in this way to stress the importance of sincerity. Needless to say that religion includes other values and principles, but this is a style of Arabic speech when we wish to glorify a concept. The Arabs of old used to say 'Real wealth is in camels', stressing the value of camels.
- 2** The Prophet's companions asked to whom sincerity was due. The Prophet (peace be upon him) answered, giving the details of those to whom sincerity was due.
- 3** The Prophet said: 'To God'. Sincerity to God, Exalted and Mighty, has a general meaning signifying the exertion of sincere efforts and ensuring that whatever He requires of us in matters of belief and action is done sincerely for Him.
- 4** Sincerity to His Book also has a general meaning stressing the importance of action that reflects our respect, love and implementation of what it requires.
- 5** Likewise, sincerity to God's Messenger (peace be upon him) has a general meaning stressing the importance of loving him with respect and following his guidance. Another aspect of sincerity to him is to extend such sincerity to his household and his companions.



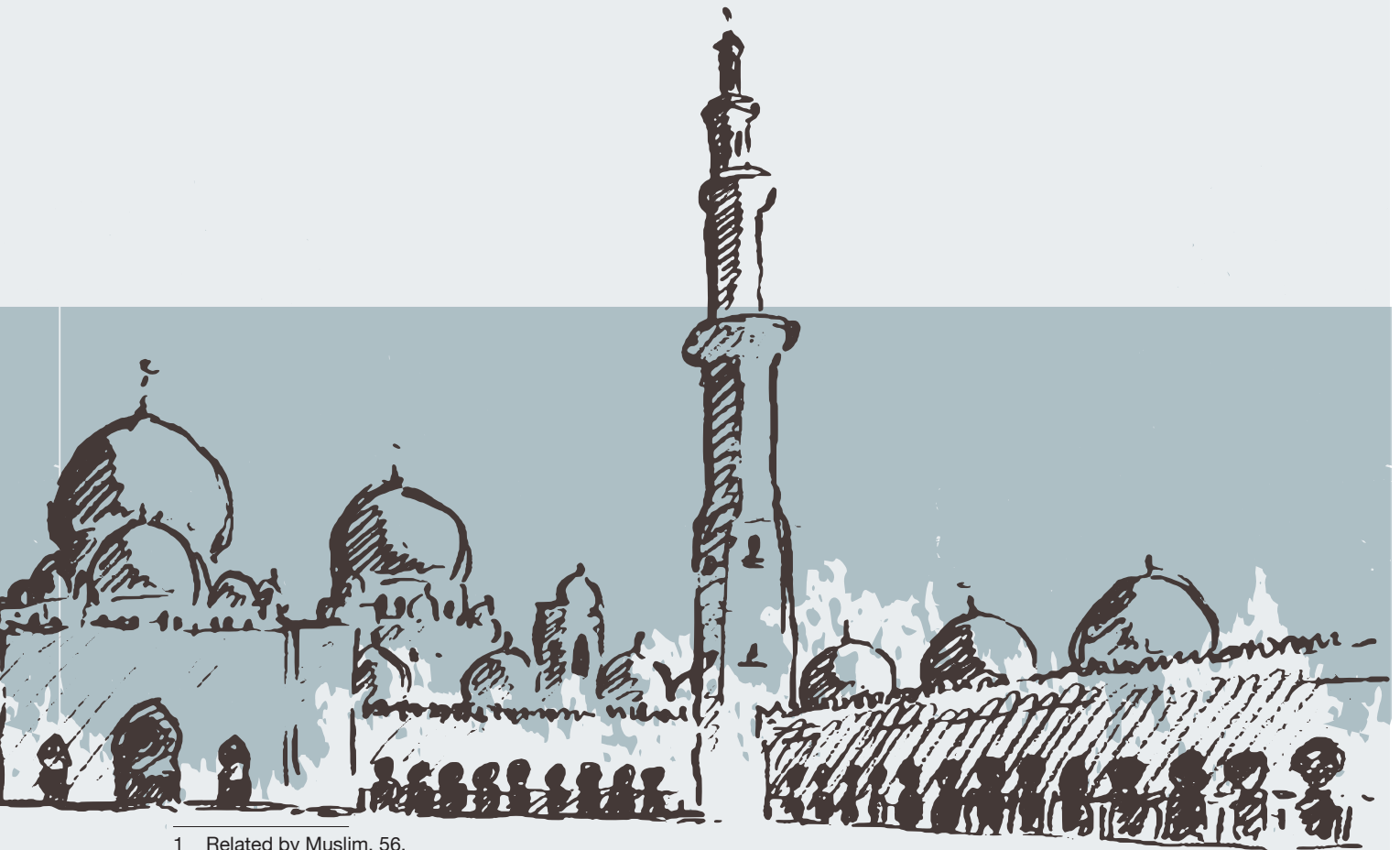
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The leaders of the Muslims are their rulers and scholars. Sincerity to them means doing one's best in whatever God has ordered to be done towards them. This includes obedience in what is reasonable and fair, giving help in doing good, praying with them, fighting alongside them and refraining from rebellion against them. It also includes that we do not highlight their errors, but give them good counsel whenever this is feasible. We should also defend them according to what is right.

7

Sincerity towards other Muslims generally means that we endeavour to do what God has ordered to be done to serve their religious and life interests. This is a very general concept. It is for this reason that the Prophet required his companions to pledge to him that they act sincerely towards Muslims. Jarīr ibn 'Abdullāh al-Bajālī narrated: 'I pledged to the Prophet (peace be upon him) to listen and obey. He instructed me to add "in what I can" and to be sincere to every Muslim'.⁽¹⁾

The fact is that sincerity will rebound on the person himself. He will reap God's reward for it. As for God, He is in no need of anyone's sincerity.



1 Related by Muslim, 56.

Implementation

1

Tamīm al-Dārī was a Christian who converted to Islam towards the end of the Prophet's blessed life. He joined him on some military expeditions. He was devout, offering night worship and reciting the Qur'an. All this was possible for one who was originally a non-Muslim. Therefore, a Muslim should never despair of mending his ways or persuade others to do so, but it needs determination.

2

Shouldering one's responsibility and doing one's task faithfully are aspects of true sincerity which is due to God, His Book, Messenger and the leaders and commoners of the Muslim community.

3

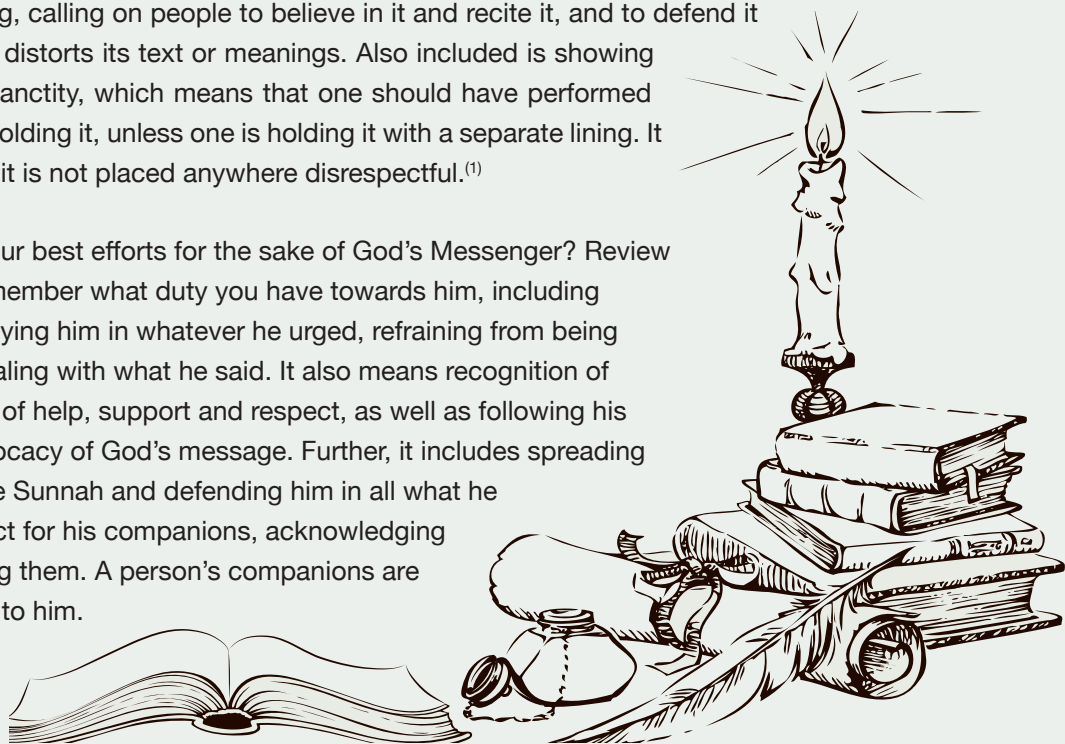
Have you exerted your best efforts for God's sake? Take stock of what you do and remember what duty you owe to God, including believing in Him, abandoning all aspects of associating partners with Him, obeying Him, fulfilling the obligations He has given you such as prayer, and doing all His bidding and refraining from what He has prohibited faithfully, loving Him and submitting to Him with great devotion.

4

Have you exerted your best efforts for the sake of God's Book? Review your actions and remember what duty you have towards the Qur'an, including believing in it, reciting it often with proper understanding, calling on people to believe in it and recite it, and to defend it against anyone who distorts its text or meanings. Also included is showing due respect for its sanctity, which means that one should have performed the ablution before holding it, unless one is holding it with a separate lining. It further includes that it is not placed anywhere disrespectful.⁽¹⁾

5

Have you exerted your best efforts for the sake of God's Messenger? Review your actions and remember what duty you have towards him, including believing in him, obeying him in whatever he urged, refraining from being presumptuous in dealing with what he said. It also means recognition of what is owed to him of help, support and respect, as well as following his footsteps in the advocacy of God's message. Further, it includes spreading the knowledge of the Sunnah and defending him in all what he said, showing respect for his companions, acknowledging their rights and loving them. A person's companions are those who are close to him.



1 Al-Qurtubī, *Al-Mufhim*, Vol. 1, p. 243. Ibn 'Uthaymīn, *Sharḥ Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn*, Vol. 2, p. 388.



Have you exerted your best efforts for the sake of the leaders of the Muslim community, including rulers, scholars and those who are in similar positions of authority? This includes obeying them in what is right, helping them in serving the interests of life and religion, reminding them of what they overlook or do not know, praying to God to keep them following the right way. Sincerity towards them means refraining from lying to them, exaggerating their praise or tempting them to do what is wrong.



Have you exerted your best efforts for the sake of the Muslim community generally. This includes advising them of what is good for them, helping them with word and deed in matters of life and religion, reminding the oblivious, educating the ignorant, supporting the needy, covering their faults, helping them to stay safe from harm, securing what benefits them in faith and life, wishing them well in this life and the life to come. It also includes stopping what is harmful for them and loving for them what one loves to have oneself.



One aspect of sincerity is to alert a person to an error he might have done. If such an error is committing what is disapproved of by Islam, one should take issue with that, according to the degree of disapproval and the benefit of taking such issue. This should be done, even if it requires putting the matter to the ruler or some other authority, because it comes under sincerity to God, Mighty and Exalted. The guidance provided by the Prophet and his companions is to give advice in private. If a person is advised in public, the advice becomes a matter of rebuke. Hence, al-Fuḍayl ibn 'Iyāḍ said: 'A believer keeps the matter private and gives advice, while a transgressor publicizes and rebukes'.⁽¹⁾



Giving sincere advice to rulers and people in power is required of a person in whatever way they are able to do so. If he is certain that he will come to no harm, he should give such advice. If he fears being harmed as a result, it is sufficient that he should secretly disapprove. If he is unable to give advice, he should not do what others may take as support. To do so is to be dishonest and to encourage their errors. It will spoil his faith.



It is wise to give the advice indirectly. It should be clearly stated only to a person who does not understand it when given indirectly. Moreover, when giving advice, one should not stipulate that it must be accepted. A Muslim gives advice to do his duty. If the addressee acts on his advice, well and good. If not, the adviser will receive his reward from God for having given his Muslim brother sincere advice.

1 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Ḥikam*, Vol. 1, p. 225.

Implementation

11

Among the ways of giving sincere advice is to explain which hadiths are authentic and which lack authenticity, and to explain to people the status of narrators, if he has sound knowledge in this subject, showing them who is reliable and who is not. Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal was asked whom he considered better: a person who offers voluntary prayers, fasting and *i'tikāf*, or one who exposes the followers of deviant ways? He said: A person who volunteers prayers, fasting and *i'tikāf* benefits himself, while the one who exposes deviation benefits the Muslim community. His work is better.⁽¹⁾ Therefore, scholars and advocates should explain such matters with sincere intention whereby their action is one of sincerity to God and His Messenger.

12

Jarīr ibn ‘Abdullāh used to sell goods. He would tell the buyer of any defect in the article he was buying and give him the choice to buy it or not. Some people said to him that if he continued to do so, he would sell nothing. He said: We have pledged to the Prophet (peace be upon him) that we will give sincere advice to every Muslim. Sincerity and good counsel are not limited to expressing views and giving advice in matters of religion only, but they apply to all matters of life. A worker practices sincerity by doing his job as best as he can; a trader informs his clients of any defects in his merchandise; a doctor does his best to diagnose the condition of his patient and prescribe the most effective medicines; a student should be keen to acquire knowledge and help his fellow students to benefit himself and his community. The same applies to all walks of life.

1 Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā*, Vol. 28, p. 231.

