

Al-'Abbās ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib narrated that he heard God's Messenger (peace be upon him) say:

- 1 Whoever accepts God as his Lord,
- 2 Islam as his faith
- 3 and Muhammad as [God's] Messenger
- 4 experiences the meaning of faith.⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾

1 The numbering in this case follows the original Arabic text. The difference in the arrangement is due to the different construction of the sentence between the source and target languages. – Editor's note.

2 Related by Muslim, 34.

From the Qur'an

﴿Among them there are those who speak ill of you concerning the distribution of charity. If they are given a share of it, they are pleased, but if no share is given to them, they are enraged. (58) Yet [how much better it would have been for them] had they contented themselves with what God and His Messenger have given them, and said: 'God is sufficient for us. God will give us out of His bounty, and so too will His Messenger. To God alone do we turn in hope'.﴾ (9: 58-59)

﴿We have sent every messenger so that he should be obeyed by God's leave. If, when they have wronged themselves, they would but come to you and pray to God to forgive them, and the Messenger prayed for their forgiveness, they would surely find that God is the one to accept repentance, ever-merciful. (64) But no, by your Lord! They do not really believe unless they make you judge in all disputes between them, and then find in their hearts no bar to an acceptance of your decisions and give themselves up in total submission.﴾ (4: 64-65)

The Narrator

Abu al-Faḍl al-'Abbās ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib ibn Hāshim ibn 'Abd Manāf of the Hāshim branch of the Quraysh tribe was the Prophet's uncle. He was born in Makkah in Year 56 BH 567 CE. He was one of the main nobility of the Quraysh before and after Islam, as he was in charge of the maintenance and management of the Ka'bah and the Grand Mosque. It is reported that he embraced Islam before the Prophet's migration but kept this secret until he joined the Prophet shortly before the takeover of Makkah. He died in Year 32 AH, 653 CE.

Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us that faith yields a fruit which has a sweet taste. Its taste is experienced only by a person who takes his faith seriously and lives it. He accepts God as his Lord and submits to Islam as a faith and creed. He acknowledges Muhammad (peace be upon him) as a Prophet and adheres to his message, believing in him as God's Messenger.



Message and Meaning

Al-'Abbās narrates this hadith which he heard from the Prophet (peace be upon him) giving the following message:



Faith has a fine taste which appeals to all people. The Prophet (peace be upon him) uses the Arabic word *dhāqa* in reference to faith, even though faith is not material. The Arabic word means 'taste', and the Prophet uses it to make his meaning clear. Everyone enjoys food and drink when they have a fine taste. Likewise, a believer feels the effects of faith within himself when faith shapes his life.

The sweetness of faith is experienced through personal satisfaction, absence of worry and the pleasure of reliance on God. The result of all this is that sin becomes less attractive and easier to avoid and refrain from, while obligations become easier to carry out and implement. A believer is always hopeful of receiving God's mercy and he accepts whatever happens in his life since it is by God's will. Such pleasure and happiness cannot be achieved unless certain conditions are fulfilled.



The first condition is 'to accept God as one's Lord'. Such acceptance means conviction and satisfaction. It also involves believing in whatever God has told us, and to submit to Him in all religious rulings, and accept with patience, resignation and reassurance all that occurs by His will.

The acceptance of God as one's Lord does not mean the mere acknowledgement of God's existence or His Lordship. Such acknowledgement is an essential requirement of Islam, and it is accepted by many unbelievers. It is a special type of acceptance meant here, namely, to accept that God is the Creator, Master and Legislator. We accept His rulings and legislation, worship and love Him, rely on Him and turn to Him in repentance, fear none but Him in private, feel satisfied with whatever He determines and say nothing that displeases Him.

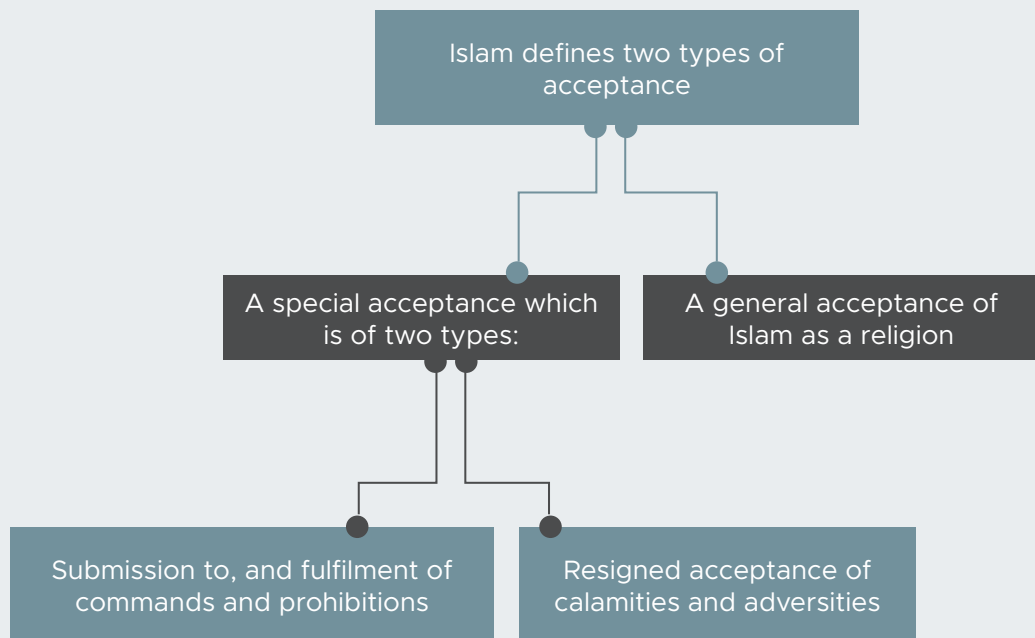


The second condition is to 'accept Islam as one's faith'. This means acceptance of Islam as a code of law, doing what it bids us and refraining from what it forbids. It also means choosing Islam in preference to all other religions, making it the principle that determines a Muslim's life. Thus, a Muslim befriends people or considers them enemies on its basis, and is ready to sacrifice all for his faith.



The third condition is to accept Muhammad (peace be upon him) as a Prophet and a Messenger of God. This means complete acknowledgement and belief in his message and acceptance of all commands and prohibitions he has given us as coming from God. Thus, a Muslim accepts this code of law given by the Prophet, submits to it and puts it into practice. Such is the acceptance of the people who love the Prophet and follow him, obey him and stick to his guidance. They love him, yearn to meet him and defend his Sunnah with all their resources.

This shows that no one really attains to faith unless they combine the three fundamentals of the Islamic faith, namely belief in God, His Messenger and His religion.



Implementation

1

Al-'Abbās ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib believed in his nephew, Muhammad (peace be upon him), although he was older than him. He persevered, knowing the enmity of his people. He, thus, showed that wisdom requires that we accept the truth, whether it is stated by one who is young or old, strong or weak, rich or poor.

2

During the Battle of Ḥunayn, the majority of the Prophet's companions were in retreat, but al-'Abbās remained firm, staying with the Prophet (peace be upon him). This proved his firm conviction of Islam and that he really experienced the sweetness of faith. What can be said about a person who is born into a Muslim family, or has been a Muslim for many years, yet he is still in a precarious position in his faith. We must fulfil the meaning of faith and be as God describes: 'Among the believers are people who have always been true to what they have vowed before God'. (33: 23)

3

Faith generates a feeling of happiness which may not be felt by someone who has been a believer for some time, because he does not fulfil its requirements or because he does not appreciate how it compares with other situations. Whoever prefers the pleasures of this present life to the sweetness of faith should remind himself of the latter and work hard to achieve the happiness of faith.

4

You will happily accept God as your Lord when you remember that He is the Lord of Grace, the Ever-Merciful, the Mighty, the Wise who knows all, as well as His other attributes which make us realize that what He says is the truth and submit to His commands and prohibitions. All this is further emphasized when we remind ourselves of God's favours and blessings, whether apparent or inconspicuous, and that what we do not know of His favours, blessing, creation and wisdom in all that are greater than what we know.

5

You will happily accept Islam as your religion when you remember that it is the message of God who is far superior to all others in His knowledge, wisdom, grace and mercy. A wise person knows that the perfection that appears to him in some aspects of the Islamic faith is a good proof that what he does not know is also perfect.

6

You will happily accept the Prophet (peace be upon him) as God's Messenger when you remember that he was perfect in every human trait. His knowledge and wisdom were perfect. He was granted God's support that kept him free of error. You should also remember that he was most caring, compassionate and generous to the Muslim community. Were we to compare him to anyone alive now or at any time in history, he would be infinitely superior to all others.

7

Full as it is of trials, hardship and calamities, the life of this world becomes a rose garden to a believer who combines belief with submission and acceptance. Hence the wise saying: 'Acceptance is the garden of this life where those in the know find their comfort'. We will be wise to plant our garden of this life with the hand of acceptance. When a Muslim suffers a calamity or misses out on some good thing or improvement of means, he surrenders himself to God and remembers that nothing befalls anyone of us except what God has determined. Thus we regain serenity, allow no room for despair or regret and do not grieve for what we might have missed.

8

'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz used to say in his prayer: 'My Lord, enable me to accept what You have determined for me, and grant me Your blessing for what You have willed for me, so that I do not wish to hasten what You have delayed nor delay what You have put forward'.⁽¹⁾

9

Yahyā ibn Mu'ādh was asked: What does a person need to attain the status of acceptance? He answered: He must establish his relationship with his Lord on four principles. He says to Him: I accept whatever You give me, and I am happy with what You deny me. If You leave me, I shall worship You, and whenever You call me, I respond. We need to question ourselves: do we implement these four principles? When we accomplish a measure of any of them, we attain a measure of acceptance.



1 Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī, *Adab al-Murta'ā fī 'Ilm al-Du'ā*, p. 164.



تاج محل