

mercy to those on earth, and the One above the heavens will show mercy to you” (Hadith, Sunan At-Tirmidhi).

# For Zaidi Islam: A Guide to the Blessed Path to Allah

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October 31, 2023

## 1 Disclaimer:

Our exploration is deeply rooted in the Qur’an and the Sunnah, reflecting the understanding upheld by the Zaidi school of thought. Allah says, “And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided.” (Qur’an, Surah Al-Imran 3:103). We pray for clarity and adherence to the pure teachings of Islam as understood by the Zaidi scholars.

## 2 Introduction:

Continuous devotion to Allah is a life-long commitment, echoing the teachings and practices of Imam Zaid bin Ali. Allah mentions in Surah Al-Ankaboot (29:69), “And those who strive for Us – We will surely guide them to Our ways.” Emulating the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) means embodying sincerity (ikhlas) in every action, a principle deeply cherished in the Zaidi tradition. Our journey is about earnestly seeking His mercy and forgiveness, not just attaining perfection. “Whoever treads a path seeking knowledge, Allah will make easy for him the path to Paradise.” (Hadith, Sahih Al-Bukhari)

## 3 Trusting in God’s Provision:

“Allah is the best of providers” (Qur’an, Surah Al-Jumu’ah 62:11). Drawing inspiration from the Zaidi teachings, we understand that every creature’s sustenance comes from Him. “There is no moving creature on earth but its sustenance depends on Allah” (Qur’an, Surah Hud 11:6). Total submission to Allah ensures that He guides and provides in ways beyond our comprehension. This trust extends beyond material needs, reflecting in our spiritual growth and compassion, principles central to the Zaidi ethos. “Show

## 4 Recognizing the Divine Beyond and His Signs Within Creation:

The vast tapestry of existence unfolds the deep-seated Zaidi perspective on the omnipresence of Allah. “We have created man, and We know the promptings of his soul.” (Qur’an, Surah Qaf 50:16) serves as a testament to the intricate relationship between the Creator and His creation. In the Zaidi understanding, every speck of creation, while reflecting the myriad attributes of Allah, is ultimately a testament to His singular, unblemished essence, underscoring the profound monotheistic principle of Tawhid.

The Zaidi school teaches that Tawhid is not merely an intellectual acknowledgment of Allah’s oneness but extends to every facet of a believer’s life, shaping their interactions, behaviors, and perceptions. The Quranic verse, “Whithersoever you turn, there is the Face of Allah” (Qur’an, Surah Al-Baqarah 2:115), is a reminder of this omnipresence and the inherent sanctity of all creation. This understanding is pivotal when interacting with diverse communities, including non-Muslims. Just as all creation reflects a facet of the Divine, every individual, irrespective of their faith, holds inherent dignity and worth.

In line with the Zaidi emphasis on Tawhid, recognizing the divine signs in the world around us should be coupled with love, compassion, and respect towards all, including our neighbors. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized the rights of the neighbor, urging believers to treat them with kindness and consideration. This directive, deeply rooted in the Zaidi tradition, serves as a guide for Muslims to cultivate harmonious relationships, not only with fellow believers but with the broader community, fostering mutual understanding and coexistence.

As believers journey through life, the Zaidi tenet of Tawhid serves as a beacon, guiding them to not only recognize the divine signs in the world around them but to also embody the values cherished by Allah in their interactions with all of His creation.

## 5 Service, Respect, and Love: Emulating the Divine Commands through the Zaidi Perspective

Allah's infinite wisdom guides us towards a life of humility and service. As articulated in the Quran, "And do not think you are superior," (Qur'an, Surah Al-Fajr 89:11-12), this principle mirrors the teachings of Imam Zaid bin Ali, emphasizing modesty. True service stems from recognizing that all authority and dominion are exclusively Allah's: "For the kingdom of the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah," (Qur'an, Surah Al-Imran 3:189).

Following the Zaidi teachings, we understand the significance of respecting the free will bestowed by Allah. As He advises against injustice in "Do not transgress; indeed, Allah does not like transgressors," (Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah 2:190), we're inspired to approach all issues with justice, fairness, and righteous behavior.

The sacredness of marriage, resonating with Zaidi jurisprudence, is beautifully captured in "And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them," (Qur'an, Surah Ar-Rum 30:21).

Family, a fundamental aspect in the Zaidi tradition, occupies a distinguished position in Islam. Allah's words, "And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs [that bore you]," (Qur'an, Surah Al-Nisa 4:1), stress the value of kinship and familial connections.

Neighbors hold a pivotal role in Islamic teachings, particularly within the Zaidi thought. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) significantly emphasized the rights and treatment of neighbors, making it a central doctrine of social behavior in Islam. He stated, "He is not a believer who eats his fill while his neighbor beside him goes hungry," underscoring the ethical responsibility towards neighbors, irrespective of their faith or ethnicity.

The Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) engagements with non-Muslims, as well as his guidance, highlight the Islamic principles of peaceful coexistence, benevolence, and comprehension. In sync with the Qur'anic directive, "There is no compulsion in religion" (Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah

2:256), the Prophet (peace be upon him) embodied tolerance and respect for individuals of all faiths.

His interactions with non-Muslim neighbors weren't merely symbolic but deeply ingrained in his teachings that accentuated the importance of treating everyone with dignity and respect, regardless of their religious convictions. This approach was not an isolated practice but represented his broader message of peaceful coexistence and mutual appreciation. The Qur'an further reinforces this tenet, stating, "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you" (Qur'an, Surah Al-Hujurat 49:13).

Such guidance and deeds emphasize recognizing the inherent human dignity in everyone, irrespective of their religious, ethnic, or social background. It's clear that the Prophet (peace be upon him) not only advocated these values but exemplified them, setting a model for all Muslims.

Incorporating these teachings, the Zaidi tradition, consistent with core Islamic principles, inspires believers to interact with non-Muslims in a manner promoting mutual respect, insight, and harmony. The focus is on fostering understanding rather than creating divisions. Reflecting on the Prophet's (peace be upon him) interactions and teachings reminds believers of the importance of maintaining amicable relations with everyone, cultivating peace, and ensuring the rights of every individual, including non-Muslims, are respected.

The Quran's words, "There is not an animal [that lives] on the earth, nor a being that flies on its wings, but [forms part of] communities like you," (Qur'an, Surah Al-An'am 6:38), serve as a reminder that every creature is a testament to Allah's divine creation, meriting our respect, love, and care.

## 6 Embracing Forgiveness, Love, and Acceptance: A Reflection for Zaidi Believers

**Allah's Boundless Mercy:** The foundational principle of tawhid, the oneness of Allah, is central to our faith. His boundless mercy, a cornerstone of our Zaidi un-

understanding, is beautifully encapsulated in "My Mercy encompasses all things, so I will decree it [especially] for those who fear Me and give zakat and those who believe in Our verses." (Qur'an, Surah Al-A'raf 7:156). This mercy should guide our interactions, reflecting our devotion and dedication to Allah.

**Prayer for Forgiveness:** Recognizing our human nature, we consistently turn to Allah, reciting, "Our Lord, do not impose blame upon us if we forget or err." (Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah 2:286). This plea resonates with our Zaidi ethos, urging us to extend forgiveness to others.

**Mandate to Kindness:** Upholding kindness is a clear directive from Allah. "And those who are patient, seeking the countenance of their Lord, and establish prayer and spend from what We have provided for them secretly and publicly and prevent evil with good - those will have the good consequence of [this] home." (Qur'an, Surah Ar-Ra'd 13:22). Embracing this virtue is paramount in our daily interactions and deeds.

**Love for the Sake of Allah:** The essence of love in Islam is to love for the sake of Allah. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) stated, "None of you will believe until you love for your brother what you love for yourself." (Hadith, Bukhari and Muslim). This Hadith emphasizes the importance of sincere and selfless love among believers.

**The Call to Forgive:** As we ardently seek Allah's forgiveness, we're also instructed to forgive others. "Let them pardon and overlook. Would you not love for Allah to forgive you? Allah is Forgiving and Merciful." (Qur'an, Surah An-Nur 24:22). Emulating this divine attribute strengthens our bonds with fellow believers and fosters harmony in our communities.

## 7 Prioritizing Divine Guidance

**Qur'an Above All:** For every believer, Allah's words in the Qur'an serve as the guiding light. "This is the Book about which there is no doubt," (Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah 2:2). The Zaidi school emphasizes the primacy of the Qur'an and believes that while scholarly insights can offer clarity, they should always align with the Qur'an's teachings and not overshadow its divine directives.

**Sunnah – The Prophetic Way:** The

Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) holds a pivotal role in Zaidism. His statement, "I have left among you two matters by holding fast to which, you shall never be misguided: the Book of Allah and my Sunna." (Hadith, Maliks Muwatta), is fundamental in shaping the Zaidi spiritual path.

**Role of Eminent Imams:** In Zaidi tradition, the Imams, especially from the Ahl al-Bayt, are revered for their profound knowledge and proximity to the primary sources of revelation. While their guidance is treasured, it's essential to recognize their teachings as interpretative and not infallible. The primary focus remains on the Qur'an and Sunnah.

**Beware of Blind Following:** Zaidism, known for its emphasis on reason and rationality, encourages believers to be critical thinkers. The Qur'anic verse, "And they will say, 'Our Lord, indeed we obeyed our masters and our dignitaries, and they led us astray from the [right] way.'" (Qur'an, Surah Al-Ahzab 33:67), serves as a reminder for Zaidis to seek knowledge and understand their faith deeply.

**Guarding Against Whisperings:** Every Zaidi believer must remain vigilant against Shaytan's cunning whispers. Drawing inspiration from Allah's advice, "And if an evil suggestion comes to you from Satan, then seek refuge in Allah. Indeed, He is Hearing and Knowing." (Qur'an, Surah Fussilat 41:36), the Zaidi tradition emphasizes spiritual discernment and unwavering faith. In this context, one of the practices employed to discern the spirits or intentions behind such insinuations, or when there's uncertainty about an individual's faith, is to request them to pronounce the Shahada: "There is no god but Allah, The Most Merciful, Most Compassionate, and Muhammad is His messenger." This affirmation of faith serves as a crucial gauge, guiding Zaidis in distinguishing between authentic divine inspirations and potential deceptive influences, ensuring their steadfastness on the path of righteousness.

**Relentless Quest for Knowledge:** Zaidism places significant emphasis on seeking knowledge. This quest for understanding, rooted in both the Qur'an and the teachings of the Imams, ensures a comprehensive grasp of the faith.

**Championing Unity:** Unity within the Muslim community (Ummah) is of paramount importance. Zaidis, while having their distinct beliefs, also value the broader unity of the Ummah and promote dialogue and mutual respect.

In conclusion, the Zaidi tradition, with its deep respect for the Qur'an, Sunnah, and teachings of the Imams, offers a path illuminated by divine guidance. By centering these sacred sources and balancing them with reasoned understanding, Zaidis can navigate their spiritual journey with clarity and conviction.

## 8 Closing: Embracing Mercy and Compassion Until Our Last Breath

**Awareness of Mortality:** The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) once remarked, "Frequently remember the destroyer of joys - death." Every Zaidi believer, irrespective of where they reside, is reminded of the transient nature of life through such teachings. The Qur'an underscores, "Every soul shall taste death," (Qur'an, Surah Al Imran 3:185), emphasizing our brief sojourn in this world.

**Unceasing Preparation:** The wisdom of the Zaidi Imams encourages a life that perpetually prepares for the Hereafter. It's not

solely about our outward deeds but the condition of our heart — a heart brimming with mercy, compassion, and love until our final breath.

**Life as a Divine Trust:** Life is seen as a sacred trust bestowed by Allah. This trust obliges believers to champion and disseminate love, compassion, and mercy. Echoing this sentiment, the Prophet (peace be upon him) expressed, "The merciful are shown mercy by the Most Merciful. Show mercy to those on earth, and the One above the heavens will bestow mercy upon you." (Hadith, Tirmidhi).

**Confronting Our Individual Day of Reckoning:** As we await the grand Day of Judgment (Qur'an, Surah Al-Haaqqa 69:18), each individual will confront their personal evaluation when we leave this existence. Did our lives exemplify mercy and love? Were our actions a testament to kindness towards all of Allah's beings? Our ultimate goal should be to be greeted with Allah's assuring words: "Enter My Paradise in serenity." (Qur'an, Surah Qaf 50:34).

In closing, our earthly existence is fleeting. However, the compassion and love we nurture within our souls bear everlasting value. May our hearts, nourished by the teachings of the Zaidi Imams, eternally reverberate with Allah's infinite kindness and love.