

Divine Guidance is not a Free Pass February 6, 2026

wa-alladhīna jāhadū finā lanah diyannahum subulanā wa-inna l-laha lama'al-muḥ`sinīn- sadaq Surah Al Ankabut (29:69)

And those who strive for Us - We will surely guide them to Our ways. And indeed, Allah is with the doers of good.

In the Qur'an, Allah-u Ta'ala promises to guide those who exert sincere effort to reach Him. This divine guidance is known as Hidayah, and it is the manifestation of one of Allah's 99 Beautiful Names: Al-Hadi, The Provider of Guidance. Al-Hadi creates the means for guidance, leading His servants toward righteousness and what is truly beneficial for them. This divine support manifests in several profound ways. First and foremost, He has equipped us with intellect and essential cognitive faculties, allowing us to distinguish between right and wrong. Then, through these capabilities, He helps us find the way back to Him when we have wronged ourselves. In addition, He inclines our hearts toward the truth, and helps our efforts with Tawfiq, the divine grace that makes success in good deeds possible. He also has sent the Prophets and revealed the Books to serve as clear maps, to assist us in staying on the right path.

While He has provided every tool necessary for our journey, there remains one vital condition to receive this ultimate guidance: our own sincere desire to receive guidance. Allah-u Ta'ala tells us in the Qur'an that those who seek guidance will be guided. He asked us to request divine guidance forty times a day, during our five daily prayers, by reciting, "ihdinas siratal mustakim: guide us to the straight path." Essentially, Allah-u Ta'ala tells us that if you really want to be guided, and transform yourselves with My guidance, you must first want it. You must cultivate a desire for change and have the honesty to recognize your shortcomings.

First we must want guidance to attain a better version of ourselves. We have to recognize that there is something about us that needs to be changed. We must look at ourselves and identify those things. It starts with the courage to look inward and identify what needs work, rather than pointing fingers to external circumstances, blaming others, and falling into the trap of complaining without action. One cannot change without first acknowledging the need to do so.

Divine Guidance is not a free pass. Allah-u Ta'ala wants us to put conscious effort into receiving guidance. This effort is nothing but resisting the gravitational pull of the lower desires of the ego. Divine guidance is not found in comfort. It is earned. Every

resistance helps the ascension of the soul to divine guidance. The more we make the self uncomfortable for the sake of Allah, the more the soul becomes free from the enslavement of the ego. Every attempt to deny the self is an invitation for higher guidance. What is the essence of self-denial? It is the ability to turn away when the unlawful desires of the nafs attract our attention. When we resist the pull of our desires for the sake of Allah, we are not only weakening the desires, but also we are strengthening the bridge between our soul and the Divine. This is the alchemy of tazkiyah, purification.

Ancient alchemists spent centuries trying to change lead into gold. Allah-u Ta'ala is showing us how to transform the lead of our lower impulses into the gold of steadfastness, firmness of the heart, towards the Divine. This the alchemy of Divine guidance: the process by which Allah-u Ta'ala turns lower impulses into spiritual rising. Purification of the self is not a one-time event, but a daily routine. It is not only about avoiding major sins; it is about quiet but difficult daily choices. It is about choosing silence when your ego wants to argue, when your tongue wants to insult. It is choosing to reconcile and forgive when your pride wants to hold a grudge, choosing to give even if you are deprived, choosing the truth even if it is difficult to live by. It is about crushing every manifestation of pride and grudges.

In less than two weeks, we will be honored by the arrival of Ramadan. Ramadan is not merely a legal obligation, but a transformative journey where the human being is refined to become a mirror capable of reflecting Diving Light through His Divine Guidance. We are still in the month of preparation. We are preparing our nafs and opening our hearts to receive the divine light from Al-Hadi. We hope to attain another version of ourselves with better character, and become closer to Allah-u Ta'ala with the help of this light. Throughout the year, our heart is filled, cluttered, with material desires, anxieties, fears and ambitions. Our heart is full of the desires of the ego. Two things cannot occupy the same space. If the heart is full of self, there is no room for Light, there is no room for guidance.

Now is the time to identify and eliminate the poisons in our lives that aren't allowing us to change, and keep us from coming closer to Allah. Once identified, we must seek prevention, for prevention is easier than seeking a cure when we are poisoned. Often Shaytan drags us into a hole, and it is much harder to climb out of it than it would have been to avoid it in the first place. Remember that a sin begins as a passing, seamlessly harmless thought, but if left unchecked, it takes root as an intention, translates into action, and eventually hardens into a habit. Once a sin becomes second nature, it suffocates the soul.

One of the most effective tools of Shaytan against those who seek guidance is distraction. It is an agitation that prevents someone from giving attention to something else. It is the interruption of our attention. It draws us away from doing the right thing at the right time and place. Remember! What we give our attention to will determine our reality. If our minds and attention are consumed by the world, then the world will be our reality. But, if we give our attention to Allah, then He will be our reality. We cannot possibly expect guidance from Allah when our reality is other than Him. If we give our attention to one thing, to Allah, He will take care of our other concerns.

These are the best times to learn to control our minds, and intentionally focus our attention on what matters. This is called mindfulness. Mindfulness will wake us up from the sleep of heedlessness. When we wake up, we may not like what we see. But that is the intentional discomfort that we choose for the sake of Allah, in order to receive His Divine guidance. He will never return any sincere effort with an empty hand.

Yurdaer Al Latif Al Jerrahi