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Qur'ānic Competencies for *Amr bil-Ma'rūf wa Nahy 'an al-Munkar* (Enjoining Good and Preventing Wrong)

Dr. Hafsa Ayaz Qureshi

Post-Doc Fellow, IRI, IIUI

Lecturer, Department of Islamic Studies

Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi

Hafsa_ayyaz@fjwu.edu.pk



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Abstract

Amr bil-Ma'rūf wa Nahy 'an al-Munkar is an obligatory principle of Islam, which is rooted in Quranic commandments as well as prophetic mission. This mandate was bestowed upon the Muslim Ummah after the end of prophethood as a means of maintaining moral order, religious happiness, and social welfare. However, this duty is not only effective on intent but on the moral, intellectual, and spiritual qualification of the performer. The paper will assess the requirements of the individuals who embark on the mission of Amr bil-Ma'rūf wa Nahy 'an al-Munkar, which is based mainly on the Quranic instructions, the teachings of Prophet Muhammad and classical Islamic studies. The paper also argues that injunction of good and prohibition of evil is not a spontaneous and unregulated practice; it needs an elaborate framework of abilities. Individual have sound Imān, genuine knowledge and deep understanding ('Ilm and Başırah), Mercy and Pity (Rahmah), good will (Ikhlāṣ), fear of Allah (Taqwā), lack of avarice and worldly desires, restraint (Ṣabr), and righteousness. The verses of Quranic texts always describe believers as ethical agents that ought to actively encourage righteousness and discourage wrong, and hypocrisy as a reverse expression of right moral duty. Classical theologians like al-Ghazali, Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Kathir underline that ignorance, cruelty and selfishness make the duty sick and regularly intend more harm than healing. The mastery of the Qur'ān, Sunnah, and the practiced way of life of the companions comes out as the major defense against extremism, personal bias, and abuse of the religious principles. The study concludes that Amr bil-Ma'rūf wa Nahy 'an al-Munkar is a morally challenging duty that requires an individual to be reformed first before a social reform occurs. When done with the necessary skills, it is an effective tool of spiritual development, social cohesion and ethical strength among Muslim communities.

Keywords: Amr bil-Ma'rūf wa Nahy 'an al-Munkar, Quran ,Dawah, Spiritual practice

Introduction

The responsibility of enjoining what is right (Amr bil-Ma'rūf) and forbidding what is wrong (Nahy 'an al-Munkar) is essentially an act of prophethood. As Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ) states when outlining the mission of the Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ):

”... يَأْمُرُهُم بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ...“¹

“... He commands them al-Máruf and forbids them from Al-Munkar...”

Following the finality of prophethood, the responsibility of enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong was entrusted to the Ummah of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ). Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ) ordained this duty for the community as a whole.

”... وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أَمَةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُونَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ“²

“Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining Al- Máruf, and forbidding al-Munkar.”

To effectively carry out the duty of Amr bil-Ma'rūf wa Nahy 'an al-Munkar, a person must be wise, righteous, and a sincere believer, maintaining a strong and sound relationship with Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ). These qualities are essential prerequisites; without them, the duty cannot be properly fulfilled, and no other traits can serve as a substitute. Therefore, anyone undertaking this responsibility must diligently cultivate these characteristics and continually address any shortcomings that may compromise them.³

There are certain qualities, which Qur'ān enjoins for the one who wishes to carry the burden of his sublime mission:

1. Faith

The Qur'ān presents Amr bil-Ma'rūf wa Nahy 'an al-Munkar as a defining characteristic and moral responsibility of true believers. Faith is not portrayed merely as an inner conviction but as an active moral force that manifests in social reform and ethical engagement. Thus, the performance of enjoining good and forbidding evil is inseparably connected with īmān and constitutes a visible expression of genuine belief. Qur'ān describes Amr bil Márūf and nahi ánil Munkar as a distinct worth of believers.

Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ) says:

"كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أَمَّةٍ أَخْرَجْتُ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَيْتُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ" ...⁴

"You (true believers) are the best of peoples ever raised up for mankind; and you enjoin Al- Márūf and forbid al-Munkar and you believe in Allāh..."

Mufti Muhammad Shafī, in Ma'ārif-ul-Qur'ān, explains that this āyah highlights the primary reason for the superiority of the Ummah of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ): it was created for the welfare of all creatures, with one of its greatest honors being its role in promoting moral and spiritual reformation.⁵

The term تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ clearly indicates the primary source of this Ummah's superiority—namely, the practice of Amr bil-Ma'rūf wa Nahy 'anil-Munkar. This implies that if the community neglects this duty, it risks losing the very quality that grants it its distinction..⁶

Qatādah reported that Umar ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه) once, during Hajj, observed people becoming negligent in their duties. He then recited this āyah and remarked: "Anyone who desires to truly belong to this Ummah should fulfill the obligations that Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ) has prescribed in this āyah."⁷

Ibn Taymiyyah, while providing a detailed account of the characteristics of the best nation, states: "This nation is the best nation for the people i.e. the most beneficial to them, the one doing them the greatest favor. This is because they constitute the total good and benefit for the people via their enjoining right and forbidding wrong both in quality and in quantity, since they enjoin all that is right and forbid all that is wrong, and their message is addressed to all people of the world. As for the previous nations, none of them enjoined all people with all that is right, nor did they prohibit all that is wrong to all people."⁸

Abu Hurairah (رضي الله عنه), a companion of the Prophet (ﷺ) and narrator of many ḥadīth used to say: "You are the best people for the people; you tie them in chains and shackles and drag them off to paradise."⁹

Haḍarat Darah (رضي الله عنها), Daughter of Abu Lahab, narrated that; "when holy Prophet (ﷺ) was at pulpit someone asked from him: Who is the best man? He said; The one who recite the Qur'ān at the most, who is the pious at the most, who enjoin good and forbid evil at the most and who joins the relationship at the most."¹⁰

Mohammad Hashim Kamali argues that in Islamic ethics, belief is validated through ethical conduct that promotes justice, welfare, and social balance.¹¹ Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas similarly emphasizes that faith divorced from ethical responsibility becomes spiritually deficient and socially ineffective.¹² Contemporary ethical theorists such as Jasser Auda highlight that moral reform in Islam must be grounded in sincerity, compassion, and higher objectives of Sharī'ah rather than coercion or domination.¹³

b. Endorsement of good by believers

The Qur'ān repeatedly emphasizes the role of believers in enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong:

"وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُنَّ أَوْلَيَاءِ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهُونَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقْبِلُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ" ...¹⁴

"The believers, men and women, are Auliyā' of one another, they enjoin Al-Ma'rūf and forbid from Al-Munkar; they perform As-Salāt and give the Zakāt, ..."

Imam Ghazālī stated that believers are especially praised by Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ) for actively adopting these practices, while those who neglect them fall outside the true category of believers.¹⁵ Ibn Kathīr explains that believers are pure-hearted individuals who do not remain indifferent to guiding others toward righteousness or preventing them from committing evil.¹⁶ This is affirmed by the words of Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ):

"وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَأَمْرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهُونَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ"¹⁷

"Let there arise out of you a group of people inviting to all that is good (Islam), enjoining Al-Máruf and forbidding Al-Munkar."

These individuals not only perform prayers but also give zakat, combining personal worship with providing relief and support to others. Their foremost concern is obedience to Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ) and His Messenger. By embodying these qualities, they become recipients of Allāh's mercy, as such virtues pave the way to His divine favor.¹⁸

Also, at another place:

"يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَأَمْرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهُونَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَسَارُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَأُولَئِكَ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ"¹⁹

"They believe in Allāh and the Last Day; they enjoin al-Máruf, and forbid al-Munkar; and they hasten to (all) good works; and they are among the righteous."

"... الَّذِينَ إِنْ مَكَّنَاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَتَوْا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَمْرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ"²⁰

"Those (Muslim rulers) who, if We give them power in the land, (they) order for Iqamat-as-Salāt, to pay the Zakāt and they enjoin al-Máruf, and forbid Al-Munkar..."

Ibn kathir recounts that Hazarat Úthman (عَنْهُ اللَّهُ رَضِيَّ) said: "This āyah revealed for us, we were exile without any cause from country, and then Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ) granted us empire. We prompt prayer and fast, enjoin good and forbade evil therefore this āyah is about me and my companions." Abu Al- Áaliyah said: "This āyah refers to companions of holy prophet." Ḥaḍart Úmer b. ábdul áziz recited this āyah in his sermon and said: "This āyah not only includes Emperor but also the general people. Emperor is responsible to keep you fulfilling right of Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ) and incase of any disregard, he should punish

you and endow everyone with his right. Keep you on the right path as far as possible for him. And your duty towards the emperor is, subsequent to all inner and outer bliss, you should obey him.”²¹

It is the believer who guides others and seeks knowledge of the religion, for Allāh has not commanded all believers to go for jihad; rather, some are required to remain behind to pursue learning and understanding.

”وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَيَنْفِرُوا كَافَّةً فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لَّيَتَفَقَّهُوْا فِي الدِّينِ وَلَيُنذِرُوْا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَرُوْنَ“²²

“And it is not for the believers to go out to fight all together. Of every troop of them, a party only should go forth, that they may get instructions in religion, and that they may warn their people when they return to them, so that they may beware.”

In tafsir Ibn kathir, it is related that Qatādah (عنه الله رضي) said: “when prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) send armies, then few people should stay for prophet’s company so that they learn religion and few people would preach their nation.”²³

The Qur’ān describes believers as steadfast supporters of what is good and righteous:

”... وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالثَّقَوْيِ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ...“²⁴

“... Help you one another in Al-Birr and At-Taqwa (virtue, righteousness and piety); but do not help one another in sin and transgression...”

c. Upholding of an evil: an attribute of hypocrites

”...الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ مِّنْ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمُنْكَرِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمَعْرُوفِ“²⁵

“The hypocrites, men and women, are from one another, they enjoin (on the people) Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief and polytheism of all kinds and all that Islām has forbidden), and forbid (people) from Al-Márūf...”

Ibn Kathir relates that Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ) admonishes hypocrites who, unlike the believers, who enjoin righteousness and forbid evil, enjoin evil and forbid the good.²⁶

Sheikh Ábdur Rehmān As- Sádi in his tafsir “Taseer al-Karim Ar Rehmān fi tafsir Kalam al-Mannan” says;

”يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمُنْكَرِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمَعْرُوفِ“ is a common characteristic of hypocrite. Munkar which they command includes Kufr and Sin and from which they forbade are; faith, good morals, good deeds and good manners.”²⁷

The implications are clear; it is not that a believer will never commit a mistake or be involved in evil. Only that he will never insist on it, justify it, or promote it. He may fail to do some required good. But; he will never be a force reviving evil.

It is narrated from Hadarat Áli (عنه الله رضي): “Amr bil Márūf wa nahi ánil Munkar is a best deed and kindle the hypocrite so doer of amr bil Márūf supports believer and doer of nahi ánil Munkar disgrace hypocrite.”²⁸

This practice exposes the true nature of individuals: those who genuinely uphold righteousness are supported and affirmed, whereas hypocrites, who oppose or obstruct virtuous actions, are publicly

discredited. In essence, engagement in Amr bil-Márūf wa Nahy 'an al-Munkar functions as both a personal act of piety and a societal mechanism for distinguishing between sincerity and hypocrisy. The believer's commitment to this duty reflects moral courage, while the hypocrite's resistance reveals their insincerity and ethical weakness.

2. Sure Knowledge And Deep Understanding

The Qur'ān emphasizes knowledge as a fundamental source for understanding faith, guiding believers toward awareness of divine principles and moral truths. True comprehension of Islam, the Qur'ān indicates, is rooted not in mere imitation but in reflection, learning, and insight. Knowledge enables individuals to distinguish right from wrong, strengthens conviction, and fosters the application of ethical and spiritual teachings in daily life.

"فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْبِكَ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مُتَقَلَّبَكُمْ وَمَتَوَالَكُمْ"²⁹

"So know (O Muḥammad) that Lâ ilâha ill-Allâh, and ask forgiveness for your sin, and also for believing men and believing women. And Allâh knows well your moving about, and your place of rest."

Because understanding the faith requires knowledge, it is a fundamental requirement for anyone who wishes to practice Amr bil-Ma'rūf wa Nahy 'anil-Munkar. Therefore, the acquisition of knowledge has consistently been a foremost priority within the Muslim community. Abu Ya'la mentioned it in his book entitled "Al-Mu'tamad" as follows:

"None should enjoin right and forbid wrong except one who is knowledgeable in that which he enjoins, knowledgeable in that which he forbids, compassionate in that which he enjoins, compassionate in that which he forbids, forbearing in that which he enjoins, and forbearing in that which he forbids."³⁰

Prophet Muḥammad () invited people towards Allâh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) with profound knowledge. His invitation was not based on unfounded information. As, it comes in Qur'ān:

"... قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَذْعُو إِلَيِ اللَّهِ عَلَى بَصِيرَةِ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي"³¹

"Say: "This is my way; I invite to Allâh with sure knowledge, I and whosoever follows me..."

Ábdullah Ibn Maśūd (عَنْهُ اللَّهُ رَضِيَ) said: "The companions of Muḥammad() are the best people of this ummah with pure heart and deep knowledge, and are not ceremonious. Allâh selected them for the company and service of Prophet Muḥammad (). You should adopt their manners because they are the only who are on right path."³²

من أَنْتَعْنِي in a general sense means every person who indulge in carrying message of prophet Muḥammad() to ummah till day of judgment. Kalbi and Ibn Zaīd said that it is also evident from this ayah that the one who testify is; the follower of Muḥammad (), it is compulsory on him that he should spread the divine message and to make common the teachings of Qur'ān.³³

Thus, the pursuit of knowledge is intrinsically linked to the ethical responsibility of commanding good and forbidding evil, reinforcing both personal integrity and communal well-being.

a. Sources of knowledge

For the prophets the knowledge and understanding come from Allâh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) directly. They were especially trained by Allâh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) for this job and were always guided by Him. They were not only given revealed knowledge; but were also gifted with the special sense of wisdom and discernment. Since,

a common believer is not blessed with prophetic qualities; he, therefore, has to depend upon revealed books and prophetic model. A Muslim has to have a deep understanding of the Qur'ān, Sunnah and the practice of trustworthy and pious generations of early Muslims. Without deep understanding of the examples of the best generations, a performer is prone to commit blunders.³⁴

i. Qur'ān

Reflecting on the Qur'ān is one way of getting deeper understanding of the path of Amr bil Márūf wa nahi ánil Munkar. Qur'ān says:

"كِتَابٌ أَنزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْنَاكُمْ بُشِّرَّاً لِّيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ"³⁵

"(This is) a Book (the Qur'ān) which We have sent down to you, full of blessings that they may ponder over its Verses, and that men of understanding may remember."

Through reflection on the Qur'ān, a performer is able to grasp the rationale behind communication of the Lord with His creation. It sentient him of deep relation between the Creator and the creation.

ii. Sirah of Prophet Muḥammad ()

The other source of attaining knowledge is, Sirah of Prophet Muḥammad () and examples of the companions of the Prophet () and Tāibeen. Their examples serve as a guiding light in the path of Amr bil Márūf wa nahi ánil Munkar. The Qur'ān has directed the followers to follow example of the prophet () by saying:

"لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُشْرُقَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ"³⁶

"Indeed in the Messenger of Allāh (Muḥammad) you have a good example to follow..."

A performer, therefore by following the example of the Prophet () and studying his method can strengthen the understanding of Márūf and Munkar. Performer will never succeed, if he ignores the beautiful pattern of the Prophet ().

A performer for the understanding of Márūf and Munkar has to study and benefit from the experiences of the companions of the Prophet () and successive generation. They were the people who become model to a followed. For a non-prophetic performer of Amr bil Márūf wa nahi ánil Munkar, deeper understanding of the message will always depend upon a thorough understanding of these sources.³⁷

Imam Ghazālī says, following kinds of knowledge are essentials for performer of Amr bil Márūf wa nahi ánil Munkar:

1. The place prevention of wrongful act
2. Limit of prevention of wrongful act
3. Order for prevention of wrongful act

These should be known and should remain confined within the rules of Shariáh.³⁸

It is necessary, that the knowledge of Márūf and Munkar must be present and must be according to Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ) 's legislation. If this type of knowledge is not present, then enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil will be based on whims and desires. Many people reject what they do not like and are not used to even though it is allowed in Islām. Having the correct knowledge implies having the correct ways and etiquettes of enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil.

Action is not possible except with knowledge and understanding

There can be no righteous deed in the absence of knowledge and understanding of the law, as 'Umar ibn Abdul-Aziz (the grandson of 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab, and a righteous Khalifa) used to say: "Whoever worships Allāh without knowledge corrupts more than he benefits." ³⁹

And, as in the statement of Mū'ādh ibn Jabal (عَنْ أَنَّهُ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ): "Knowledge is the imam of action, and action is a corollary to it." ⁴⁰

This is obvious; intentions and actions, which are not based on knowledge, are ignorance and going astray. Thus, knowledge of the Márūf and the Munkar are absolute necessities as are the ability to distinguish between them, and knowledge of the condition of those to be ordered and forbidden is essential. ⁴¹

For optimum benefit, enjoining and forbidding, should be performed on the straight Path. The Straight Path is the shortest route, and the one, which leads to the attainment of the sought-after goal.

3. Compassion and Passion

It is imperative for the performer of truth that his heart should be brimmed with the sentiments of passion and compassion. He should treat and deal his people kindly, and his intention should of their welfare and betterment and his real affection for people is to invite others to Islam in which lies their protection from hell. ⁴²

Compassion makes the behavior of absurd people, uncomplicated for performer of Máruf and Munkar. Because of his high level of iman and fortune, he takes them as children who are ignorant of their loss or benefit. While passion gives the moral strength and tenacity to aggressively fight sin, compassion allows the believer to empathize with others, wanting their well-being and encouraging them toward righteousness.

Every practitioner invite others without taking into consideration the intricacy he faces, Prophet Muhammed (ﷺ) continue to invite Quraish; irrespective of their misconduct. Practitioner will not be hopeless on the behaviour of opponents as the one do not become disappointed on misdemeanors of children's. ⁴³

خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ ⁴⁴

"Show forgiveness, enjoin what is good, and turn away from the foolish."

A performer of Amr bil Márūf wa nahi ánil Munkar acting upon this āyah, forgives, the one who produce quandary for him. If he does not possess this quality, then no one will listen to him and try to escape from him. His saying will not be inspiring if his way is ruthless.

Therefore; Allāh (عزوجل) says in the Qur'an:

فَإِنَّمَا رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ لِنَّفَّاثَاتِهِمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظُلْلًا غَلِيلَظَّا الْقَلْبِ لَا نَفَّضُوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ ⁴⁵

"And by the mercy of Allāh (عزوجل), you dealt with them gently. And had you been severe and harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about you..."

Prophet (ﷺ) said: "O! Aisha: Verily Allāh (عزوجل) is Compassionate, and He loves compassion. He gives based on compassion that which is not given based on force, and is not given based on any other cause." ⁴⁶

Amr bil Márūf wa nahi ánil Munkar must be done with compassion. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Compassion does not enter into anything without beautifying it, and is not removed from anything without making it ugly."

The Qur'an exhorts believers to combine a strong commitment to virtue with genuine concern for others, so that prohibiting evil and promoting good is not just a duty but a deliberate, sincere endeavor. By

striking this balance, moral behavior becomes both ethical and transformational, promoting both societal concord and individual piety while exposing hypocrisy and halting moral deterioration.

4. Fear of Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ)

Fear of Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ), or *taqwā*, is a fundamental ethical and spiritual motivator in the practice of *Amr bil-Mārūf wa Nahy 'an al-Munkar*. Imam Ghazālī reports that fear of Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ) is necessary for one who prevents evil because one who prevents it should not act for self-interest but for the sake of Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ).⁴⁷

The love of good should be in harmony with what Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ) loves. This principle is that the love of a believer for what is good, and his hatred for what is evil, and his desire for the accomplishment of the good and his desire for the avoidance and prevention of evil should be in harmony with what Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ) loves and hates. Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ) loves all that He has enjoined upon us in His shariāh, and dislikes all that He has forbidden us in His shariāh. Furthermore, the action of the believer in that which he loves (the good), and his avoidance and opposition to that which he hates (the evil), must be to the extent of his ability and his strength, for verily, Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ) does not demand from any of us more than what is within our ability.⁴⁸

As Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ) says:

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا أَنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ⁴⁹"

“So keep your duty to Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ) and fear Him as much as you can...”

This consciousness encourages careful discernment, preventing excessive harshness or neglect, and motivates the believer to maintain consistency even when facing social opposition or ridicule. By rooting the practice of promoting good and preventing evil in *taqwā*, the believer harmonizes courage with humility, passion with prudence, and ethical responsibility.

5. Absence of Greed

The absence of greed and excessive attachment to worldly interests is a crucial ethical requirement for those engaged in *Amr bil-Mārūf wa Nahy 'an al-Munkar*. A person who seeks favor, status, or material benefit from others becomes vulnerable to compromise and fear, which weakens moral authority and silences truthful counsel. He who depends on men will not be able to prevent sins. Once a speaker advised Caliph Māmun and spoke harshly with him. The Caliph said to him: “O! Gentleman, be modest as he who was better than you was sent by God to people worse than yourself with the instruction of advising them with soft words.⁵⁰ Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ) says:

فَقُولُوا لَهُ قُوْلًا لَّيْنَا لَعَلَهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَى⁵¹"

“And speak to him mildly, perhaps he may accept admonition or fear.”

Greed entangles the heart in personal outcomes, shifting focus from reforming society to protecting one's own comfort.

5. SINCERITY AND PURE INTENTIONS

It is essential that one's intention be directed solely toward Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ), seeking only His pleasure as the ultimate reward. No worldly gain should motivate the action, and desires such as showing off or blindly defending one's own opinion must be excluded.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Deeds are but with intentions.”⁵²

For all righteous actions, two fundamental elements are required:

- They must be performed purely for the sake of Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ).⁵³
- They must conform to the teachings of the Shari‘ah.

A sincere intention is therefore a prerequisite for good speech and righteous deeds, whether in the pursuit of knowledge, its application, or in acts of worship and devotion. It has been well authenticated in the Sahih that Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Verily, the first three (categories) for which hell is fired up are: A man who learned knowledge and taught it, and read the Qur'an and taught others to read it in order that the people might say: He is knowledgeable, and he is a good reciter. And a man who fought and struggled so that the people would say: He is courageous, and he is a good fighter. And a man who spent of that which he was given and gave charity so that the people would say: He is generous, and he is openhanded."⁵⁴ These three people desire eye service, reputation, and credit. They are in opposition to the three, which have been mentioned in the Qur'an after the prophets:

"وَمَنْ يُطِعَ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّنَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشَّهِيدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَحَسْنَ أُولَئِكَ رَفِيقًا"⁵⁵

"All whoso obey Allāh and the messenger, then they will be in the company of those on whom Allāh ahs bestowed His grace, of the prophets , the Siddiqun ,the martyrs, and the Righteous And how excellent these companions are!"

The ever truthful and believing (As-siddiqeen), the martyrs in the cause of Allāh (Ash-shuhadaa'), and the righteous doers of good (As-saaliheen).

Just as acts of worship, which are taken as devotions - if they are of that which Allāh has prescribed, and His Prophet has ordered us to do - are valid and correct and are in accordance with the message with which Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ).sent the prophets. On the other hand, acts of "worship" which is not so (i.e. not part of what Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ). and His Prophet has ordered) are falsehood, foolishness, and innovation, which lead astray, even though its devotees may call it; knowledge, understandings, devotions, exercises, experiences, or stations.⁵⁶

On the other hand, those who perform deeds in order to be seen by others are dispraised by Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ) and are promised punishment, as Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ) says:

"مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزِيَّنَهَا نُوَفِّ إِلَيْهِمْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِيهَا وَهُمْ فِيهَا لَا يُنْجِسُونَ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا النَّارُ وَحِيطَ مَا صَنَعُوا فِيهَا وَيَأْطِلُّ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ"⁵⁷

"Whosoever desires the life of the world and its gillter, to them We shall in full there deeds therein, and they will have no diminution therein. They are those for whom there s nothing in the hereafter but fire, and vain are the deeds they did therein. And of no effect is that which they used to do."

The one who enjoins what is right must do so solely for the sake of Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ)—commanding only because He commands, forbidding only because He forbids, and conveying only what He has revealed. This reflects truth, genuine faith, and proper guidance, as taught by the prophets. Just as true worship requires intending solely for the Face of Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ), any action motivated by personal desire, passion, pride, or the pursuit of recognition is misguided—comparable to someone who fights merely out of anger, emotion, or to impress others..⁵⁸

Many people mix what is permissible with what is forbidden in speech, worship, and warfare, acting in ways that conflict with the guidance of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

6. Patience

A Muslim must exercise patience in fulfilling what Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ) has commanded and avoiding what He has forbidden. This includes patience during persecution, criticism, and various calamities, as well as patience in times of ease to prevent pride or arrogance.

Patience holds a central place in the moral and ethical character of the Prophet (). It was this quality that allowed him to endure the opposition and hardships imposed by the Quraysh while carrying out the duty of *Amr bil-Ma'rūf wa Nahy 'anil-Munkar*⁵⁹. Patience can be categorized into two types:

1. Patience in controlling one's anger.
2. Patience in enduring calamities and hardships.⁶⁰

Al-Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī said: "No slave of Allāh has struck a more effective blow than wisdom and forbearance in anger and patience in the face of calamity."⁶¹

Allāh said about calamity in general;

وَلَنَبْلُونَكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ . الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَهُمْ مُّصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

"And certainly, We shall test you with something of fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives and fruits, but give glad tidings to As-Sābirin (the patient ones, etc.). Who, when afflicted with calamity, say: "Truly! To Allāh we belong and truly, to Him we shall return."

And, Allāh said about anger:

وَلَا سُتُّوي الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّنَةُ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي يَبْيَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةُ كَانَهُ وَلِيُّ حَمِيمٌ . وَمَا يُلْقَاهَا إِلَّا ذُو حَظٍّ e will achieve this except those of the greatest good fortune."⁶³

"Good acts and bad acts are not the same. Drive away (bad) with that which is better. Suddenly, the one with whom there was enmity becomes as a close and devoted friend. And none will achieve this except those who are patient, and non

When enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, one must persevere through hardships and must stand for all the harm that a performer of *Amr bil Márūf* and *nahi ánil Munkar* may find in his way. For this reason, Haḍarat Luqman advised his son; Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ) said in sūrah Luqman:

...وَأُمْرٌ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَأَنْهِي عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَاصْبِرْ عَلَى مَا أَصَابَكَ...⁶⁴

"...enjoin (on the people) for Al-Márūf and forbid (people) from Al-Munkar and bear with patience whatever befalls you..."

Ibn kathir accounts that Haḍarat Luqman advised his son, to enjoin what is just, and forbid what is wrong and as this seems ghastly to people and they become opponent of the one who is saying truth, therefore, he said; incase of any trouble and reprisal, you should be patient. Infact to suffer difficulties in the path of Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ) and not to become hopeless; is a great job.⁶⁵

The practitioner of *Amr bil Márūf* and *nahi ánil Munkar* must be forbearing and patient in the face of adversity and persecution. Persecution must confront the true practitioner of enjoining right. If he is not patient, forbearing and wise in the face of this, he will cause more corruption than reform.⁶⁶

Thus, Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ) ordered His prophets, and they are the imam's of enjoining right and forbidding wrong, to have patience, just as He ordered the seal of the Prophets Muḥammad(). The order to have patience came along with the order to deliver the message of Islām. When the Prophet () was first ordered to deliver the message to the people, Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ) sent Sūrah Al-Muddathir;

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ . قُمْ فَأَنذِرْ . وَرَبِّكَ فَكَبِّرْ . وَتَبَّاكَ فَطَبِّرْ . وَالرَّجُزَ فَاهْجُرْ . وَلَا تَمْنُنْ تَسْتَكِنْ . وَلِرِبِّكَ فَاصْبِرْ .⁶⁷

"O, you enveloped in garments! Arise and warn. And magnify your Lord. And purify your garments! And keep away from Ar-Rujz. And give not a thing in order to have more . And be patient for the sake of your Lord."

Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ) began these seven āyat, with which He commissioned the To convey His message to creation, Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ) commanded the Prophet () to warn people and concluded this instruction with the command to exercise patience. Warning people of Allāh's punishment is an essential aspect

of Amr bil-Ma'rūf wa Nahy 'anil-Munkar, indicating that patience becomes obligatory once one undertakes the duty of enjoining what is right. In this context, Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ) says:

"وَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رِبِّكَ فَإِنَّكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَسَيَّعْ بِحَمْدِ رِبِّكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ"⁶⁸

"So wait patiently for the decision of your Lord, for verily, you are under Our Eyes"

"...فَاصْبِرْ كَمَا صَبَرَ أُولُو الْعَزْمِ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ"⁶⁹

"Therefore be patient, as did the messengers of strong will."

"وَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَاهْجُرْ هُمْ هَجْرًا جَمِيلًا"⁷⁰

"And be patient with what they say, and keep away from them in a good way."

"فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رِبِّكَ وَلَا تَكُنْ كَصَاحِبِ الْحُوتِ إِذْ نَادَىٰ وَهُوَ مَكْظُومٌ"⁷¹

"So wait with patience for the decision of your Lord, and be not like the companion of the fish..."

"وَاصْبِرْ وَمَا صَبَرْتُكَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ وَلَا تَحْرُنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا تُلْكَ فِي ضَيْقٍ مَمَّا يَمْكُرُونَ"⁷²

"And endure you patiently, your patience is not but from Allāh and grieve not over them, and be not distressed because of what they plot."

"وَاصْبِرْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيغُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ"⁷³

"And be patient; verily, Allāh wastes not the reward of the good-doers."

The prophet of Islām has been commanded by Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ) to be patient in all circumstances.

"...فَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَسَيَّعْ بِحَمْدِ رِبِّكَ"⁷⁴

"So bear patiently what they say, and glorify the praises of your Lord..."

Ibn Kathīr explains that those who are protected from loss are the true believers—those who perform virtuous deeds, encourage others to do good, forbid evil, and exercise patience during hardships. They also guide others to be patient and maintain the same steadfastness even when facing difficulties in enjoining good and forbidding evil.

A person engaged in Amr bil-Ma'rūf wa Nahy 'anil-Munkar should demonstrate good manners, kindness, and compassion. These virtues help in controlling anger and ensure that the act of preventing wrongdoing is carried out properly. When these qualities are present, the individual earns reward for guiding others away from sin; without them, one risks overstepping the boundaries prescribed by the Shari'ah. The Prophet() said : "He who is not patient in enjoining good and forbidding evil and has got no knowledge of enjoining good and forbidding evil shall not enjoin good and prohibit evil",⁷⁵ Thus, it becomes clear that knowledge, patience, and kindness are essential when giving advice.: "If anyone amongst you wishes to enjoin good, he should advice himself first with good qualities of patience and hope for rewards from Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ) ."⁷⁶

Those who seek the reward of Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ) will encounter no difficulty in giving advice. A key principle of advising others is to maintain patience, which is why Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَ) has closely linked patience with the act of counsel.

Findings

1. Faith (Īmān) is the initial pre-condition; the Quran explicitly identifies the injunctions as a way to foster righteousness and to forbid wrongdoing as a way to secure authenticity of faith.
2. Deepest understanding and sound epistemological basis are necessary, as the moral action without the knowledge is bound to cause wrong direction and moral degeneration.
3. Empathy and compassion strongly enhance the effectiveness of moral responses, but cruelty discourages participation and destroys the chances of ethical transformation.
4. The purity of one intention (ikhlāṣ) is the fulcrum of the moral right, as the actions driven by the necessity to become famous, gain authority, or self-interestedness are not spiritually effective.

5. Patience (szabr) is necessary to sustain ability, moral reform must always face opposition, criticism and difficulty, and perseverance is required.

6. The fear of Allah (taqwala) is a tool that avoids any possibility of misusing this power and ensures that moral intervention does not go beyond ethical and legal limits.

Conclusion

Amr bil-Ma'rūf wa Nahy 'an al-Munkar is a noble yet demanding Islamic obligation that extends beyond verbal instruction to embody ethical excellence and spiritual maturity. The Qur'ān and Prophetic tradition clearly establish that only those equipped with faith, knowledge, sincerity, compassion, patience, and moral discipline are truly qualified to perform this duty. When these requirements are neglected, moral intervention risks becoming coercive, hypocritical, or socially destructive. Conversely, when fulfilled, this obligation functions as a transformative force that nurtures individual righteousness and collective well-being. Therefore, cultivating these competencies is not optional but essential for reviving the true spirit and effectiveness of Amr bil-Ma'rūf wa Nahy 'an al-Munkar in contemporary Muslim societies.

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¹ Al-Araf:157

² Al-e-Imran:104

³ 'Abd al-Karīm Zaidān, *Uṣūl al-Da'wah* (Beirut: Maktabat al-Baṣīr, 1990), 365.

⁴ Al-e-Imran, 3:110

⁵ Muftī Muḥammad Shafī', *Ma'ārif al-Qur'ān* (Karachi: Idārat al-Ma'ārif, 2002), 2:149

⁶ Abul Kalam Azad, *Amr bil Ma'rūf* (Lahore: Makki Dār al-Kutub, 1994), 25.

⁷ Dr Al-Amar, A.R., *Nasus-ud-dawah fi Qur'ān al-Karīm* (Riyad: Darul Shabiliya, 1997), ed.i, p.81.

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⁹ Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī, *The Translation of the Meanings of Ṣahīḥ al-Bukhārī: Arabic–English*, trans. M. Muhsin Khān and Muḥammad Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī (Riyadh: Darussalam, 1997), *Book. Prophetic Commentary on the Qur'an Prophetic Commentary on the Qur'an, Vol.vi, No. 80.*

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¹³ Jasser Auda, *Maqāṣid al-Shari'ah as Philosophy of Islamic Law* (London: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2008), 147–150.

¹⁴ At-Tauba:71.

¹⁵ Al-Ġhazālī, A.H., *Ḩīya úlum-ud-din*, Trans., Fazal-ul-Karim (Lahore: Sind Sagar Academy n.d.), Vol.ii, p.226..

¹⁶ Ibn Kathir, *Tafsīr Ibn kathir*, vol.ii, p.369.

¹⁷ Al-e-Imran, 3:104.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Al-e-Imran:114.

²⁰ Al-Hajj:41.

²¹ Ibn Kathir, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathir*, vol.iii, p.464

²² At-Tauba:122.

²³ Ibn Kathir, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathir*, vol.ii, p.413

²⁴ Al-Maidah:2.

²⁵ At-Tauba:67.

²⁶ Ibn Kathir, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathir*.Vol.ii, p.2.

²⁷ A. R. al-'Amār, *Nuṣūṣ al-Da'wah fī al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* (Riyadh: Dār al-Ashabīliyah, 1997), 87.

²⁸ A. L. Samarkandī, *Tanbīh al-Ġhāfi�in*, trans. Maulānā 'Abdul Majīd (Multan: Maktabah Ḥakānīyah, n.d.), 95.

²⁹ Muhammad:19.

³⁰ Ibn-e-Taimiyyah, *Al Amr bil Māruf wa nahi ḥāni'l Munkar*, 57.

³¹ Yusuf:108.

³² Muftī Shafī', *Ma'ārif-ul-Qur'ān* (Karachi: Idaratul-Ma'ārif, 2002)..vol. v, p.157

³³ Ibid

³⁴ K. Alvi, *Islamic Da'wah*, 1st ed. (Lahore: Al-Faisal Nashrān, 1997), 76.

³⁵ Sad:29.

³⁶ Al-Ahzab:21.

³⁷ Alvi, *Islamic Dāwah*, 79-80

³⁸ Imam Ghazali, *Ihya ulum ud din (Revival of religious leanings)*, Trans. Fazl-ul-karim(Lahore: Sind Sagar Academy, 1978).Vol.2, p.240.

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⁴⁰ Ibn Taymiyah, *Al-Amr bil Māruf wa nahi ḥāni'l Munkar*, 54-55.

⁴¹ 'Abd al-Karīm Zaidān, *Uṣūl al-Da'wah* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 1996), 326–327.

⁴² 'Abd al-Karīm Zaidān, *Uṣūl al-Da'wah* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 1996), 326–327.

⁴³ Zaidān, *Uṣūl al-Da'wah*,358.

⁴⁴ Al-'Araf:199.

⁴⁵ Al-e-Imran:159.

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⁴⁹ At-Taghabun:16.

⁵⁰ Al-Ghazali, *İhya úlum-ud-din*.241

⁵¹ Ta-Ha:44

⁵² Muhammed ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī, *The Translation of the Meanings of Ṣahīḥ al-Bukhārī: Arabic-English*, trans. M. Muhsin Khān and Muhammed Taqī-ud-Dīn al-Hilālī (Riyadh: Darussalam Publishers, 1997), Book of Revelation, vol. 1, no. 1

⁵³ Ibn Taymiyyah , *Al-Amr bil Maruf wa nnahi annil Munkar*,99.

⁵⁴ Yaḥyā ibn Sharaf al-Nawawī, *Ṣahīḥ Muslim bi Sharḥ al-Nawawī* (Damascus: Maktabah al-Ghazālī, n.d.), *Kitāb al-Birr*, vol. 16.Vol.xiii, 50.

⁵⁵ An-Nisa:69.

⁵⁶ Ibn Taymiyyah, *Al-Amr bil Maruf wa nnahi annil Munkar*, 101.

⁵⁷ Hud:15-16.

⁵⁸ Ibn Taymiyyah, *Al-Amr bil Maruf wa nnahi annil Munkar*,102.

⁵⁹ Dr Alvi, K., *Islamic Dāwah* (Lahore: Al-faisal Nashran, 1997).92.

⁶⁰ Ibn Taymiyyah, *Al-Amr bil Maruf wa nnahi annil Munkar*,80.

⁶¹ Ibid

⁶² Al-Baqarah:155-156

⁶³ Fussilat:34-35.

⁶⁴ Luqman:17.

⁶⁵ Luqman:17.

⁶⁶ Ibn Taymiyyah, *Al-Amr bil Maruf wa nnahi annil Munkar*, 56.

⁶⁷ Al-Mudathir:1-7.

⁶⁸ At-Tur:48.

⁶⁹ Al-Ahqaf:35.

⁷⁰ Al-Muzammil:10.

⁷¹ Al-Qalam:48.

⁷² Ta-Ha:130.

⁷³ An-Nahl:127.

⁷⁴ Hud:115

⁷⁵ Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir ibn Kathir*,. Vol.v, 589.

⁷⁶ Al-Ghazali, *İhya úlum ud din*, Vol.3,82

⁷⁷ E Book Soil-Science 16.04.(2020).pdf, pg:72 (Accessed on 26 Oct 2025)