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

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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 Baṣīrah), Mercy and Pity (Raḥmah), good will (Ikhlaṣ), 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 (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) states when outlining the mission of the Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ):

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

“... He commands them al-Ma'rūf 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 (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) ordained this duty for the community as a whole.

”... وَلَتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ...”²

“Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining Al- Ma'rūf, 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 (عَزَّوَجَلَّ). 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 Mārūf and nahi ānil Munkar as a distinct worth of believers.

Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) says:

"كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ" ⁴ ..."

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

Mufti Muḥammad Shafī, in Ma'ārif-ul-Qur'ān, explains that this āyah highlights the primary reason for the superiority of the Ummah of Prophet Muḥammad (): 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 (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) 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 () 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

Ḥadārat Darah (عنها الله رضى), Daughter of Abu Lahab, narrated that; "when holy Prophet () 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 بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ ..." ¹⁴

"The believers, men and women, are Auliya' 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 (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) 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 (عَزَّوَجَلَّ):

"وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ" ¹⁷

"Let there arise out of you a group of people inviting to all that is good (Islam), enjoining Al-Márūf 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 (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) and His Messenger. By embodying these qualities, they become recipients of Allāh's (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) mercy, as such virtues pave the way to His divine favor.¹⁸

Also, at another place:

"يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَأُولَئِكَ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ" ¹⁹

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

"... الَّذِينَ إِنْ مَكَّنَّاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَمَرُوا 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-Márūf, and forbid Al-Munkar..."

Ibn Kathir recounts that Hazarat Úthman (عنه الله رضى) said: "This āyah revealed for us, we were exile without any cause from country, and then Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) granted us empire. We prompt prayer and fast, enjoin good and forbade evil therefore this āyah is about me and my companions." Abu Al-Áāliyah said: "This āyah refers to companions of holy prophet." Ĥadart 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 (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) 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 (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) has not commanded all believers to go for jihad; rather, some are required to remain behind to pursue learning and understanding.

"وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِيَنْفِرُوا كَافَّةً فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِن كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِّيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ"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 رضى) said: “when prophet Muhammad () 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 وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ..."²⁴

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

c. Upholding of an evil: an attribute of hypocrites

"...الْمُتَافِقُونَ وَالْمُتَافِقَاتُ 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 (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) 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 forbid 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 Ḥadārat Áli (عنه الله رضى): “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 وَمَثْوَاكُمْ" 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 (ﷺ) invited people towards Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) with profound knowledge. His invitation was not based on unfounded information. As, it comes in Qur’ān:

"... قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَى بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي" ³¹

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

Ábdullah Ibn Maśūd (رضي الله عنه) said : “The companions of Muḥammad(ﷺ) are the best people of this ummah with pure heart and deep knowledge, and are not ceremonious. Allāh selected them for the company and service of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ). You should adopt their manners because they are the only who are on right path.” ³²

مَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي in a general sense means every person who indulge in carrying message of prophet Muḥammad(ﷺ) to'ummah till day of judgment. Kalbi and Ibn Zaīd said that it is also evident from this āyah that the one who testify is; the follower of Muḥammad (ﷺ), 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 Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) directly. They were especially trained by Allāh (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 Mārūf wa nahi ānil Munkar. Qur'ān says:

"كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ 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 Mārūf wa nahi ānil Munkar. The Qur'ān has directed the followers to follow example of the prophet () by saying:

"...لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ 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 Mārūf and Munkar. Performer will never succeed, if he ignores the beautiful pattern of the Prophet ().

A performer for the understanding of Mārūf 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 Mārūf wa nahi ānil 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 Mārūf wa nahi ānil 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 Shariāh.³⁸

It is necessary, that the knowledge of Mārūf and Munkar must be present and must be according to Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ)'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'adh ibn Jabal (عنه الله رضى): “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 Máruf 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 Muḥammad () 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 الْجَاهِلِينَ⁴⁴

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

A performer of Amr bil Máruf 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 (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) says in the Qur'ān:

"فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ"⁴⁵

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

Prophet () said: “O! Aisha: Verily Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) 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 Máruf wa nahi ánil Munkar must be done with compassion. The Prophet () said: “Compassion does not enter into anything without beautifying it, and is not removed from anything without making it ugly.”

The Qur'ān 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 (عَزَّوَجَلَّ)

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

The love of good should be in harmony with what Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) 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 (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) loves and hates. Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) loves all that He has enjoined upon us in His shari'ah, and dislikes all that He has forbidden us in His shari'ah. 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 (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) does not demand from any of us more than what is within our ability.⁴⁸

As Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) says:

"...فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ"⁴⁹

"So keep your duty to Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) 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-Ma'rūf 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 (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) says:

"فَقُولَا لَهُ قَوْلًا لَّيِّنًا لَّعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَى"⁵¹

"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. SINCEREITY AND PURE INTENTIONS

It is essential that one's intention be directed solely toward Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ), 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 () said:

"Deeds are but with intentions."⁵²

For all righteous actions, two fundamental elements are required:

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

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 () 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’ān after the prophets:

"وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَحَسُنَ أُولَئِكَ رَفِيقًا"⁵⁵

“All whoso obey Allāh and the messenger, then they will be in the company of those on whom Allāh has 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-siddiqueen), the martyrs in the cause of Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) (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 (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) has prescribed, and His Prophet has ordered us to do - are valid and correct and are in accordance with the message with which Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) sent the prophets. On the other hand, acts of "worship" which is not so (i.e. not part of what Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) 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 (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) and are promised punishment, as Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) says:

"مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتَهَا نُوَفِّ إِلَيْهِمْ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فِيهَا وَهُمْ فِيهَا لَا يُبْخَسُونَ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا النَّارُ وَحَبِطَ مَا صَنَعُوا فِيهَا. وَبَاطِلٌ" 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 is 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 (عَزَّوَجَلَّ)—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 (عَزَّوَجَلَّ), 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’ān and Sunnah.

6. Patience

A Muslim must exercise patience in fulfilling what Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) 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 (ﷺ). 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 'an al-Munkar⁵⁹. 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 (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) said about calamity in general;

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ . الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاغِبُونَ⁶²

"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 (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) said about anger:

وَلَا تَسْتَوِي الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ. وَمَا يُلْقَاهَا إِلَّا الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَمَا يُلْقَاهَا إِلَّا ذُو حَظٍّ عَظِيمٍ⁶³

"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 Mārūf and nahi ānil Munkar may find in his way. For this reason, Ḥaḍarat Luqman advised his son; Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) said in sūrah Luqman:

"...وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأَصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَكَ..."⁶⁴

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

Ibn kathir accounts that Ḥaḍarat 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 (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) and not to become hopeless; is a great job.⁶⁵

The practitioner of Amr bil Mārūf and nahi ānil 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 (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) 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(ﷺ). The order to have patience came along with the order to deliver the message of Islām. When the Prophet (ﷺ) was first ordered to deliver the message to the people, Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) sent Sūrah Al-Muddathir;

"يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ. قُمْ فَأَنذِرْ. وَرَبَّكَ فَكَبِّرْ. وَتِبَابَكَ فִطِّرْ. وَالرُّجْزَ فَاهْجُرْ. وَلَا تَمْنُنْ تَسْتَكْثِرُ. وَلِرَبِّكَ 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 (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) began these seven āyat, with which He commissioned the Prophet (ﷺ) To convey His message to creation, Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) commanded the Prophet (ﷺ) to warn people and concluded this instruction with the command to exercise patience. Warning people of Allāh's (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) 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 (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) says:

"وَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ فَإِنَّكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ"⁶⁸

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

"... فَاصْبِرْ كَمَا صَبَرْنَا الْأَوَّلُوا الْعَزْمَ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ"⁶⁹

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

"وَاصْبِرْ عَلَى مَا يَقُولُونَ وَاهْجُرْهُمْ هَجْرًا جَمِيلًا"⁷⁰

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

"فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ وَلَا تَكُنْ كَصَاحِبِ الْخُوْتِ 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 صَدْرُكَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا تَكُ فِي ضَلٰٓئِقٍ مِّمَّا 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 يَضِيْعُ 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 (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) to be patient in all circumstances.

"... فَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ"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 (ﷺ) said: “He who is not patient in enjoining good and for bidding evil and has got no knowledge of enjoining good and for bidding 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 (عَزَّوَجَلَّ).”⁷⁶

Those who seek the reward of Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) will encounter no difficulty in giving advice. A key principle of advising others is to maintain patience, which is why Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) 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 (ikhhlās) 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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- 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.
- ⁴⁶ Imām Nawawī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi Sharḥ al-Nawawī* (Damascus: Maktabah al-Ghazālī, n.d.), Kitāb al-Birr, chap. Fadā'il al-Rifq, vol. 16, 146.
- ⁴⁷ Al-Ghazali, *Îhya' ulum-ud-din*, 240.
- ⁴⁸ Ibn Taymiyyah, *Al-Amr bil Māruf wa nahi annil Munkar*, 48-49
- ⁴⁹ At-Taghabun:16.

⁵⁰ Al-Ghazali, *Îhya' ulum-ud-din*.241

⁵¹ Ta-Ha:44

⁵² Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī, *The Translation of the Meanings of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī: Arabic-English*, trans. M. Muḥsin Khān and Muḥammad 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 Yahyā ibn Sharaf al-Nawawī, *Ṣaḥīḥ 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, *Îhya' ulum ud din*, Vol.3,82

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