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See also: ABROGATION; BACKBITING; BIRTH; BLOOD RELATIVES; BOUNDARIES OF ALLAH; CALUMNY; DAY OF JUDGMENT; DREAMS AND THEIR INTERPRETATION; ENORMITIES; FORGIVENESS AND FORBEARANCE; HOMOSEXUALITY; JĀHILIYYA; LEGAL PUNISHMENTS; LOVE, DESIRE, AND LUST; MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE; PEOPLE OF THE BOOK; REPENTANCE; REWARD AND PUNISHMENT; YŪSUF, UPON HIM PEACE.

**MUHAMMAD UMAR
AASIM ALI RASHID**

Adulthood

See LIFE; LIFE OF THIS WORLD; OLD AGE

ADVICE

NAṢIḤA

This article comprises the following sections: i. Lexical Background; ii. Usage; iii. Hadith References; iv. Muslim Practice and Literature; v. Bibliography.

Naṣiḥa, a comprehensive term encompassing both sincerity and well-meaning advice, is understood by certain scholars as the crux of the religion of Islam, encompassing the three dimensions of action, belief (*q.v.*), and spirituality (*islām*, *īmān*, and *iḥsān*, as specified in the famous 'hadith of Jibrīl' (*q.v.*) (Muslim, *Imān*, bayān al-islām wal-īmān wal-iḥsān; al-Nawawī, *al-Arba'ūn al-Nawawiyya*, Hadith 2, p. 48)) (Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi' al-'ulūm wal-ḥikam* 1:218). Given the broad scope of the term, practically every Qur'ānic verse and every teaching of the religion can be considered in some

way to be an elaboration of *naṣīḥa*. *Naṣīḥa* underlies sincerity in worship, contractual honesty in commerce (see BUYING AND SELLING), and interpersonal ethics (see IḤSĀN) in family law and other human interactions. State law, in turn, exists precisely to earnestly serve and preserve the collective welfare of both Muslim and non-Muslim subjects. The spirit of *naṣīḥa* underpinned the message and mission of all Prophets of Allah, and constantly keeping it in mind is said to be a powerful antidote against becoming enmeshed in legal technicalities (Kāshif al-Ghiṭāʾ, *al-Dīm al-naṣīḥa*, p. 6-8). It is an important constructive force for holding individuals and social institutions to standards of justice, preserving deep-rooted ethical standards. Finally, some sages have portrayed it as the key to spiritual achievement. Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728) was willing to swear that “The most beloved of Allah’s slaves to Allah are those who endear Allah to His slaves, and endear Allah’s slaves to Allah, and strive upon the earth with sincere counsel (*naṣīḥa*).” The early mystic Fuḍayl b. ‘Iyād (d. 187/803) averred that any spiritual rank is attained not because of abundant prayer and fasting, but rather “by magnanimity of soul, integrity of heart, and desiring good (*muṣḥ*) for the *umma*” (Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi‘ al-‘ulūm wal-ḥikam* 1:224).

Lexical Background

Naṣīḥa is derived from the trilateral root *n-ṣ-ḥ* which generally signifies purity, the intransitive verb *naṣaḥa* being used to describe honey from which the beeswax has been removed (the folk etymology of the English word “sincere” is precisely analogous). *Shāra al-‘asal*, a transitive verb used to describe this process, yields the term *shūrā* (“extracting an opinion,” see CONSULTATION), thus conceptually overlapping with the term *naṣīḥa*. From the tangible meaning of material purification derive the intangible senses of sincerity (*ikhhlās*, purification from deception and selfish motives, its root *kh-l-ṣ* being essentially synonymous with *n-ṣ-ḥ*), genuine love, and well-wishing, and hence honest striving—through thoughts, words, and actions—for what is beneficial and not harmful. The term’s active participle denotes not only one pure of heart (*nāṣīḥ*) but also a tailor (*nāṣīḥ* or *nāṣīḥī*), because he produces a garment to serve the welfare and best interest of the client and because he restores clothes to good order by patching (concealing) their damage—much like an earnest counselor, whose advice is directed purely toward what is good for another. The verb *naṣaḥa* can be used transitively, or more commonly and properly with the preposition *li-*, to indicate earnestly advising

another. The verbal noun *muṣḥ* signifies a state of being pure and sincere (Ibn Manẓūr; Fayrūzābādī, *Qāmūs*). Related to *naṣīḥa* are numerous other terms, among them *tadhkīr/dhikrā* (“reminder”) (see REMEMBRANCE AND REMINDER OF ALLAH), *wā‘iz* (“admonition”), *da‘wa* (“invitation (to Islam)”) (see CALLING TO ALLAH), *amr bil-ma‘rūf wa nahy ‘an al-munkar* (see COMMANDING GOOD AND FORBIDDING WRONG), and *waṣīyya* (“directive” or “testament”) (see WILLS, BEQUESTS, DIRECTIVES, AND DIVINE STIPULATIONS). Its opposite is *ghishsh* (“dishonesty, cheating”).

Usage

Five of the eleven Qur’ānic occurrences of derivatives of *n-ṣ-ḥ* present sincere, altruistic advice as underlying the preaching of the Prophets, specifically as illustrated by reference to Nūḥ (*q.v.*), Hūd (*q.v.*), Ṣāliḥ (*q.v.*), and Shu‘ayb (*q.v.*), peace be upon them all (detailed elaborations of Qur’ānic usage follow below). Ibn Kathīr extrapolates, deducing that Prophets in general possess the attribute of *muṣḥ* (“pure goodwill”), along with honesty and due diligence in delivering their message (see CONVEYING THE MESSAGE). The *muṣḥ* of the above-mentioned Prophets can be deduced to subsume actions and attitudes such as: conveying the message without alteration, addition, or subtraction (Ṭabarī; Tabarsī, *Majma‘*); clarifying the truth (Shawkānī, *Fath al-qadīr*); inviting their peoples to affirm the oneness of God and their Prophethood, in which people’s welfare ultimately lies (see REWARD AND PUNISHMENT) (Ṭabarī); warning them of Divine punishment if they do not mend their idolatrous, iniquitous ways (Ṭabarī); and conveying the Divine injunctions and duties, directing people to what is most correct and beneficial, and loving for them what the Prophet loves for himself (Rāzī).

In response to accusations by their people of misguidance and foolishness, respectively, Nūḥ (Q 7:62) and Hūd (Q 7:68) reply that they simply convey the messages of Allah, Nūḥ adding “*and I advise you all*” (*wa anṣaḥu lakum*) and Hūd adding “*and I am a true advisor to you*” (*wa anā lakum nāṣīḥun amīn*). The words of Nūḥ, peace be upon him, are presented in the imperfect tense, likely to reflect the nature of his 950-year mission (Q 29:14), in which he preached by *night and by day* (Q 71:5) despite repeated rejection and persecution. On the other hand, Hūd’s use of the participial noun *nāṣīḥ* (“advisor/counselor”) reminds his people of his established reputation among them (Ālūsī; Ibn ‘Ashūr, *Tafsīr*). While these two Prophets describe themselves as sincere advisors in the hope