

Self-Awareness and Reality of Faith

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After we saw some of the attributes that cause the degradation of human status, now let us proceed to observe the virtues that ensure the perfection of human development and are the cause of human maturity and perfection. But before beginning this discussion we invite your attention to two essential introductions

A – Necessity of Self-awareness

For a creature that naturally loves itself, it is absolutely instinctive to try to know its abilities and to try for their perfection. From this angle the emphasis put by Divine religions as well as religious leaders and scholars on self-awareness and self-acquaintance is for awakening the human nature.

So the Holy Quran asserts: We will soon show them Our signs in the Universe and in their own souls, until it will become quite clear to them that it is the truth.

And He has made subservient for you the night and the day and the sun and the moon, and the stars are made subservient by His commandment; most surely there are signs in this for a people who ponder; And what He has created in the earth of varied hues most surely there is a sign in this for a people who are mindful.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) too has given extraordinary importance to self-awareness and has introduced it as a way for knowing God. He says: One who knew himself has known God.

The following narrations are from Amirul Mo-mineen (a.s.):

Self-awareness is the most profitable knowledge.

I wonder about the one who is searching the missing thing whereas he himself is missing and yet is not searching. It makes me wonder that a man does not know himself. How can he wish ?to know God

The climax of knowledge is self-acquaintance?

The biggest success is for the one who succeeds in knowing himself. Do you think that you are an insignificant being whereas a great world is concealed in you Question: Why so much emphasis has been put on self-awareness in these verses and narrations?

Answer: It is because the one who understands himself knows God, thereafter he sees nothing

but Him and thereby is endowed with Divine virtues. Hence it is narrated from Imam Baqir (a.s.) that, as per a Qudsi Hadith: The Lord Almighty has said: There is no slave of mine who, through whatever I have made obligatory for him, attains nearness to me. Indeed my slave also, through, voluntary non-obligatory good deeds, comes so near to me that I like him and since I like him I become his ear through which he hears and I become his eye through which he sees and his tongue through which he speaks and his hand by which he attacks My and his enemies, the wrong doers. If he calls Me, I give answer to him and if he wants something from Me, I give it to him.

In Munaajaate Shaabaaniyah we read: Enlighten the eye of my hear, through which I observe Thee, by thy Radiance until the eye of wisdom tears through the curtains of light and joins thy Great Light, and connect our souls with the sacred status of thy Greatness. O my Lord Make me one of those who answer Your Call when you call them and when you attend to them they, due to your lustre and grandeur, become unconscious.

As a conclusion, from the viewpoint of the teachings of Quran and the Family of divine Revelation, man possesses such a high status that by becoming aware of it he can reach to such spiritual heights. By studying the events of those men of God who, as a result of self-build-up, reached the high stages of human dignity upto perfection and who ruled over the .physical world, you will be able to understand this fact

B – Views of World-famous Philosophers

1 – The enjoyment of human perfection is more pleasing than material fruits and for gaining it, man must make use of the tool of knowledge and technique of natural resources so that he may live a life of comfort and happiness. This view is based on the originality of matter, and genuineness of taste and the nobility of man.

2 – Human perfection is attainable by collective utilization of the gifts of nature. For attaining it, efforts should be made for common welfare. This view is based on the originality of community.

3 – Human perfection lies in both material and spiritual progress which can be attained through self-discipline and by fighting against material pleasures. This view corresponds with the views mentioned earlier.

4 – Human perfection is in intellectual progress that is attainable through knowledge and philosophy or logic.

5 – Human perfection is the rational and moral maturity that can be reached by learning knowledge and acquiring a graceful character.

And the last two views also are incompatible with materialism. After these two preliminaries have been clarified, we should understand that one virtue can make man perfect like the virtue of Faith can, as it is the faith in the Lord of the universe and in His commandments that lifts man unto the heights of perfection. From this angle, all of our efforts should be to adorn ourselves with this virtue. We must dig out the pearl of humanity from the mine of nature. Of course, this work is very difficult as

Reality of Faith

Some scholars of Islam believe that Faith is attestation by heart and, according to some; attestation of heart must also be combined with verbal witness. Yet some others also add deed with these two.

For making this discussion clear let us turn toward to the Holy Quran and the words of the family of infallibility and purity: The dwellers of the desert say: We believe. Say: You do not believe but say, We submit; and faith has not yet entered into your hearts; and if you obey Allah and His Apostle, He will not diminish aught of your deeds; surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. The believers are only those who believe in Allah and His Apostle then they doubt not and struggle hard with their wealth and their lives in the way of Allah; they are the truthful ones. From this verse we derive that the reality of Faith means confirmation by heart and its enactment through deeds but confession of the two Kalimas refer to Islam. Hence it is recorded from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) ???

In many verses after the word Aamanoo Believe Amale Swaleh Good deed has been added, indicating that, perhaps, special inclination is toward the common. Just look at these four verses:

1 – And as for those who believe and do good, We will most surely cause them to enter among the good.

2 – And as for those who believe and do good, We will certainly give them abode in the high places in gardens beneath which rivers flow, abiding therein; how good the reward of the workers.

3 – As for those who believe and do good, they shall surely have gardens of bliss, Abiding in them; the promise of Allah; a true promise, and He is the Mighty, the Wise.

4 – Except those who believe and do good.

I swear by the Asr, Most surely man is in loss, except those who believe and do good.

Question: IN some of the verses only confession from heart has been taken into account. Is it not against the abovementioned view?

Answer: Before replying to this question we look at the circumstance of the revelation of this verse: But no! By your Lord! They do not believe in reality until they make you a judge of that which has become a matter of disagreement among them, and then do not find any straitness in their hearts as to what you have decided and submit with entire submission.

Zubair bin Awwaam who was one of the migrants had some dispute with one of the Ansar Muslims of Medina in the matter of watering their gardens that were adjoining one another. Both went to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) for solving their dispute. The garden of Zubair was on the upper side of a stream and that of the Ansari on the lower.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) asked Zubair to water his garden first and thereafter the Ansari Muslim may water his and this was in accordance with the way in vogue about adjoining gardens then. But this Ansari, who was apparently a Muslim, became displeased with the just judgement of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and said: Is this verdict not because Zubair is your cousin? The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) became very uncomfortable. So much so that the colour of his cheeks also changed. It was at this time that the above quoted verse was revealed which cautioned the Muslims.

The above verse instructs that true Muslims should always be fully submissive and obedient to the orders of Allah and His Messenger. But it does not negate the other condition mentioned in previous verses.

Question: For being a Faithful, is it enough to believe in heart or is it essential to be obedient and submissive in practice too along with the belief in heart?

Answer: Undoubtedly mere belief is not sufficient because, most of the unbelievers, especially the leaders of Kufr and misguidance, knew it very well that the way of the Messengers was true and that their own path was false and deviated.

Therefore it is said in the Quranic verses: And they denied them unjustly and proudly while their soul had been convinced of them: And another ayat says: Those whom We have given the Book recognize him as they recognize their sons, and a party of them most surely conceal the truth while they know it.

And in the third verse Moosa (a.s.) addresses the children of Israel thus: And when Moosa said to his people: O my people! Why do you give me trouble? And you know indeed that I am Allah's apostle to you. So what we derive from the verses about Faith is that mere knowledge of truth is not enough but both belief and submission are required as is seen in the above quoted ayats.

Now we draw your attention towards some narrations:

1 – It is recorded from Imam Baqir and Imam Ja'far (a.s.): Faith is confession and practice and

Islam is confession without obedience. It is obvious that what is aimed by the second confession is oral belief and the recitation of the two Kalimas of shahaadatain and the word bi laa amal is added and in the phrase bi laa amal the word laa stipulates a condition. It does not imply negation. That is to say, for being a Muslim mere oral confession is enough even it is not practiced. It does not mean that there should be no practice. It is so because, one who acts according to the demands of Islam has become a Mo-min and at the same time he is also a Muslim.

2 – It is recorded from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) of Islam: Faith has three foundations: understanding and belief by heart; confession by tongue; carrying out the religious duties.

3 – Somebody asked Imam Sadiq (a.s.) about Faith. So he said:

Faith is nothing but hearty belief, verbal confession and action through body organs.

4 – It has been recorded from Imam Sadiq (a.s.): Emaan faith always accompanies Islam submission or obedience but obedience is not necessarily always with belief.

That is, every Mo-min Faithful is a Muslim obedient but every Muslim is not always a Mo-min.

5 – It has been recorded from Imam Baqir (a.s.) that once Amirul Momineen (a.s.) was asked: Is one who testifies the oneness of God and the Prophethood of Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) a Momin? He said: Then where do the commands of God vanish?

This means that only recitation of Kalimas is not sufficient for earning Faith.

6 – Salaam Jafi says: I asked Imam Sadiq (a.s.) about Faith. So he replied: Eman means Allah must be obeyed and He must not be disobeyed. In conclusion, what we get from the narrations is that which has been derived from the verses of the Holy Quran and it is that Faith is belief in heart and the following of Divine orders.

Just pay attention to these narrations regarding the perfection of Faith:

A – It is narrated from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.): One who has three characters has attained all the qualities of Faith: when he is happy, his happiness does not attract him toward untruth; in time of anger, his anger does not drive him out of the truth; and when he gets power, he does not exceed his limits.

B – Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said: A man does not become perfectly faithful except by three things: being aware of religious problems: 2 – moderation in living and 3 – steadfastness in times of difficulty.

C – Imam Baqir (a.s.) said: One having the qualities of stinginess, jealousy and timidity is not a Mo-min and added: a Mo-min is never stingy, jealous and timid.

D – Imam Baqir (a.s.) is quoted to have said: A Mo-min is more steadfast than a mountain because something can be taken out of a mountain but nothing can be confiscated from a Mo-

min.

5 – Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said: In truth, a faithful is tougher than a piece of iron because when iron is put in a furnace it changes and becomes red but if a Mo-min is killed, then enlivened, then ..killed and again enlivened his heart does never change

Recognition of faith

Now when the reality of Faith, from the viewpoint of verses and narrations, has become clear, it is essential to think over three things:

1 – Faith in the Lord of the universe assures peace of mind and heart.

2 – Faith can be either strong or weak.

3 – Faith is of two kinds: firm and meek or docile.

Now surely the friends of Allah – they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve. Those who believe and guarded against evil: They shall have good news in this worlds life and in the hereafter; there is no changing the words of Allah; that is the mighty achievement.

Between the friends of god – who are real Mo-mins – and God, there is no barrier or distance. Curtains have been lifted up from their souls and in the radiance of the light of knowledge and faith and pure deeds, they see god with the eyes of their souls in such a way that no kind of doubt or hesitation creeps in their hearts. It is due to this recognition of Allah Whose existence is unending and Whose Power is limitless and Whose perfection is total, everything except Him Allah becomes little, insignificant and weak and valueless in their sight.

Yes, one who is friendly with an ocean gives no importance to a drop and the one who looks at the sun is care little about a faint lamp. Thus it becomes clear why they are fearless. The reason is that fear usually is due to the possibility of the vanishing of a bliss or wealth which in the possession of man or because of dangers which are likely to threaten him in future.

Similarly, usually, man grieves over losing what he had in the past. The Wali's and true friends of Allah are free of every kind of attachment or slavery of the material world and zuhd or piety, in its true meaning, rules over their existence. They do not complain restlessly by losing material possessions nor any fear in this regard about future ever engages their minds.

That is why the sorrows and fears which make others always tense and restlessness, either about the past or regarding the future, are never found in their lives.

A little pot of water wavers even with the blow of mouth of a man but in the vastness of an ocean even storms prove ineffective and that is why the ocean remains mostly calm. So that you may not grieve from what has escaped you, nor be exultant at what He has given

you. Yes, the friends of God were always like this, that is: When they had they did not become mad after it and when they missed they did not grieve. Their souls are so large that and their views are so vast that such events of the past or the future can never affect them. In this manner true peace and tranquillity rules over their existence and in the words of they Holy

Quran: Those are they who shall have the security.

And according to another ayat: now surely by remembrance are the hearts set at rest. In shorts, grief and fear of man, usually is due to his materialistic thinking. If those who are not materialists do not feel fear or grief it is quite natural and sometimes this argument is propounded in the form of logic.

The friends of God always remain so deeply thoughtful of the Grace and Grandeur of God and are so much engrossed in His thought that they forget everything except Him. It is obvious that and pain and fear and fright undoubtedly require a thought of losing something or of facing an enemy who is dangerous. One who gives no place in his heart except to God and who does not fear anyone else and whose soul does not accept anything but God, how is it possible that he will have any kind of grief or sorrow or fear or fright?

For making the argument more clear it can be said: scientific and logical arguments also may bring certainty but they cannot create peace because logical arguments can satisfy man's mind but not his heart. And hence, it is essential that heart should be satisfied by way of faith and certainty and actual observation. As was the case with Gods fried Ibrahim (a.s.). When God

asked him: What! And do you not believe? He said: Yes but that my heart may be at ease.

An Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said: One day the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) offered the Morning Prayer in congregation. Then, in the mosque, he saw a young man who was dozing. His colour was yellow and his eyes were deep in their sockets. They Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) asked him: How are you? How did you pass your night and got up in the morning? The youth replied: I got up with Faith in my heart. The Prophet (s.a.) doubted his words. So he asked: Every faith has a certainty. What is the certainty of your faith?

The youth: O Prophet of God! It is the same certainty that has made me sad and sorrow-stricken. Awakening in the night and the thirst in days have been gifted to me by the same certainty. I have become uninterested in the world and everything therein so much so that, as if, I see the Throne of the Lord and that the court of accountability has rose up and that all men have gathered there and as if I see those who are in the Paradise, who are enjoying it fruits sitting comfortably on chairs introducing one another and as if I can see also the people of the Hell who are being punished there and that they are crying and shrieking and as if now I am hearing the noise of the flames of fire leaping from the Hell.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said to and the self-sacrificing youths of the Islamic Revolution of Iran in the field of war, so much so that a captive Iranian Muslim youth is not prepared to talk with a foreigner unveiled lady.

Faith is Liable to be strong and Weak Now we invite your attention to some Quranic verses which clearly state that faith can be increases:

1 – Those only are believers whose hearts become full of fear when Allah is mentioned, and when His communications are recited to them they increase them in faith, and in their Lord do they trust.

2 – When the believers saw the allies, they said: This is what Allah and His Apostle promised us, and Allah and His Apostle spoke the truth; and it only increased them in faith and submission.

3 – And whenever a chapter is revealed, there are some of them who say: Which of you has it strengthened in faith? Then as for those who believe, it strengthens them in faith and they rejoice. And as for those in whose hearts is a disease, it adds uncleanness to their uncleanness .and they die while they are unbelievers

Faith is of two types: Mustaqarr and Mustavda

What is derived from verses and narrations is that Faith of some people is stable Mustaqarr and fixed while the Faith of some, due to repeated disobedience is departing like as unfixed deposit. This can here be seen in the following verse and a tradition: 1 – And He it is Who has brought you into being from a single soul, then there is for you a resting-place and a depository; indeed We have made plain the communications for a people who understand.

2 – Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said: Verily a slave gets up in the morning in a state of a faithful Mo-min and passes his evening when he is a Kafir. And on the contrary he is unbeliever in the morning and turns into a believer in the evening. In between these tow kinds there also are people whose Faith is like a loan, which thereafter is taken back from them and such people are called

Ma aa reen meaning who were given a loan. Then he said: That person is among them.

What experience has confirmed and what history points out is that, around Prophets and Imams (a.s.) there were people who were faithful and pious but when a testing time arrived they failed therein and turned their faith into disbelief for example names of Bal-am Baaooraa and Zubair and ... can be quoted and on the other hand there are people of the other kind like Zaheer bin Qain and Hurr bin Yazeed Riyaahi and ... In the Islamic Revolution of Iran also we know a group of people who, after the Revolution, deviated from the straight path and the line of the Imam. As against them, there were also were people who were for merely deviated but

thereafter they believed in the Revolution to such an extent that they even attained martyrdom. To summarize, if man does not reform and construct oneself and does not train himself his future becomes very dark and he reached a stage when this Word of the Lord Almighty becomes applicable to him: They are as cattle, nay, they are in worse errors. Yes, if we long to attain the status of Gods vice regency, I quote here for our enlightenment about heart soul some words of the archers of morals. They will, God willing, prove helpful. Scholars of ethics are of the opinion that a man's soul or human feelings and impulses has three stages and that

the Holy Quran points to them like this:

1 – Is a rebellious soul that orders man to commit sin and drives him in every direction. Therefore it is called Ammaarah In this stage intelligence and Faith have not only no power or strength to control the rebellious self and to bridle it, but, on most occasions, to it they also submit to it and if it wants to fight with the rebellious soul they fall down and are defeated.

Second stage is Nafse lawwaamah: wherein, after learning, training and striving, man rises to a height. Of course, in this stage, it is possible that man in front of the storming impulses, sometimes does wrong. But, he at once, feels ashamed and scolds himself. He decides to stop sinning and washes purifies his heart and soul with the water of repentance. In other words, in

this battle between mind and soul, sometimes Aql wins and sometimes soul.

But in either case, the side of Aql and Eemaan is weightier. Yet for reaching this stage effort and striving is essential. In Islam such training and exercise is provided by the Words of God and the Prophet and the Imams and religious leaders. It is the same stage by which the Holy Quran has vowed in Surah Qiyamat. Such a vow indicates its greatness: Nay! I swear by the

Day of Resurrection. Nay! I swear by the self-accusing soul.

The third stage is Nafse Mut ma innah and this is the stage whereafter, full cleanliness, disciplining and training, man reaches a status when rebellious desires get defeated. They desires lose power to fight with Aql and Eemaan because the latter have become much more strong. This is the same stage of satisfaction and tranquillity. A tranquillity that rules over vast oceans. This is the status of Prophets and saints and the true followers and the Mo-mineen who learnt the lesson of Faith and fear of God from the Divine religion, strived for several years

for disciplining of the soul and took the Jihade Akbar to its final end.

The Holy Quran refers to it: O soul that art at rest! Return to your Lord, well pleased with Him, well pleasing Him, So enter among My servants, and enter into My Garden.

Everyone who keeps distance from his self Gets back the opportunity of is rejoining Here we .conclude the discussion of Faith and proceed to other heavenly attributes of man