Radical Self-Love

Coveting material things is a basic human nature. It is an instinct that was implemented in man on the day he was born. It is the motive which allows him to struggle continuously and preserve himself. As a result of this instinct, we notice that man avoids that which harms him and is attracted by advantageous matters. Therefore, he is a hostage of the psychological phenomenon when he advances. This phenomenon plays a great role in advancing the level of human civilization.

Yet, human happiness can only be achieved if men when struggling towards it, protect themselves from immoderation and carelessness; and at the same time refrain from the slavery of wants. Thereupon, in order for one to fulfill the needs of his instincts in an appropriate manner, wherein praiseworthy traits and excellent morals can develop, he must use his reason in every field of life.

This is because reason guides man not his instincts. Reason is what prevents instincts from both excessiveness and under development. It is the element which makes us face the realities of truth and falsehood. The power of reason, which has the greatest duty in developing man's personality, is what possess the ability to protect us from going astray and grants us scrutiny in our affairs.

If the instinct of self-love violates the limits of moderation and ventures into the territory of extravagance, it adversely affects man's reasoning system; hence preventing him from realizing the realities of life. Those who fall victim to such a disorder will eventually drown in the swamp of misguidance and corruption. Yet, the said instinct can be criticized for its harmfulness only when it is within the boundaries of extravagance. Therefore, the only goal of criticizing self-love is to point out the disadvantages of allowing this instinct to violate the limits of reason.

Both the success and failure of an individual correlate to their spiritual and moral condition. Moral disorders, which are spread through various stages of life, often stem from problems that arise form our unruly and unjustifiable wants.

Man has been given abundant talents and capabilities. Everyone has the power to follow his authentic and reasonable affection. Nevertheless, it is apparent that nothing is more of a harder for man than to adjust his instincts or wants including self-love conceit and arrogance. Therefore, we are compelled to make more of an effort to adjust this instinct or we will be unable to adopt excellent manners. Without self-control, we cannot lead an acceptable and

.praiseworthy life

What Do We Achieve from Arguments

Success in social behavior directly relates to certain rules which we must learn and build our conduct upon. For man's role in his relationships with others and his knowledge of the limits of his duties are among the issues which are determinative to his/her misery or happiness.

The need for harmony and establishing relationships is a trait deeply implemented in man's nature. Everyone is inclined to love and harmony; hence resents loneliness and secludedness. However, unless a person reaches peace of mind and soul, he will be incapable of living in peace with others, or with himself.

Peace, harmony and cooperation are essential factors for a healthy and peaceful social life; and respecting other's rights and feelings is the first condition to be observed in the art on constructive interaction. In this case, interpersonal relationships enjoy strength and continuity. Those who lack the foresaid traits are naturally deprived of balanced relationships with others, and the basis of love and harmony are weakened in them. They cannot, under the circumstances, keep their relationships with others at an acceptable level.

One of the evil traits which severely hurts the feelings of others and destroys the ties of love between people is disputing with them. Arguing individuals should realize that excessive self-love is one of the main factors which create this evil trait; it grows only when irrigated by the flow of this treacherous instinct.

A disputatious person, in order to quench the thirst of his conceit, opposes every opinion that may be brought up in any gathering, not to present a righteous idea or eradicate a mistaken concept, but to destroy his opponent's personality by false accusations. He attempts to create a sense of false excellence for himself by doing so. Such a person might conceal his aims under exclamatory or wondering vocabulary. In this manner, the disputatious looses the spirit of a just judge, and dares to commit all kinds of oppression and encroachments upon other's rights.

Furthermore, the opponent's reaction, in this case, should not be disregarded for when an individual's pride is violated, it is inevitable that he reacts to the cause. Therefore, he may exploit the appropriate opportunity to revenge, using all his powers to do so. Thus, if this trait is widespread in any given nation, it can result in disunity in both the way of thinking and the manner of conduct.

A scholar commented on this subject by saying: "Reason is a shinning light that guides mankind away from the darkness of ignorance and relieves him from his problems. We boast

about the fact that we are the only creatures to possess reason saying that with reason we have come to understand matters, their causes, results, and their relations to other entities. Yet, woe unto us if we attempt to unveil the truth by means of discussion and argumentations; for disputing results is nothing save mental anxiety. Disputing also reveals the ignorance of the disputants and their errors in scientific fields; it never changes the way others think nor makes them adopt our ideologies.

A Glance at the Words of Leaders

Islam has closely considered all aspects of social life, and scrutinized every element of love and harmony, hence it strongly condemns all that creates dissention among Muslims and shakes the foundation of their unity. The leaders of religion have shown their followers how to follow the path of purity and protect their hearts from the filth of all obscurities.

The Messenger of Allah (S) said: "It is a virtue that a man hastens to his brother when the latter speaks to him".[1]

Imam al-Baqir (a.s.) said: And learn good listening just as you learn good speech; and do not interrupt another's words."

The leaders of religion have repeatedly criticized disputation, and reminded people of its evil results up to the point that they prohibited their followers from disputations even in righteous issues.

Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "A worshipper does not reach the essence of belief until he abandons boasting even when right."[2]

No one becomes victorious in the arena of disputation. Imam Hadi (a.s.) gave the following advice to those who advocate defeating their opponents by means of disputation: "Boasting ruins long-standing relationships; ends strong relations, and the least of its evils is competition (trying to excel over one s foes), and competition is the main (factor in) alienation."

Dr. Dale Carnegie wrote: "In every ten verbal disputes, the disputant comes out in nine out of ten cases believing more in their opinions and claiming that their opponents are wrong. There is not a winner in these disputes where the one defeated runs away. Yes, you crack your fingers in happiness over your victory; but you think about the condition of your opponent! You made him feel ignorant and hurt his feelings leaving a scar on his heart.

'"Disputing is an inappropriate way to convince others, and to influence the way that other's think. In fact, there is no relationship between convincing and disputing, nor can misunderstandings be removed by disputing. Selected advice and a peaceful approach are the elements needed in this case. It is incumbent on man to sympathize with his opponent."

The Messenger of Allah (S) said: “Avoid bragging for the lack of its goodness; and avoid bragging for its advantages are few and it instigates enmity between brothers.”

A famous doctor once said: “There are not many advantages to disputing. The intention for the disputant can turn on the side of his foe, for feelings can erupt during arguments. No matter how calm conversations are, they still have adverse affects on the opponent’s heart. Thus, whenever we attempt to outsmart him he insists on his opinion. One word can destroy a love relationship forever. Furthermore, disputes never cause others to adopt our way of thinking.”[3]

Disputants always have a sense of anxiety in their hearts.

Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: “Avoid disputing for it occupies the heart, results in hypocrisy, and creates hard feelings.”[4]

Therefore, by observing the divine Islamic teachings we can pave the way for ourselves to create a spiritual revolution in our spiritual characteristics in an attempt achieve excellent .human morals. Allah is the Best Helper and on Him do we depend

Notes:

[1] Nahj al-Fasahah p. 633

[2] Safinah al-Bihar V.2, p. 522

[3] Dar Jostojui Kushbakhti

[4] Usul al-Kafi. p. 452