

Beliefs Between Reason and Sentiment

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In the Name of Allah the most Gracious the Most Merciful

And We sent not before you any messenger, but surely they ate food, and went in the markets; and we have appointed some of you to be a trail for others. Will you endure? Your Lord is ever All-seeing.

And those who look not for a meeting with Us, Say: Why have the angles not been sent down on us, or why see we not our Lord? Assuredly they think too highly of themselves and are scornful with great pride.

On the day when they behold the angles, on that day there will be no good tidings for the guilty; and they will cry: A ban forbidding!

And We shall turn to the work they did and make it scattered motes.

Those who have earned the Paradise on that day will be better in their home and happier in their place of noonday rest. [The Criterion]

It is possible for men to take and receive their beliefs and thoughts from their feelings and sentiments. And, there are some who take their reason a starting point and base for their beliefs.

The first type like appearances, are affected by them, follow them, and thus follow their passions. They put and fix before their eyes, which do in fact propel and lead them, colors, forms, and beauty: all appearances.

The second group makes sentiments and affectation with the superficial subordinate to reason and wisdom. So, when he decides to buy a house, for instance, he thinks of and over its place, the type of neighbors he would have, makes sure about the durability of its foundations, then he chooses one. He also repeatedly thinks into religion, morality, ethics, and the descent of the lady he wants to choose as his future wife. All based on rational and sound grounds, and not fascination and attraction to her mere looks or beauty, and thus act this type of individuals in all affairs of their lives.

Most often if you ask a certain Mr. X any where about the motives or reasons behind his choice of a certain religion, in most cases, you will see that he has followed his parents or people. Whereas we have become definitely sure that the family environment does not generate any right or reality. While it is also most often seen that the wise and thoughtful answer by saying that they have pondered and meditated before reaching convictions and decisions over choosing a certain fact or piece of truth. So, we see that these two types of

people are greatly different from one another.

Those who believe in and take up a certain religion based on their emotions and sentiments, should very easily give away their belief when those emotions and feelings have changed. He believes in that certain religion as long as the people surrounding him do. And, if the surrounding circumstances and conditions change he should also change and start looking for a new outfit to put on.

The second issue is that those who take up a religion based on sentiments, the social, political, or historical milieu surrounding them, can not use their reason and brains while applying the details of their religion. For example those worshipping the cow are unable to listen to the call of their reason telling them that it is most disgusting to seek bliss with the waste of a cow. But that is really what Hinduism is like and about, consciously or unconsciously evading and ignoring the search for the reasons behind the cow receiving such a sacredness. This is clear proof to that whoever starts a belief by irrational principles and without sound search should wrongly follow it in all areas of his life. You would see him bury or burn the wife when her husband dies, or let loose a cow to disturb the traffic whenever it likes. Thus are all those beliefs based on sentiments and emotions.

Therefore, I recommend myself and my brethren of the necessity to base beliefs on firm principles of reason, wisdom, and sound thinking. So that our journey in life be healthy, and we reach a noble and regretless end.

The Holy Quran had stricken a good example for us in Abraham, the prophet's, story. For, Abraham was definitely sure and cognizant of Allah's absolute might and glory. But, he started his journey of suspicion all through and up to utter conviction, so that all other believers witness a tangible and useful example that would save them from any possible losses and hardship. Here the Quran had said:

And thus We showed Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and that he might be of those who are sure.

So when the night grew dark on him he beheld a star, He said: This is my Lord. But when it set, he said: I love not things that set.

And when he saw the moon uprising, he exclaimed: this is my Lord. But when it set, he said: Unless my Lord guide me, surely I shall become one of the folk who are astray.

And when he saw the sun uprising; he cried: This is greater! And when it set he exclaimed: O my people! Surely I am free from all that you associate (with Him).

Surely I have turned my face toward Him who created the heavens and the earth, as one by nature upright, and I am not of the idolaters. [The Cattle]

Abraham wanted all Muslims to have a religious belief based on sound logical hierarchy, the logic that would fully recognize and cover all the attributes of that worshipped Creator. Then in another Quranic story the same scene is repeated one which should increase awareness and certitude based on the principles of exact search and healthy thinking. In

Allah's words:

And when Abraham said to his Lord: My Lord! Show me how Thou give life to the dead? He answered: What! Do you not believe? He said: Yes, but I ask in order that my heart may be at ease. His Lord said: Take four of the birds, then train them to follow you, the place on every mountain a part of them, then call them, they will come to you flying, and know that Allah is mighty, Wise. [The Cow]

Abraham this great prophet was looking for himself and all the Moslems certainty, asking Allah the Exalted to show him how he resurrects the dead so that his heart calms down and he be not affected with all that uncertainty and rush the hypocrites experience with every event.

and whose hearts feel doubt, so in their doubt they waver. [Repentance]

Where they live and die in uncertainty, while ignorant of the fact that true life is in certitude and certainty, and of conviction with religion which should be an original one.

The Quality of Belief in Imam Ali (A)

On the occasion of Imam Ali's birthday, we should be aware of whom we are speaking. Some people speak of Ali as that great hero who always released the prophet and his progeny from sorrow, until Gabriel in between the heavens and earth cried out: There is no brave man like Ali or any sword like his (Zolfeghar). He reaped the infidel and unbeliever. He who during a battle when was asked by some one to give him his sword did give his sword and explaining the reason had said that he would for ever be shameful if he did send away and refuse any person's request. He was a real hero, generous, and sensitive person

We once believe in him as that symbolic hero, good example of bravery, courage, and generosity. All this is right and a true reflection of what heroism excites as feelings and sentiments.

And once we believe in him as that worshipping hermit who prayed a 1000-part prayer. Ali is that man who would pray to his Lord in Bani Nahar's garden, until he fainted with excessive worship and fear of his Lord. Again we believe in him as that patron and guardian of the orphan. He who whenever seeing an orphan would be all in tears.

All that belief is right and springs out of feeling and sentiment. True belief in Ali is knowing him as the direct extension of the prophet, Mohammad, whom we know to be sent by Allah.

There is great difference in knowing Ali in his personal frame work and conduct, and in knowing him the lawful representative of our holy prophet's message and mission. When we say that Mohammad is Allah's messenger, it means that we believe in Jesus the son of Mary, or Moses the son of 'Imran, or Abraham to be all Allah's messengers, without discriminating between any of the prophets. One's conviction in his beliefs should not be discordant and selective, but they should be unified, and derived from principles and values shaping all the prophets, messengers, righteous, martyrs, and the subjects and worshipers of Allah the Glorious. If anyone asked the prophet of what attribute he liked he would answer: Call me Allah's slave/subject. Thus was Imam Ali, too. For, when once , at his last days, one of his close companions had asked him a question, he had answered him: I am one of Mohammad's slaves/subjects. The question had been about his position between the divine prophets. There he had proved his excellence over all prophets through Quranic evidence, but at the same time had said those preceding words when getting to Mohammad. It is natural in the religious belief that the more one's belief in Allah increases the more will be his belief as a consequence in the prophet, his progeny, and their dos and don'ts. Thus, it is essential in religious belief to believe in Allah according to reason and wisdom. What is most loved in: Ali is that he is the extension of the prophet, and in Mohammad that he is Allah's slave/subject, and true love only belongs to Allah. This is most essential in religious belief and it is impossible to separate our love for Allah, his messenger, or his friends.

The Truth of Human Crisis

If anyone claims to love and glorify Allah, while ignoring and denying the necessity for loving the messenger. Such a belief should be totally rejected, for, Allah does not accept such love from us. Allah says in his prophets tongues: Say if you love Allah, follow me, Allah will love you and forgive you and forgive your sins. Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.

[The Family of 'Imran]

Allah's love is inherent in following the messenger, and such a condition is not to be imagined without belief and love. Allah had said in another Quranic verse: We sent no messenger save that he should be obeyed by Allah's leave. And if when they has wronged themselves, they had but come to you and asked forgiveness of Allah, and asked forgiveness of the messenger, they would have found Allah Forgiving, Merciful.[The Women]

Allah has pointed to that door which we should enter from, and the prophets are just means to this. Perhaps the fruit of belief in Allah is that man prevents from evading and avoiding those responsibilities Allah has put on his shoulders, an escape which has always been among mankind's greatest crises, and the true reflection of that chaos which storms humanity from the very beginning, where every individual tries to plan a method which would supposedly lift him up to the peak and summit.

Disobedience to the prophets represents one of those crises from the old ages and days. People used to raise the banners of justification in their refusal of the prophets. Once they would blame the prophets for entering the market, and working for their living; or for not being angles; or for not being wealthy; or for gathering the weak and needy around themselves. Men have always disobeyed Allah's divine rule, prophets, and messenger by taking refuge in pride and illusions.

The All-mighty Allah has always been able, from the very beginning, to refute all the lame excuses the unbelievers have raised against the prophets. But divine wisdom decided to send human prophets who would as all others be ruled by natural laws, men walking into the markets, just knowing the unseen and invisible as far as Allah wished for them, not owning any gifts but those others had, and Allah increased for them of his grace. All these for different reasons. Among which for the prophets to be Allah's signs and proof to all men as far as faith in Allah had been concerned. For if they had been very greatly different from all others, then people would have excuses to be offered to Allah.

Allah wanted the human character to crystallize through this exact test embodied in the prophets obedience in all harsh and difficult circumstances, so that they deserved all the promised divine rewards.

It was Allah who sent down his revelation to the prophets' hearts, knowing that the hearts of people are unable to take it. But that disease of pride prevented men from knowing clear truth. For receiving and understanding revelation ,and dealing with angles are in great need of the preparation of the needed grounds, such as, correct upbringing, absolute faith, and Allah selecting one. But the majority of people are unable by virtue of their corrupt hearts, unable of receiving and understanding, and they are basically inapt for divine selection.

Likewise man's disobedience to and escape from acknowledging the prophets had been among the major human crises, Thus is man's arrogance toward Allah which has been an obstacle to the human journey, too, and which should continue so to the Doomsday, when Allah would change whatever actions and behavior of the unbelievers' into dust, for they are all based on selfishness and disobedience: what was stated in the opening verse.

But, humility to Allah is an opposite picture to that, where this moral value is base on faith in Allah, which in turn is based on reason and wisdom.

I say: Reason if looks into the wisdom existing in the universe from a Quranic point of view, will reach a recognition of Allah in its very heart, and through this recognition it will know the prophet, his progeny, and Allah's friends. So, reason does see in Imam Ali another picture of the prophets' attributes in his knowledge, courage, justice, and worship, which would extend from him to Imam Ali and to all those following his path. For, if the believers had followed Imam Ali, it had been because of his orders to following the prophet's orders, where in turn we would be following and obeying Allah's commands.

It is all important for sentiments to stand behind rationality, wisdom, and logic, so that sentiments become their soldiers and not enemies.

We ask Him the exalted to support us and put us among those who He has guided, and to make us know Him, His messenger, and His proof, Imam Mahdi; and to give us vision in our religion; to help us with ourselves, as He did with the righteous: and to make our doom a good one. And Allah is the patron of all success.

.May Allah's salutes be to Muhammad(S.A.W.) and his pure progeny