

Discourse 2: Characteristics Of The True Believer – Part 11

In continuation of the tradition which noted the characteristics of the true believer, we examine six more qualities the believer must possess:

...إِنْ سَلَكَ مَعَ أَهْلِ الدُّنْيَا كَانَ أَكْيَسَهُمْ، وَإِنْ سَلَكَ مَعَ أَهْلِ الآخِرَةِ كَانَ أَوْرَعَهُمْ
لَا يَرْضَى فِي كَسْبِهِ بِشُبُهَةٍ وَلَا يَعْمَلُ فِي دِينِهِ بِرُخْصَةٍ يَعْطِفُ عَلَى أَخِيهِ بِزَلَّتِهِ وَ
يَرعى مَا مَضَى مِنْ قَدِيمٍ صُحْبَتِهِ...

“...if he (the true believer) is in the company of those (attached to the) material world, then he is the most alert and attentive (to the next world); if he is in the company of those (who love the) next life, then he is the one who possesses the most consciousness (of Allah). He does not entertain any form of doubt in relation to his earnings (they are all from the permitted) and he does not allow any leave or departure from his beliefs. If his brother in faith makes a mistake, he forgives it, however he does not forget the good deeds which have been done in the past by his close friends.”¹

The majority – or close to all of the scholars from amongst the Shi’a and Ahlus Sunnah believe that the text of the Noble Qur’an has not been altered (Tahrif) in any way. However, there are a minority of scholars of the Ahlus Sunnah and even some Shi’a scholars who accept that there has been alteration of the Qur’an. The logical proofs, narrated proofs and historical evidence pointing to the protection of the Qur’an have been explained in detail in our book, *Anwar al-Usul*, while a summarized discussion of this has been presented in our work, *Tafsir-e-Namuna*.

It must be noted that there are some amongst the Ahlus Sunnah (particularly the head-strong Wahhabis) who are adamant that the Shi’a believe in the alteration (of the Qur’an)! However, we see that the Qur’an printed in Iran and those printed in their country are no different from one another, however they still incessantly believe state that, “You Shi’a have a separate Qur’an!”

It is these sorts of people who wish to see the Shi'a taken out of the fold of Islam and thus, are unyielding in their false claims! However, through using their own reference books, we have proven to them that it is actually they who have the belief in the alteration of the Qur'an!

Alteration of the meaning of the verses is one of the branches of tahrif of the Qur'an and this is something alluded to in the Qur'an itself. The alteration of the meaning (of a sacred scripture) is something that has always been present in the faiths of Judaism, Christianity and even Islam and the most basic form of alteration of the meaning of a scripture is to choose those verses and passages which suit a person and his ideology.

Thus, in such a method of corruption of the text, only one portion of a verse that benefits a person is quoted while the rest of the verses on that topic or section are ignored whereas we know that the verses of the Qur'an explain and elucidate upon one another.

One instance in which an alteration in the meaning of the Qur'an and the traditions has taken place is in relation to the topic of the material world. While discussing this topic, every group has tried to explain the transient world through their own biases and predispositions.

One group of people who are materialistically deprived and do not have the energy to work have chosen a life of asceticism and abstinence from the material world.

Another group of people live by the tradition which states:

الدُّنْيَا مَزْرَعَةٌ لِلْآخِرَةِ.

“The world is the planting ground for the next life.”

These people have attached themselves firmly to the life of this world and worship the transient world!

However, both of these extremes are unacceptable and therefore, we must refer to the Noble Prophet (S) and see what he has mentioned in relation to the world and how the complete believer should view it.

According to the Prophet (S), the forty-eighth characteristic of the believer is, “If the believer is in a gathering in which people are paying attention to the material world, then he is more aware and alert of Allah (SwT) than the others.”

The forty-ninth characteristic of the believer is that, “He (SwT)s one who, while in the presence of those who are working for the next life, possesses the most consciousness (Taqwa) of Allah (SwT) and does not seek the material world for pleasure, luxury and enjoyment. Rather, he seeks the material world solely for the honour and esteem of the Muslim nation and for its progress.”

Honour and esteem are not manifest through mere slogans and chants; rather they are seen through

being independent and needless of others! If the needs are reciprocal, then it is not a problem however if we are in need of what the others have while they have no need for us or our products, then this is of no benefit!

If we do not want to have political relations with other people or countries, then we must also not have economic relations with them; and if we do not want economic relations with them, then we must not have intellectual relations with them! However, if we wish to have relations with others, then no matter what slogans in defense of freedom and independence we cry out, they will have no impact since within the products which foreign countries produce and sell, we see that they have infused their culture and tradition into them!

The fiftieth characteristic states, "...the believer is one who not only fulfills the obligatory acts which are upon him and refrains from the prohibited, rather, he also stays away from the doubtful issues in life." Thus, the true believer would not participate in vain and useless gatherings, which is one of the areas of doubt.

In the Du'a of Abu Hamza al-Thumali which is recited in the Month of Ramazhan and has been taught to us by Imam 'Ali b. Husayn al-Sajjad (as), we read that:

أَوْ رَأَيْتَنِي فِي مَجَالِسِ الْبَطَّالِينَ فَحَرَمْتَنِي.

"Or maybe You saw me in a gathering of those who were indulging in vain (acts) and thus, you rejected me."

Thus, we have been told that doubtful acts are like the edge of a cliff and if a person falls into negligence in relation to these deeds, then most definitely, he will fall head first into the valley of sins.

The fifty-first characteristic is that "...the true believer is one who does not permit himself any sort of departure or separation from his faith." The meaning of separation of the faith is best summarized in the following saying:

كُلُّ مَكْرُوهٍ جَائِزُ الْعَمَلِ وَكُلُّ مَسْتَحَبٍّ جَائِزُ التَّرْكِ.

"All reprehensible acts are permissible to perform, and all recommended acts are permissible to neglect."

The true believer is one who stays away from doubtful things and anything which serves to separate him from his faith.

The fifty-second characteristic is that the true believer is one who "...forgives the slips and errors of his brother in faith."

Other than the Infallibles (as), who else is there in the world that does not have errors or faults on their record? If we were to remember all the mistakes and faults that others perform, then it would not be possible to live in this world any longer!

The fifth-third characteristic tells us that the true believer is one who, "...does not forget the good things which his friends have done for him in the past."

We ask Allah (SwT) that He grant us the ability to enliven these characteristics within ourselves!

1. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 64, pg. 311

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