

Self-Sacrifice in Order to Reach One's Objectives

(Verse 15)

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ

“Without doubt the true believers are only those who have faith in Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad) and then do not change their belief into doubt, and (the believers are those) who struggle with their wealth and their lives in the way of Allah. Surely it is these people alone who are the truthful ones.”

The style of the Qur'an is such that when discussing an issue, it puts forth the clearest proofs and it follows this method when it elucidates on the practical laws and issues related to society. Within its communications, the Qur'an also introduces both logical proofs and the traits which are within our innate disposition and in a majority of instances, its directives are not propounded as simply matters of submission. 1

Many times during the course of a person's research, a scholar will view a verse of the Qur'an as an isolated, independent issue, separate from that which came before it. However after careful study, he will realize that the issue which he is studying is not independent; rather the aim and intention of the contents of the verse he was studying was to elucidate and draw his attention to a previously mentioned fact, and this point is absolutely clear for the person who has a deep love for the Qur'an.

The verse under discussion is of this type and although the plan and design of this verse is to explain some of the signs of a person of true faith, however in reality it explains the causes why the tribe of Bani Asad must say:

أَسْلَمْنَا وَ لَمَّا يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ

“(Rather say) that we submit (as Muslims) since true faith has not yet entered into your hearts.”

Why does the Qur’an say this? It is because people who possess true faith can be distinguished through the following characteristics:

1. They have firm faith in Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and His Messenger (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) and this is deeply rooted in the bottom of their hearts.
2. They do not allow doubt or scepticism to enter into their hearts.
3. They offer sacrifices in the way of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He).

Were these characteristics within them (the tribe of Bani Asad)? Without doubt, they were not. This was said because the outward show of their actions illustrated that they had not yet developed true faith in the bottom of their hearts and there was still doubt and scepticism in them and thus, they were not willing to give up their life and wealth in the way of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He).

Now, we offer an explanation of the third characteristic:

One of the signs of a person who possesses true faith is that he is unselfish and self-sacrificing. Such a person is constantly struggling with his life and property toward his goals and the action and behaviour of one are brought forth through his manner of thinking and his beliefs.

If the beliefs of a person in relation to something reach to such a level that they overtake the importance of his own life, property and his entire existence, then without doubt he will exert as much energy that is needed to reach and protect his goals and will be ready to give up everything (to reach to such an aim).

Principally, true faith and belief in something would produce such a strong love and affection in a person that sometimes without his own volition he would express his love for that thing. It goes without saying that love is an internal, conscious feeling that makes a person act in a particular way out of its own desire.

The power and force that this emotion has on the internal conscious of a human being and the wave of excitement that love and affection bring about in a persons’ life can never be explained or brought about with proof or logic.

Sometimes, it could be that countless points of logic and other sorts of proof could be brought forward to crush the internal feelings and emotions of a person, however when those same feelings become stronger and more powerful in the (spiritual) heart, then they uncontrollably take over a person and thus the person is left to submit to his powerful inner emotions.

For example, sometimes it may be impossible to get even one dollar from a person who has a strong love and affinity to money and wealth however when his child falls victim to an illness, then the natural instinct within himself that forces him to love his child takes precedence over his love for wealth. In such an instance, it is possible that he would even give away half of his wealth just to have his child cured from a sickness!

The feelings and inner desires, rather all of the innate characteristics of a human being bring about an intense form of (spiritual) movement and motion in a person, and if these emotions and feelings are not controlled and channelled in a proper manner, then truly the person would transgress many boundaries and limits.

When we look at the self-sacrifice of people during the passing of time, we see individuals who in an urge to push their own goals and aims forward, became so uncontrollable and illogical that they ended up losing their own respect and dignity just to make sure that their goals were achieved.

It is because of this fact that it is said they have true faith in the bottom of their hearts for the goals that they were trying to reach towards and their faith created such a strong sense of love within themselves that without even calculating the outcome of their acts, they ended up sacrificing everything to reach to their goals and without any control, were pulled towards reaching it. If we see that at the final stages of their lives they even ended up forgetting their spouses and children and were still trying to pursue their goals, then it is because of this reason.

Sa`d Rabi` was one of the self-sacrificing companions of the Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) who possessed a heart that was overflowing with faith and sincerity. During the battle of Uhud, he fell to the ground with a staggering twelve injuries to his body and was in a state of giving up his life when the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) commanded another believer to go and investigate the state of Sa`d Rabi` and to bring him back the real news of how he was.

Zaid ibn Thabit found this companion of the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) amongst the others who had been killed on the battle field and (just before he died), he proceeded to ask how he was doing, to which Sa`d replied in the following manner:

“Tell the Prophet that there are only a few moments left in the life of Sa`d and may Allah give you, O’ Messenger of Allah, the best reward that one who is a Prophet is entitled to receive.” He then went on to say, “Convey my greetings to the companions of the Prophet and tell them that anytime any sort of injury or harm is inflicted on the Prophet and they are living then they must ask forgiveness from Allah for this.”²

There is no love or affection greater than the love that true faith brings about in a person, since the person who has such a faith will be so drowned in the glory and beauty of the one that he loves and will strive to reach his goal, that he would be willing to give up his entire life to attain that which he loves, and

will forget everything else around him.

The Areas Where Love is of No Use

Each and every person has been created with a specific inclination or set of emotions within him. This spiritual blessing exists in all people however with a variance in its levels amongst people. Amongst all of the various levels that exist, women are the focal point of this inclination and it is their hearts which are full of love and affection.

One time, a Muslim woman of Madinah was told that three of her loved ones were killed in the battle of Uhud. This woman mounted a camel and proceeded towards the area where the battle of Uhud had taken place so that she could go and bring the bodies of her deceased ones back home for burial. On the return back to Madinah, she was carrying the three bodies with her on the camel and was getting ready to enter into the city.

Half way to the city, she met up with one of the wives of the Messenger of Allah (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny). This wife of the Prophet asked the lady how the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) was doing.

This selfless woman – with a clear face resembling one who had not even seen the smallest difficulty – who was holding the ropes of the camel in one hand and was covered in the blood of the martyrs that were on the camel being transported back, said to the wife of the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny), “I have good news for you and that is that the Prophet is alive and safe and because of this great blessing, all other trials and tribulations seem to be insignificant, trivial things!”

The wife of the Prophet asked this lady, “Whose bodies are those?” The lady replied, “The one body is that of my husband, the second is that of my son and the third is my brother’s. I am taking them all back to Madinah to have them buried there.”³

What factors were responsible for this display of self-sacrifice and unselfishness in one’s aim and purpose that flowed through this woman? How is it possible that such a true faith and strong affection to the true visage of Tawhid could be present in the heart of a person such that her innate inclinations of motherhood could be kept under such control?!

True Faith Takes the Place of the Forces of Equality

One of main reasons for the victories during the previous wars is the superiority of the military forces or at least being at par or balance with the opposing side. By this we mean that each side of the conflict would try their best to make sure that the number of soldiers and quantity of weapons would be equal with the opposing side so that there would be some equality between the two armies.

However in relation to the wars that are fought to defend the sanctity of an ideology and teachings in

which the soldiers are equipped with true faith, inner desires, wishes and through their spiritual stimulants which make them go towards the enemies, at no time can equality (of military strength) be the classification for victory.

Rather, there have been people who were small in number and insignificant (from the point of view of strength) that were victorious over a large group of people and it was the power of their soul and spirit that made them victorious over their well-equipped enemy.

For example, in the Battle of Badr, the forces of the idol worshippers were three times that of the Muslim forces. In addition, the entire force of the enemy was armed to the teeth with weapons and had enough troops mobilized (to win the battle). Before the flames of war erupted between these two groups, the elders of the Quraish requested one of the bravest men to go and count the number of companions of Muhammad (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny).

With his swift horse, he circled the camp of the Muslim army and returned with the following report: "The number of fighters with Muhammad does not exceed more than 300 people and there are no other people behind them that could be used to ambush us. However, I also tried to study their mental and spiritual state and found that they have brought death and destruction from Madinah as a gift for you all!"

The man continued: "I saw a group of people who have nothing except for a sword to use for protection such that until they do not kill one of you, they will not be able to be killed. When this number of people have killed an equivalent number of you, then their lives will have no more worth."⁴

This man found all of the polytheists of the Quraish quiet, however the firm resolve could be seen on their faces and their snake-like venomous tongue was still in their mouths.

It is because of this that the Qur'an considers the greatest sign of true faith to be self-sacrifice when it mentions that those people who have true faith are those who as the Qur'an puts it: "Those who have true faith are those people who have a firm belief in Allah and His Messenger which is rooted in the bottom of their hearts and are willing to give up their lives and wealth to reach to their goals, surely it is these people who are the truthful ones."⁵

The Generation of Freedom

The second half of the twentieth century has been introduced as the generation of freedom for the exploited nations of the world. Those nations who for countless years were locked under the chains of colonization finally awoke and through their intelligence and vigilance, broke off the chains (of oppression) that were upon them and have proclaimed their freedom to the entire world.

However the only nations that proved to be successful were those who traversed this path (of freedom) with true faith and self-sacrifice in all areas of their lives and completely turned their backs to the colonizing empires of the world. The self-sacrifices of the freed nation of Algeria and the other countries

of Africa are clear examples of this issue.

Today, for the countries who are busy exploiting and colonizing others, there is no fear if a group of wicked, rebellious people that do not possess any spiritual goal and motives based on true faith rise up in aggression.

The greatest danger and threat for Imperialism on a national level are the developed nations which have true faith such that by relying on their faith and spiritual goals that they have set for themselves, have risen up and even with arrows and rocks, have been able to remove the colonial forces from their lands. As long as life is flowing through them, they will never rest for even one moment, and thus their eventual end will be that of victory.

1. By this, it is meant that when the Qur'an speaks on various issues, it does not make the issue as one that we must accept without proof or logical arguments and as simply being commandments that we must follow as Muslims – or those who submit to the word of Allah – rather, the Qur'an tries to explain issues to us through proofs and reasoning that our minds would understand and accept. (Tr.).

2. Sirah Ibn Hisham, Volume 2, Page 497; Bihar al-Anwar, Volume 20, Page 121.

3. Maghazi, Volume 1, Page 265.

4. Sirah Ibn Hisham, Volume 1, Page 622; Bihar al-Anwar, Volume 19, Page 251.

5. Surah al-Hujurat (49), Verse 15 [Verse Under Discussion].

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