

Right n. 2: The Right of Your Self

حق النفس

وَأَمَّا حَقُّ نَفْسِكَ عَلَيْكَ فَإِنَّ تَسْتَوْفِيَهَا فِي طَاعَةِ اللَّهِ فَتُوَدِّي إِلَى لِسَانِكَ حَقَّهُ وَإِلَى سَمْعِكَ حَقَّهُ وَإِلَى بَصَرِكَ حَقَّهُ وَإِلَى يَدِكَ حَقَّهَا وَإِلَى رِجْلِكَ حَقَّهَا وَإِلَى بَطْنِكَ حَقَّهُ وَإِلَى فَرْجِكَ حَقَّهُ وَتَسْتَعِينُ بِاللَّهِ عَلَى ذَلِكَ.

And the right of yourself incumbent upon you is that you employ it in obeying God; then you deliver to your tongue its right, to your hearing its right, to your sight its right, to your hand its right, to your leg its right, to your stomach its right, to your private part its right, and you seek help from God in all that.

Therefore, we must respect the rights of our body parts that God has given us in order to honor ourselves. We should seek God's help in doing so.

The Meaning of One's Self

Some researchers consider the self to imply our souls. We read:

أَخْرَجُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ الْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ عَذَابَ الْهُونِ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ وَكُنْتُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِهِ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ

“... Yield up your souls: this day shall ye receive your reward, – a penalty of shame, for that ye used to tell lies against God, and scornfully to reject of His signs!” [The Holy Qur’an, al-An’am 6:93]

Others consider it to mean our inner thoughts, or our hearts as in:

وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُ وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ

“...And know that God Knoweth what is in your hearts, and take heed of Him; and know that God is Oft-forgiving, Most Forbearing.” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Baqarah 2:235]

We can also see this meaning in the following verse:

تَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِي وَلَا أَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِكَ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ.

“...Thou knowest what is in my heart, though I know not what is in Thine, for Thou knowest in full all that is hidden.” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Maida 5:116]

In other places self is used in its natural context as in the following verse:

وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ

“...But God cautions you (to remember) Himself; for the final goal is to God.” [The Holy Qur’an, Al-i-Imran 3:28]

In other places, self is used to refer to our physical body, which needs food, water and air to survive. Once these are cut off from the self, it will perish. Sheikh Tabarsi has commented that there are three meanings for the self: the spirit, one’s nature, and sometimes used to show that we are placing a stress on something. An example of the use of self to imply spirit is found in the following verse:

يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَمَا يَخْدَعُونَ إِلَّا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ

“Fain would they deceive God and those who believe, but they only deceive themselves, and realize (it) not!” [The Holy Qur’an al-Baqarah 2:9]

Self as Viewed by the Qur'an

As Sheikh Tabarsi said the Arabic word 'nafs' meaning 'self' is used to mean the spirit or the soul as we can read in the following verse:

اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنْفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِي لَمْ تَمُتْ فِي مَنَامِهَا فَيُمْسِكُ الَّتِي قَضَىٰ عَلَيْهَا الْمَوْتَ وَيُرْسِلُ الْأُخْرَىٰ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

“It is God that takes the souls (of men) at death; and those that die not (He takes) during their sleep: those on whom He has passed the decree of death, He keeps back (from returning to life), but the rest He sends (to their bodies) for a term appointed verily in this are Signs for those who reflect.” [The Holy Qur'an, al-Zumar 39:42]

Another example where self is used to mean the soul is found in the following verse:

وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا لَا تَجْزِي نَفْسٌ عَنْ نَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَلَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا شَفَاعَةٌ وَلَا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ

“Then guard yourselves against a day when one soul shall not avail another nor shall intercession be accepted for her, nor shall compensation be taken from her, nor shall anyone be helped (from outside).” [The Holy Qur'an, al-Baqarah 2:48]

In another place, it is used to imply our soul or heart as in the following verses:

وَاذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ تَضَرُّعًا وَخِيفَةً وَدُونَ الْجَهْرِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ وَلَا تَكُن مِّنَ الْغَافِلِينَ

“And do thou (O reader!) Bring thy Lord to remembrance in thy (very) soul, with humility and in reverence, without loudness in words, in the mornings and evenings; and be not thou of those who are unheedful.” [The Holy Qur'an, al-A'raf 7:205]

قَالُوا إِن يَسْرِقْ فَقَدْ سَرَقَ أَخٌ لَّهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَأَسْرَهَا يُوسُفُ فِي نَفْسِهِ وَلَمْ يُبْدِهَا لَهُمْ

قَالَ أَنْتُمْ شَرُّ مَكَانًا وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تَصِفُونَ

They said: "If he steals, there was a brother of his who did steal before (him)." But these things did Joseph keep locked in his heart, revealing not the secrets to them. He (simply) said (to himself): "Ye are the worse situated; and God knoweth best the truth of what ye assert!" [The Holy Qur'an, Yusuf 12:77]

رَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِي نُفُوسِكُمْ إِنْ تَكُونُوا صَالِحِينَ فَإِنَّهُ كَانَ لِلأَوَّابِينَ غَفُورًا

"Your Lord knoweth best what is in your hearts: If ye do deeds of righteousness, verily He is Most Forgiving to those who turn to Him again and again (in true penitence)." [The Holy Qur'an, Bani Israil 17:25]

Self as Viewed by Scholars

Sadr ul-Muta'alliheen Shirazi quoted al-Sheikh ul-Raees Abu Ali Sina from Shafa: "There are three divisions for the self. At first we have the plant self, that is the first degree of perfection for an organic natural being having the ability to feed and grow. The second division is the animal self, that is the first perfection of an organic natural being which only has the ability to feel and move combined with will. The third is the human self which is the perfection of an organic natural being with the ability to think, understand and draw conclusions. Then the various properties and characteristics of these divisions are presented."1

In the twenty-second chapter of Risalat Fosoos al-Hikam, Abu Nasr Farabi known as "the second teacher" said the following regarding the self: "Indeed the perfection of the self is in the recognition of God's first right incumbent upon oneself. This will result in a state of self-confidence."

Mr. Elahi Ghomsheyye made the following comments on this: "There are many aspects of the speaking self. It is called the lascivious self because it is highly inclined to animal lustful desires. As lust overtakes it, the self considers obscene acts to be beautiful ones. Thus, it is called the adorning self. As it uses trickery to do his animalistic acts, and is deceitful: it is called the deceitful self. As it returns to his own nature and blames himself whenever he commits a wicked act, it is called the reproachful self.

As whenever it is freed from his eagerness for animalistic lustful desires it benefits from mental pleasures it is called the confident self. Whenever it totally submits to the will and pleasure of his true lover being God and destroys his own will and pleasure, then it is called the pleased self. For a confident self, the only form of pleasure and perfection is derived from the recognition of God's first right, that is to purify the soul from the filthiness of the body."2 We shall discuss these aspects of the self as viewed in

the Qur'an.

Various Aspects of the Self in the Qur'an

1) The Lascivious Self

The lascivious self is that which orders us to fulfill its lustful desires. This is man's biggest enemy. The greatest religious men have always sought God's help to fight themselves. We read the following in the Holy Qur'an:

وَمَا أُبْرِئُ نَفْسِي إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ إِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّي إِنَّ رَبِّي غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

"Nor do I absolve my own self (of blame): the (human) soul is certainly prone to evil, unless my Lord do bestow His Mercy: but surely my Lord is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful." [The Holy Qur'an, Yusuf 12:53]

In another verse of the Holy Qur'an we read:

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ

فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ

"And for such as had entertained the fear of standing before their Lord's (tribunal) and had restrained (their) soul from lower desires, their abode will be the Garden" [The Holy Qur'an, al-Nazi`at 79:40-41]

What is meant in this verse is that man should restrain himself and fight his carnal desires. The Commander of the Faithful said:

النَّفْسُ مَجْبُولَةٌ بِسُوءِ الْأَدَبِ وَالْعَبْدُ مَأْمُورٌ بِمُلَازِمَةِ حُسْنِ الْأَدَبِ وَالنَّفْسُ تَجْرِي بِطَبْعِهَا فِي مَيْدَانِ الْمُخَالَفَةِ وَالْعَبْدُ يُجْهِدُهَا بِرَدِّهَا عَنِ سُوءِ الْمُطَالِبَةِ، فَمَتَى أُطْلِقَ عِنَانَهَا فَهُوَ شَرِيكٌ فِي فَسَادِهَا، وَمَنْ أَعَانَ نَفْسَهُ فِي هَوَىٰ نَفْسِهِ فَقَدْ أَشْرَكَ نَفْسَهُ فِي قَتْلِ نَفْسِهِ.

“The soul is inclined towards evil deeds, and a servant has the responsibility of directing it towards good deeds. The soul tries to resist, but the servant tries to control the bad desires of the soul. Whenever a servant lets his soul free to do as it wishes, he is a partner in the corruption and the crimes committed by the soul. Whoever aids his own soul to fulfill his carnal desires has indeed taken part in killing himself.”³

Imam Sadiq said:

أَقْصِرْ نَفْسَكَ عَمَّا يَضُرُّهَا مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تُفَارِقَ وَاسِعَ فِي فَكَاكِهَا كَمَا تَسْعَى فِي
طَلَبِ مَعِيشَتِكَ فَإِنَّ نَفْسَكَ رَهِينٌ بِعَمَلِكَ.

“Hinder your soul from bringing you harm and prevent losses before you depart from it. Try to free it from its illegitimate desires as hard as you try to earn a living, since the soul is subject to your deeds.”⁴

Fight the Instincts

Imam Ali said:

أَفْضَلُ الْجِهَادِ مَجَاهِدَةُ الْمَرْءِ نَفْسَهُ.

“The most excellent holy war is one’s fighting against his own selfish desires.”⁵

The Noble Prophet said:

إِنَّ الشَّدِيدَ لَيْسَ مَنْ غَلَبَ النَّاسَ، وَلَكِنَّ الشَّدِيدَ مَنْ غَلَبَ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ.

“A strong man is not one who overcomes the people. Rather a strong man is one who can overcome his self.”⁶

Imam Ali said:

خَالَفَ نَفْسَكَ تَسْتَقِمْ وَخَالَطِ الْعُلَمَاءَ تَعَلَّمْ.

“Fight yourself to avoid any deviations and live an upright life. Associate with the people who possess knowledge so that you can learn and get freed from ignorance.”⁷

He also said:

مَنْ قَوِيَ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ تَنَاهَى فِي الْقُوَّةِ.

*“Whoever overcomes himself has attained the highest ranks of power.”*⁸

Stronger Than One Who Lifts Rocks

Once when the Prophet was passing by a group of people, he saw a man who was lifting a heavy rock. The people were amazed at his strength and admired him. When they told the Prophet about him, and his might, the Prophet asked:

أَفَلَا أُخْبِرُكُمْ بِمَا هُوَ أَشَدُّ مِنْهُ؟ رَجُلٌ سَبَّهُ رَجُلٌ فَحَلِمَ عَنْهُ فَغَلَبَ نَفْسَهُ وَغَلَبَ شَيْطَانَهُ وَشَيْطَانَ صَاحِبِهِ.

*“Do you want me to tell you about someone who is stronger than him? Whoever is insulted by others but restrains himself, controls his anger and overcomes the devil within himself and the devil inside the one who insulted him, is stronger than this man who is lifting heavy rocks.”*⁹

2) The Reproachful Self

So far, we have discussed the verses and traditions regarding the lascivious self that continuously drives us towards doing evil deeds. The other aspect of our soul that constantly blames us for our bad deeds is called the reproachful self. The Holy Qur’an calls this aspect of our soul as witness in the following verse:

لَا أُقْسِمُ بِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ

وَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ

“I do call to witness the Resurrection Day; and I do call to witness the self-reproaching spirit: (Eschew Evil).” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Qiyamah 75: 1-2]

The Imam has been quoted by Ali ibn Ibrahim to have said that what is meant by the “self-reproaching spirit” is man’s self which disobeys and then blames itself.

When someone commits a sin, he is blamed by himself and the call of conscience tortures him. The psychologists have called this reproaching force within us as our moral conscience, and the Qur’an has called it the reproachful self. This implies that this reproaching force is our human spirit that is a part of us, and has always existed in mankind.

Treating Loss of Hope

Once when Imam Sajjad was circumambulating the Holy House of God, he noticed that some people had gathered somewhere in the mosque. He asked what had happened, and he was told that a man called Muhammad ibn Shihab al-Zuhri had suffered from a psychological illness and seemed to have lost his mind. He did not speak at all, and his family had brought him to Mecca hoping that he might talk to the people he saw there.

When Imam Sajjad finished performing the circumambulation ceremonies, he went to see that man. The man recognized Imam Sajjad when he saw him. When Imam Sajjad asked what was wrong with him, he said: “I have become this way because I killed an innocent man when I was a governor. Such a murder of an innocent man has devastated a governor, and the blaming of his reproaching self has caused him psychological ailment; and the shame of committing a sin has shut up his mouth. Now he is like an insane man.”

Imam Sajjad who felt that he had really lost hope in being forgiven by God said: “I am more worried about the sin of your losing hope in God’s Mercy than that of killing an innocent man. Pay the full compensation for his blood money to his family members.” The man said: “I tried, but they did not accept it.” Then Imam Sajjad said: “Watch their house and see when they leave it to attend the prayers. Then drop the bags full of their blood money into their house.”¹⁰ By recognizing the influence of the reproachful self or the moral conscience, Imam Sajjad treated that man’s psychological problem.

3) The Adorning Self

One of the aspects of the human soul is that it attempts to present wicked deeds as nice ones by somehow adorning them and making them look good to us, thereby encouraging us to perform them. There are two cases cited from the Holy Qur’an below.

Joseph and His Brothers

When Jacob’s children took their brother Joseph away from their father and dropped him in a well and left him there, their self-adorned their deeds and fooled them:

وَجَاؤُوا عَلَى قَمِيصِهِ بِدَمٍ كَذِبٍ قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ أَنْفُسُكُمْ أَمْرًا فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ
وَاللَّهُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلَى مَا تَصِفُونَ

“They stained his shirt with false blood. He said: “Nay, but your minds have made up a tale (that may pass) with you, (for me) patience is most fitting: Against that which ye assert, it is God (alone) Whose help can be sought”...” [The Holy Qur’an, Yusuf 12: 18]

Their father recognized their evil deed. He warned them that it was their minds that had made up a tale. This implies that when selfish desires overwhelm and we let them overcome our mind and spirit, then even the most horrible crimes such as killing or abandoning one’s brother might be so adorned in our mind that we consider them holy and obligatory deeds. This guides us towards the recognition of a psychological principle.

Once excessive tendencies towards a certain issue are coupled with moral wickedness, they will dull our senses and make things look different than they really are in our mind. Therefore, proper recognition of facts and realities, and correct judgment is impossible without self-purification. In this verse, we see how the adorning self-caused Joseph’s brothers to throw him into a well abandoning him there, and fake a story to fool their father into believing their tale. On another occasion, they returned from Egypt and brought their father the news of their brother’s act of stealing. But their father did not believe them and said:

قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ أَنْفُسُكُمْ أَمْرًا فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَأْتِيَنِي بِهِمْ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ
هُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ

Jacob said: “Nay, but ye have yourselves contrived a story (good enough) for you. So patience is most fitting (for me). Maybe God will bring them (back) all to me (in the end). For He is indeed full of knowledge and wisdom.” [The Holy Qur’an, Yusuf 12:83]

Samiri

We read in the Holy Qur’an that when Moses was about to go to Mount Tur (Mount Tabor) to receive the Ten Commandments, he told the people that it would take him thirty days. However, his trip was extended to forty days by God. Samiri fooled the children of Israel during the last ten days and made them worship the calf. When Moses returned and encountered that situation, at first he blamed his brother Aaron. However, once he realized that Aaron was not at fault, and it was Samiri’s fault, he blamed Samiri.

قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكَ يَا سَامِرِيُّ

قَالَ بَصُرْتُ بِمَا لَمْ يَبْصُرُوا بِهِ فَقَبَضْتُ قَبْضَةً مِّنْ أَثَرِ الرَّسُولِ فَنَبَذْتُهَا وَكَذَلِكَ
سَوَّلَتْ لِي نَفْسِي

“(Moses) said: “What then is thy case, O’ Samiri?” He replied: “I saw what they saw not: so I took a handful (of dust) from the footprint of the Apostle, and threw it (into the calf): thus did my soul suggest to me.” [The Holy Qur’an, Ta-Ha 20:95-96]

Samiri was a corrupt selfish man. He was able to use his ingenuity, courage and dexterity to deploy the weakness of the children of Israel to make a great sedition. Thus, they ignored all of the previous teachings of Moses and started to worship a calf. In this situation, Samiri claimed that his evil deeds were rooted in his adorning soul by saying: “Thus did my soul suggest to me.”

Hasan al-Basri: The Samiri of the Nation

There is a tradition in Ihtijaj by Tabarsi that states: “When the Commander of the Faithful conquered Basra, the people gathered around him. Among the people, Hasan al-Basri was writing down what Imam Ali had said. Imam Ali asked him what he was doing. He said: “I am recording your words to be saved for the future.” Then the Commander of the Faithful said:

أَمَّا إِنَّ لِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ سَامِرِيًّا وَهَذَا سَامِرِيُّ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ، إِنَّهُ لَا يَقُولُ: لَا مِساسَ، وَلَكِنَّهُ
يَقُولُ: لَا قِتَالَ

“O people! Beware that there is a Samiri for each nation. Know that Hasan Bassri is the Samiri for this nation. The only difference is that Samiri did not let anyone approach him, but this man tells the people that we should not fight, even with the corrupt people.”¹¹

The Imam was referring to Hasan al-Basri’s anti-war propaganda regarding the Battle of Jamal.

4) The Confident Self

Confidence is one of the highest ranks for the self. We read in the following verse of the Holy Qur’an:

يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ

أَرْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً

فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي وَادْخُلِي جَنَّاتِي

(To the righteous soul will be said:) "O (thou) soul, in (complete) rest and come back thou to thy Lord, - well pleased (thyself), and well-pleasing unto Him! Satisfaction! Enter thou, then, among My devotees! Yea, enter thou My Heaven!" [The Holy Qur'an, al-Fajr 89:27-30]

How wonderful is God's invitation to the righteous whose faith has helped them attain confidence, complete rest and satisfaction to return to him: an invitation to a return combined with the pleasure of both sides. Then he will be crowned with servitude; will be dressed in the garment of servitude; will attain the position of especial ones, and shall enter Heaven.

This refers to a form of peace and tranquility after turmoil and attaining the utmost degree of certitude, recognition, and witnessing of God. Kashefi interprets this as: "O' the self that is confident by remembering Me when granted blessings, and by patience and perseverance during times of hardship. Thus now that you are pleased with the blessings that I have granted you, return to what I have promised."

The Confident Self at the Time of Death

The peace with which the confident self-departs from this material world and joins eternity is the most beautiful demonstration of the nobility of the confident self. Sudayr Seyrafi quoted the following on the authority of Imam Sadiq regarding this state: "I asked Imam Sadiq : O' grandson of the Prophet! May I be your ransom! Does a believer feel bad about his spirit being taken out of his body at the time of death? Imam Sadiq replied:

لَا وَاللَّهِ! إِنَّهُ إِذَا جَاءَهُ مَلَكُ الْمَوْتِ لِيَقْبِضَ رُوحَهُ جَزَعٌ عِنْدَ ذَلِكَ، فَيَقُولُ مَلَكُ الْمَوْتِ: «لَا تَجْزَعُ! فَوَالَّذِي بَعَثَ مُحَمَّدًا لَأَنَا أَبْرُوكَ وَأَشْفَقُ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ وَالِدِ رَحِيمٍ لَوْ حَضَرَكَ، إِفْتَحْ عَيْنَيْكَ فَانظُرْ.» (قال) وَيُمَثِّلُ لَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَأَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَفَاطِمَةُ وَالْحَسَنُ وَالْحُسَيْنُ وَالْأئِمَّةُ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِهِمْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ فَيَقَالُ لَهُ: «هَذَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَأَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَفَاطِمَةُ وَالْحَسَنُ وَالْحُسَيْنُ وَالْأئِمَّةُ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ رُفَقَاؤُكَ.» (قال) فَيَفْتَحُ عَيْنَيْهِ فَيَنْظُرُ فَيُنَادِي رُوحَهُ مُنَادٍ مِنْ قَبْلِ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ فَيَقُولُ: «يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ إِلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَأَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ أَرْجِعِي

إِلَى رَبِّكَ رَاضِيَةً بِالْوِلَايَةِ مَرْضِيَةً بِالثَّوَابِ فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي؛ يَعْنِي مُحَمَّدًا وَأَهْلَ
بَيْتِهِ، وَادْخُلِي جَنَّتِي. «فَمَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ اسْتِلَالِ رُوحِهِ وَاللُّحُوقِ
بِالْمُنَادِي.

'No. I swear by God! When the angel of death comes he becomes anxious and distressed. However, the angel tells him: "Do not be distressed! I swear by God who appointed the Prophet that I am even kinder to you than a merciful father – if he was present here. Open your eyes and look." Then the Prophet , Imam Ali , the Blessed Fatima , al-Hasan, al-Husayn, and the Imams are represented to him.

*It is said to him: This is the Prophet and Imam Ali, the Blessed Fatima, al-Hasan, al-Husayn and the Imams , your friends.' He opens his eyes and sees, and the caller calls out to his soul from the Glorious Lord, saying: "O Confident self who has attained peace via Muhammad and his household. Return to your Lord pleased with the friendship of Imam Ali and the reward of your Lord. Join My servants Muhammad and his household, and enter My Heaven." Nothing will be more desirable for him than the drawing out of his soul and joining the Caller!'*¹²

Fighting Selfish Desires to Attain Perfection

One must first recognize and abandon all his selfish desires before he can attain human perfection. This has been quoted by Majashe on the authority of the Noble Prophet of Islam who was the first perfect man ever. It is recorded in Ghawali al-La`ali that a man called Majashe went to see the Prophet , asked him the following questions, and got the following replies:

Question: "O' Prophet of God! What is the way of recognition of God?"

Answer: "Recognition of the self."

Question: "What is the way to agree with God?"

Answer: "To disagree with the self."

Question: "What is the way to please God?"

Answer: "To raise the wrath of the self."

Question: "What is the way to approach God?"

Answer: "To abandon the desires of the self."

Question: "What is the way to obey God?"

Answer: "To disobey the wants of the self."

Question: “What is the way to remember God?”

Answer: “To fight the self.”

Question: “What is the way to get closer to God?”

Answer: “To stay away from the self.”

Question: “What is the way to get accustomed to God?”

Answer: “To fear the self”

Question: “What is the way to attain all this?”

Answer: “Seeking God’s help against one’s self.” 13

If one practices what the Prophet has instructed us to do in this tradition, then he can attain true mysticism. Man can only attain inner peace and illumination if he abandons wicked traits and adorns himself with perfection. He should first abandon all his wickedness, and then he should adorn himself with perfections. Finally, man should polish the beauties of his self, refine them, and make them transparent.

The Jurisprudents’ View on the Rights of the Self

Finally, we will discuss the jurisprudents’ view on the rights of the self. One of the highly valuable aspects of the human self is his life. Nothing can be equated with it. The Holy Qur’an says the following regarding the value of man’s life:

مِنْ أَجْلِ ذَلِكَ كَتَبْنَا عَلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنَّهُ مَن قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي
الْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا فَكَأَنَّمَا أَحْيَا النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا

“On that account: We ordained for the Children of Israel that if anyone slew a person – unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land – it would be as if he slew the whole people: and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people....” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Ma’ida 5:32]

The Holy Qur’an determines a very bad punishment for killing a believer. This is considered to be the worst crime:

وَمَنْ يَقْتُلْ مُؤْمِنًا مُتَعَمِّدًا فَجَزَاؤُهُ جَهَنَّمُ خَالِدًا فِيهَا وَغَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَعَنَهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُ عَذَابًا عَظِيمًا

“If a man kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is Hell, to abide therein (for ever): And the wrath and the curse of God are upon him, and a dreadful penalty is prepared for him.” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Nisaa 4:93]

The Holy Qur’an also says:

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَمَنْ قُتِلَ مَظْلُومًا فَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا لَوْلِيهِ سُلْطَانًا فَلَا يُسْرِفُ فِي الْقَتْلِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ مَنْصُورًا

“Nor take life – which God has made sacred – except for just cause. And if anyone is slain wrongfully, we have given his heir authority (to demand qisas¹⁴ or to forgive): but let him not exceed bounds in the matter of taking life; for he is helped (by the Law).” [The Holy Qur’an, Bani Israil 17:33]

The law of equality that is meant for punishing those who kill others is presented by the Qur’an:

وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقِصَاصِ حَيَاةٌ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

“In the Law of Equality there is (saving of) life to you, O ye men of understanding; that ye may restrain yourselves.” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Baqarah 2: 179]

We can classify killing into three groups: intentional, pseudo-intentional, and unintentional. The remaining kin of the person killed have the option to kill or accept the financial compensation¹⁵ in case of intentional killing, or forgive altogether.

In a pseudo-intentional killing in which no weapon like a gun, or a knife is used, and there has been no intention to kill, but to deliver a blow to the other, the remaining kin of the murdered person can only receive the financial compensation. In the case of unintentional killing, there is only the possibility of financial compensation.¹⁶

The Qur’an views the Law of Equality as a means of saving lives in the society, while still leaving room for financial compensation or forgiving. According to the jurisprudents’ views, the financial compensation or the blood-money for the life of a free person is either one of the following:

1 One hundred camels that have attained six years of age

2 Two hundred cows

3 One thousand sheep

4 Two hundred silk dresses

5 One thousand 'Mithqal-e-Shar'i'17 of gold

6 Ten thousand Dirhams.18

We should also note that the compensation for the blood money for women is half of that for men.

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1. Afsar Arbaeh, v.8, p.53
 2. Hikmat-e-Ilahi Aam wa Khaas, p.31-32.
 3. Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, v.2, p.270.
 4. Ibid. p.310
 5. Sharh-e-Ghurur wa Durar, Aqa Jamal Khansari, v.2, p.462.
 6. Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, v.2, pg.270.
 7. Sharh-i-Ghurur wa Durar, v.3, p.462
 8. Ibid. v.5, p.254.
 9. Majmu'ah Waram, v.2, p. 10.
 10. Majmu'ah Waram, v.2, p.4.
 11. Nur al-Thaqalayn, v.3, p.392.
 12. Nur al-Thaqalayn, v.5, p.577.
 13. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, v.2, p.270.
 14. The option to kill or to accept financial compensation in case of intentional killing.
 15. 'Qisas' in Arabic.
 16. Mukhtasar al-Manafi', Kitab al-Diyat, p.294.
 17. Mithqal Shar'i is a unit of weight equal to 3.456 grams.
 18. Ibid.

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