

Piety, Patience and Love for Allah: Basis of Self Elevation

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The core concepts of self elevation for raising one's self to an exalted position needs to exercise self with the Quranic concepts of virtues of piety, which needs patience and love for Allah's given ordinance – Quran has very beautifully explained these concepts at different places in different chapters (Surah's)

Piety

Piety means to observe the Divine Commandments, conscientiously and scrupulously, and to avoid all forbidden, wicked and shameful things, believing wholly and firmly in the last day and fearing Allah and His wrath and punishment.¹ In other words, it demands on us to carry out the duties prescribed by the Almighty and to refrain strictly from doing anything that has been prohibited to us by Him. Piety according to Shah Waliullah is every act which a person does as a requirement of his submission to the Highest Council (*Al- mala' al- a'la*)², his being effaced in accepting inspiration from Allah, and his surrendering himself to the Divine purpose.

It consists of every act which is rewarded by good in this world or the next, every act which benefits the support of civilization upon which the human order is based. In contrast to it, sin is every act which man does as a result of his obedience to the devil and which results in his surrendering to his purpose, every act which is rewarded by evil in this world and the next, every act which damages the support of civilization.

Both in the Quran and Hadith a very great emphasis has been laid on piety and righteousness, and it has been urged upon us most forcefully and persistently to cultivate it in ourselves. The sole criterion of honors and superiority with Allah is Piety. "Verily, the most honorable of you in the sight of Allah is that (believer) who has *at-Taqwa*..."³

The Quran also tells that those who lead a life of piety and righteousness become the 'Friends of Allah', and then, for them there is neither fear nor shall they ever grieve.⁴

Piety requires a proper use of mind by grasping the truth of Allah and life, a proper use of wealth by spending in the way of Allah under all circumstances. It also demands a high degree of self control over one's anger and emotions, a moral capacity for forgiveness and patience and a conscious urge to make a sinner return to Allah in regret and repentance as Imam Ghazzali says *Taqwa* means to give up unlawful things owing to fear⁵ For this reason Allah says the most honorable of you is one who is most Allah fearing.⁶ The lowest sign of fear according to Ghazzali is that which is expressed in action is to abstain from unlawful and prohibited things. The fear which keeps away from unlawful things is fear of sin. If the proportion of fear is excessive and it keeps one away from doubtful things, it is called *Taqwa*.⁷

According to Badiuzzamaan Said Nursi *Taqwa* is the renunciation of evils and the Quran mentions it as having three stages⁸

- 1) the giving up of associating partners with Allah
- 2) the giving up of sins and
- 3) the giving up of all things other than Allah

Virtue of Patience

The Arabic word ‘*Sabr*’ according to Abdullah Yusuf Ali implies many shades of meaning, which it is impossible to comprehend in one English word. It implies,⁹ he says,

1. Patience in the sense of being thorough, not hasty;
2. Patient perseverance, constancy, steadfastness, firmness of purpose;
3. Systematic as opposed to spasmodic or chance action;
4. A cheerful attitude of resignation and understanding in sorrow, defeat or suffering, as opposed to rebellion or murmuring, but saved from mere passivity or listlessness, by the element of constancy or steadfastness.

According to Shibli, *Sabr* means to Stop and support one’s self from fear.¹⁰ He further says it does not mean to remain silent against oppression from any side but to remain firm and steadfast in faith at all times and in all circumstances, in other words to uphold faith with all his courage and strength, however adverse the conditions may be.¹¹ To Great Imam Ghazzali the meaning of Patience is action to the requirement of the immutable faith.¹² Patience is to put in action the inclination virtue after suppression of evil propensities.¹³

Imam Ghazzali has dealt with the subject at great length in his *Ihya Ulum al-Din*. He explained it, starting with the Quranic verses and the Hadith of the Prophet (SAW), divided the subject into so many categories and then classified them under different heads e.g. the patience in consideration of severity and ease; patience in consideration strength and weakness; patience in consideration of laws; patience at things against nature; patience in sinful actions etc¹⁴.

In order to save the social life and to maintain the public order one requires to be patient on some atrocities misfortunes from the administration.--To serve the purpose of faith--Said Nursi mentions the five principles-- respect, compassion, refraining from haraam , security, the giving up of lawlessness and being obedient to authority—¹⁵ These five principal can be carried only through patience.

Muslim narrated on the authority of Ubada b. Saamit that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) called us and we took oath of allegiance to him . Among the injunctions he made binding upon us was: listing and obedience (to the Amir) in our pleasure and displeasure, in our adversity and prosperity , even when somebody is given preference over us, and without disputing the delegation of powers to a man duly invested with them.(obedience shall be accorded to him in all circumstances) except when you have clear signs of his disbelief in (or disobedience to) Allah’s signs that could be used as a conscientious justification (for non- compliance with his orders)¹⁶

The power of patience endurance given to a man by God is adequate to every misfortune, unless squandered on baseless fears¹⁷

The word ‘*Sabr*’ and its derivatives occur at 103 places in the Quran¹⁸ means the Quran stress the importance of *Sabr* in man’s life e.g. the Quranic Verse No. 153 of *Surah al- Baqarah*

“O you who believe! Seek help in patience and prayer. Truly! Allah is with the Patient.”¹⁹

This verse opens the door to every kind of spiritual well being as Allah is with the person who has patience, perseverance, self-restrain and constancy.

“Therefore be patient (O Muhammad (SAW) as did the Messengers of strong will and be in no haste about them (disbelievers)... ” ²⁰

For our benefit and guidance, a number of extremely inspiring parables have been narrated in the Quran of devout and faithful servants of Allah who remained true to faith in circumstances of utmost distress and suffering. Neither fear nor greed could make them deviate from the path they had chosen. One such parable is of magicians of Egypt who were summoned to challenge Prophet Musa and great rewards and honors had been promised to them. After the truth of divine inspiration and the apostolic message of Musa had drawn upon them, they cared neither for the riches and honors the Firawn had promised, nor for the severe punishment they were sure to receive at his hands for disobeying his command. Rising above the consideration of gain or loss they boldly declared before the vast assembly of men, ‘ we believe in the Lord of Harun and Musa’ later when they were threatened by that enemy of Allah²¹ as the Quran says:

*“(Pharaoh) said: “Believe you in him (Moses) before I give you permission? Verily He is your Chief who taught you magic. So I will surely cut off your hands and feet on opposite sides and I will surely crucify you on the trunks of Palm Trees, and you shall surely know which of us... can give the severe and more lasting torment.”*²²

But they replied, displaying magnificent courage of conviction that:

“.... So decree whatever you desire to decree, for you can only decree (regarding) this life of the world. Verily! We have believed in our Lord, that He may forgive us our faults...” ²³

Another parable which is more inspiring is the story of the wife of Firawn. Firawn was the all powerful monarch of Egypt. All the world’s glories and luxuries were have been for his wife but she preferred faith in Allah, regardless he consequences of torture from Firawn. In return for it she prayed to almighty as the Quran said:

“And Allah has set forth an example for those who believe, the wife of the Pharaoh when she said: ‘My Lord! Build for me a home with you in Paradise, and save me from Pharaoh and his work and save from the people who are Zalimun...” ²⁴

When the atrocities by the polytheists of Makkah on Muslims exceeded all limits the *Sahaba* approached the Prophet (SAW) for mercy and protection, the Prophet (SAW) remarked, “You have become disheartened so soon! Men of Allah before you were subjected to such brutal torture that combs of red hot iron were driven into their heads, and the skulls of some of them were sawed off into two and yet they remain steadfast and did not abandon their faith.”²⁵

To sum up the above lines *Sabr* (Patience) means

- 1) To wait for an appropriate time.²⁶
- 2) To be patient in misery and distress²⁷
- 3) Not to count miseries²⁸

- 4) To forgive and not to avenge²⁹
- 5) Be firm to faith³⁰
- 6) Self-control ³¹and
- 7) To fulfill obligation in every state³² (whatever the condition may be)

Virtue of the Love of Allah

One of the virtues which Islam rated very high is the virtue of love. Love is the only thing which eliminates and extinguishes violence and in turn promotes peace, brotherhood. It illuminates mind and soul. It gives pleasure and happiness. It means attraction of mind to what is tasteful and pleasure giving, when it is strong and firm, there is deep love- Mind like a thing congenial to nature, hates a thing opposed to nature and also hates what is injurious and pains giving. Imam Ghazzali in his '*Ihya Ulum al- Din* had discussed the subject at great length.³³ He writes that there are three basis of love³⁴.

1. Acquaintance and Understanding means man does not love one whom he is not acquainted.
2. Knowledge and Acquaintance.
3. He who loves himself loves another for himself.

After mentioning the basis of love he mentions the cause of love which are as under:³⁵

- 1) Love for the sake of life and attainment of perfection.
- 2) Love for getting benefit.
- 3) Love a thing for its quality and not for the things itself.
- 4) Love of beautiful things not only for the sake of beauty. Beauty is both external and internal.

He further writes that love of Allah is the last stage. There is no stage after acquisition of love of Allah. Repentance, Patience and Renunciation are preliminaries to love of Allah³⁶. And obedience to the Prophet (SAW) is compulsory to attain love for Allah ³⁷. The Quran says:

*Say (O Muhammad (SAW) to mankind): "If you (really) love Allah then follow me (i.e. accept Islamic Monotheism, follow the Quran and the Sunnah), Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful"*³⁸

"I was a hidden treasure, so I created creation that they might know Me" Badiuzaman Syed Nursi on quoting this tradition from al-Suyuti, *al- Durar*, *al-Muntathira* and Ali al-Qari, *al- Athar*, *al- Marfu'a*, says that is "I created a creation to be a mirror in which I might observe my beauty" ³⁹

That is why as Shibli writes the teaching, the commandments, ethics and all other practices of Prophet (SAW) are compulsory to adopt in order to attain the love of Allah⁴⁰.

Quran also identifies people to whom Allah loves and also categorizes the people who are far away from His Love.⁴¹

The love of Allah in the opinion of Juwayni , writes Colin Turner for example , to say " that Allah loves someone does not mean that He feels an inclination towards each other." Colin Turner explains it further that God loves someone means that He bestows favours on him and acts towards him in a beneficent manner,

God's love then means His benevolence or munificence. As for man's love for God, that is expressed through his submission to the Divine ordinance where God is concerned,the Asharite theologian, al-Juwayni offers an explanation, namely "God's love is equal to His will, when that will involves bestowal of favors, it is called love, but when it involves the meting out punishment, it is called anger or wrath" ⁴²

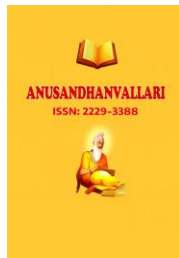
To sum up the above lines - constructive action - a believer should seek refuge with God from Satan the accursed - the thirteenth flash of the Risala-i Nur explains it in a much better way "Destruction is easy " has become a proverbial - it is because of this that the people of misguidance sometimes triumph over the people of truth, who are very powerful, with what is in reality a weak force. But the people of truth possess a stronghold so unassailable that when they take refuge in it, those fearsome enemies cannot draw close; they can do nothing.⁴³ To Nursi the sole solution for the harms through the misguidance that arise from Science and Philosophy is light - "Quran"⁴⁴

Evil spirits provoke in respect of destruction, they commit much evil with few actions- here the people of truth and guidance, people of faith are in need of much caution and great care to hold fast the values of faith, belief surely Almighty Allah bestows assistance to the people of guidance- when the people of faith take refuge in the practices of the Prophet (SAW) and there is the salvation The Quran declares it as,

"It is he who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth, to make it prevail over all religion: and enough is Allah for witness" ⁴⁵

Notes and References

- [1] Numani, Mawlana Manzoor, *"Do you Know What Islam Is?"* Adam, Delhi, 2006, P. 33.
- [2] *Al-mal' al- a'la*. The Highest Council. The term is found in Quran 37:8; 38:69. This group contains both angels and developed human souls (*Hujjatullah al- Baligah*), Eng TR. Marcia K. Hermansen, Delhi, Kitab Bhavan 2005, pp 43-8)
- [3] 49:13
- [4] 10: 62-64
- [5] Naumani, *op.cit*, 2006,p.75
- [6] 49: 13
- [7] Imam Ghazali, *Ihya Ulum al-Din*, Eng. TR. Mawlana Fazlul Karim, Delhi Islamic Book Service, Vol. iv, 2008, p. 132-35.
- [8] Badiuzzamaan Said Nursi *"Signs of Miraculousness"*, pp. 40; 175-76)
- [9] Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *"The Holy Quran"*, Madina, P. 19.
- [10] Shibli, *"Sirat al-Nabi"*, Pakistan, Lahore, Faisal Nashiran, Vol. V, p. 247.
- [11] *Ibid.*,
- [12] Imam Ghazzali, *"Ihya Ulum al din"*, Eng.Tr. Fazlul Karim, Delhi Islamic Book Service, Vol. IV, p. 70.
- [13] *Ibid.*,
- [14] *Ibid.*, pp. 67-83
- [15] Badiuzzamaan Said Nursi, *The Rays*, "14th Ray", p.329-73
- [16] Muslim, *Kitab al-Imarah*
- [17] Badiuzzamaan Said Nursi, *Flashes*, "22nd flash", p.25)
- [18] Muhammad Fawad Abdul Baqi, *Al- Muajam al Mufaharis li Alfaz al Quran al Karim*.
- [19] 2: 153; Haqani defines it in his Tafsir as following reason and restraining fear, anger and desire. (Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *op. cit*, p. 62)
- [20] 46:35; There are many Prophets.... Only five are of strong will namely: Muhammad(SAW), Noah, Abraham, Musa and Isa (*Noble Quran*, Madina, Maktaba Darul Quran, p. 786)



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- [21] 20:70
[22] 20:71
[23] 20:72,73
[24] 66:11
[25] Numani Manzur, *op.cit*, p. 77
[26] 76:24
[27] 12:83
[28] 46:35.
[29] 16:126-127
[30] 2:177; 8:45-46
[31] 11:9-11
[32] 20:132
[33] Imam Ghazzali, *op.cit*, Vol. IV, Pp. 263-340
[34] *Ibid.*, p. 265-66
[35] *Ibid.*, P. 266-67.
[36] *Ibid.*, p. 263
[37] *Ibid.*, p. 263
[38] 3:31
[39] Badiuzzamaan Said Nursi, *Signs of Miraculousness* ,p.24
[40] Shibli, *op.cit*, Vol. 6, p. 96.
[41] Al- Quran mentions the people whom Allah loves e.g. *Sabarim, Tawwabin, Muhsinin, Muqnitin* etc and also those who are far away from His love e.g. *Kafirin, Mutadin, Mufsidin, Zalimin* etc etc.
[42] Colin Turner, *The Quran Revealed*, Gerlach Press, Germany ,2013,p.437
[43] Badiuzzamaan Said Nursi, *Flashes*, “13th flash”, p.105
[44] *Ibid.*, *The Flashes*, “16th flash”, p.144
[45] 48 : 28