



(11) The Importance of Reforming Oneself. Part (1)

Islam is dedicated to preparing the sincere Muslim. The sincere Muslim is an essential element for achieving success and prosperity. The sincere Muslim is like the rain: wherever it falls it brings benefit. Moreover, he is like the sun: when it sets at one place it arises at another.

The Arabs, before the appearance of Islam, were a lost nation. They were made up of shepherds, and were no match for other nations. They had no presence on the global stage. The world at that time was dominated by the Romans and Persians, while the Arabs were a weak nation living on the margins of history.

After the appearance of Islam, everything changed in favor of the Arabs. They became leaders among other nations and inherited the treasures of the Roman and Persian empires. The Muslim nation expanded to include most of the world at that time, and was able to redefine the course of history.

These changes were not the result of chance. Rather, they were achieved through the determination, will power, and honest resolve of the Muslims.

Reformation of the individual's own self was the entry to all the greatness and success which was achieved by the early



Muslims. It is the only way to make progress on the path of real and lasting prosperity.

Why is it important to reform the human self?

1) Reforming oneself is a mandate by Allah (SWT) upon all Muslims, so that they can protect themselves from the punishment of the Hereafter.

Allah (SWT) says: “O you who believe! Ward off from yourselves and your families a Fire (Hell) whose fuel is men and stones.” (At-Tahrim, 6)

The protection of the family, the children, and the person’s own self can only be achieved through change and reform. The person has two choices: either to reform himself and enter paradise; or neglect reforming himself and face the wrath of Allah (SWT) and enter the hell fire.

2) The reforming of oneself is the main reason for success in this life and in the Hereafter. Allah (SWT) has made a balance for us, if it is upheld then the person lives a prosperous life.

On the other hand, if this balance is upset, the person lives a miserable life.

Allah (SWT) says: “By the Nafs (soul), and he who perfected him in proportion; Then He showed him what is wrong for him and what is right for him. Indeed he succeeds who purifies his



own self. And indeed he fails who corrupts his own self.” (As-Shams, 7-10)

3) There is a great emphasis on the reforming of oneself because it is one of the goals of the prophetic message. Allah (SWT) has mentioned purification of the self before mentioning knowledge. This means that reformation and purification of oneself is an important part of acquiring knowledge.

Allah (SWT) says: “Similarly (to complete My Blessings on you) We have sent among you a Messenger (Muhammad) of your own, reciting to you Our Verses (the Qur’an) and sanctifying you, and teaching you the Book (the Qur’an) and the Hikma (i.e. Sunna, Islamic laws and Fiqh – jurisprudence), and teaching you that which you used not to know.” (Al-Baqara, 151).

4) There is a great emphasis on reforming the individual because it is the first step and the most important one in reforming the society. Reform does not come from outside; rather, it has to be an event which originates from the individual’s own self.

Reforming the society can only occur by reforming the individuals that compose that society. Change only occurs when the individuals in that society change themselves.



Allah (SWT) says: “Verily, Allah will not change the condition of a people as long as they do not change what is in themselves.” (Ar-Ra’d, 11).

Allah (SWT) does not change a hardship which He has inflicted on a group of people, until they change themselves and stop committing sins. The change created by Allah (SWT) does not occur until the changing of the people occurs first.

The society will not experience positive change until the individuals change. Likewise, the individuals will not experience positive change unless they reform themselves.

5) Islam emphasizes on self-reformation because if the human soul is left neglected this could result in a great loss. This is the loss which Allah (SWT) referred to as the evident loss.

Allah (SWT) says: “Say: The losers surely are those who shall have lost themselves and their families on the day of resurrection; now surely that is the clear loss.” (Az Zumar 15).

An important question to ask in light of this Ayah is, what does the human being gain if he has all the wealth in the world but is among the losers who lose everything on the day of judgment?” It is indeed a clear and irreversible loss.

6) Islam emphasizes on self reformation, because nowadays people are pursuing the things that matter the least. People



take care of their physical well being at the expense of their souls. They emphasize on their external appearance while they neglect self reformation and deprive themselves from worshipping Allah (SWT).

The true essence of the human being should be determined by his goodness and piety and not by his appearance or his social and financial status.

Abu Alfatah Al-Bustawy said beautiful poetry in the past :O you who is in the service of his body, are you ask the wind for that which will be lost?

Pursue the perfection of your soul and its virtues

For it is your soul that makes you a human being and not your body.

7) Islam emphasizes on self reformation to quell any internal conflicts they may develop within the individual. It is important to know that Allah (SWT) created three different types of creation. In the first type, Allah (SWT) put intelligence only, and that is the angles. In the second type, Allah (SWT) put desires only, and that is the animal. And In the third type of creation, Allah (SWT) put both intelligence and desires, and that is the human beings.

As a result, the angles obey Allah (SWT) continuously and



never commit sins. And the animal will not be held accountable for their actions because they lack intelligence. However, the human being lives in a constant struggle between his intelligence and his desires.

On one hand, his desire pulls him toward sins. And on the other hand, his mind encourages him to obey Allah (SWT). The individual will remain on this state of internal conflict and anxiety until his mind overcomes his desire. At that stage, the Muslim becomes relaxed and develops a sense of tranquility. This can only be achieved by following the ways that Allah (SWT) has prescribed.

Allah (SWT) says: “then whoever follows My guidance, he shall not go astray nor be unhappy; And whoever turns away from My reminder, his shall be a straitened life, and We will raise him on the day of resurrection, blind.” (Ta-Ha, 123 – 124).

8) Islam emphasizes on self reformation because it is a form of Jihad. If the Muslim is unable to perform Jihad on himself, how can he perform Jihad on the enemies of Islam?

Jihad of the desires is a difficult form of Jihad. It requires the Muslim to suppress those desires and to observe patience and endurance.

Alboaisiry said: The human self is like a baby, if neglected he



will grow to love suckling, And if you wean him, he will quit.

Similarly, the human self desires if you encourage your desires,

And the soul from its evils can bring about evil consequences.

Alboaisiry also said: Disobey yourself and Shaitan and never trust them And be cautious of their advice.

Therefore, disobeying the desires of oneself is a major Jihad, because those desires are an internal enemy, which many people overlook. The evils of a hidden enemy are more dangerous than the evils of a clear one.

We ask Allah (SWT) to help us purify and reform our own selves.

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