

Conviction

Conviction is the constant believing in the principles of the religion. Such believing should conform to the reality and not be shaken by suspicions. If it does not, it is then compound ignorance.

The Islamic Sharia has taken a special notice of conviction and showered people of conviction with glorious items of praise:

Amirul-Mu'minin (a) used to say: "No one can find the true taste of faith before he believes that whatever befell him would never miss him and whatever missed him would never befall him. The real source of harm and benefit is only Allah¹."

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: "Faith is preferable to being Muslim. Conviction is preferable to faith. In fact, there is nothing more powerful than conviction²."

"The little permanent deed with conviction is favorable in the sight of Allah to the many deeds that are lacking conviction³."

"To avoid pleasing anyone and discontenting Allah and reproaching anyone for something that Allah has not given to you these are parts of the trueness of Muslim's conviction. The sustenance cannot be obtained through (any sort of) niggardliness and will not be ceased when someone hates it. If you escape your decided share of sustenance in the same way as you escape death, it will surely catch you in the same way as death will inevitably catch you. Out of His justice and equality, Allah has made pleasure and rest lie in conviction and content, and has made care and grief lie in suspect and dissatisfaction⁴."

Once, Imam ar-Rida (a) was asked to identify the best of two men one of whom says only the truth, but he commits wrongdoings, consume wines, and perpetrates the grand sins, while the other is less in conviction but he does not commit such evildoings. The Imam said: "The first one is just like a man who sleeps on the right course; as soon as he is awoken, he will take it. The other is like a person who sleeps on the wrong course; when he is awoken, he cannot realize the right course to take⁵."

Imam as-Sadiq narrated that the Prophet (S) once, noticed a young man, in the mosque just after the Fajr prayer, nodding his head with his face pale, his body thin, and his eyes sunken in his head. 'How is your morning?' the Prophet asked the young man. 'God's Messenger,' answered the man, 'I begin this morning with full conviction.'

The Prophet (S) was admired by this answer; hence, he said, 'There is a proof for every conviction. What is the proof of yours?'

The young man said, 'God's Messenger, my conviction is the reason of my grief, sleeplessness, and thirst in midday. Hence, I disdain this world along with its pleasures so completely, as if the Throne of my Lord is prepared for the judgment, all people, including I myself, are gathered there for interrogation, and as if people of Paradise are there enjoying the bliss and introducing themselves to each other and leaning on the sofas, and as if people of Hell are there tormented and lined up, and now I can hear the sound of fire in my hearings.'

The Prophet (S) said to his companions, 'Surely, Allah has illuminated the heart of this man with faith.' He (S) then asked him to keep on such faith and conviction. The young man asked the Prophet to pray to God for martyrdom, and the Prophet did.

Not before long time, that young man participated in one of the Prophet's campaigns and was martyred⁶.

Qualities of People of Conviction

People of conviction, as they are flourished and lightened by the glittering rays of conviction, acquire various colors of mental perfection that exalt them to a lofty spiritual standing. Thus, they are characterized by high moral standards and moral conducts as they avoid vices and bad manners. The illusions of this world cannot divert them from exalting their spiritual qualifications for gaining the lofty ranks and the expected endless pleasures of the life to come.

They exert all efforts for offering acts of obedience to God for sake of attaining His satisfaction. They trust in Him completely in sorrow and in joy. They neither fear nor hope for anything except God because they are convinced of His well management and wisdom. Their prayers therefore are responded and their charismata are shown. Finally, they find favor with God.

Ranks of Faith

There is a great variety in the scope of people's faith. Some are forerunners in the field of faith while others are too tardy. The following holy text may cast shadow on such a variety.

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: "Like stairs, faith is often ranks that should be taken one by one. The owner of two ranks of faith should not accuse the owner of one rank of having nothing of faith until he climbs the ten ranks successfully. Hence, you should not throw him who is lower than you are down, lest he who is

higher than you are will throw you down. You should also raise him who is lower than you are so leniently and you should avoid burdening him with heavy things that break his back. In fact, he who breaks a believer should set him⁷.”

Categories of Faith

Natural Faith

Natural faith is that which God grants, such as faith of the prophets and their successors, because those individuals are the highest examples of faith and nobility of conviction. Neither doubts nor can the devilish inspirations influence them.

Transient Faith

Transient faith is the artificial that is only said without having any reality in the inner self. Such category of faith is very soon influenced by doubts and ill inspirations.

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “A man may begin his day with faith but ends it with disbelief or the opposite. Some people borrow faith then dress it. Those are the borrowers⁸.”

“Allah created prophecy in the prophets; hence, they never apostatize. Likewise, He created succession of prophecy in the prophets’ successors; hence, they never apostatize. For some believers, He created faith in them; hence, they never apostatize. For others, they are given faith as loans; but if they pray and supplicate to Allah importunately, they keep on that faith⁹.”

After these two sayings, Imam as-Sadiq (a) adds a third one as the criterion of constant and transient categories of faith. He says:

“Regret, sorrow, and woe all will be to him who does not benefit by that which is shown to him and does not realize whether his belief is for his good or bad he whose deeds conform to his words will be saved (since he enjoys constant faith), while he whose deeds do not conform to his words enjoys the transient faith¹⁰.”

Acquisitive Faith

Acquisitive faith is the slight natural that has been grown and increased until it is exalted to a considerable level. This category of faith, however, has different ranks.

Now, let us provide some advices that help in protecting the natural part of faith and saving the acquisitive:

☞ It is recommended to associate with the faithful, pious individuals and avoid the sinful, wicked ones. It is well known that the associate plays a great role in acquiring moralities. Referring to this fact, the

Prophet (S) said:

“A man follows his associate’s beliefs. Hence, you should care for choosing your associates.”

☞ It is recommended to avoid looking in and listening to the books of deviation and sayings of the misleading people whose main concern is to poison the others’ pure ideas in order to take them away from the Islamic creed and to corrupt the values and concepts of faith in their mentalities.

☞ It is recommended to practice pondering over God’s creatures that are characterized by beautiful made, accurate organizing, and fascinating wisdom of management:

“In the earth, there is evidence (of the Truth) for those who have strong faith. There is also evidence of the Truth within your own selves. Will you then not see? (51:20-1)”

☞ It is highly recommended to strive oneself and practice acts of obedience to God. It is recommended to avoid acts of disobedience to God so that one’s mentality will be established correctly by the concepts of faith. As a matter of fact, the soul is as pure as fresh water unless it is blemished by pollutions. Were it not for the rust of sins and the dirt of wrongdoings that raid at the souls to seize their beauties and abate their lights, most of people would benefit by the illumination of faith:

“(I swear) by the soul and that (Power) which designed it and inspired it with knowledge of evil and piety, those who purify their souls will certainly have everlasting happiness and those who corrupt their souls will certainly be deprived (of happiness) (91:7-10).”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “When a man commits a sin, a black spot emerges to his heart. If he repents, that spot will disappear. But if he keeps on committing sins, that spot will increase in area until it covers the whole heart. That man will never see success¹¹.”

¹. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 54 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

². Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 15 part 2 page 57 (as quoted from al-Kafi).

³. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 15 part 2 page 60 (as quoted from al-Kafi).

⁴. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; part 3 page 54 (as quoted from al-Kafi).

⁵. Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; 2/734 (as quoted from Fiqh ul- Imam ir-Ridha).

⁶. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 33 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

⁷. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 30 (as quoted from al-Kafi

⁸. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 30 (as quoted from al-Kafi).

⁹. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 30 (as quoted from al-Kafi).

¹⁰. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 30 (as quoted from al-Kafi).

¹¹. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 167 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

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