

Repentance in Attributes and Consequences

How beautiful and deep the meaning is of the saying of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) where he quoted it from the Lord, Allah, the Great:

“There is no god but Allah '(i.e. none has the right to be worshipped but Allah) is my fortress and whoever enters My fortress is safe against My punishment.'“^{[1](#)}

If a Muslim knows the true meaning of 'There is no god but Allah' and comprehends its concepts and contents and then recognizes its impact in his life and the connection it has with his existence, surely he will understand that everything in this existence is founded on the phrase: 'There is no god but Allah' and moves towards it.

Most people, including some of those who memorize the names of Allah, blessed be His names which are considered below His attributes, and actions, who study the science of monotheism with its text and rules and speak about the vividness of the essence of Allah and abundance of His mercy and the relationship of the existence with His power ... are unfamiliar with most facts and distinct impacts of the phrase: 'There is no god but Allah.'

If the dimensions of the self are opened to these vast horizons and if intellects would comprehend what the word of monotheism carries in it of meanings and attributes concerning the Divine Self and lived under its rays and the outpouring of its lights, surely he would understand that he lived under the impacts of these attributes. They are facts which are obvious in the world of existence and are in connection with the essence of man and his existence. He would, also, understand that every distinct Divine attribute filled a gap in the human self and, also, created hope in him.

Thus, happiness would overwhelm him and he would absolutely feel the meaning of existence if he lived while seeking inspiration from its surplus and fills the gaps in his self with its impacts.

What is important, in this research, is to study repentance as an impact in our lives, occurring among the impacts of these Divine attributes.

All fields of existence, including human existence, have a connection with an attribute among the Divine

attributes.

Whatever exists in this universe like might, wisdom, science, justice, mercy, kindness, power...etc. is but a shadow in the unlimited Divine perfection, and the distinctions of this perfectness is a secret which aligns the world and the source of its existence and this existence is adopted among His everlasting generous abundance.

Indeed, the Holy Qur'an speaks about numerous Divine attribute and the Almighty Allah describes and glorifies Himself with them. Here, we discuss what relates only with the subject of repentance for it is one of the distinct impacts of visible Divine attributes in man's life.

According to the logic of monotheism, repentance comes as an impact which should be achieved in the system of creation, and as long as its Creator is described with these attributes, it is inevitable that the abundance of good appear. These attributes are:

First: Verily, Allah, the Most High, describes Himself with clemency and the attribute 'clemency' mentioned in most of the Qur'anic sources always associated with forgiveness, because forgiveness is an impact among the impacts of clemency and an inevitable attribute to it, and no forgiveness comes forth except from a clement nor can a clement be anything but a forgiver.

The word clement (halim) is mentioned eleven times in nine chapters Of the Holy Qur'an; where the attribute of clemency (hilim) is associated six times with forgiveness while the other five are associated with the attribute of richness, science and thankfulness.

Clemency, for man, means to restrain oneself from anger and achieve patience in himself, but for Allah, the Almighty, clemency means to grant a respite to man and delay punishment and to give him both enough assistance to review himself and an opportunity to return to himself.

Forgiveness: It generally means elimination, covering, protection and conservation against impurity.

But, forgiveness concerning Allah, the Most High, is to purify His servants, eliminate their evil deeds, protect them against chastisement, and guard them against their shortcomings without disclosing them.

The Almighty, Allah says:

“Allah will not call you to account for what is vain in your oaths, but He will call you to account for what your hearts have earned. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, the Most Forbearing.” (Holy Qur'an, 2:225)

“... and know that Allah knows whatever is (latent) in yourselves, therefore be careful of Him; and know that Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Forbearing.” (Holy Qur'an, 2:235)

Allah, the Exalted is distinguished by His knowledge of what is in human souls of good and evil and does

not disclose them but on the opposite He protects them and gives them the opportunity to repent and return towards truth. Indeed Allah, the Almighty, is distinguished by this characteristic which is called clemency.

Verily, His distinguished with clemency, forgiveness and protection opens the door of repentance to His servants; as He does not deal with them through punishment, but He embraces them with His clemency, generosity, forgiveness and widespread mercy, and promises them to take away their sins.

Secondly: The Almighty is attributed with forgiveness and power. His being attributed by power is the base upon which forgiveness is built and from which repentance results, for no one forgives except the Powerful and no one gives of anything except the owner.

If one follows the description of the Holy Qur'an for Allah, the Almighty, and the attribute of forgiveness is being related to Him, one will find that His being attributed as a forgiver mostly accompanies forgiveness and sometimes it is associated with clemency and might.

The Almighty, Allah says:

"... and certainly Allah has pardoned them. Surely Allah is Forgiving, Forbearing." (Holy Qur'an, 3:155)

"If you do good openly or keep it secret or pardon an evil, Allah surely is ever Pardoning, Powerful." (Holy Qur'an, 4:149)

"So, these, it may be that Allah will pardon them. And Allah is ever Pardoning, Forgiving." (Holy Qur'an, 4:99)

In the above mentioned verses, one will see that all these attributes are linked with each other.

Allah is described as having the ability to forgive what He wills to forgiveness, and repentance is shown as a fact in the world of consequences; as a system in the world of man; as a shadow for the attribute of forgiveness and power and an impact coupled with the human life.

Third: The Almighty being described with kindness.

Divine Kindness: It means to treat people with kindness and sympathize with them.

This Divine kindness appears in the way Allah simplifies whatever makes people come near to obedience and repels them from disobedience in order to show sympathy over them and treat them with kindness. He never charges people with things above their ability nor does He close the door of repentance to them after their disobedience lest their destination would be the chastisement of Hell and aloofness from Allah, the Most High.

Therefore, repentance is an aspect among the aspects of Allah's manifestation with kindness and a state

among the states among its appearance in the world of man.

Allah, the Exalted says:

“And remember that which is recited in your houses of the messages of Allah and the Wisdom. Surely Allah is ever Knower of subtleties, Aware.” (Holy Qur’an, 33:34)

In fact, the Holy Qur’an has mentioned the attribute of 'kindness' in seven different places; five of them associated with the meaning of 'cognizant', because of having a spontaneous relationship existing between the two attributes 'kindness and cognizant'. He, the Almighty, is Aware of the weaknesses and feebleness which exists in man's self and which makes him unable to hold to the way of righteousness in what results from him. The Almighty Allah says:

“Does He not know, Who created? And He is the Knower of subtleties, the Aware.” (Holy Qur’an, 67: 14)

On the one side, man in his genetic nature stands exposed to venture out of the bounds of behavioral righteousness; while on the other hand, he wishes to return towards righteousness in order to be integrated, once again into the world of good and purity.

In order to do that, man needs tolerance and forgiveness so that his return would be accepted and be pleased with his repentance. Thus, Allah's kindness, i.e., His clemency and His sympathy, is the Intercessor for man for the acceptance of his return because Allah, the Exalted likes His servants to approach Him and also likes to see him as a fact which agrees with the will of his creator and His pleasure.

The Most High says:

“Surely Allah loves those who turn much (to Him), and He loves those who purify themselves.” (Holy Qur’an, 2:222)

Fourth: His being attributed with Affection and Mercy.

Affection means love, and mercy means to be charitable and benevolent to the one who deserves pity.

And Allah, the Almighty, does not describe, repeatedly, His Divine Self with an attribute nor does He emphasize on it in the same way as describing Himself with the word 'Mercy'. Even the attribute of 'Mercy' used by the Holy Qur’an equals the attribute of 'Divinity'; and is clear when it allows the name of 'Rahman' (Merciful) to be called on His Divine Self instead of calling His Holy Self as 'Allah'. Thus the Holy Qur’an considers the word 'Mercy' enough to be used in invoking His Divine Self for having full reference of it.

The Almighty Allah says:

“Say: Call on Allah or call on the Beneficent. By whatever (name) you call on Him, He has the best names ...” (Holy Qur’an, 17:110)

Both terms, Allah and Rahman 'Merciful' imply 'Self' characterized by Beautiful Attributes. The influence of this Divine Attribute is great on human life, for it is an eternal source elaborating on the feelings of security, tranquility and peace and also a source stirring up hope and expectation in order to continue the relationship between Allah and His creature in human self.

It acts as a vessel of the attributes of nearness which includes the meanings of love, affection, forgiveness, charity and peace ... etc. It acts as a connection which fills up the gap of farness and fleeing and which removes the alienation and disinclination between man and his Creator.

It prepares psychological readiness in man to eulogize his peaceful and sincere relation with Allah, the Most High.

A mood of pleasure and tranquility overflows in man and has the feeling of bliss and protection against falling under the attributes of anger, omnipotence and revenge.

“And were it not for Allah's grace upon you and His mercy, not one of you would have ever been pure.” (Holy Qur’an, 24:21)

“And ask forgiveness of your Lord, then turn to Him. Surely my Lord is Merciful, Loving-kind.” (Holy Qur’an, 11:90)

“And say: My Lord, forgive and have mercy, and You are the Best of those who show mercy.” (Holy Qur’an, 23:118)

“And your God is one God; there is no god but He! He is the Beneficent, the Merciful.” (Holy Qur’an, 2:163)

Thus, the relationship between Allah and His creatures is distinguished as the Almighty wills to be established on the basis of mercy, kindness, love, forgiveness, condonation, forbearance, and protection to revive man while his heart is filled with tranquility, love and peace and, also, so that his self be filled with hope and expectation and the waiting of benevolence from a Lord Who is characterized by the attributes of affection and love.

Accordingly, the acceptance of repentance is a hope which worries man's heart, and an expectation which lives in him, as an expected result for this beloved relation existing between Allah and His creatures.

Certainly, this hope is a fact and hope is a truth and of which both are incorporated under the shadow of the sacred attributes of the Almighty, Allah.

“Say: O My servants who have been extravagant unto their own selves, despair not of the mercy of Allah; surely Allah forgives sins altogether. He is indeed the Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful.”
(Holy Qur’an, 39:53)

Therefore, the door of repentance is opened and its rope is extended as Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) describes it:

“Repentance is Allah’s rope and assistance for His Divine providence.”

1. Al-Muhajabah al-Baidha’e, Book on Al-adkar and al-Da’awat, p. 274.

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