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# Ayatullah's Heart to Heart Talk to the Religious Scholars

Instead of submitting them to our thinking and reason we want to submit our hearts to a critical examination in the light of the Qur'an. We want to see what feelings our hearts have in respect of that which we love. We want to know to what they are attached. Allah has said that one heart cannot hold two genuine and fully developed loves.

One can either love Allah or love this world. But both the loves cannot be contained in one heart.

Let us submit our hearts to test. Let us examine our hearts to see whether the love of Allah or the love of this world prevails over them. If the love of Allah prevails over our hearts, let us make it deeper and more effective. If, Allah forbid, the love of this world prevails over them, let us try to save us from this dreadful malady and fatal disease.

Every love which occupies the centre of the heart of a person is of either of the two kinds. We call the perfect love the double grade love and the love which is not so perfect the single grade love. To begin with, love becomes the basis of man's sentiments, feelings, emotions and desires.

After attending to his job or immediate need, man soon returns to his object of love, because love occupies the centre of his thoughts, feelings and sentiments. Sometimes man may be absorbed in his conversation, may be attending to his work, his food or drink or may be facing some other problem, but love remains the centre of his activity all the time and his attention is diverted frequently to the object of his love. This is the single grade love.

In the case of the double grade love man's entire attention is drawn by the object of his love and nothing can divert his attention from it. Wherever he turns his face, he sees his beloved. He is never inattentive to the thought of his beloved. This love is double grade love.

These two kinds of love are applicable to love of Allah as well as to love of this world.

Both these kinds of love are found in the case of the noble love of Allah. Single grade love appears in

the hearts of the pious believers whose hearts are free from the impurities of the base affairs of the world. Their sentiments and feelings become subservient to their love of Allah.

Although they attend to their food at the time of taking their meals, pay attention to their physical needs, meet their friends, go to parks for walking and perform miscellaneous acts, yet all the time the centre of their interest is one and the same. As soon as they are free from their immediate engagements, they return to the question which is the object of their love.

As for the double grade love, it is found in the hearts of the Prophets and the Imams. You all know Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib, in the vicinity of whose tomb we live (Najaf Ashraf, Iraq). This great man has said: "I never saw a thing but I saw Allah before it, after it and along with it."

In fact, it was so because love of Allah occupied his great heart and conscience in such a way that it concealed everything else from him. Even when he saw human beings, he saw Allah. He looked at them as Allah's bondmen. When he looked at Allah's bounties, he remembered Him. This bond with Allah was always present before his eyes, for it was Allah alone whom he truly loved and to whom alone his hopes and aspiration were directed.

He never allowed anybody to divert his attention from Allah and thus all the time he saw only Allah. These two grades of love are applicable to love of this world also, the love of which, in the words of the Holy Prophet, is the root-cause of all errors.'

There are two grades of love of this world. The first stage of this love is the concentration of one's activities, hopes and trends on seeking worldly gains. A person having this love moves when his personal interest demands so and stops when it does not. Whenever he deems it fit, he devotes himself to the worship of Allah and when he does not, he does something else.

Thus this world is his first consideration, although sometimes he ignores it and engages himself in some noble acts also. He sometimes offers prayers and keeps fast. But before long he returns to his main interest. This is the single grade love of worldly gains.

Even this state of love of this world is a dangerous malady. But the double grade love of worldly gains becomes fatal, when one totally closes one's eyes and ears. Exactly what Imam Ali, the Commander of the faithful said in connection with love of Allah, applies to the double grade love of this world also.

The Imam used to say that whatever he saw, he saw Allah before it, after it and along with it. Love of this world also reaches this stage when man does not see anything but he sees this world before it, after it and along with it. Whatever he does at this stage, he does it for some worldly gain.

If he offers prayers, keeps fast or even engages himself in teaching or discussing theological subjects, all actions of him are characterized by some sort of worldly interest. He cannot look at anything except through the window of self-aggrandizement. He wants worldly return from everything that he does.

Whatever he does, he does it to acquire some position, post or financial gain.

Yet he cannot devote himself to pious deeds for more than a few days. This is double grade world – seeking which is far more dangerous than single grade world–seeking. That is why the Holy Prophet has said that love of this world is the root cause of every error.

Imam Sadiq has said: "This world is like sea water. The more one drinks of it, the more one gets thirsty."

Do not say: "There is no harm if I make a little worldly gain and be content with it or acquire some position and then turn to Allah." The fact is that the more money or worldly position you secure, the thirstier you get and the more attracted to worldly things you feel. No doubt this world is like brackish sea water. Its love is the root–cause of all errors.

The Holy Prophet says: "He who is mostly concerned with worldly affairs, has nothing to do with Allah."

In other words, his relation with Allah is severed, for one heart cannot contain two loves. That is why it has been said that love of this world is the root–cause of all errors. It makes prayers and every other form of worship devoid of their significance. If your heart is dominated by love of this world, your acts of worship can have no meaning. You and I know the people who criticized the conduct of Imam Ali. They were those who never missed their prayers, who

were particular about their fasting and who did not touch wine. At least most of them did not. But what is the value of such prayers? What is the result of such fasts? If a person's heart is full of love of this world, what is the use of his abstaining from the intoxicants?

Love of this world does not allow man to see or learn the realities. As love of this world is the root–cause of every error, similarly love of Allah is the source of all virtues. Love of Allah confers on man honour, purity, chastity and power to overcome all his weaknesses.

It was love of Allah that impelled the magicians of Fir'awn's folk to become the first to follow the way of Prophet Musa. They said to Fir'awn boldly:

***Issue*** any ***order you like. The*** life ***of this world is*** going ***to*** pass. (Surah TaHa, 20:72)

How did the magicians dare to say that? They could say so because love of Allah had illuminated their hearts. It was love of Allah that was the basis of Imam Ali's courage and bravery. His courage was not that of a ferocious beast. It was the courage that is produced by faith and love of Allah. His bravery was that which is shown by the warriors, but he also had the courage of rejecting what is wrong, and being steadfast and firm. He was over 60 when he took the field against the Khawarij and in a successful engagement single–handedly killed 4000 of them. This is an example of the utmost bravery in the battlefield.

He was so intoxicated with love of Allah that he did not think for a moment that he alone was facing 4000

people. He was also at the height of bravery in regard to being patient and not pressing his rightful claim. He kept quiet when he was required by Islam to overlook his right and be patient. At that time he was in the prime of his life. He had not grown aged. His conscience was a flame with the fire of youth.

But Islam had told him to keep quiet and be patient, even if his right was violated. He was to keep quiet so long as the externalities of Islam were being maintained and the religious rites were being observed.

This was the height of bravery as far as patience was concerned. It was not the bravery of the ferocious animals. It was the courage of a brave believer absorbed in love of Allah who reached the peak of bravery by practicing self–negation. Do you know what his reaction was when Caliphate was offered to him on conditions contrary to the Qur'an and Sunnah (conduct of the Holy Prophet) following the assassination of Uthman, the Second Caliph?

He rejected the offer outright because its terms, which were contrary to the Qur'an and Sunnah could not be acceptable to him. From here we see that Imam Ali never felt concerned for himself. He felt concerned for Allah and His religion. Hence this was not a case of bravery in the battlefield. It was a case of bravery in the field of patience. He had the courage to refuse as well as the courage to keep quiet.

This courage was inculcated in Imam Ali's heart by love of Allah, not by mere belief in Him for this belief is shared by the philosophers of the West also. Aristotle also believed in Allah. Plato, Farabi and others also believed in Him. But what have they done for humanity? What have they done for this world or the next? Belief alone is not enough. Only love of Allah added to belief in Him does wonders.

We are the people most befitted for renouncing this world, and divorcing it. If love of this world is a sin, it should be considered to be the biggest sin as far as we the students of theology are concerned.

It is necessary for us to be more careful in this respect than others, for we call ourselves the leaders of the way to salvation. Then what is our function and our duty in this world? If somebody asks you what duty you perform and how do you justify your existence, what will you say? You will say that you draw the attention of the people to the Hereafter, and to the Divine world and to Allah. Then how can you sever your world from the Hereafter?

If your world is not linked to the Hereafter, then you link the people to your own world and not to Allah's Hereafter. In that case you become the highwaymen of the way to Allah, which is not the right way between any two cities. Our duty is to lead the people to the way of Allah. We have shouldered this responsibility.

We are committed to lead the people by holding their hand. If we ourselves turn to any other way, we will be obstructing people from going to the right path. Anyone whose heart is overpowered by love of this world, is ruined. But when love of this world overpowers the hearts of us, the students of theology, we not only ruin ourselves, but we ruin others also, for we have placed ourselves in a position of

responsibility and in a place where we should bind people to Allah.

But unfortunately we are not conscious in our hearts of Allah's presence, and that is why we are unable to discharge our duty. As we have greater responsibility, it is necessary for us to refrain from loving this world. We claim to be the heirs of the Holy Prophet and the Imams. We claim to be following the way of the Holy Prophet, Imam Ali, Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn (Peace be on them), and to have a special relationship with them.

Do we not want that we should have a living consciousness of this great relationship? This relationship makes our position more sensitive and more delicate than that of others, because we narrate the sayings, teachings and guidance of the Holy Prophet and the Imams and consider ourselves to be nearer than anybody else to the words, manners and sciences of the Holy Prophet and the Imams. Has not the Holy Prophet said: "We the Prophets do not leave gold, silver, or property as our inheritance. Only knowledge and wisdom are our legacy."

Imam Ali said: "This Caliphate of yours has no value to me. What is important to me is to establish some truth or to destroy some falsehood." Did Imam Ali not say so? Did he not act according to this view throughout his life? He worked for his beloved Allah, not for himself. Had Imam Ali sought the world and worked for it, he would really have been the most unfortunate man on the face of the earth, for from his early childhood he had carried his life in his hand.

He defended the Prophet of Allah and fought for his cause and his divine mission. He never wavered for a single moment. He did not care for his life, and was never afraid of his death. He carried his life in his hand. He was more obedient to the Holy Prophet during his lifetime and after his death than anybody else. He worked for the cause of Allah more than all others. More than others he underwent all sorts of hardships and sufferings for the cause of Islam. Why did Imam Ali make all these efforts? What was his aim?

If we look at the things from a worldly point of view, Imam Ali did not get any thing out of his efforts. In the matter of Caliphate he was pushed aside. For all his efforts he had to pass a retired life for a long time. Was not this great man abused and cursed? Was he not cursed from the pulpits which he himself had set up by dint of his blood and sacrifice?

Thus Imam Ali did not acquire any worldly thing, neither wealth or property, nor any post or position, nor fame or renown. His work did not receive appreciation. Despite all this what did he say when Abdur Rahman ibn Muljam struck him with his sword on his head? At that moment this great Imam exclaimed: "By the Lord of the Ka'ba, I have succeeded."

Imam Ali was not working for his personal profit. Whatever he was doing, he was doing for Allah's sake. So he thought that the time of meeting Allah had come. He would soon meet Allah, who would pay him his dues and would reward him for all the sufferings he had undergone. That is why he exclaimed: "By the Lord of the Ka'ba, I have succeeded."

This Imam is our ideal. His life is a model for us? We believe that the Qur'an and the Sunnah are the sources of Islamic law? What is Sunnah? Does it mean anything other than the conduct – sayings, the deeds and the approvals of those who are infallible? It is our duty to refrain from loving this world. In fact we have no world to love. Should we love the world? Can we the students love this world and leave aside Allah's good pleasure which is more important than everything else.

Is it possible to leave aside what no eye has seen, no ear has heard and no heart has conceived? After all what is this world of ours? It is only a collection of imaginary and fictitious things. Of course the world of everybody is such, but our world is more fictitious than that of others. What can we get out of this world except that which is insignificant and paltry?

We are not out of those people who plunder the wealth of others, nor are we out of those who prefer this world to the Hereafter. Harun al-Rashid's world was very imposing. We often draw a comparison between his position and ours. We curse him day and night. But do you know to what extent Harun was engrossed in his world? Do you know what kind of world it was in which he was absorbed? In what lofty palaces did he live? What a luxurious life did he lead? What a grand and extensive empire did he possess?

We say that we are better, more pious and more God fearing than Harun was. Has the world of Harun al-Rashid ever been offered to us and we have rejected it? If not, how can we claim to be more pious than him.

The world which has been offered to us is not that of Harun al-Rashid. As compared to his world, it is very limited and insignificant. It is transient and of short duration. It is a world which is not as vast and extensive as that of Harun al-Rashid. He looked at the clouds and said: -"Wherever you rain, you will rain in my dominion, and pour the taxes into my treasury." For the sake of this world he threw Imam Musa Kazim into prison.

Are we sure if we get that world, won't we imprison Imam Musa Kazim?

Have we tested ourselves? Have we put this question to ourselves? Each of us should put this question to himself and answer it between himself and his Allah. The world of Harun al-Rashid makes one bound to imprison Imam Musa Kazim.

Has the world of Harun al-Rashid ever been put before us so that we could know whether we were more pious than him? What is our world? It is a distorted form of the world. It is a vain speculation. In our world there can be no real truth except that of Allah's good pleasure. In this respect every student of our seminary is like Imam Ali. Had the Imam worked for worldly gains, he would have been the most miserable person. The gates of the world are always open.

If a person seeking this world has the necessary capability, talent and intelligence, all doors are open to him. But if a student of theology works for this world, he is an unlucky man, for he loses this world as

well as the next. This world is not for the students of theology. A student who is looking for this world, can get neither this world nor the next.

Therefore it is incumbent on us to confine our efforts to seeking the next world and to inculcate love of Allah in our hearts, for this world should have no value to us.

The Holy Imams have told us to remember death. That is the best cure of love of the world. We all know well that all men have to die, but we think that death is meant only for others, not for us. To exterminate love of this world from our hearts we should always keep the concept of our death before our eyes.

We should think that any moment it is possible that we die. Each of us has had friends who have died. Our brothers have departed this world. At the time of his death my father was not as old as I am at present. My brother died at an age younger than mine now. I have now completed the span of my lifetime. It would not have been unreasonable if I had died at the age at which my father died or at the age at which my brother died. Each of us should have a reminder of this sort before him.

Many of our friends and relatives have passed away. All their hopes and aspirations have come to an end. Nothing has been left of them. If those who have gone to their Lord were working for this world, every thing concerning them has ended. Their death is a warning to us. That is what the Imams have taught us. We must always keep this warning in mind, so that we may suppress our lust for this worldly life, which may last for a few days or perhaps a few months or at the most a few years.

How can we exert ourselves on the presumption that the life is long-lasting? We may get an opportunity to work only for ten days. We may be able to defend our life only for a month or two. We do not know what we are defending. Shall we be able to bear the consequences of the sins committed by us against Allah and against our religion during this period?

What for should we bear these consequences? For the sake of the life of ten days or of a month or two months? This is not a good bargain. We ask Allah to purify our hearts, and to brighten them with faith. May He turn our mind more and more to seeking His pleasure and fill our hearts with His love, His fear and belief in Him. May He help us act according to the teachings of His Book.

***Ameen.***

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