Merits of the Soul: Trust in God (tawakkul)

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Article

A brief text about tawakkul (trust in Allah SWT), its degrees and merits.

Trust in God (tawakkul)

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a) was asked regarding the utterance of God Almighty, ***'And whoever puts his trust in God, then God suffices him'* (65:3).** The Imam (a) said: "There are various degrees of trust in God. Of them one is that you should put your trust in God in all your affairs, being well-pleased with whatever God does to you, knowing for certain that he does not cease in His goodness and grace towards you, and that the command therein rests with Him. So put your trust in God, leaving that to Him and relying upon Him in regard to that and everything other than that." [Al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, vol 2, p. 391, hadith # 3]

Tawakkul or entrusting one's affairs to God depends upon a person's knowledge and firm belief in God's Lordship, Mastership and the quality of the authority of the Holy Essence over all affairs of the Universe. However, trusting God in one's worldly and hereafterly affairs doesn't mean that efforts and endeavours should be given up. Rather one should perform actions to the best of his abilities and then rely on God for His justice, help and beneficence.

What is tawakkul

● Famous '*arif*, Khawaja Abdullah Ansari [ra] said: ***"Tawakkul* means entrusting all the matters to the Master and relying upon His trusteeship."**

● Other gnostics have defined it as: ***"Tawakkul* upon God means the severance by the servant of all hopes and expectations from the creatures (and attaching them to God)."**

The degrees of tawakkul

● The commoners among the monotheists consider God Almighty the Creator of the general essences of things and their elements and substances; but they do not believe in the all-embracing Lordship of God, and consider His authority over things as limited.

They are devoid of *tawakkul* in respect to their worldly affairs; they make vigorous claims of *tawakkul* when it comes to the matters of the Hereafter. They justify their sluggishness and neglect in the matters of acquisition of transcendental knowledge, spiritual development and fulfilment of moral and devotional duties by easy professions of reliance on God and *tawakkul* on His beneficence. With such verbal declarations as `God is great' and `My trust lies in God's beneficence' they hope to attain the stations of the Hereafter. However, in regard to worldly matters, they declare, "Effort and endeavour are not contrary to *tawakkul* on God and reliance upon His munificence."

Thus, they consider worldly matters as paramount, and put their reliance on material causes, not relying on God and His efficacy and since the affairs of the Hereafter are not important in their eyes and as they have no real faith in the Day of Resurrection and its details, they conjure up pretexts to conceal their neglect.

● There is another class of people, who, having been convinced either by reason or intuition, affirm that God Almighty is the sole determiner of matters, the cause of all causes, efficacious in the realm of being, there being no limit to His power and influence. At the level of rational belief, they have *tawakkul* in God; hence they consider themselves as *mutawakkil* and are able to supply rational proofs in justification of *tawakkul,* which are: God's knowledge of the needs of His creatures; His power and ability to satisfy those needs and His love and mercy for His creatures.

This group, although they are *mutawakkil* at the level of rational knowledge, has not yet attained the stage of faith; they are shaky when confronted with the matters of life. There is a conflict between their reason and their heart, in which reason is dominated by the heart which has faith in material causes and is blind to God's power and efficacy.

● There is a third group in which the conviction in God's sway over creation has penetrated into the heart, which has firm faith in God's Sovereignty and Mastership over things. The pen of reason has inscribed all the essentials of *tawakkul* on the tablet of their hearts. It is they who possess the station of *tawakkul.* But the members of this group also differ from one another in regard to the level and degree of faith, whose highest degree is contentment (*itminan*) at which the most perfect degree of *tawakkul* appears in their hearts. Then, their hearts are detached from causation and attached to the Lordship of God, on Whom they rely and in Whom they are content, in accordance with the words of a mystic who defined *tawakkul* as "**casting the body away in servitude to God and attaching the heart to His Lordship**."

● **My Lord, grant me complete severance of my relations with everything else and total submission to You**.... [Munajat Sha'abniyyah of Imam Ali (a): Al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 94, p. 99]

The merits of tawakkul

● In Islamic traditions, *tawakkul* has been highly praised as the firm sign of one's faith, piety and complete trust in God. Only those who enjoy true friendship of God can always trust Him, under all conditions in their lives.

● One's *tawakkul* in God guarantees his success in world and hereafter, no matter how difficult the task is and how severe and harsh conditions one is going through in his life or how powerful are the enemies one is facing.

● Imam Ali (a): "***Tawakkul* on God is [source of] relief from every evil and protection from every**

enemy." [Al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 56, p. 79]

Are there any stages higher than tawakkul?

● The stage of *rida* [being pleased with God] is different from the station of *tawakkul*, being higher and more luminous. This is because whereas the *mutawakkil* seeks his own good and benefit and entrust his affairs to God considering Him the provider of good, the *radi* [one who has attained the station of *rida*] is one who has annihilated his will in the Divine Will, having no more a separate will of his own.

● The stage of *tafwid* which means that the devotee should see no power and capacity in himself and that he should consider himself ineffectual and regard God as All-effectual. This stage is subtler and more refined than *tawakkul*, for in *tawakkul*, the *mutawakkil* makes God his own substitute, one in charge of his affairs for attaining that which is good and beneficial while in *tafwid* it is with regard to absolutely all the affairs.

● *Thiqah* [reliance] on God Almighty is the soul of every station near to God, and the devotee cannot attain them without it. According to Khawaja Abdullah Ansari [ra], '*thiqah* is the eye of *tawakkul*, the (moving) point of the circle of *tafwid*, and the inmost heart of *taslim* (surrender).' That is, the three stations cannot be attained without *thiqah*.

● Imam Reza (a): "**Faith has four pillars: *Tawakkul* on Almighty God, be pleased with His decree, surrender to God's order, completely entrusting [one's affairs] to God**." [Ar-Rayshahri, *Mizan al-Hikmah*, hadith #22499]

An advice to attain tawakkul

In order to develop trust in God, one must change his view about his own existence, life of this world, human relationships, hardship and happiness, health and disease, wealth and poverty, success and failure, life and death, and become realistic about himself, being a mere creature of God and his Creator, God, the Almighty, Who has created this Universe, from tiniest particle to the mightiest of creatures. One must realize that God is the ultimate source of every bounty, every success, and every benefit, and no harm can reach him even from the most powerful enemy except with the permission of God and similarly no benefit. One must often ponder about these basic issues of his life and slowly develop his faith in God, place his hope and trust in Him, often pray to Him and nurture realistic thinking about his future and make a plan for doing good actions, keeping in view both this world and hereafter. One must observe that:

● Human being though is the most superior creature on Earth, in fact has a very fragile existence. Humans like any other creature are never independent. Additionally, humans like others have no control over their birth, aging and death.

● Similarly, disease, failure, sorrows, poverty and other hardships are inherent in human life, from richest to the most powerful human beings, no one can avoid them. Life of this world is meant to test human beings and is not a place of reward and permanent stay.

● A person who forgets God as his Almighty Creator and Provider and attributes his successes, possessions, wealth and other worldly things solely to himself is more likely to suffer from harm if he loses them. On the other hand, a believer who places his trust in God is actually saved from anxiety, stress, and depression and other physical and psychological illnesses because of his relationship with God. His hope in God provides him strong support under most difficult moments of his life and gives him strength.

● For every living creature, living in this world, life will end one day and the time of death is also not known. It is better that a person should always keep his heart in a state of complete trust with God and not be influenced by physical causes, materialistic things and transient successes and failures, rather one should attach himself to the eternal values set by God.

Conclusion

● Prophet of God [s] said: "Whoever wishes to be the most powerful person among people must trust God." [Al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar,* vol. 15, p. 135, hadith # 71]

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