

Self-sacrifice? Or selfishness?

In the Qur'an, an important truth is revealed with the command **"You will not attain true goodness until you give of what you love..."** (Surah Al 'Imran, 92).

One of the most essential moral values that will lead people to true goodness is "self-sacrifice." Self-sacrifice is to be able to withdraw from the things that a person owns, loves, and prizes without thinking and with open arms. It is to be able to face up to every hardship and trouble for the people one loves and for the values one cherishes, and to find the determination and willpower to do the most one can do under difficult circumstances.

However, the inner self as created is inclined to various bad moral values such as self-interest and egoism. If one does not educate his inner self, these selfish desires will come to dominate the person's whole morality. Such a person generally and mostly thinks about himself more than others. He wants the best, the most beautiful and the most perfect of everything all the time. When he faces a hardship, he expects the people around him to face every sort of risk and trouble for him; and support him even if this means sacrificing their own interests. Inwardly, he wants to protect his own desires and interests, and to ensure his own comfort and benefit. Otherwise, (in the name of protecting his own interests and to prevent causing any harm to himself) he could easily be prepared to sacrifice many of the things he most cherishes. Allah reveals this sickly feeling of selfishness that exists in man's inner self in the Qur'an:



"Truly man was created headstrong –desperate when bad things happen, begrudging when good things come –" (Surat Al-Ma`arij, 19–21)

Self-Sacrifice Brings Good Moral Values

A person who does good deeds in order to earn Allah's good pleasure behaves with great enthusiasm, willpower and self-sacrifice in the face of every incident he comes across as a trial. This sincere and faithful behavior ensures that he learns many good moral values together with it. A self-sacrificing person also has very patient, devoted, courageous, determined, merciful, helpful, compassionate, polite and thankful characteristics.

The Importance of Muslims' Self-Sacrifice

There may be very few opportunities to act in a self-sacrificing way throughout one's life. Therefore, when he faces such an opportunity, he must act with the consciousness that these are very precious opportunities to get closer to Allah and to

earn His love and good pleasure. Today when we look at the condition of mankind and especially of Muslims who live throughout the world, the importance of living the moral values of Islam emerges one more time.

Muslims Overcome Hardships With Solidarity and Self-Sacrifice

Times of difficulty are very precious moments Allah creates for believers. People generally seldomly come across such situations. And these are the times that a person can show the strength of one's loyalty, love and devotion to Allah, and that he can do more good for the Hereafter. A believer does not put out an extra effort to meet hardship and trouble, but when he faces them he considers them as great blessings and opportunities Allah created for his own self.

"Say: 'My prayer and my rites, my living and my dying, are for Allah alone, the Lord of all the worlds,' (Surat Al-An'am, 162)

Selfish People Do Not Appreciate Allah As One Should

People who are preoccupied with their own interests in the life of this world and do not show the required effort regarding self-sacrifice, have not been able to comprehend Allah's Power, His mercy and compassion on believers and that He is the guide, friend and helper of believers all the time.

Selfish Desires Let the Person Down in the Hereafter



A person who ignores these truths in the life of this world, even though he knows the moral values of the Qur'an and his moral responsibilities, must not forget that he could experience a regret that cannot be compensated for in the Hereafter. Those who lead their lives by following their selfish desires are going to want to turn back to the world one more time and do self-sacrifice for the sake of Allah with their possessions and lives, when they are in the Hereafter. They will want to give everything they gathered by avoiding self-sacrifice in order to be saved

from Hell:

"And that Day Hell is produced, that Day man will remember; but how will the remembrance help him? He will say, 'Oh! If only I had prepared in advance for this life of mine!'" (Surat al-Fajr, 23–24)

One Finds Salvation By Avoiding Selfish Desires

Salvation from this weakness of the inner self could only be possible through understanding faith and living by the moral values of the Qur'an. A person who lives the truths revealed in the Qur'an and the morality commanded by Allah could achieve a level of morality to be able to demonstrate self-sacrifice at every moment throughout his or her life. This is because Allah revealed in the verse, **"... It is the people who are safe-guarded from the avarice of their own selves who are**

successful.” (Surat at-Taghabun, 16) that one of the attitudes that will direct people to salvation in this world and the Hereafter is to avoid this bad habit of the inner self.

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