

Purification of Soul in Islamic Perspective A Comparative Study of Islamic Concept of Tazkiah with Monasticism

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Abstract

This universe is the creation of Allah, the Almighty. It has its colorful manifestations in different forms and shapes of life. Man is the circlet of the universe and the super most creatures of Allah among all other types of creatures. He is a well blended spectacular piece of spirit and matter. The perceptible body is envoy of matter, whereas the spirit represents the luminous feature of soul. The soul directly descends from the order of Allah. So by boosting and strengthening his spiritual attribute, the man may directly be linked and joined with the forces of his Creator; Allah the Almighty. This makes him distinctive among all other creatures of the universe.

Keywords: Islam, Tazkiah, Monasticism

This magnificent amalgamation of matter and spirit is quite proportional and the same ratio is required to be maintained by the man. This is highly significant to comprehend the fact that the path of success is always through this worldly life. The Islamic concept of living is different from others. Islam proposes the methodology to uphold both the features of human body with the same proportion as by design placed in it. This out rightly rejects the extreme concepts of life which are either to enjoy all sort of lusts of dirty life with full fledged liberty and freedom as there being no other life. The other extremist concept of life is, in order to gain ultimate success of life of hereafter; one essentially needs to keep himself away from the normal business of life which is related to the social aspects. This is in order to gain the purity of soul from the lusts

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of this worldly life, the essence of monasticism. The former one is pure materialistic approach, whereas the second is based on leaving the world aside. Islam is very clear in this regard that neither the social aspect of life is to be ignored nor the monasticism is to prevail. Both the features are imperative for the eternal success of the man. The path of heavens passes through the social links of the world. No isolated and special short cut has been recommended in Islam for its followers to choose as a source of achieving success. Maintaining both the inbuilt features; material and spiritual side by side is the way that one can efficiently perform rights of Allah and rights of fellow beings simultaneously. Purification of soul does not mean to give up all worldly business. This means to observe all rights of the creator and His creatures with full practical sense of duty, as his Creator is before his eyes, or at least Allah is monitoring him during all courses of his actions. Enlightening from this hadith, an Islamic terminology has been established as, 'Ihsan'.¹

The soul, of course will be the driving force during the voyage of life. This is all about 'Tazkiah' (purification of soul). This is an essential qualification that is supposed to be precede our knowledge of 'Al-Kitab' and 'Al-Hikmah. By acquiring this qualification, the man becomes superior to even angels.

The course to walk about in this regard is to keep the soul alive, and not to let the material forces dominate the spiritual features of life. The following description and sketch is all about this fact that how to preserve the humanity by looking after the well blended proportion of spirit with matter in human life.

To attain this standard, Islam ensures to look after the bodily needs to avoid any negligence of the material feature of life. Similarly it is his expectation from its followers to comply with prescribed

commands in order to preserve and promote the spiritual substance of the soul as well. This spiritual essence can be strengthened by Prayer, Zakat, charities, Fasting, and above all, Zikr of Allah. (To keep Allah always in mind)

Introduction

Islam is a perfect and comprehensive spiritual and social package of life. It is a well integrated whole of beliefs, moral values and actions. Purity of intention occupies the fundamental place for all actions. Islam asks its followers to evaluate their intentions while performing any action, major or minor, material or spiritual. If the intention is to seek the pleasure of the Lord, and the Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW), it is sufficient to become worth accepting. Same has been elaborated in the following hadith:

"The rewards of deeds depend upon the intentions, and a person will get the reward according to what he intended." ²

Starting from this paradigm, one may conclude that Islam's fundamental theme is to demand from the mankind to purify their intentions and thinking processes in order to manifest good deeds in line with the desire of their Lord. This is the only way to achieve success here and salvation in the life hereafter. The straight path (which every Muslim is supposed to beg from his Lord at least five times a day while performing obligatory five prayers) leads him to achieve the pleasure of Allah which ultimately has its manifestation in the attractive shape of heaven. But this path does not have any deviation from the society. One has to involve himself enthusiastically with full sense of commitment and active participation in various social aspects of life. Dealings among human beings, mutual relationship in the society and multi layers of human

associations are inevitable to be practiced upon alongside filling the columns of rights of Allah simultaneously. This is the beauty of Islam that never isolates the man from his social obligations as Christianity believes to quit all material practices in order to gain the purity of the soul from the grubby feature of this material world.

This concept of monasticism has totally been prohibited in Islam as it has been affirmed in the holy Quran:

*"But the monasticism which they invented for themselves, We did not prescribe for them, but (they sought it) only to please Allah therewith, but they did not observe it with the right observance."*³

Moreover, the Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW) is a practical form of the Quran which clearly testifies about his active involvement in the family affairs, as well as other social aspects like trade and political matters etc. so the self purification is not synonymous to monasticism. Following pages will bear witness to it.

Islam does not recommend and encourage the hypothesis of dualism between spiritual and material aspect of human life. It is rather a well-integrated and strong combination that each one compliments the other. This is contrary to the concept that calls for separation of the both (monasticism). It is indeed Islam, which strongly believes that body is the appropriate asylum for soul. That is why the strengthening of the body, and it's brought up in a tidy, hygienic and conducive environment is equally important as much as it is desirable for the grooming of the human soul, its healthy growth and prosperous flourishing. Proper diet (material and spiritual both) is evenly essential to be supplied to the body as well as to the soul. The laxity towards the essential necessities of the human body has strictly been prohibited as this matter has been reported through a famous hadith that one of his noble companions "Hazrat

Abdullah Bin Amr Bin Al-Aas” dedicated his days and nights with fasting and recitation of the Quran respectively without any break. As a result, the social aspect like family affairs and other important dealings with fellow beings were disregarded. The Prophet called him and asked him to discontinue that practice immediately. The holy Prophet said:

“I have been informed that you observe consecutive fasting and recite the holy Quran throughout the night.”⁴

After confirmation, the Prophet further ordered him to observe fasting for three days a month. On his request for increasing, the Prophet commented:

“Surely you are accountable to pay certain obligations to your wife, guest and for your body”.⁵

This means that strengthening of mere spiritual aspect leads to abandoning the social practices. This is indeed Islam which really ensures to care for the social aspect of the human life along with the proportional blending of spiritual features.

Despite all what we discussed earlier, this is well known fact that the man is by nature ease-loving and has the tendency towards relaxation which may cause some sort of negligence and other linked problems leading towards poor performance and dark shades dishonoring his status of “vicegerent” on the earth. This is in fact not in order to reduce the significance of his capacities and abilities, but to underline his unique distinctions that despite having this weak area, he is expected to exhibit a very high standard of duty to be performed deliberately to prove the worth of his rank and status. Allah says:

“Fair in the eyes of men is the love of things they covet: women and sons; heaped-up hoards of gold and silver; horses branded (for blood and excellence); and (wealth of) cattle and well-titled land”.⁶

After acknowledging the real state of weak areas of the man, Quran does not leave him to go off track by exerting hard to achieve only this mean target of worldly lively hood. Quran further adds to underline the mortality of these things.

*"Such are the possessions of this world's life;"*⁷

This part of the verse has clear message that despite all sort of attractions in this world, man should not be left alone at the mercy of his wishes and temptations. So his attention is being drawn (in the later part of the verse) to another alternative to opt, and that is:

*"But with Allah is the best of the goals (To return to)".*⁸

Further, in the verse tagged along; a comparison has quite vividly been presented before the man to enable him to choose better and eternal option:

*"Say: shall I give you glad tidings of things far better than those? For the righteous are Gardens in nearness to their Lord with rivers flowing beneath; therein in their eternal home; with spouses purified and the good pleasure of Allah".*⁹

Islam does not deny material aspect of human life. It acknowledges the inbuilt characteristics of the man. On the other hand, it advises him to devote his full capacities for that which is Immortal, but of course not at the cost of his social side of life. No doubt this is a revolutionary step taken by Islam that neither of the sides is ignored / mistreated and complications were avoided so beautifully.

In order to uphold the stability of both the sides and counter the risk of general inbuilt attitude of violating the limits of either aspects, which may be harmful to the performance of the man and his well distinct and identical practical manifestation of deeds, it was ordered to maintain not only the regular supply of spiritual diet to meet the

nutritional needs of the human soul, but also the quality should not be compromised, lest the soul should fall sick and consequently end up into death which is the high point of absolute material domination on spiritual aspect, which results ultimately to exercise pure material view point, and that is absolutely against Islam. The Holy Quran urges upon promotion of such a balanced and well blended arrangement of the human society that ensures the prosperous and regular brought up of all human inbuilt abilities (material and spiritual simultaneously without any minor dot causing any kind of divergence from the proposed right path. This is called: Tazkiah” i.e. “Purification of own self”.

Significant Characteristics of human beings

The man is the superior most creature of Allah, the Almighty, amongst the whole universe. The Holy Quran describes his illustrious characteristics at various places:

“Verily we created the man from a drop of mingled sperm, in order to try him: So We gave him (the gift of) Hearing and Sight. Verily, we showed him the way, whether he be grateful or ungrateful.”¹⁰

“He who taught (the men) the use of the Pen, Taught man that which he knew not”.¹¹

“Behold, thy Lord said to the angels” I will create a vicegerent on the earth.”¹²

The above mentioned verses let us know that the man has been blessed with the distinctions of “Mind”. “Free Will” and “Knowledge” (in order to prove the worth of the superior most rank amongst the creatures of Allah. Similarly the soul is also an extra ordinary manifestation of Allah, the Almighty in the material body of the man which is further a distinction of the man amongst rest of the creatures. This reality is

expressively and meaningfully indicated in the following verse of the holy Quran:

*"He began the creation of man from clay. Then He made his offspring from semen of despised water. Then He fashioned him in due proportion, and breathed into him the soul (created by Allah for that person); and He gave you hearing (ears), sight (eyes) and hearts."*¹³

The first verse reveals the initial state of creation of man, and the second one reflects the next state of creation of the man. Both are material aspects whether from the clay or course of reproduction. In the later verse, the matter has been disclosed that after his proportional finishing, the soul was breathed into him and was blessed with senses. So senses along with mind free will, knowledge and soul in the body make a well blended proportional combination. All above stated abilities of the man are essentially subject to the appropriate grooming and developing the potentialities in order to upkeep the soul and uplift the own self of the man. If we divide the human body apparently into two parts, the upper and lower. Prior one comprises hearing, sight, brain (mind) and heart. These abilities may be the true reps of soul, if exercised rightly in accordance with the commandments of the Lord. The soul always tends to take off upwards. So the angelic attributes are quite possible to be obtained by the man. The lower part of the human body consists of belly and downwards organs (sexual). This may be interpreted as the reps of animal aspect of life which reflects temptations and to fulfill the lusts of the world. Lower part is closer to the earth, and if the man follows his temptations blindly by ignoring the demands of spiritual forces, obviously this will tend to go downwards. This has very magnificently been stated in the holy Quran:

*"And had we willed, we would surely have elevated him therewith, but he clung to the earth and followed his own vain desire."*¹⁴

So following the vain desires and temptations is exactly similar to inclining to the earth. Similarly elevation means to position the spiritual wings to take off to the heights of character and morality. These are the distinctions that craft the man qualify to become the super creature and to be appointed as the "Vicegerent" of Allah on the earth.

*"Behold, thy Lord said to the angels" I will create a vicegerent on the earth."*¹⁵

Significance of Spiritual and Material Combination

This combination of "matter" and "soul" goes side by side. The matter is manifested in the body, whereas the soul is interpreted as the inner self. Both are integrated with each other, and need suitable intake according to their own manufacturing designs. The body fulfils its nutritional needs from material food for flourishing and nourishment. The soul gets its spiritual diet to further strengthen and to promote its divinely inbuilt characteristics.

Keeping in view the above mentioned points regarding food or diet, we shall try to explore the meaning of "Spiritual diet" for the "inner self" which aims at purification, strengthening, promoting and canalizing its inherent capabilities of either doing good or evil. As food is necessary for the survival of any material body, the spiritual diet is also essential to keep the soul alive. This is the soul which is the manifestation of "Divine 'Noor' of Allah" in human body. If unfortunately this becomes dead due to discontinuation of supply of its required standard food, this is not viable to envisage for a "Caliph" of Allah to be worthy of his elevated rank with the dead soul just appearing in the stature of human body. So the significance of Man as to establish the sanctity of "Caliph Hood" of

Allah depends upon the proper and regular supply and provision of the food wanted for the inner self, other wise the only difference between him and the animals shall be the difference of apparent shape. Let us find out about the required intake for own self. We will try to explore out the fact step by step through Quranic statements and authentic ahadith:

It is mentioned in the Holy Quran:

“But he will prosper who purified himself. And remembers the name of his Guardian-Lord, and prays.”¹⁶

In this holy verse of the Holy Quran, four points have been highlighted:

- Salvation
- Purification of self
- Remembrance of Allah
- Prayer

In the light of the verse, the success and Salvation is attainable by following the next three points, and “Purification of self” falls at the top of the list which is further followed by that keeps the heart alive. Consequently “Prayer” is manifested practically in actions with full zeal and zest. This is the ultimate product which leads the man to the road of success. Same reality has been exposed at another place in the Holy Quran:

“Successful indeed are the believers those who humble themselves in their prayers.”¹⁷

The Quran highlights the significance of Purification of self when talks about “Human Soul” in an extraordinary way.

“By the Soul, and the proportion and order given to it; and its enlightenment as to its wrong; and its right.”¹⁸

After putting the soul as witness to certain reality, the holy Quran throws the eternal light to that reality:

*"Truly he succeeds that purifies it, and he fails that corrupts it"*¹⁹

The above mentioned verses belong to (Al-Shams) which begin with a fine nature passage and leads up to man's need of realizing his spiritual responsibilities. The contents of the verses indicate the following important points:-

Significance of Human self

This has been highlighted in a way that its creator Himself swears upon it, and the same has been endorsed by Quranic evidence:

*And I swear by the reproaching soul [to the certainty of resurrection]*²⁰

Inherent tendency of Human Self

This aims at revealing the potentialities of the human self either to opt good or evil. This is to tell about the man that he has been bestowed with liberty and freedom, unlike animals, as he may take on either way of life. (Good or bad).

Purification of own Self

This means that our own self with its natural tendency to opt either bad or good needs conscious efforts to mould it to adopt good for further participation and promotion of the good in the human society. This is to enable the self to flourish and qualify for "Zikr" and "Prayer" in order to gain the definite success, which is achievable only by purifying the own self to supplement and improve its inherent faculties to perform and promote the good. If we examine the issue with a different perspective,

we get in touch with an exciting end which begins with the prayer of Hazrat Ibrahim (may Allah be pleased with Him) (The grand father of the Last Prophet) after getting through from the construction of the House of Allah along with his son Hazrat Ismail. They pray:

*“O our Sustainer! Raise up from the midst of our offspring an apostle from among themselves, who shall convey unto them Thy message, and impart unto them revelation as well as wisdom, and cause them to grow in purity.”*²¹

This Dua includes the following assignments for the apostle about whom the request has been put up to be commissioned:-

- Recitation of the Holy verses
- Teaching of Al-Kitab
- Inculcating of wisdom
- Purification of self

The prayer was granted approval, but with a significant amendment.

*“Similarly (to complete My Blessings on you), We have sent among you a Messenger (Muhammad) of your own, reciting to you Our verses (the Quran) and purifying you, and teaching you the Book (the Quran) and the Hikmah.”*²²

Same theme with the same order has been maintained in two other places of the holy Quran.²³

These verses expose the fact about the amended sequence of the responsibilities of the Prophet (SAW) presented in a different way in 'Dua' of Hazrat Ibrahim. The amendment was significantly made in such a way that the order of the “Purification of self” was promoted prior to imparting of 'Al-Kitab' and 'Al-Hikmah'. This was dissimilar to the

sequence of Hazrat Ibrahim's prayer where the purification of soul was occupying the tale. Let us analyze the sense of this amended sequence:-

a) Recitation of the Holy Quran

This prepares the environment towards thoughtful listening to the Prophet and increases the state of conviction of the believers. This further helps them to comprehend more and more. Just look what the holy Quran says in this regard:

*"Believers are only they whose hearts tremble with awe whenever Allah is mentioned, and whose faith is strengthened whenever His verses are recited unto them."*²⁴

This is the role of recitation of the Holy Quran which actually purifies and cleans the hearts when they are rusted. Same has been mentioned in the following Hadith reported by Hazrat Abdullah bin Umar from the Prophet:-

*"The hearts get rusted as the water rusts the iron. It was asked about the treatment. The Prophet advised them to have frequent remembrance of death and recitation of the Holy Quran"*²⁵.

Now look at the fact that how important heart is in the human body! This is well known to every one from biological point of view, but spiritually how deeply it affects the whole course of life. Let us read this in the following hadith:

*"Be on your guard. Surely there is a piece of meat in human body, if this is accurate, the whole body is accurate, and if this gets flawed, the whole body follows it. Be on your guard. This is heart."*²⁶

These sayings of the Prophet (SAW) establish the importance of heart which is exactly a nucleus in the body. This heart often

gets filthy, rusted, and become flawed either because of the surroundings and society (external factor) or due to dirty feelings and ideas. (Internal factor) This deadly needs to be preserved and kept clean and tidy. The other important tip which has been offered here is the recitation of holy Quran, which not only increases the state of conviction, but similarly purifies the heart and soul from rust and protects it from getting dirty. So, recitation of the Holy Quran simultaneously purifies the heart and soul, and smoothes and softens the surface of heart for further cultivation of the seeds of conviction as Quran testifies:

*“For such He (Allah) has written Faith in their hearts.”*²⁷

Same has been re-enforced in another fashion:-

*“Their hearts Has Allah tested for piety.”*²⁸

Another view is essential to be focused on the subject:-

*“But Allah has endeared the Faith to you, and has made it beautiful in your hearts, and He Has made hateful to you Unbelief, wickedness and Rebellion.”*²⁹

This all is evidence that the heart or soul is the place of conviction which deadly requires to be purified for full fledge flourishing and nourishing of the seed of conviction. And this purpose is fully achieved with the help of recitation of the Holy Quran which is the initial but one of the primary roles assigned to the Prophet.

b) Purification of Self

This step is placed soon after recitation which stresses to aim at cleaning the ready soil of the heart for further making it tidy. This is known as 'Tazkiah'.

This is prior to the cultivation of knowledge; otherwise this all may end in vain and cause confusions. So, the Prophet, soon after softening of the hearts and increasing the state of conviction with the help of recitation, cleans and purifies it. He trims and cuts the unwanted habits and undesirable characteristics. So the trimming of human self and purification is one of the essential tasks assigned to him by Allah.

c) Teaching of Al-Kitab

The sheet of mind and heart is ready now to receive and comprehend the knowledge. This is the high time to cultivate the seed of knowledge based on belief, because the heart is ready to return it fruitfully. The most shining and brilliant aspect of knowledge is to enable the one to benefit the mankind and further to differentiate between good and evil, desirable and undesirable, and wanted and unwanted. Same is the case with knowledge. So it is interesting to note that knowledge itself is never sufficient for "Hidayah" until it is gained purposefully with a clear objective. This is "Tazkiah" of human self which lets the man know about his limited knowledge as per the statement of the Holy Quran:-

*O man! You have been granted very little knowledge"*³⁰

This is the net result of purification of soul and heart that the man realizes not only the limitation of his knowledge, but also gets extremely inspired by the divine infinite knowledge of Allah

which ultimately results in immediate fear of Him as Quran ratifies it:

*“Of all His servants, only such as are endowed with knowledge stand (truly) in awe of Allah;(for they alone comprehend that)”*³¹

In the light of the verse this is essential for knowledge to be enhanced with “Tazkiah”. This makes the people realize that they do not know much as compared to Allah’s infinite knowledge. Thus the more they know, the more they realize that “unknown” is much greater fact than “known” to them. This keeps them motivated to gain more and more but with purpose. If knowledge is gained without “Tazkiah”, this shall create arrogance which is extremely harmful. This fact is evident that knowledge may also be harmful. It is exactly in the same sense as the food full of rich ingredients, is supplied to a stomach patient. The knowledge is supposed to be beneficial, but without Tazkiah, it is harmful. The Quran describes this particular damaging feature of knowledge as per the following verse:-

*”And they learned what harmed them, Not what profited them.”*³²

This means that if some one becomes arrogant of his knowledge and thinks that his knowledge is superior to others and he further needs nothing to bother and exert more in this regard, this is the sign of his decline and deprivation from knowledge and his existing so called knowledge becomes a veil and hindrance for him on his way to the light (Noor) of knowledge. This is why a Dua has been reported from the Prophet (SAW):

*”O Allah! I seek your shelter from such a knowledge which is not beneficial.”*³³

One extremely meaningful saying which has deep sense of inspiration from the above mentioned hadith is placed as following:-

"Seeking of knowledge and further its increasing is of no consequence without the fear of Allah."

It is further added that

"The one, who possesses knowledge without acting upon it, is like a spoon which is deprived of tastes even being amidst various delicious dishes." ³⁴

d) Imparting of Al-Hikmah

This is the right time to impart Al-Hikmah. This means (wisdom), i.e. the ability to utilize and apply the knowledge appropriately. If we ignore this particular sequence of imparting the knowledge of even Al'-Kitab." (The Holy Quran) We may not be able to benefit ourselves "Hidayah" despite possessing huge amount and quantity of knowledge. The orientalist are true example who undergo tough attempts with enthusiastic pains to conduct research in the fields of Quran and Sunnah, but most of them remain without belief. Thus the knowledge shall never be useful neither by lacking in its prerequisite, i.e. (Tazkiah) nor without qualifying as how, when and where to utilize and apply it, i.e. (Al-Hikmah)

The evidences of the past and experiences of the present testify the truth that the man had never been in the crisis of knowledge. But the real crisis had been and still persists is the lack of the ability as how, where and when to apply the knowledge. The man conquered the atom and made bomb out of it, but the present is the best and honest judge to decide that same was used against mankind, and the same threat can be

witnessed even today despite the man possesses much grater sum of knowledge than he had ever before in the known history. Same goes to the knowledge of the holy Quran and the Sunnah which aims at enlightening the hearts, minds and souls of the mankind, but it is highly being distorted to promote sectarianism, to strengthen one's own viewpoint and to grow the seeds of hatred among even the followers of Quran and Sunnah.

The integrity of "Muslim Ummah" has become a daydream and a mere fantasy despite possessing of enormous information; because the real spirit to act upon the commandments of Allah is missing. The self conceit and self-importance replaced the humbleness, humility and God fearing. The reason has lost its divine power. Why this is happening with this knowledge full and knowledgeable man?

This question demands that a deep view has to be devoted to it. The answer is clear in the light of what we discussed that the man, though has knowledge today, but has been deprived of "Al-Hikmah. He is proud and self-conceit of his "little amount of knowledge" instead of being humble and God fearing, which should have been the ultimate result of knowledge. The scholars are invited to explore the reality mentioned in the Holy Quran, that Allah never mentioned mere knowledge as a "great wealth" in any context of His holy Book, but "Al-Hikmah has been affirmed as great "great wealth". The Holy Quran tells us the same in the following verse:

*"And whoever is granted wisdom has indeed been granted wealth abundant."*³⁵

So the matter may be concluded that the package of all four assignments of the Prophet comprises four essential parts. Each one is inevitable for all others in such a way that none can become meaningful and practical without the rest of the components. However “Tazkiah” dominates the list as a matter of fact that the heart of the Last Prophet was washed and cleaned four times with the water of “Zamzam”. Once in the days of his early childhood when he was being brought up under the custody and care of his feeding mother “Haleemah Sa,adiyah” as per the following Hadith:

"Hazrat Anas bin Malik reports that once Gebril came to the Prophet (SAW), (in his childhood) while he was playing with the children. He caught the Prophet and lied Him down, then he opened His chest and brought His heart out, then he threw away a clot of the blood from the heart and said that this was the share of Satan from You. Then he washed it away with water of "Zamzam" brought in a dish made of gold, and then he healed the heart and placed it in its own place." ³⁶

Same kind of incident has been reported by Hazrat Anas again that happened with the Prophet when he was being bestowed with “Miraj” (Night Journey).

'The Prophet (SAW) said that they walked with me to the water of "Zamzam" and he opened my chest, then he washed it with the water of "Zamzam." ³⁷

This event is known as 'Shaqq-e-Sadr' in the legacy of the Prophet (SAW), which has been reported to happen in all four times in his life.³⁸

The heart of the Holy Prophet (SAW) was washed four times with the water of “Zamzam”, who was born sinless and

further was protected by Allah, the Almighty, from committing sins, then what about in case of his “Ummah”? Whether It should be left without purification of heart which has the deep and core influence on the whole body such as if this works in right direction, the whole body follows it, and if it works otherwise, the whole body goes wrong as it is said by the Prophet (SAW):

So “Tazkiah” and “Al-Hikma” both must play their divine and forceful function as protective cover and shield to cure the spiritual diseases of own self through the purification of heart and mind (soul).³⁹

Conclusion

The nucleus of the Islamic system is the part which has a direct bearing on the inner life of a man. It is generally branded as the spiritual system and strives to emancipate his spirit from the servitude of "self", purges it of the lust of the worldly life and imbues and instills it with the passion of His love, compliance, obedience and pleasure. A person attains the required love of purity and passion when he identifies or subordinates his own likes and dislikes with that of Allah. He acts upon the commands of his Master as if he is seeing Him with his own eyes; fears His displeasure as if he is in His presence; actively pursues his pleasure as one burning with thirst makes a rush for water. He is always on the ready to sacrifice his life and wealth, as a humble offering, on His slightest bidding. This level of spiritualism, which represents the loftiest and best standard, is known as "Ihsan" in Islamic terms. This highest state of Iman has been mentioned in hadith of Gebril:

“The Prophet asked,” What is Ihsan?” The Gebril replied that you observe ‘Ibadat’ in such a passion and enthusiasm as if you are seeing Allah with your own

eyes, and if you cannot perceive Him, then at least to endeavor to focus on His presence to monitor you.”⁴⁰

The methods prescribed by Islam for attaining this level of purity and transparency of heart and mind are called "the pillars of Islam". These pillars of Islam with their meticulous and inherent characteristics craft the conformity of actions with heart and mind very smoothly. Let us see that how does the prayer, stop the man from committing which has its essential trait as mentioned in the holy Quran:

“Indeed, the prayer restrains from shameful and evil deeds.”⁴¹

How does the zakat (poor due) and other charities result in purity of mind and heart as it should have its spiritual impacts on the man as it is prescribed in the holy Quran?

“Of their wealth take alms, that so you mightest purify and sanctify them and pray on their behalf.”⁴²

How does the fast inculcate its inherent feature of 'Taqwa' (تقوى) in the man as we see it in the holy Quran?

“O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that you may (learn) self restraint.”⁴³

How does the pilgrimage play its strong and effective role to stop the people from being at each other's throats, other acts of Sins and dishonoring their dignity as we are inspired by the following verse:-

“If anyone undertakes that duty therein, let there be neither obscenity, nor wickedness nor wrangling in the Hajj.”⁴⁴

This is the comprehensive system to carry out perfect sense of purification of soul with the help of a complete package. Of such purified frame of mind and feelings will be developed through actual

implementation of these traits of the pillars of Islam stated in above mentioned verses.

To act upon the pillars of Islam, i.e. offering the prayers, to observe fasting, to go for hajj, and to pay due share to the poor (zakat and other charities), all are those good deeds which have been declared in Quranic terminology. In fact these are the boosters of the man status and uplift the zikr and good sayings as it has been mentioned in the holy Quran:

“To Him mount up (all) words of purity: it is He Who exalts each deed of Righteousness.”⁴⁵

The above mentioned translation of the verse may not confuse anyone as it suggests that words of purity are uplifted by Allah Himself, (underlined) whereas the thesis mentioned above was based on the fact that Kalim al-Tayyib (words of purity) mount up to Allah, and the boosting force is Amal Saleh (Good Deeds). This is one of the interpretations of ‘Mufasssireen’ among them is Abdullah Yousuf Ali.⁴⁶

The other opinion in this regard is the same which has been stated above that Kalim al-Tayyib (words of purity) are uplifted by Amal Saleh (Good Deeds). By adopting this expression and opinion, the substance of the subject results that purified words and good deeds are strongly linked with each other, as Kalim al-Tayyib (words of purity) goes upwards to Allah itself, but Amal Saleh (Good Deeds) boosts it further.⁴⁷

This is the Islamic package to keep the soul and our own self purified from either the lusts of the worldly affairs, or from other misconceptions like monasticism to get it purified. This comprehensive package could be made possible because of the only one reason, and that

is because the source of guidance is Allah the almighty. Let us end the article on a very meaningful paragraph:

*" ... And Islam, very significantly offers package to groom the soul, because it is a Deen of nature. As a matter of fact, this the spiritual abilities which are more forceful and powerful to connect itself with the facts of the universe and its creator. The ability of material body is limited because of its physical parameters, and the limits of senses. The ability of rationale and reason(to think and mind) , of course greater than the material body, but factually talking, it also has its limitations with reference to the time and space, start and end, so is destined to the ultimate end. The ability of soul and spirit is the only force, in the body of human being, which is beyond limits and restrictions, out of space and time, without concept of start and end, So is endless and immortal. This is the only ability which has the force to connect itself to the realities and facts which are beyond the range of senses and rationale. This is the only power which can connect to the eternal one, i.e. connection with Allah the almighty."*⁴⁸

This is soul which is the distinction of the man, a spark of the light of Allah ⁴⁹ and Allah is the Noor of heavens and the earth as it has been stated in the Holy Quran:

*"Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth."*⁵⁰

So the spiritual force, being the essential force of Allah has its jurisdiction and domain throughout the universe, because it has the accessibility to everywhere. If the soul is purified and kept away from the lusts of the world, one cannot imagine about its forcefulness that how great role it could play by driving the human body to its ultimate destination of eternal success of this world and the life of hereafter too.

End Notes:

¹ Myhammad bin Ismail Al-Bukhari, *Saheeh-ul-Bukhari*, Dar-u- Ihya-il-Turath-il-Arabi , No edition & date, hadith No. 48, p: 127/1. For more reference, please see Muslim bin Al-Hajjaj, *Saheeh Muslim*, (Urdu translation: Waheed-uz-Zaman), Khalid Ihsan Publishers, Lahore, 2004, No.93, p: 88/1.

² *Saheeh-ul-Bukhari*, hadith No.1. P: 1/1

³ Al-Hadeed, 57:27

⁴ *Saheeh Muslim*, hadith No.2730, p: 157 /3

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Aale-Imran, 3: 14

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid; 15

¹⁰ Ad-Dahr, 76: 2-3

¹¹ Al-Alaq, 96: 4-5

¹² Al-Baqarah, 2:30

¹³ As-Sajdah, 32:7-9

¹⁴ Al-A'araf, 7: 176

¹⁵ Al-Baqarah, 2:30

¹⁶ Al-A'ala, 87:14

¹⁷ Al-Mu'minoon, 23: 1-2

¹⁸ Ash-Shams, 91: 7-8

¹⁹ Ibid; 9-10

²⁰ Al-Qiamah, 75: 2

²¹ Al-Baqarah, 2:129

²² Ibid; 151

²³ Aal-e- Imran, 3: 164 and Al-Jumu' ah, 62: 2

²⁴ Al-Anfal, 8:2

²⁵ Ahmad bin Al-Husain Abu Bakr Al-Baihaqi, *As-Sunan*, Dar-ul-Ma'rifah Lit-Taba'ah wan-Nashr, Beirut, Lebanon. Edition: 1, 1337 A.H. For more details, please see Ala-ud-Din Ali Al-Muttaqi, *Kanz-ul-Ummal*, Mu'assasat-ur-Risalah, Beirut, Lebanon, 1399 A.H. /1979. hadith No.3924,p:241/2

²⁶ *Saheeh-ul-Bukhari*, hadith No.50, p: 129/1.

²⁷ Al-Mujadalah, 58:22

²⁸ Al-Hujurat, 49:3

²⁹ Ibid; 49:7

³⁰ Al-Isra, 17:85

³¹ Al-Fatir, 35-28

³² Al-Baqarah, 2:102

³³ *Saheeh Muslim*, hadith No. 6906,p:292

³⁴ Zulfiqar Ahmad Naqshbandi, *Tasawwuf-o- Sulook*, , Jamiat-ul-Habib, Faisalabad, 1995, p: 159

³⁵ Al-Baqarah, 2:269

³⁶ *Saheeh Muslim*, hadith No. 412, P:272/1

³⁷ *Ibid*; hadith No. 413, p: 273/1

³⁸ Maulana Muhammad Idrees Kandhalvi, *Seerat-ul-Mustafa*, Maktabat-ul-Husain, Lahore. Edition: 1, p: 99 -110/1

³⁹ *Saheeh-ul-Bukhari*, hadith No.50, p: 129/1(Translation on p: 08).

⁴⁰ *Ibid*.

⁴¹ Al-Ankaboot, 29:45

⁴² At-Taubah, 9:103

⁴³ Al-Baqatah, 2:183

⁴⁴ Al-Baqatah, 2:197

⁴⁵ Al-Fatir, 35:10

⁴⁶ Abdullah Yousuf Ali, *The Holy Quran: English Translation of the meaning and commentary*, King Fahad Holy Quran Printing Complex, Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah, KSA, 1410 A.H.p:1300

⁴⁷ For comprehensive details please consult Maulana Mhmood Hasan, *The Holy Quran* (Urdu Translation by:, Tafseer by: Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani), King Fahad Holy Quran Printing Complex, Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah, KSA, 1409 A.H./1989. P: 581, Foot note No. 2, 3.

⁴⁸ Muhammad Qutub, *Manhaj-ut-Tarbiah Al-Islamiyyah*, dar-ush-u-rooq, Beirut, ILabanon, edition:1. 1400AH/ 1980p:41,42/1

⁴⁹ Al-Isra, 17: 85

⁵⁰ An-Noor, 24:35

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