

FACTS ABOUT MAN'S INNER SELF

AHMED H.SHERIFF

One of the distinctions of mankind over all other animals lies in the fact that he feels the burden of a responsibility and repentance, under certain conditions, following an evil deed or an oppressive act.

A wolf attacks and rips open a sheep, eating its flesh without feeling any guilt nor any sense of repentance for having done so. But a human being may possibly undergo an unbearable state of guilt and acute repentance following an act of cruelty over another human being.

It is possible that man by his persistent negligence and sinful actions reaches a stage where he daringly tramples upon all high values of human decency and wisdom. It is possible also that falling under the influence of cruelty and power worship, his inner consciousness becomes absolutely dead. He feels no sense of shame or guilt however ghastly crime he may have committed. History provides many examples of those who, having lost their natural state of consciousness, committed such atrocities as to have become famous as hard-core criminals.

It is mentioned that Khan Moghul in a special meeting asked his chief officers whether in the course of all the killings and blood-shed they had just committed, they ever suffered any sense of guilt or repentance. All sat quiet except one of them and he said, 'I can remember of one incidence when I arrived at a house wherein I saw a child lying in a cradle. On seeing me, there was a sweet smile over its tiny face and it began to move its hands and legs. I placed the sharp point of my spear into its mouth. The child thinking it was the breast nipple of its mother, started sucking it. I was about to withdraw under the influence of this natural scene and soon the feeling of mercy would have shaken my heart. However I did not wait for this and pierced the spear in its mouth, taking away its life in the cradle".

Perhaps this could be quoted as an instance where 'the milk of human kindness' had completely dried up and where man hastily embarked upon a ghastly crime without pausing to think of its justification. And when one's consciousness becomes dead with persistent crimes and sins, not only his heart produces no sense of guilt but it feels a kind of enjoyment in committing them.

Hind, the wife of Abu Sufyan and the mother of Moavia, is well known in Islamic history for having removed and chewed the liver from the body of Hamza, the uncle of the Prophet, who was killed in the battle of Ohad. And ripping off the livers, ears, eyes from bodies of the martyrs in this battle, she made a necklace of them. By nature women are considered to have very soft hearts with delicate feelings but here we see how a woman behaving worse than a wolf when her inner consciousness had turned completely dead.

Another instance of profound cruelty recorded in the history of Islam is that against the martyr Zaid, the son of Imam Zainul Abideen(a.s). For years his blood-stained body was

kept hanging on the gallows and thereafter the dried skeleton was burnt in a fire and its ashes scattered in the air.

Such are the instances of absolute dead consciousness and veiled inner-self from which not a slightest feeling of wrongdoing or guilt erupts.

In contrast, we do come across instances in which there is a sense of realization of one's folly and feeling of repentance. When Prophet Ibrahim (A.S) was approached by the people of his time to inquire who had demolished their idols, he referred them to the biggest of the idol who was still intact saying that perhaps it would provide the required information. The logic presented to them by the Prophet was that if idols were true gods worth worshipping then they should be able to speak. This logic appear to have appealed to some of them whose consciousness was still alive. They realized their mistake and they acknowledged among themselves their fallacy of their creed and beliefs. the holy Qura'n referring to this revived consciousness says :

"Then they turned to themselves and said : Surely you yourselves are the unjust" (Anbiya : 64)

This indicates their feeling of shame for their illogical belief in idol-worship for which they realized and condemned themselves.

We come across instances where one is drawn under compelling circumstances to commit such a wrong that on seeing its outcome, his consciousness bites and obliges him to acknowledge his guilt openly. The outcome of an American pilot who had bombarded Hiroshima Japan in the 1940-44 years of world war the second with hydrogen bombs for the first time is worth quoting herewith. Despite all appreciations and awards given to him from the American Government, the stinging effect of his guilty conscious on seeing the pictures of massive devastations and less of life caused in the city of Hiroshima was such as to make him mad. No medical treatment in the best of American hospitals could restore his mental balance.

Openheimer the great scientist who had invented the manufacture of atomic bomb dropped over Hiroshima war presented with 7 million dollar reward and was entrusted with the running of the Commission for Atomic Energy of the U.S.A. Despite such a costly award and high promotion, he began to sense the constraint of guilty conscious and having committed a big crime by devising the manufacture of such an annihilating bomb. He once said "My brain has produced such a black spot that even the light of a thousand suns on it would not succeed to erase".

The huge wealth in reward and the high position did not satisfy nor appease his conscious. He donated the 7 million dollar gift into a charitable trust and tendered resignation from his high post in the Atomic Energy Commission.

Thus we see how the natural heat of a biting inner-self cannot be extinguished by any materialistic gains or any worldly thing.

Those who have committed some major crimes or sins become very depressed and frightened and in an endeavour to cover up their crimes, they accuse others by shifting the responsibility to them. Their mental balance is shaken and life becomes very miserable. Islam has shown ways of redressing the situation by providing a system of repentance (tawba), compensation (kaffara) and damages (diyat). This is aimed at not only calming the nerves of those suffering from acute guilty conscious but also to afford an opportunity to the guilty and sinful to think and start afresh in reforming their life ways.

The fact is that a biting consciousness is a kind of resurrection in man's inner-self. The same way as accounting with justice for one's actions is to take place on the Day of Judgement, the sense of repentance in one's inner-self provides opportunity of reckoning one's committed actions and verdict of their being right or wrong. On the day of Judgement, the sole Judge will be Allah Himself before whom no influence, no bribe, no injustice would work. Similarly when man in the state of biting and self-accusing consciousness, he acts like a witness and judge over his actions when no outside influence works. No wonder therefore, the following ayat in the holy Qura'n has placed both these together as their working resemble each other:

" Nay I swear by the Day of Resurrection and Nay I swear by the self-accusing inner-self".