

" N A F S " - MAN'S INNERSELF

Whosoever desires to reconstruct his innerself in an effort to achieve a lasting bliss in this world and in the hereafter, the most essential thing initially for him is to recognize and understand the structure of his own existence, the aim and object of his creation in this world and his inner and outer friends and enemies in life. Philosophers have expressed divergent views on man's overall structure. According to Dr. Chamran's philosophical viewpoint, the following three elements go to form the basis of man's structure:

- 1) HUMAN BODY consisting of the head, hands, feet etc all such materialistic substances as described by biologists and physiologists in science. The composition of human materialistic body is the same and not different from that of animal body.
- 2) HUMAN SOUL is man's spirit described in the holy Qura'n as 'AMR- THE COMMAND OF GOD'. This human spirit in its very nature is pure and free of sin. There is no difference in spirits of different persons. It is manifestation, deposit and agent of God. When man becomes capable of understanding his spirit, it comes to his aid when necessary.
- 3) HUMAN INNER-SELF In Arabic and Islamic terminology, this is popularly known as NAFS, which in man is said to consist of passions, affections, reactions, judgements, sensual desires, expectations etc. All these go to contribute towards the building up of man's personality and character.

Thus we conclude that man's existence consist of body, soul and Nafs. The training and development of human body does not much differ from that of other animals and creatures. The human soul is an untrainable phenomenon since it is basically pure and pious. But only element in man which can be changed and developed is his NAFS i.e. his inner-self. What makes the personality of a person differ from that of the other is the Nafs. It is this Nafs of man that is responsible for his deeds and is to be called to account before Almighty Allah on the day of Judgement and not the spirit of man.

Therefore before man embarks upon self-construction and development, it is essential that he must first try to recognize and analyse his own Nafs. In the light of holy Qur'anic ayats and in accordance with views of scholars, the human Nafs in the process of its development has to pass through seven stages- from the meanest to the highest stage of God-like status.

1) NAFS AL-AMMARAH
THE SELF-MOTIVATING NAFS is that which commands and instigates man towards evil deeds. The holy Qura'n referring to 'this Nafs' says: "VERILY (MAN'S) INNER-SELF IS PRONE TO COMMANDING (HIM TO DO) EVIL" (Sura Yauf - v 53)

In his do'a- supplication recited every Tuesday in the week as recorded in the Saheefa Al-Kamilah, the fourth Imam Zainul Abedeen a.s. says:

"I seek refuge from Allah from mischief of my inner-self for verily the inner-self is very prone to evil unless my Lord have mercy"

This aspect of man's inner-self prone to evil if not controlled makes him inferior than animal which acts only according to its instinctive nature. For example, we see a lion inspired by its reparious nature, attacking and tearing open other animals to eat them. But no sooner it has done so, it retreats having duly satisfied its hunger whereas a humanbeing when out of control of his Nafs Al-Ammarah- the evil commanding inner-self does not remain contented and satisfied even after swallowing the whole world.

EXPLOITATIONS OF

THE SULTANS AND SHAHS

History bears witness of great despots and oppressors who did not feel satisfied even after taking lives and looting hundreds of thousands of their weak people and of their thirst for acquiring more and more never quenched. The more they exploited their masses the more discontented they felt.

It is mentioned that during the last moments of his life, Sultan Mahmood Ghaznavi could not ~~easily~~ breathe his last, the soul ^{easily} would not/leave his body. He issued an order to load all the jewels and wealth which he had plundered from India over mules and camels and thence he paraded ^{them} before his eyes. Only when this was done and he observed the caravan of his wealth which he had amassed that the soul could depart from his body. Such was the attachment to his worldly exploitations.

Exploitations and oppressions by the Shabs of Iran are the latest examples under this subject. Mohamed Heikal writes in his book Return of Ayatollah that when Reza Shah in June 1941 abdicated his throne in favour of his son Mohamed Reza and whilst going into exile to South Africa, he took with him a beautiful old jewelled sword from the Imperial Treasury of Iran. When he died there, his widow placed this expensive sword in the coffin besides the Shah's body. The coffin was sent to Cairo to a temporary resting place before final burial later in Iran. Farouk the Egyptian King then having come to know about this, had the coffin secretly opened to see the sword, liked it so much that he appropriated it.

His son Mohamed Reza Shah delayed his final departure from Tehran in Jan 1979 in order to hike out of the country with him the most fabulous jewels worth more than US \$ 250 billion. On six successive days did the Shah send his personal detachment of Royal Guards to force the Central Bank officials to open the safes twenty metres underground where the jewels were kept in safe custody. The Bank employees being on strike and the officials in charge having disappeared, the Shah finally had to leave the country without the crown and the fabulous jewels.

Thus we see how man lowers ~~himself~~ ^{his inner-self} by attaching himself solely to materialistic ways of life and become inferior to animals. The animal kind acts according to its natural instinct whereas man tramples his nature and acts according to his inner desires rather than his divinely endowed intellect.

2) NAFS AL LAVVAMAH

THE SELF-REPROACHING NAFS is what we call the guilty conscious. Man's inner-self awakens after committing a sin, and he reproaches himself and becomes self-accusing. This intuition is a first step towards awakening and awareness of the Nafs. Referring to this aspect of man's inner-self, the holy Qura'n says:

"NAY I SWEAR BY THE SELF-ACCUSING NAES" (Sura Qiyamah v.2)

Most ordinary people on committing sins feel uneasy and repent as a result of their reproaching inner-selves. They tend to vow in their hearts not to repeat those sins. However those who have lost self-control and persist in committing sins gradually lose the natural intuition of self-reproaching and they reach a stage where they do not feel any guilt even when committing worst of sins. It is said that psychologists are able to distinguish culprits in big criminal cases from analysis of their moods and behaviour particularly as a result of their self-reproaching appearance and movements.

A DRAMATIC INCIDENCE

OF A SELF-ACCUSING PERSON When during the last 1940/45 world war, the Americans decided to bombard Hiroshima in Japan with atomic bombs, it is related that a bold well-built American young pilot was selected to do the job. He flew over this city, released a few atomic bombs over selected targets and returned safely. Consequently in very few moments, hundreds of thousands of innocent Japanese civilians perished. Almost the whole city was devastated into massive rubbles.

This massive annihilation of innocent people and their homes was as a result of the decision of the U.S.A. government in launching an atomic bombardment. But when that American pilot who did the job read the reports and saw the pictures published on the colossal devastations and destructions, his mind was terribly shocked and he lost his mental balance. Madly he began

screaming 'Am I not responsible for such a great devastation and destruction of human lives ? Have I not been an oppressor and treacherous ?? He was admitted in a best of American hospitals and treated by expert psychiatrists but he would not recover. Day and night he went on screaming and finally he was declared lunatic.

Was this not the outcome of a severe and sudden attack of self-accusing and biting conscious on witnessing the results of his hand in the massive human destructions ? Let those so-called champions of human rights not forget such horrible incidents.

What a profound divine justice that along with 'Nafs Al Ammarah' man has been endowed with 'Nafs Al Lavvannah' to balance the two aspects of human conscious- the evil commanding and the self-accusing sides of man's inner-self. The holy Qura'n referring to this says:

"AND THE MAN'S NAFS (INNERSELF) AND HIM (ALLAH) WHO MADE IT PERFECT THEN HE INSPIRED IT TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IS RIGHT AND WRONG FOR IT"

(Sura Shams v 7-8)

3) NAFS AL A'QELA

THE LOGIC -REASONING NAFS

This is a stage in the development of man's inner-self where he has succeeded in attaining the power of wisdom and reasoning, acting on the basis of what is logic. Consequently he does not allow severe passions, sensual desires and emotions to control his actions. Few people usually reach this stage where the wise with conscious mind evaluate and measure what is good and what bad for them before performing any action.

4) NAFS AL-MOLHEMA

THE SELF-INSPIRING NAFS

This is a stage where one enjoys God's inspiration. As a result of strict self-control over inner desires and intellectual development, the Nafs becomes so pure and elevated as to become eligible to receive God's inspiration. Such a man is able to absorb and understand the light of God which radiates over all people.

5) NAFS AL-MOTMA'ENNA

THE CONFIDENT NAFS

When one's inner-self have progressed and arrived at this elevated stage, he feels quite assured that it will not retrograde. It enjoys full confidence in its evolutionary course and feels certain as moving forward on the path of Allah and attaining His nearness.

6) NAFS AL-RAZIA

THE CONTENTED NAFS

In the course of its evolution and advancement when a man's inner-self arrives at this stage, he enjoys contentment and satisfaction. He feels well-pleased with His Lord for whatever He has destined for him.

NAFS AL-MARZIAH

THE DIVINELY APPROVED NAFS When a man's innerself has progressed to such an extent that not only he feels contented and pleased but also God Almighty declares His satisfaction and pleasure with him. In other words such a man becomes the beloved and chosen of Allah.

The holy Qura'n referring to the above last three stages of man's highest development of his innerself says:

"OH NAFS (INNERSELF) THAT ART CONFIDENT AND AT REST, RETURN TO YOUR LORD WELL-PLEASSED (WITH HIM) (AND) HIS BEING WELL-PLEASSED WITH YOU" (Sura AlFajr v.28)

When one becomes devotee of Allah, he acquires in ~~himself~~ in himself the divine attributes reflected and one who has reached this stage of spiritual development, he becomes mindful only of his Lord and nobody else. He aspires for nothing else except the pleasure of Allah. This is the stage at which were the Prophet and his Ahl-el-Bait.

A splendid example of a Nafs Al-Motma'anna and Al-Raziyah Al-Marziyyah- the confident, the contented and divinely approved innerself is the personality of Imam Husain a.s. How marvelously did he display these supreme stages of man's high character on the plains of Karbala on the 10th day of Ashura in 61 Hegira. It was his last moments when he was lying in a ditch, his body inflicted with countless wounds from his swords and arrows of his enemies who were rejoicing whilst Shamr was getting ready to behead him. Suddenly the lips of the Imam started murmuring and a curious Arab nearby overheard him saying:

" OH MY LORD I WILLINGLY DO I SUBMIT TO THY WILL AND BOW DOWN DO ~~XXX~~ I TO THY COMMAND, ACCEPTING FROM THEE THE TRIALS AND AFFLICTIONS WITH FOREBEARANCE. OH THE HELPERS OF THOSE SEEKING HELP"

إِلَهِي رَضًا بِقَضَائِكَ
وَ صَبْرًا عَلَى تَلَايِكَ
و تَسْلِيمًا لِأَمْرِكَ
لَا مَعْنَى سِوَاكَ
يَا غِيَاثَ الْمُسْتَغِيثِينَ