

ISLAMIC PURIFICATION OF SOUL

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ISLAMIC PURIFICATION OF SOUL

From the Islamic perspective, advancement and perfection of an individual per se is an end in itself. Islam focuses upon an individual; calls upon him to the servitude and submission of God; provides rights and imposes duties upon the individual; enjoins him to promote virtues and abolish vices; evokes hope of rewards for good deeds and fear of punishment for sins only to him. Apparently in its system of 'thoughts and practices', an individual is a basic unit occupying cardinal position, in the beginning as a doer and in the end as a recipient. It appeals to the reason and emotions of an individual, addresses him to convey its message and guidance; aspires to his success and prevents him from failure. Even so the virtues of an ideal community or an organisation to which he is affiliated, is to no avail if an individual himself is imperfect and degenerates further. Conversely his failure to benefit from the opportunities available to him, notwithstanding his association with a pious organization, will be an evidence against him to trigger his failure in the hereafter. On the contrary, if he scales a peak attainable by him making strenuous efforts and develops his personality to the utmost possible, the depravity of an organization or the societal degeneration may not hinder his success or salvation; rather it will be a testimony to his successful efforts in the wake of adverse conditions.

This is precisely what a verse from the Holy Quran connotes, “O you who believe! Guard your own souls: عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْفُسُكُمْ لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ مَن ضَلَّ إِذَا اهْتَدَيْتُمْ If you follow (right) guidance, no pain (or sorrow) can come to you from those who have lost their way. (Al-Maidah: 105).” In other words no guidance will benefit you if you go astray.

Individual and Society

However it cannot be inferred that Islam undermines the significance of organisation and collective order; indeed the collective order is exceedingly significant, though not as an end in itself. Its utility rests upon the excellence of its collective order and its capability to foster the quintessence of an individual and his faculties. Allah has created men with independent individual characteristics but did not place them in solitude. Even before birth the genetic traits and influence of social life assimilated by parents are ingrained as hereditary features which impact positively or negatively on the fostering of his/her personality. Social life continues to exert as well as derives influence from the cradle to the grave of an individual. If the social milieu is founded upon a flawed system and if its ethos spurs anarchy instead of reform and its environs are conducive to evil instead of virtue, obviously it is an arduous task rather impossible to most of the individuals to be virtuous, consequently the situation deteriorates at times to such an extent that an eminent Prophet Noah urged:

وَقَالَ نُوحٌ رَبِّ لَا تَذَرْنِي عَلَى الْأَرْضِ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ دَيَّارًا ﴿٢٦﴾ إِنَّكَ إِن تَذَرْنَاهُمْ
يُضِلُّوا عِبَادَكَ وَلَا يَلِدُوا إِلَّا فَاجِرًا كَفَّارًا ﴿٢٧﴾ (نوح: ٢٦-٢٧)

"And Nuh said: My Lord! Do not leave of the unbelievers, even a single one on earth! For if You leave (any of) them, they will only mislead Your servants and they will breed only the wicked ungrateful ones.--- (Nuh- 26 & 27)."

Therefore it is inevitable to revamp society and cleanse the social system to create a congenial environment facilitating proper development of their personalities. 'Paradise is forbidden to a person nourished on unscrupulously earned bread,' moreover the truthful Prophet (pbuh) too avered that the hell-fire is the foremost abode for him. But how can any individual be immune to it and from which source will he obtain the permissible (halaal) bread if a rotten economy has contaminated all the sources of income? The morals, thoughts and practices pertaining to gross ignorance (jahiliyat: anti-thesis of Islam) invariably lead to eternal loss, how can any one stay unscathed when the morals, thoughts and practices and its poison with its pestilential infection permeated through the entire education, culture and social fabric. It is unthinkable to develop personality and attain the height of glory disobeying God and the Prophet (pbuh). But how far anybody may abstain from it when the unislamic political system completely subjugated the nations and subjected them to serve infidelity, tyranny and disorder? Eventually the salvation and well being of an individual becomes not only difficult but well nigh impossible unless the impediments engendered by the perverted and degenerated social order are done away

with and a virtuous social order facilitating the growth and development of individual is established.

Collectivity – A Realm of Individual Trial

The correlation between an individual and society is just one aspect and the second aspect is that Allah has essentially destined the blue print of advancement and perfection of an individual within the social life and not beyond it. The realm of trial, where the individual has to prove his proficiency or display his incompetence (and significantly on the success or failure therein; depends the success or failure in the afterlife) is not located in a solitary haven nor in a remote forest; rather is it positioned amidst the mainstream of social life. An individual is not placed in isolation but tied to numerous bonds and relationships viz. as.....son, brother, husband, father, friend, foe, neighbour, benefactor, ruler, subject, client, seller, trustee and a surety. Tied with all the bonds, encumbered with responsibilities and trusts, surrounded by an environment of fear, greed, love and anger, expectations and frustrations, he is tested to find out how he abides by the obligations and duties of Allah and how he remains steadfast within the confines laid down by Allah. How does he discharge the duties entrusted to him as a 'vicegerent'; which attributes he endeavours to attain, which attributes he fosters and which moral legacy he leaves behind in this world.....The concept of virtue propounded by Islam is rendered entirely devoid of its import if an individual is dissociated from collective life. Any individual with least involvement in socio-cultural arena and who shouldered fewer public responsibilities has in fact

subjected himself to least evaluation and proportionately deprived his personality of opportunities of development in those aspects, so much so that anyone living a solitary life as a hermit, certainly forfeited all the avenues of trials and tribulations and hence outrightly fails to deserve any credit.

It's not merely the potential of an individual materialising only in collective life, inexorably most of the major and vital injunctions of Allah won't see the light of the day if the sinews of power are not under control of the righteous people. The irreligious at the helm of civil, political and economic affairs implies the shelving of Islamic Shariah, promoting anarchy instead of redemption, promulgating evil instead of virtue among the people and what is more, evil will be projected as virtue and vice versa!! Nothing could be worse than such a state of affairs to induce the wrath of Allah and in such a condition if any individual anticipates that meditation and reclusive hardships, expositions of piety and righteousness; or propagating the commandments palatable to the rulers would stimulate individual's development and reform, he is mistaken. The sole way for an individual to develop his personality is to endeavour to dislodge the irreligious rulers from the seat of power and all efforts should be focused to enforce the Shariah (laws of Allah), sedition should be wiped out from the land of God; virtue and rectitude should be established, let righteousness govern and sin be abolished .

Islam's Demand on an Individual

The foregoing narrative emphasizes the importance of society and collective life in Islam. But it also affirms the preponderance of an individual, as the restoration of social reform and obliteration of social dissension is primarily meant for the welfare of individuals only.

Thereinafter there is no gainsaying that Islam attaches utmost importance to individual reform and development than any other school of thought. Its outlook is different from those systems which deem an individual as a solitary entity and isolates him from society to undergo the stages of spiritual elevation; it is different even from those systems which ignore individuality but expediently give importance to individual and prepare him to put him into service of the society. In contrast, according to the Islamic point of view every individual is personally accountable to Allah. His accountability is mostly related to collective responsibilities, obligations and duties; and his preparation for the ultimate salvation depends upon collective success and reform. He can't attain God's favour unless he strives to the utmost to eradicate sedition and enforce commandments of God in His land as an obligation imposed upon him as an (individual). Therefore an individual must not concentrate only to develop traits necessary to meet personal needs, rather his personal development should be strong enough to combat the impious regimes and establish and preserve the pious regime.

The centuries old decline led to the degeneration of Muslims in various ways deteriorating to a great extent, among other things the concept of purification of soul.

The objective narrowed, the perspectives varied and the ways and means of purification of soul changed from those in vogue during the reign of the Prophet (pbuh). Consequently all though there are quite a few big institutions for purification of soul established since long but despite their presence, the forces of ignorance, with their sword, pen, knowledge, culture and politics conquered not only the world but also the Muslim nations and states. Certainly there must be some causes of this malaise and whatever they might be, no undue affection should inhibit a fair inquiry to examine the causes.

A fairly large faction among us believes that the objective of purification of soul is the 'Viewing of Truth' invariably in this world and the 'faith in the invisible' should progressively advance to render into 'witnessed faith' (Imaan Bishshahadat). Apparently it is the highest aim. But the Qur'an does not enjoin us to dedicate our life to accomplish such an aim. On the contrary even if we adopt it as a goal, the Qur'an assures that it is impossible for anyone (except the Prophet(pbuh)) to attain (Imaan Bishshahadat) witnessed faith. Allah knows the transcendental realities and He does not share that knowledge with anybody except the prophet chosen by Him. He deposes angels around the prophets to observe whether the prophets delivered the messages of God.

In fact Allah conferred requisite knowledge to man through his prophets and it is an exceptional favour of God that He spared man from the quest of the transcendental knowledge. Now the task of man is to believe in the 'knowledge of unseen' revealed to the

prophets and discharge satisfactorily the responsibilities assigned to him.

The objective of spiritual purification is understood to be spiritual advancement; but it is an ambiguous and mysterious phenomenon as a man even after a lifelong assiduous exertion through the spiritual labyrinth can never know judge his spiritual upliftment. Its terms, its stages, its outcome and benefits are all esoteric and unfathomable to a layman. Palpably it is manifest that the stages traversed during the course never spot the stages passed through by Bilal (RA), Ammar (RA) and Suhaib (RA) and it is never expected to catch sight of the destination passed over by Abu Bakar (RA) and Umar (RA).

The objective of those people who seek to attain piety through purification of soul is the closest to the Islamic objective. But it is disconcerting to find that generally people have a very narrow perception of piety. Conforming to some religious practices and excessive worshipping besides regular prayers suffice the realization of righteousness. Such a narrow perception, fails to cope with the wide ranging social problems.

The Nature of Objectives determines every Preparatory Measure in this world of Action

In principle, man prepares an appropriate purpose he sets before him to achieve. Preparation per se is meaningless without any purpose, it is always designed to accomplish a goal. The character of goal determines the nature and scope of preparation viz minimal or comprehensive, depends upon the limited or comprehensive span of goal. The inherent disposition of

the goal also determines the appropriate methodology of the preparation. Sometimes similar preparation is indispensable for diverse goals; but a watchful observation reveals that despite similar preparations, every goal has a distinctive spirit charting out a different course from beginning to end till accomplishment of the goal. Thus each plan all though similar in the beginning, differs gradually from each other in its ways towards the closing stages of completion.

For instance, manufacturing weapons of any type and purpose obviously requires certain groundwork. However few steps in procedures of manufacturing may be to some extent common to all types of weapons. But the purpose of weapons determines the methods and techniques as well as the stages of manufacturing which will be fundamentally different from other weapons being manufactured for some other purposes. For instance, a craftsman makes ostentatious weapons as an art to gratify the aesthetic sense. Another person is a professional manufacturer of weapons and a third person intends to manufacture weapons in order to set up an army and achieve strategic goals in a war. Producing weapons for these three different objectives may have few common steps in procedures; but the difference in objectives will progressively set apart their methods of manufacturing further till the final stages of completion.

For a craftsman manufacturing ostentatious and beautiful weapons is an aim in itself; naturally those weapons won't serve any other purpose as the splendour, beauty and aesthetics are far more important although in the battle field they are worthless in

inflicting any damage. Hence from numerous techniques, only those useful in manufacturing aesthetically pleasing, the most exquisite and very delicate weapons are employed in order to be acclaimed and admired by the men of taste. Obviously the techniques of designing deadly and destructive weapons will be starkly ignored. The craftsman's swords can't move in for the killing of enemy at war but merely to cut the silk handkerchief as an exhibition of fun; the ammunition will be consumed to display fireworks; the tanks to fire colourful flowers instead of bombs; hence such a weapons-industry will not attract the clients interested in military weapons but only those customers who are fond of artistic weapons to embellish the drawing rooms. By far it may be used in hunting or shooting rehearsals and sometimes to cheer the audiences in demonstrations of art of warfare.

On the contrary, a professional weapon-maker will manufacture lethal weapons and display in a market for anyone to pay the price and buy them. His swords are not meant for him, but to serve the customers. The sword-maker may sharpen the edge of a sword while the customer will utilise the sharp edge. All sorts of weapons to fulfil various needs of each category of customer will be available in his plant, for instance, a hunter for hunting, a dacoit for dacoity, a conqueror for annexation of land and a Mujahid (holy warrior) for jihad, everyone will procure weapons from him. He will not adhere to any specific design or technique, he will comply with the customers' needs. He won't be bound by any specific purpose rather it's determined by others. This open-ended manufacturing of weapons impacts the process of manufacturing insofar as all the prevailing

techniques and methods will be skilfully employed in manufacturing; nonetheless the manufacturer absolutely does not know the method to harness the operational skills in weapons essential to fight in a battlefield. They are similar to the American weapon manufacturing industries during the first world war, which could produce the market oriented weapons, but they were oblivious of the state of the art technology adeptly developed by the other nations' weapon industries consequent upon experiences in the battlefield!! Mr Lloyd George lamented in his autobiography that the American weapons in the first world war were glossy, delicate and dazzling but fizzled out in the battlefield.

On the contrary a third person manufacturing weapons to arm his armed forces to fight a war, will be qualitatively different from the other two. In principle, melting and casting of metal will be similar to the artistic-weapon-manufacturer, the professional-arms-producer and the producer-for-its-own-army, but will differ in its use. The third weapon producer will be least interested in vivid, delicate and beautiful weapons but will be looking for potentially lethal weapons. For him a gorgeous weapon if ineffective in war is futile compared to an unattractive but deadly weapon, as only lethal weapons will be the most sought after. Phenomenally wonderful weapons are irrelevant. A cannon destroying the fortress but failing to shell even a single flower is useful; in the same vein he needs a sword piercing deep into the body of enemy cutting from chest to the abdomen as though it is not ostentatious or flashy and unable to cut even a piece of handkerchief tossed in the air. He would be yearning to

have a lethal as well as ostentatious weapon; invariably a warrior-producer would prefer a thousand times an unattractive but lethal weapon. Moreover he will not be bound by any conventional methods, rather he will test them in a battlefield and based on expediency, adopt the propitious principles of manufacturing even if they contradict the conventional methods and practices; significantly the objective will solely determine the categories of weapons possible to be manufactured or abandoned based on various manufacturing-principles; undoubtedly manufacturing ostentatious or professional traders' weapons is out of question in this industry for him. On the contrary the kind of weapons manufactured on priority basis here are neither contemplated by the craftsmen nor the professional manufacturers. And what is more, the producer in his wildest dreams will not sell his weapons to his enemies. The craftsman will be preoccupied with his craft unconcerned with the expeditions of friends or foes while a professional will lure every customer irrespective of the intention of the customer. But the warrior-weapon-producer has both friends and foes in a battlefield. It is impossible for him to allow passing on a single weapon from his arsenal to the enemy. If he anticipates the seizure of his weapon-industry by the enemy, he will destroy it himself ignoring the years of strenuous efforts and billions of rupees invested to build it.

As manufacturing weapons is a sort of preparation, in the same vein purification of soul is a kind of preparation too. There are two connotations of 'Tazkiyah': to purify and to grow. Based on these connotations, purification of soul (Tazkiyah e Nafs) implies cleansing the unwanted traits (evils) and

nurturing the good traits (virtues) of the soul. Accordingly purification of soul and character building are synonymous. Obviously just as 'Preparation for the sake of preparation' for anything is absurd, in the same vain 'moral preparation' in itself is untenable unless its objective is well-defined. As its objective alone would determine the attributes instrumental in accomplishing it and hence required to be developed. Further more, the goal would solely determine the 'kind of men' to be moulded and point out the breed of 'unwanted or irrelevant men' who don't deserve be moulded at all or mere moulding them may not be fair enough. The appropriate method of purification of soul purely depends upon the specific character of the objective useful to mould the men of requisite standards and the relevant strategies inter alia are best suited to mould men of required calibre.

Purification of Soul and the Goal of Man

The underlying motive for purification of soul is so vital that the mode, the benchmark and the modus operandi of purification of soul entirely depend upon it. Effectively objective differentiates and identifies the significance of various categories of purification of soul (tazkiyah).

If the preceding illustration of 'manufacturing-arms' is retained in mind and pondered over, one can easily appreciate the purport of the narrative. Replace 'man' for 'weapon' in the analogy and replace the reformer who wants to mould men for the 'arms producer'; invariably before anything else the same question which surfaced earlier in the context of arms

manufacturing viz. “what is the purpose of producing arms?” would be replaced as “what is the aim of human reformation?” Reformation of men or human development may be carried out for the sake of craft or for any professional purpose or even to execute any global agenda to accomplish any temporal scheme with the help of the reformulated men or to please God through enactment of the divine order. Among all the different models of human development there are a few similarities, yet all the men would fundamentally differ in their disposition consequent up on the diverse aims and objectives of human development which would essentially separate their destinations. But despite a consensus over the undesirable attributes, every one would have contrasting views about the rationale of unwanted attributes, even the degree of disapprobation may not be uniform. Besides, many attributes reproachful to one group yet may be conspicuously absent from the register of reprobated attributes of few others!! Thus not only their views regarding the common reprobated attributes differ, but on the whole the set of unwanted attributes of each group too would be at variance with each other. Similarly all groups differ from each other over the rationale of required qualities as well as in the stages of requisiteness and excellence. One group’s criteria does not match with any other group. Likewise common strategies would have diverse spirits driving them; their order of significance would be contradictory and on the whole one model of ‘human development’ would be fundamentally different from the others in their manoeuvres and strategies.

Notwithstanding 'human development' being a single common term, but look how the various orders differ fundamentally from each other owing to the differences in their aims and objectives. How to differentiate between these schools of 'purification of soul' is another issue in question and moreover how to decide.....who is a craftsman or a professional and who strives to execute his own plan or who is endeavouring to enforce the divine mission? It is possible to distinguish in two ways only; firstly to analyse each system of purification of soul and secondly to observe each order's course of action.

Evading the Responsibilities of Life

The distinguishing characteristics of an artist (mystic/sufi) are: vivacity, beauty, subtlety, mystical excellence, manifestation of miracles and observation of mystical beauty....constitute the basic tenets of its order. Necessarily, the schools established from the artist's (mystic/sufi) perspective will manifestly comprise all these features. The list of reprobated attributes would be set up according to the artist's (sufi's) point of view and the more condemnable attributes would be purged strenuously. Minor deviation from the conventions in purity, delicacy, etiquettes, trends and similar qualities is deemed as a major sin. The qualities retreating the spiritual journey or inhibiting the mystical discovery or rendering attainment of mystical excellence impossible....all such qualities would be reproachful. Likewise, the artistic perspective will sway even the list of desirable qualities. It is obvious that they are interested more in the

elegance of life. At the most they may be interested in ethical virtues useful to nurture spiritual prowess, acquire the power to traverse the celestial world and gain the sensibility of the transcendental joy.....as if they want to design an electronic instrument quite pretty in appearance, proportionately carved to capture the ultra soft sounds or make a well equipped beautiful camera capable of capturing fine and delicate pictures. They don't have any agenda in this world propelling them to take on the external forces and demanding them to shoulder any responsibility nor confront civilizational, cultural, socio-political problems nor do they need to enforce any positive programme in the wake of resistance and opposition. Hence they turn a blind eye to the set of admirable attributes deemed necessary or unnecessary by anybody with a mission to take on the world. They are not concerned about the strength of the building, rather they are interested in its glamour, design, beauty and colours. They don't require tenacious and sound character, instead they covet exquisiteness of character. They don't need the vigorous powers of the soul essential to sustain and discharge enormous responsibilities of the world; instead they crave for the subtle and delicate powers leading to discover divine inspiration of hearts and the graves (Kashf e sudoor and kashf e quboor), besides the realization and overpowering of the transcendental and similar other entities. Hence among all the techniques of spiritual purification, they adopt only the methods compatible with their objectives. A Muslim artist or a non-muslim artist, both seek to attain a common goal through these methods; all of them will have identical disposition in planning . The only difference in case of

a Muslim artist will be that he will select his strategies from the list of Islamic schemes (symmetrically designed for some other purpose) useful to him. He makes those strategies compatible (if permissible and sometimes even if not permissible) to his disposition. This is how he moulds the righteous souls, the ideal souls from his artistic perspective.

Devoid of the Goal

Consider a professional mystic. Ordinarily you will find him devoid of any goal. In his training-school, you may find each breed of pious souls; he will try to purge the traits undesirable in puritanical circles, and will leave no stone unturned to nurture the coveted traits sought after there. Towards this end he will adopt a few measures suitable for purification. The noble souls thus trained will be disposed out for placement wherever possible in society. His case is similar to the professional manufacturer of weapons who is unmindful of the utilization of his weapons whether used in war or showcased in an arsenal. Neither he is engaged in any war nor he has hostility towards anyone. In the battleground he is just a neutral professional craftsman committed to groom dedicated, pious, orthodox and well-bred men. It makes no difference to him if his trained men bearing his symbol join as pious policemen to serve in a police station of an oppressive regime or hearing a lawsuit as the religious solicitors based on ungodly or blatantly anti-shariah unIslamic courts of an evil regime or become self-adjudicating pious transgressors (taaghut) or conquer those territories in the battlefield fighting for the sake of Allah

pronouncing Allahu Akbar where the rebels of Allah have established their supremacy....In either case it makes no difference to the mystic. However the more successful the trainees of Khanqah (Abode of spiritual Retreat) in these feats, greater the testimony of success of the mystic (sufi). The true success of the Khanqah is contingent on its trained prototypes having secured stability through remembrance and fear of God, fit in the system of rebels of God and prove to be more credible than the men trained by the rebels of God.

In this trade the professional mystic (sufi) not only moulds the standards of beauty and techniques of purification of soul according to his mystical temperament, but also formulates his own philosophy of life without which his profession can't sustain. The men reformed by him are completely oblivious of the need to establish their own code of life as Muslims and they need to strive for it. On the contrary the mystic (sufi) prepares his men to live harmoniously, reconcile and assimilate with every dominant regime. He (sufi) provides his disciples a gist of religion, ethics, spirituality and culture enabling him to become a virtuous component of every evil system.

Exploiters of Human beings as Tools

There are various types of people striving for temporal objectives viz.. among them are those promoting family or class interest; while some rise up for promoting nationalist or patriotic agenda, others aspire to launch exclusively human welfare schemes. Among them are people believing in spiritual and religious values while some don't believe in them. All

of them fundamentally differ in their *modus operandi* to reform man. But on the whole, all of them perceive man in the least as a human being, more as a means to accomplish their goal. This attitude governs their personality development (reform) system as if they manufacture primarily the tools and weapons of war and have nothing to do with grooming human beings. Hence the desirable and undesirable qualities from the human perspective are excluded from the list of desirable and undesirable qualities of these people. Although they adopt a few desirable qualities from human perspective, they do it only to serve their interests. In fact their list of ethics is formulated according to the requirement of traits for a person to fit in as a tool in their scheme of things. Based upon it, they design their course in purification of soul. If you wish to grasp the tenor of their human development model, testing only one feature may suffice. One may observe that the 'attributes of highest human order' are nurtured by this model among its trained cadre, not as a requirement for human excellence, but enhanced efficiency of a tool. For instance, patience is one of the finest qualities of man. But this model which imbues patience (in an individual) to remain undeterred even amid the trail of heavy bombardment, fails to evoke even the minimal moral strength to resist the provocations of base desires.

Islamic Purification of Soul

Unlike others, the case of a person who grooms a man to enable him to succeed in the test and trial of Allah and to attain the pleasure of Allah fulfilling all the obligations assigned to man as vicegerent of Allah on

earth is altogether different. For this purpose, he will ponder over the question of morality in a broader spectrum and in finer details which no one else would normally do. He would assess all spheres of human life which are subject to trials and tests. He would explore every aspect from the point of view of trials and tests and find out the best course leading to success in testing times. Thereafter, he would identify Allah's intent, based upon fulfilment of which alone depends success of man. From the same perspective, he will look into the internal and external barriers in achieving success and the extent to which they hinder. Similarly, which internal and external factors are instrumental in attaining success and what are the stages of their relevance in attaining success. It is the criterion for him to determine the list of desirable and undesirable activities, also to determine the vitality of any characteristic and intensity required to be exerted either to accomplish the desirable or to vanquish the undesirable. And what is more, he will select the modus operandi for purification of soul in accordance with the same criterion. His system of purification of soul (tazkiyah) will consist of the ways and means that obliterate all the internal impediments to success and strengthen the resolve to eliminate the external hurdles; besides the factors assisting in success are fostered and enhanced. He should be competent and eager to acquire those qualities ensuring success. Not only he will adopt those policies for his order, but same spirit of the mission permeates all the policies. He will lay down all the policies proportionately in his order of purification of soul (Tazkiyah).

Only the last model of purification of soul is the Islamic purification of soul. Probably the terms and few ingredients of this model are found in other models of purification of soul. But it will be a flagrant error to consider the other models as Islamic, merely because of this superficial resemblance. Beware of the models of purification of soul wherein the list of essential and non-essential ingredients is either curtailed or expanded upon the Islamic list of requisites and wherein the grades of desirability or undesirability are turned upside down; wherein purification of soul is tinged with art, professionalism and worldliness. Similarly as the measures and proportion of purification of soul set up by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) are distorted, the aim of purification of soul has invariably changed leading to change in the character of purification of soul (Tazkiyah). Such a model of purification of soul (Tazkiyah), notwithstanding its discourse of religiousness and purity and the exaggerated devotion to some of the most sacred ingredients of purification of soul, it can't deserve the respect commanded exclusively by the Islamic purification of soul. Obviously any soldier fighting for a cause, if attributes a reward for burnishing the sword; this reward can't be attributed to those polishing the weapon merely as an art or to those burnishing the weapon for the enemies.

Fundamental Characteristics

Evidently it is inconceivable for the people to establish the Islamic order who are ignorant about Islam or who are devoid of its conviction or lacking focused

attention on Islam or fail to adopt its moral principles and values in their lives or who don't have any mission to establish it. Likewise it is not enough that people of desirable qualities assemble, because they may not be mutually well-disposed. There may not be cooperation between them nor discipline. They may lack the manners of working together. They may be unfamiliar with the method of mutual consultation and criticism. Merely coming together of such people won't yield any beneficial result.

Attachment with Allah and Sincerity towards Allah

Apart from the aforementioned qualities, let us find out what are the other basic qualities essential to succeed in reform and development of personality.

First and foremost quality is the attachment of individual with Allah and sincerity towards Allah. All other tasks in the world can be performed for the sake of oneself, family, clan or a community and a nation with or without faith and devotion to God and every kind of temporal success is possible thereupon, but establishing the Islamic system is such an endeavour which can't succeed unless man's attachment with Allah is unerring, firm and profound and unless his motive is to work solely for the sake of Allah. Because what a man seeks to establish here is the Deen (A complete code of life) which necessitates every act to be done only for the sake of Allah, to whom the Deen belongs. Absolute trust in Allah's support and help is essential. All hopes of reward should be pinned on Him. His instructions and His commands and interdictions should be adhered to; the fear of His chastisement

should grip the hearts. If any fear, enticement, any love and any submission and obedience coalesces with, and if any other motive is involved in this mission, it will dislocate the mission from the straight path. Consequently anything else may be established but not the Deen of Allah.

Concern about Afterlife (Fikr e Aakhirat)

‘Concern about afterlife’ is a second attribute akin to the first. As though the workplace for a believer (momin) is this world, and whatever he proposes to do, he will have to work it here, however, he does not work for this world but for the afterlife; as the consequences thereto remain his goal. He must do everything beneficial for the afterlife and dissociate from every engagement unproductive in the afterlife. He must cast off every benefit detrimental in the afterlife and welcome every loss benefitting in the afterlife. He must be solely concerned about the reward and punishment in the afterlife. He should pay no heed to any reward and punishment in this world. Whether his efforts in this world bear fruits or not, whether he foresees success or failure here; he is admired or condemned, he is awarded or subjected to trial.....in every situation. He should work with the belief that nothing is concealed from God for Whom he is striving, and he will not be deprived of the eternal reward in the afterlife ‘and success there is a genuine success’. In absence of this attitude, it is not possible for anybody to make strides in right direction. Even the slightest degree of attachment to the worldly motive, is enough to cripple the steps. A few set backs if not a single, in the cause of Allah dampen the spirit of

the person motivated by worldly gains. A slight achievement at any stage during the course corrupts the behaviour of a person whose heart is moved by worldly motives.

Good Conduct

Good conduct transforms the influence of the first two virtues into formidable power. The people dedicated to the cause of Allah should be broad-minded and tenacious, benevolent and sympathetic, humane and gentle. They should be self respecting, contented, humble and polite, soft-spoken and kind. People should not anticipate any mischief, rather expect virtuousness from them. They are content with minimum for themselves but willing to give a larger share to others. Evil is responded with virtue or at least not responded with evil. They acknowledge and appreciate others' virtues too. They are magnanimous to ignore the weaknesses of others, pardon mistakes, forgive excesses and don't take revenge for oneself. They are happy to serve others rather than be served by others. Do not work for self interest but for others well-being. Perform one's duty ignoring every acclamation or condemnation. They don't look to anyone for reward except Allah. They can't be suppressed by force nor can be bought over by wealth. But surrender unreservedly to truth. Even their enemies trust them as in any circumstances they never compromise integrity, decency and propriety. These are appealing morals. They secure victory faster than a sword and they are more precious than the treasure of gold and silver. A person endowed with such a character can captivate the

people in the vicinity. But if any organisation is endowed with such virtues, no power on earth can defeat it.

Patience

Patience is yet another virtue, that must be termed as a key to success it is a comprehensive term with multiple connotations and the people striving in the way of Allah should be patient from all aspects of the term.

One of the meanings of patience (sabr) is that man should not be hasty, he should not be impatient to see the results of his efforts and should not lose heart if the results are delayed. In fact a patient person is he who strives continuously throughout his life to attain the goal; and despite successive failures perseveres in his work. The mission to reform society and constructing life is an uphill task testing one's patience. Without the virtue of patience no one can accomplish any objective. In all fairness it is almost like working wonders.

Secondly patience implies man should not have a fickle mind, unstable opinion and lack of determination. He should possess the quality of standing firm on a path carefully chosen following thoughtful consideration and should keep on advancing on the same track with grit and determination.

Patience also means man should face difficulties and troubles valiantly and bear the ensuing hardships with a cool head. A stoical person (saabir) does not retreat accepting defeat in the face of storms and dire straits.

Further patience entails man should not be easily hurt and should not be short tempered, rather be tolerant

and magnanimous. Anybody intending to engage in reform and reconstruction of a decayed society, invariably encounters malicious and vicious opposition. If a person is not courageous enough to laugh away the abusive behaviour, ignore the sarcastic remarks, continue to work in serenity and tranquillity by taking allegations, vicious slanders in his stride, it is better for him not to enlist in this mission. Because it is an unenviable journey through a thorny path; each thorn potentially impedes any advancement towards the destination. Under these circumstances, if anybody confronts every thorn on his way, he can't move ahead. The mission demands people, who instead of getting stuck in vexatious issues, venture immediately to advance ahead unhindered getting rid of those issues. Patience is not only useful against the adversaries but sometimes the person treading on this path has to countenance bitter and hostile criticism of his own colleagues, for which he has to exercise tolerance failing which he may mar the journey of the whole caravan.

Patience also implies that man should adhere to the straight path in the wake of every fear and avarice. Notwithstanding provocations by satan and desires of the soul (Nafs), fulfil one's obligations. Shun the prohibited and remain steadfast in obedience of Allah. Abhor all the luxuries and benefits and accept every loss and privation in the course of piety and truthfulness. Witness the glitter of the materialists but far from being envious, evince no regret. Find avenues of worldly fortunes and opportunities of prosperity widely open, yet remain wholeheartedly satisfied with the proceeds drawn serving the cause by the grace of God.

Patience (Sabr) in all its multifarious implications is a key to success, however impatience in any aspect of the work ensues grave consequences.

Wisdom

Wisdom is one of the most important among all virtues. Success depends to a great extent upon wisdom. All the prevailing systems of the world are governed by the wise and intelligent men; and under their authority the intellectual and ideological forces as well as the educated and professional elements are functioning with the material resources at their disposal. To establish and successfully enforce an alternative system against it is not an easy task. It can't be enforced by the dogmatic ritualists. The credulous people however pious and sincere, can't succeed in establishing it. It needs profound vision and insight, wisdom and pragmatism. This mission may be accomplished only by those who are capable and sagacious, have the potential to grasp and solve the problems of life.

Wisdom is an all-embracing word for all these virtues. Its virtually manifest in numerous instances of sagacity and prudence. It is wisdom that a man understands human psychology and knows to deal with people. He should not offer same medicine to all the people but diagnose each disease correctly and treat accordingly. He should not reproach the guilty and the innocent indiscriminately. Rather every group or people he encounters should be dealt with according to one's specific situation. Moreover, knowing one's own mission and methodology is wisdom, further one should be able to overcome the difficulties, opposition and

obstructions on his way. He should be very well aware about the course of action, the modalities to be adopted and the measures to be taken to remove the various obstacles amidst the struggle for the cause.

Among the numerous illustrations of wisdom, insight in religion and foresight in the worldly matters is supreme wisdom. Mere knowledge of the decrees and shariah rules and their interpretation according to the contingencies may be adequate to fulfil the needs of the office of jurisprudence (Mansab e Ifta), but it is palpably inadequate to reform a degraded society and to establish a system of life afresh upon the Islamic lines uprooting the existing order based on (jahiliyyah) ignorance about God. It is imperative for this mission to have comprehensive understanding of injunctions along with details of the religious system. Besides it is equally important for a man to be well-informed about the rationale of the injunctions. He should understand the prevailing situation and exigencies in which these decrees have to be enforced.

A False Impression

A glimpse through the profile of the desirable traits may frighten a man who assumes it to be an uphill task requiring ideal individuals, since the common people can't be endowed with all the qualities. To dispel this misconception, it is essential to note that everybody need not be perfect in each quality, nor is it mandatory to be perfectly trained in all the attributes at the outset. The intention to expound the (aforementioned) views is only to drive the point home that Islamic mission is not merely "social welfare", mission. One joining it should

first find out whether the seeds of the desirable traits are present in oneself? If seeds are present, it is just sufficient enough to start the work in Islamic movement. To foster these traits and to boost them to higher level (in conformity with one's potentials) may be done in subsequent stages just like a seed embedded in soil sprouts and gradually germinates to develop into a big tree. But if there is no seed underneath, nothing stems from it. Similarly if the ingredient of the desirable traits exists, proper efforts, measures and training, it can be gradually augmented to excellence.

An accurate plan of action is of course essential for reform and reconstruction. But much more essential than that is the abiding need of workers braced with appropriate moral character. Eventually what encounters a degenerate society directly is not the canons of the plan of action, but the character of the individual and collective body involved in the field work. From this perspective, the fundamental prerequisites of the activists partaking in this mission are: 1) Precise Discernment or correct understanding of Deen (Religion). 2) Unwavering Faith in Deen. 3) A character in conformity with the Deen. 4) To adopt the mission of establishing the Deen as the goal of life.

An organisation arising to render service must be endowed with the following characteristics:

- 1) Mutual love, positive attitude, sincerity, sympathy, benevolence and mutual spirit of sacrifice for each other.
- 2) Work with mutual consultation and observe the Islamic etiquettes of consultation.
- 3) Discipline, regularity and punctuality, cooperation and team spirit.
- 4) Reasonable and orderly criticism for

rectification aimed at curbing and not aggravating the defects of the organisation.

To add to it, some other virtues are required viz.
 (1) Profound attachment to Allah and to work only for the sake of Allah are inevitable to keep the efforts of rectification on proper track and lead to true success.
 (2) To remember the accountability of the Day of judgement and never focus on any gain other than the reward for the day of judgement. (3) Good conduct. (4) Patience. (5) Wisdom.

Let us point out the major evils that workers must avoid.

A blemish that wipes out every virtue

The first and foremost blemish that wipes out every virtue is pride, conceit, egoism and haughtiness. It is purely a satanic spirit suitable for satanic acts, no good work is possible with such a spirit. Because greatness belongs only to Allah, the claim of greatness by humans is nothing but a falsity. Any man or a group afflicted by this false pretension, is deprived of every favour from Allah, for Allah detests it the most in His creatures. Consequently the person affected by such a malady can't seek guidance to the straight path. He perpetrates weird and outlandish acts continuously and ultimately bites the dust. Yet another consequence is the growing hatred towards other men as he exhibits his arrogance in his interaction with the people. So much so that he is discredited and becomes irrelevant to influence people morally.

This vice permeates the religious workers in many ways. It embraces the mean persons when their religious

and moral condition improves in comparison to the surrounding community and they render worthwhile service appreciated by others. Satan provokes them through whispers that they have grown in stature, and the satanic provocations tempt them to boast of their greatness. Thus the work started off with pious spirit, gradually treads on an erroneous path. A second way of deviation is that the people who sincerely try to improve themselves and others, develop some virtues spontaneously, stand out from the society; their services evidently deserve appreciation. Indeed such efforts are too conspicuous to ignore. It is natural and inevitable to appreciate a genuine effort. But a slight indulgence of the soul (nafs) and a minor temptation by satan turns it into pride and egoism. Sometimes the opponents try to find fault in their work and even indulge in personal fault finding. Naturally they have to speak out certain things in defence palpably true but not without highlighting one's virtues. A slight exaggeration in highlighting one's virtues surpasses the fair limit to the extent of pride.

Every individual and organisation rising up sincerely with the mission of reform should be vigilant against this dangerous tendency. In every individual and organisation sensitivity to servility (to God) should not only exist but remain alive and buoyant. He should not lose sight of the fact that greatness exclusively belongs to Allah; nothing else except humility and submissiveness is the status of servants of Allah. If piety develops in any man, it is due to the grace of Allah and hence not a matter of pride but an occasion of gratitude. It should ensue more humility towards Allah and whatsoever meagre piety attained should be dedicated

to the service of a noble cause so that Allah may reward further and augment piety. Having attained piety, sinking it to egoist-conciet is to convert virtue into a vice which is not the key to progress but to debasement.

Introspection is another element protecting man from conceiting tendencies. A person who performs self- introspection properly should find out his virtues as well as weaknesses; he may not indulge in vanity and egoism. If someone concentrates one's attention on own sins and blemishes, he would be busy in seeking forgiveness and repentance, let alone be influenced by haughtiness.

There is another factor to prevent this evil tendency, Man should not look down on the lower spiritual status of others, compared to whom he finds himself better. Rather he should look towards high level religiosity and supreme morals compared to which he finds himself at very low level. There is infinite scope for moral and spiritual progress from lowest to highest levels. The worst among the depraved may be proud of himself to find someone more wicked than him. Consequently he may be content with his present station and give up efforts to improve himself. The devilish psyche placates him that there is further scope for debasement. Such an attitude is subscribed by those who are averse to their own progress. Those aspiring sincerely to make progress always look to the righteous higher in character, instead of the lowly depraved. After scaling each height they come across many more peaks; instead of experiencing haughtiness on finding them their humility rues only to motivate them to ascend the peaks.

Besides all these measures it is essential that the organisation should remain vigilant about it. Every indication of egoism, vanity, haughtiness and arrogance should be stemmed in time. But the measures to curb it should not entail unhealthy character viz. pretentious humility and flaunting submissiveness among people. Nothing could be worse than this sort of vanity masked by a false humility.

An antithetical blemish to faith and sincerity

A second major defect no less in weeding out virtuousness than vanity by an individual or organisation is to perform any charitable work to show off and be concerned about the adulation of the people. It is antithetical not only to sincerity but indeed to faith too and hence it is termed as disguised association of partners with God (Shirk e khafi). Faith in God and afterlife essentially necessitates man to work only to seek the favour of God. One should expect the reward from Him and focus upon the consequences of afterlife instead of the world. But the 'showoff' person aims at the favour of the people; expects reward from them. Sometimes he earns the reward i.e. name, fame, popularity, adoration, influence, sway, authority and glory in the world itself. It implies that he has associated people with God or designated them His counterparts. In such a condition any man rendering any amount of service and any kind of service, obviously it wont be for the sake of God nor for His religion (Deen) nor his services will be regarded as acts of piety.

Such an unholy motive would render any deed inconsequential, in fact it is not possible with such an

attitude to perform any deed correctly. It is the inherent characteristic of this motive that man is concerned more about the promotion of his work than the actual work. He thinks only the activity executed with publicity campaign, admired and complimented all over is the work. An activity performed quietly, noticed by nobody except God is not deemed as work by him. Thus the parameters of his work are restricted only to the advertised work and after realising the purpose of publicity, he loses interest even in that activity. However sincerely one might begin the practical life as a worker, as soon as he is afflicted by this malaise, sincerity begins to vanish just like tuberculosis (TB) exterminates the vital energy of life. Thereafter its not possible for him to remain righteous outside the public glare and discharge any duty considering it as his own. He will evaluate everything from its "show-off" value and popular praise worthiness. All over he will find out only the demeanours appreciated by the people and will abhor to think about the work that portrays him unfavourably before the world although honestly it may be the voice of his conscience that it is the work which needs to be done.

It is relatively easy for the people worshipping Allah in a solitary pursuit to be immune from this evil. But the people engaged in activities of reform, social service and reconstruction amidst the people are prone to affliction of this evil. They have to do certain activities invariably turning out to be publicly noticeable, take efforts to make the like-minded and influence them, besides it is incumbent upon them to publish reports of their work. People are attracted by their services and acclaim them. As they have to face

opposition, they are reluctantly compelled to highlight their own merits in defence. In these circumstances wherein popularity overwhelms, it is not easy: to circumvent popularity; to be immune to the evil of show-off amidst prevailing publicity; not looking for reputation when admired all around; not trying to seek or ignore approbation when widely acclaimed. If one is surrounded by a plethora of causes of ostentation, to remain unaffected from it requires strenuous effort, focused attention and hard work. Even slight negligence towards it may risk the affliction of the evil of ostentation.

Individual as well as collective efforts are essential to be secure from it. Individually it can be overcome if as an obligation everybody performs some virtuous deeds in secrecy. One should be watchful to check his ego whether it loves the deeds performed in hiding or in public eye. If it is the latter, immediately one should be alert for the evil of ostentation is overtaking him and seek the shelter of Allah and strive the utmost to transform the state of his soul (nafs).

Collectively the evil of ostentation can be overcome by an organisation (Jama'at) discouraging the tendencies of ostentation within its fold. It should restrict its publicity to the genuine need. On the slightest appearance of the symptoms of show-off it should be stemmed immediately. A slight whiff of ostentation should not be tolerated even in organisational consultations and interactions viz. so and so work should be done as it may be a source of popularity and so and so work should not be done as it is not liked by people. The internal environment of the organisation

(Jama'at) should be moulded to remain unconcerned about appreciation or condemnation and should not foster the disposition of getting upset by condemnation and encouraged by appreciation. Despite this if some individuals are found to be infested with the syndrome of ostentation, instead of encouraging them, they must be urged to ponder over purging them of the evil.

Contamination of Intentions

A third fundamental defect is contamination of intentions. No model of righteousness can be built upon it. Any work of righteousness is possible with pure intentions alone. A believer wishes that virtue disseminates across the world through our efforts. We may then be blessed by Allah with blissful success. Except this motive, no other personal or group interest should be associated. No worldly interest should be the intent; whatever be the pretext. No expectation of personal benefit should be blended with the righteous objective. Such ulterior motive not only deprives one of reward from Allah, rather a man with contaminated intention can't do any work properly. Contamination of intention invariably impacts character. Palpably its impossible to succeed in this mission (aimed at abolishing evil to establish virtue) with polluted character.

As pointed out above a similar dilemma arises here too. It may not be difficult to maintain the purity of intention in rendering services related to insignificant welfare activities. Feeble attachment with Allah and truly determined spirit may be adequate for it, but for the people who envisage to reform the system of life of

the entire country to re-establish it upon the Islamic foundations, can't afford to restrict their efforts merely to ideological, preaching or character building but they have to strive directly or indirectly to change the direction of the political system. A change in political system necessarily ensures the people striving to change, wield power directly or transfer it to their allies. In either case, the goal of power can't be ignored for change in political system. Its like staying in deep river without getting wet. Likewise an organisation (Jama'at) involved in politics find it difficult to keep members' individual intentions and the collective intension, at a pure level. Sincere intention should not be affected by "desire for power for oneself" syndrome. It requires rigorous 'striving of soul' (mujaheda e nafs) and an extensive purification of soul and heart. In order to understand it in correct perspective, it is essential to appreciate the fundamental difference between the two resembling tendencies. It is obvious that one who intends to transform the entire system of life in totality, can't ignore political system. Obviously any transformation in a political system warrants that power should be vested with those aspiring to transform it or with their supporters. There is a "difference and a major difference" between seeking power for oneself and seeking power for the sake of principles and a mission. A 'principled regime' practically may require the political rule of adherents of principles. Nonetheless, seeking 'rule of principles' and 'power to the adherents for themselves' are two distinct objectives differing fundamentally in 'soul and character'. Contamination of intentions is found in the second case and not in the first. In the process of 'striving of soul' (mujaheda e nafs)

care should be taken to make strenuous effort to acquire 'power for principles.' But not even a shred of thought should be tolerated for 'power for themselves.' The model of the Prophet (pbuh) and his companions (Sahaba) (RA) is there to guide us. They strived to change the entire life system in totality to rebuild it upon Islamic principles. It necessitated acquisition of political power without it, Islam could not have prevailed and established completely. Consequent upon this struggle political power was achieved by to them. In spite of it, no honest observer can even suspect about the objective of their struggle as 'power for ourselves'. On the other hand history is replete with seekers of 'power for themselves.' Why to search them in history when we find them in contemporary world. If securing power is regarded as an incident, practically there is no difference in both the groups; but they differ radically in intention which is incontrovertibly evident in their character both during the struggle and post-success period.

The people sincerely aspiring to establish Islamic way of life should understand this difference properly and maintain purity of their intentions individually and the organisation as a whole should try to see that the motive 'power for ourselves' should never find space within its ranks.

A seemingly innocent type of weakness

A cluster of defects emerges from the weakness aptly called as "temperamental imbalance". It is relatively innocent looking weakness compared to egoism because there is no element of evil intention,

evil spirit or any unscrupulous desire associated with it; but in terms of deriving corrupting tendencies, it ranks second after egoism but at times compared to egoism its repercussions are equally worse. The natural consequences of imbalance are imbalance in views and thoughts and imbalance in efforts and practices. It directly confronts the realities in life. Yet another drawback of imbalance is that it leads to failure which is colossal to an organisation committed to reform and reconstruction.

Man's unilateral mind set is the first and foremost manifestation of temperamental imbalance. A man overtaken by it usually looks at one side of everything ignoring the other side. In every matter he ruminates one aspect without taking notice of the other. He moves ahead in the direction in which his mind conceives to move on; he is not prepared to pay heed to any other direction. It develops continuously a typical imbalance in understanding the matters. He tilts towards only one side in forming any opinion. He holds on to any decision he reckons significant. Other similarly important or more important things than his decision become insignificant to him. He is vehemently obsessed in opposition to anything he reckons bad; some other worse evils are not worth any attention to him. If he adopts rule of standards, he goes to the extent of inertia (becomes inactive) by adhering to principles in an extreme manner, he does not pay heed to the actual demands of the mission. When he resorts to conformism, he tends to be conformist at the cost of indiscipline and having set the objective of success wishes to exploit every type of ways and means.

If this condition continues unabated, it exacerbates to assume extreme form. A person then insists upon his opinion to excess. He carries difference of opinion to extremes. Neither he considers others viewpoints objectively nor tries to understand; but seeks to reject and holds in contempt every opposing opinion. Subsequently day by day he becomes unacceptable to others and others become unacceptable to him.

It is better if imbalance is subdued at this stage but instead it is nurtured as a virtue, condition worsens to turn him into hot tempered, freakish, sharp tongue and worse still he become suspicious of others' motives and lambastes them, which is not tolerable in any organisation.

If anybody conducts oneself this way, at the most he may be cut off from the organisation and will be deprived to offer any contribution to the cause for which he was associated with the organisation. It may not ensue any collective damage to the organisation but in any joint set up, if the moderates and the extremists come together, each category of imbalance clusters around a band; one extreme position entails the opposite extreme; cleavages sharpen to split into factions and the confrontation impairs the very goal for which people had assembled with noble intentions.

Owing to the collective nature of the tasks, certain responsibilities can't be delivered individually, to accomplish them many people have to work together. Everybody has to delineate one's own views to others, as well as understand their views. Differences in temperaments, abilities and personal traits are there to stay. Notwithstanding differences, all of them have to

galvanise harmony, without which no cooperation is possible. Accommodation and modesty are indispensable for harmony and these attributes are found only among the moderates whose views and temperament are moderate. If extremist elements unite, their unity won't survive long. Their organisation would be torn apart; moreover the splinter groups in which these extremists come together, will subsequently disintegrate further and ultimately there will be leaders without followers.

The people aspiring to work for Islam and to whom the passion and enthusiasm to reconstruct and reform the system of life along Islamic lines is a cause to rally, they should undergo self-introspection to safeguard themselves against every form of imbalance and their organisation should also be concerned to see that this disorder should not escalate in their organisation. A verse from the Qur'an and the guidance of the Prophet of Allah (pbuh) forbidding strictly both extremism and violence should enlighten them. The Qur'an avers 'transgression in religion' as a fundamental mistake (يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ) of the people of the Book (Christians and Jews etc); Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) enjoined his followers to safeguard against it in these words:: "Beware don't get involved in extremism, people in the past were destroyed by extremism. (Masnad Ahmed- quoted by Ibn e Abbas [R.A]). In another tradition of Ibne Mas'ood [R.A] the Prophet (pbuh) quoted thrice in his speech:: "extremists, exaggerating and fussy people perished, (Muslim). The men engaged in spreading the message (Da'awah) were taught by the Prophet (pbuh)::

"Facilitate convenience, don't distress, convey the elating news, don't inculcate hatred." (Bukhari&Muslim)

"Allah is lenient, appreciates leniency."

(Bukhari & Muslim)

"Anybody divested of leniency, is completely divested of virtue."

(Muslim)

Apart from abiding by these compendious instructions, if the workers dedicated to the cause of the Islamic code of life, instead of resorting to pick and choose from the Qur'an and Sunnah to suit their interests, cultivate the practice of moulding their temperament and views according to them; balance, evenness and moderation will develop spontaneously, so vital to overhaul the international situation and affairs in tune with the framework of Qur'an and Sunnah.

Yet another weakness in men similar to "temperamental imbalance" is "covetousness"; the Qur'an (Chapter-59:9) interprets it as "Shuhhe Nafs: meaning greed, narrow mindedness, covetousness and miserliness tinged with avarice". The Qur'an avers that success to anyone is contingent upon rescuing oneself from covetousness; further the Qur'an evinces it as a vile practice in contrast to piety and perfection. Anyone overtaken by covetousness, is reluctant to give away anything to anybody in his life. What is more, he thrives inordinately, but finds it quite inadequate; on the contrary even though others diminish, he feels they have exceedingly flourished. He seeks to avail every concession for himself but utterly denies it to others. He deems his merits as attributes and others' merits as coincidence; his weaknesses are pardonable in his view but can't forgive any defect of others. He considers his difficulties as real while others' difficulties mere excuses. He expects absolution for his blemishes but he

is not willing to absolve others' blemishes. Unmindful of others helplessness, he urges to fulfil extreme demands he would never be able to fulfil in his state of helplessness. He tries to impose his own choice and forces his flavour upon others; but does not care about others choices and flavours. Gradually it stoops low to brickbat and fault finding. He reproaches others for silly mistakes but feels affronted if anybody retorts.

Another form of covetousness is techiness, peevishness, annoyance and being intolerant of each other; it's a scourge to the person beset by it as well as to all others associated with him.

This scourge if plagues any organisation is a sign of a danger. Collective effort calls for mutual affection and cooperation without which no group activity is possible. But covetousness not only diminishes the prospects of cooperation but puts an end to it. Naturally the inevitable consequence are embittered relations and resentment tearing apart the hearts and embroiling the colleagues in mutual bickering. Obviously the persons involved in such a vice are unsuitable for social life, and what is more, this vice is antithetical to the virtues required to establish Islamic way of life. Islam prescribes magnanimity instead of covetousness, generosity instead of niggardliness, pardon instead of retribution and leniency instead of sternness. This work needs tolerant and forbearing souls, only those people can afford to shoulder the responsibility who are broad minded, who observe strictness for themselves, but are soft towards others; They look

into their own faults and recognize others' virtues; they are accustomed to suffer rather than trouble others; they are anchors to the vulnerable instead of causing the downfall of others. Any organisation consisting of such people, will not only consolidate itself but connect the scattered entities in the surrounding locality. On the contrary, the group of covetous and debased people will disintegrate and provoke the affiliated people to quit disdainfully

