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SIMILARITY
AND
EXCELLENCE

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Allah ﷻ says in the Holy Qur'aan, in the 48th Sura, *al-Fath* (Victory) الفتح in Verse 9:

لَتُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُعَزِّرُوهُ وَتُوَقِّرُوهُ وَتُسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً
وَأَصِيلاً

So that, (O people,) you may believe in Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ and may help his (*Din* [Expanded way of life]), revere and venerate him with heart and soul, and (with that reverence in your heart) glorify Allah morning and evening

As the Muslims have been in their period of decline, their faith and their knowledge of Islam has also declined. The effect of the modern materialistic thought which has come from the western world, the notion of pursuing pseudo - rationalism, the closure of the True Caliphate, the Movement of History thereafter, has led some of the Muslims to reject important aspects of the prophetic personality which are of a spiritual bearing.

People who do not understand the nature of the world, what is the human constitution, what are the laws under which this world functions, try to interpret everything in material terms in accordance with the very defective knowledge that they possess. Some of them go to the extreme of blasphemy, trying to conceive the Holy Prophet ﷺ as a human being like them.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ is the source of grace, the foundation of our Iman, it is through him that we know Allah ﷻ, the Qur'aan, Angels, Day of Judgment, Heaven, Hell and everything in Islam. Allah ﷻ loves him and he wants the **Muslims to love and honor** him. Therefore, Allah warns us in

the Holy Qur'aan, in the 49th Sura, al-Hujuraat [The Inner Apartments] الحُجُرَات, Verse, in Verse 2:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَرْفَعُوا أَصْوَاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ
النَّبِيِّ وَلَا تَجْهَرُوا لَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ أَنْ
تَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ

O! Yoy who have Divinely Committed do not raise your voices above the pitch of the voice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and do not talk with him in the fashion, which you talk amongst yourselves. If you do even this slight unconscious mistake, remember all your [Salaah, prayers, fasting, Hajj, Zakaat and every other act of] virtue will be annulled totally and you will not even know it.

Adab gahez zehere aasmah az arsh nazuk tah,
Nafas ghum kar dami ayaad Junaid oh Byazid jah

There is a place where respect has to be offered and
it is more delicate than the Throne of Allah
When great spiritual luminaries like Junaid and
Bayazid come here they come trembling.

If for a single error, of disrespect to Allah ﷻ's beloved, every act of virtue is annulled: How much must Allah ﷻ love him? He does not even give the blasphemmer the Divine Help (*Taufiq*) to realize he has sinned, thus the door of repentance remains closed.

The axis of our *Iman* is the personality of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Belief in all the Pillars of Islam, including Belief in One God (*Tauhid*) and The Hereafter (*Akhirat*), stems from Him.

There are two aspects of *Nabuwwat* (Prophethood): One aspect is Similarity or (*Misliat*) and the other aspect is Excellence or (*Fazilat*). *Fazilat* is to see Excellence in someone's personality and accept him as being greater than ones self and others. Similarity or *Misliat* is to view somebody as being similar to ones self and others. The miraculous nature of the Holy Prophet ﷺ's personality fall under *Fazilat* ; E.g. Splitting of the Moon, Moving of the Sun, trees coming to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and stones reciting the *Kalimah*. The human aspect of the Holy Prophet ﷺ personality falls under Similarity or *Misliat* E.g. Marriage, Business, Eating, Sleeping, Perspiring etc.

But the Prophetic nature or *Nabuwwat* is a combination of Excellence or *Fazilat* plus Similarity or *Misliat*. A great person comes down to the level of his subjects and humbly approaches them to create a friendly atmosphere E.g. If one needs a favor from a minister of parliament and on approaching him one finds him very formal and officious, then one will not be at ease and in laymen's terms one will say:

"He is a big man and not down to earth."

On the other hand one may approach another and find him to be very friendly, helpful and accommodating. He may say:

"Whenever you have a problem, please feel free to call. I am your servant."

This puts one at ease and one can relate to such a person. But to think that he is like one in status, because of his humility, will be a mistake. The Holy Prophet ﷺ who is the Greatest in Allah's creation and who reached the highest spiritual height of Slavery to Allah or *Abdiat*, which was handsomely demonstrated on the occasion of the Ascension (*Meraj*) repeatedly told his followers, **إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ** "I am like you" to befriend them and put them at ease.

During the *Me'raj* the Prophet went to the farthest limits of the Universe, into the Divine Presence or to where the essence of Allah ﷻ is centered,

where no man has reached. This is his Excellence or *Fazilat* and on the other hand when a needy woman asked him to walk with her in Madinah, he walked barefoot, this is his humility that projects similarity or *Misliat*.

Allah ﷻ says in the Holy Qur'aan, in the 11th Sura Huud هُود in Verse 49:

تِلْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهَا إِلَيْكَ ۖ مَا كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُهَا
أَنْتَ وَلَا قَوْمُكَ مِنْ قَبْلِ هَذَا ۖ فَاصْبِرْ ۖ إِنَّ الْعَاقِبَةَ
لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

This (narration) is of the accounts of the unseen that We reveal to you [excellence]. Neither you nor your people knew them before this. [similarity] So observe patience. Surely, it is the God-fearing with whom it ends well.

Allah ﷻ says in the Holy Qur'aan, in the 18th Sura, *al-Kahf* (the Cave) الْكَهْف in Verse, in Verse 110:

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ

I am Human as you are a Human (similarity) but revelation from Allah ﷻ comes to me (his excellence)

Those who fix their attention on similarity (*Misliat*) become misguided. Those who combine Similarity (*Misliat*) and his excellence (*Fazilat*) have true Belief (*Iman*).

Allah ﷻ says in the Holy Qur'aan, in the 2nd Sura *al-Baqarah* (the Cow) الْبَقَرَة in Verse 255:

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ

**None can intercede in his Presence (similarity) except whom he permits
(his excellence)**

Allah ﷻ says in the Holy Qur'aan, in the 43rd Sura *az-Zukhruf* الزُّخْرُف (Ornaments of gold) in verse 67:

الْأَخِلَاءُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ إِلَّا الْمُتَّقِينَ

**Friends on that day (Judgment) will be foes one to
another (similarity) except the Righteous (his
excellence).**

Those who fix their attention on similarity (*Misliat*) are misguided. Those who believe with similarity (*Misliat*) and excellence (*Fazilat*) combined have *Iman*. There are five groups, namely:

1. Those that reject and cover up belief after knowing (*Kafir*),
 2. Those that attribute partners to Allah ﷻ (*Mushrik*)
 3. The Hypocrites or 'Dual Loyalists' (*Munafiqun*) or The Waverers (*Muzabzabin*)
 4. The Blasphemers (*Gustaq* or *Mudahilin*)
 5. The True Believers (*Mominien*)
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1. Those that reject belief (*Kafir*) reject his excellence (*Fazilat*) including his Prophethood and accept him only as an ordinary human being. Focusing on his similarity (*Misliat*)

Allah ﷻ speaks of them in the Holy Qur'aan, in the 11th Sura *Huud* هُود in verse 27:

فَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ مَا نَرَاكَ إِلَّا بَشَرًا
مِثْلَنَا

We see (in) thee nothing but a man like ourselves.

Again Allah ﷻ mentions them in the Holy Qur'aan, in the 23rd Sura *al-Mu'minuun* (the Believers) الْمُؤْمِنُونَ in verse 24:

فَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ مَا هَذَا إِلَّا بَشَرٌ
مِثْلُكُمْ

The chiefs of the Unbelievers among his people said: "He is no more than a man like yourselves

2. Those that attribute partners to Allah (*Mushriq*) reject his similarity (*Misliat*) and only accepts his excellence (*Fazilat*).

Allah ﷻ mentions them in the Holy Qur'aan, in the 9th Sura, *at-Tawbah* (Repentance) التَّوْبَةِ Verse 30

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ عُزَيْرٌ ابْنُ اللَّهِ وَقَالَتِ النَّصَارَى الْمَسِيحُ
ابْنُ اللَّهِ

And the Jews say: Uzair is the son of Allah ﷻ; and the Christians say: The Messiah is the son of Allah ﷻ

3. The Hypocrites (*Munafiqun*) or The Waverers (*Muzabzabin*) see his similarity (*Misliat*) and his excellence (*Fazilat*) as the same.

Allah ﷻ mentions them in the Holy Qur'aan, in the 4th Sura, *an-Nisaa* (Women) النِّسَاء in Verse 143:

مُذَبِّدِينَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ لَا إِلَى هَؤُلَاءِ وَلَا إِلَى هَؤُلَاءِ وَمَنْ
يُضِلِ اللَّهُ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ سَبِيلًا

Wavering between that (and this), (belonging)
neither to these nor to those; and whomsoever
Allah causes to err, you shall not find a way for him

4. The Blasphemers (*Gustaqs* or *Mudahilin*) accept his excellence (*Fazilat*) but place more emphasis on his similarity (*Misliat*).
5. The True Believers (*Mominien*) accept his similarity (*Misliat*) but place more emphasis on his excellence (*Fazilat*). **Iman is to accept his similarity (*Misliat*) but place more emphasis on his excellence (*Fazilat*).**

The *Sahaba* and the *Kuffar* saw the Holy Prophet ﷺ and Hazrath Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه and Imam Ali عليه السلام saw the body cast no shadow, and a fly did not sit on the body, but Abu Jahl and Abu Lahab saw a human like them. Those who fix their gaze on excellence became the *Sahaba* and those who looked for similarity and fault remain the unbelievers.

The unbelievers saw him perspiring and said, "he is like us" but the believers realized that a beautiful aroma emanated from his perspiration and it perfumed the air around him. When he walked through the streets, he left a fragrance on the path.

The non-believers saw him eating food and thought that he was like them, but the believers saw the food making *Shukr* to Allah¹ that it is going to enter the Holy body.

¹ Sahih al-Bukhari, Volume 4, Book 56, Number 779: Narrated 'Abdullah:

We used to consider miracles as Allah's Blessings, but you people consider them to be a warning. Once we were with Allah's Apostle on a journey, and we ran short of water. He said, "Bring the water remaining with you." The people brought a utensil containing a little water. He placed his hand in it and said, "Come to the blessed water, and the Blessing is from Allah." I saw the water flowing from among the fingers of Allah's Apostle, and no doubt, we heard the meal glorifying Allah, when it was being eaten (by him).

During the battle of the Trench, stones were tied on his tummy² to quell the hunger and the disbelievers said, "He is like us." On the other hand, during the same battle when Hazrath Jabir ؓ invited him for food and 1500 ate from a small pot. Hazrath Jabir ؓ knew that his responsibility was his guest and the Holy Prophet ﷺ would take care of his guests.

The *Sahaba* had *Iman* or belief on the human status (*Bashariat*) but emphasized (*Nuraniat*) or his status of being 'The Essence of The Universe' (*ar-Ruh al Qainaat*). Even today those who accept his similarity (*Misliat*) but emphasize his excellence (*Fazilat*) are the true *Ahle Sunnat Wa Jamaat*, those who celebrate his Birth (*Meelad*) and sing his praises (*Naat*). *Fazilat* or excellence points to his being the Beloved of the Beloved. (*Mahboobiat*). *Misliat* or similarity points to him being the slave of Allah (*Abdiat*) despite all his excellence, and this saves one from *Shirk*. (Attributing partners to Allah)

He is a light from Allah (*Nurullah*) and not Allah. Everyone saw his similar human qualities (*Misliat*); a chosen few saw his excellence (*Fazilat*) but, his reality (*Haqiqat*) only Allah knows. Therefore he said to Hazrath Abu Bakr ؓ

Muhammad al-Mahdi al-Fasi quotes the following hadith in his commentary of *Dala'il al-Khayrat* or *Dalaail u'l Khayraat Wa Shawaariq u'l Anwaar Fee Zikri's Salaat Alan Nabiiyi'l Mukhtaar* (The Waymarks of Benefits and the Brilliant Burst of Sunshine in the Remembrance of Blessings on the Chosen Prophet) called *Mutaala'a Al-Maseraat* مطالع المسرات بجلاء دلائل الخيرات that the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said:

يا أبا بكر! والذي بعثني بالحق! لم يعلمني حقيقة غير

ربي.

O Abu Bakr ؓ! I swear by that Being who sent me with the truth. My Reality is known to none besides my Lord.

² Sahih Bukhari 5:427

"Tum zate Khuda se na Juda ho, Na khuda hoh.
Allahi ku ma loom heh kya janiyeh kya hoh"

You are not distant from Allah, nor are you Allah;
for
Allah only knows your reality

Irshad Soofi

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