

BELIEF IN ONE GOD

BY Dr Fathi Ossman

The belief in the One God, aims to benefit the human beings in their relations with 'others,' since God Himself is not affected in his all-mightiness by belief or disbelief in Him. The Ten Commandments represent the cornerstone in the messages of monotheism and its moral goals. Next to the belief in the One God and the worship of Him alone, come the consequences that this faith has for all human relations, starting with the family and going to all human beings whose lives, families and properties should be secure from any violation (Exodus 20. 3-15).

In the next two verses (Exodus 20.16-17), dealing with neighbors is stressed as a starting point in dealing with 'others.' That faith in the One God has immediate consequences for inter-human relations was emphasized by Jesus when he answered a question about the great commandment in the law: "Jesus said, 'You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart and your mind.' And the second is like unto it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matt. 23.35-40; see also Mark 12.28-32, Luke 10.25-28). When Jesus was asked further to define "the neighbor," he gave the well-known parable of "the good Samaritan" who offered help and had compassion to the person who needed it, regardless of any difference in faith (Luke 10:29-37).

Now, in an era of globalization, the whole world has become a close neighborhood. The Quran teaches the doing of good to the neighbor from your own people, the neighbor who is a stranger, and the friend by your side whoever he/she may be (4:36).

Caring for travelers who lost their way or their possessions is repeatedly stressed in the Quran. Even in war, those who leave the enemies' front to seek the Muslims' protection, have to be granted this protection, in addition to a safe passage to the destination they choose (9:6). Prisoners of war, who have to be set free as soon as possible, and all prisoners, should be taken care of in their various needs: physical, intellectual and spiritual-moral (47:4). Such a genuine understanding, sympathy and cooperation ought to be the outcome of the belief in the All-Merciful, who offers His limitless mercy and grace to all of His creation (21:107).

Since the Lord and Cherisher of all human beings "makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust," believers in Him ought to reflect God's mercy and grace in their relations with others: "For if you love them which love you, what reward have you? And if you salute your brethren only, what do you do more than others?" (Matt. 5:45-47).

The Quran endorses the moral commandments of the Torah (2:83), and describes the Torah as containing "guidance and light" (5:44), and as "clearly spelling out everything, and [thus providing] guidance and grace" (6:154).

As for God's message revealed in the Gospel, the Quran states that in it "there is guidance and light, confirming the truth of the Torah that has preceded it, and [it was revealed] as a guidance and admonition unto the God-conscious" (5:46). The Quran urges the Jews to follow the Torah (5:43), as it urges the Christians to follow the Gospel (5:47), and has promised the good of this world's life if they do (5:66), in addition to the greatest reward of God in the eternal life to come.

As Jesus had emphasized in earlier times that he had not come to destroy the law of the Torah and the teaching of the prophets, but had come to fulfill them, so Muhammad emphasized that he was merely sent to fulfill what is virtuous.

The Quran spells out what this implies: "True virtue and good do not consist in turning you faces towards the east or the west, but truly virtuous and good-doer is the one who believes in God, the Last Day, the angels, the books and the prophets; and spends his substance- however much he/she himself/herself may cherish it-upon his near of kin, and the orphans, and the needy, and the wayfarer (who lost his/her way or possessions during a journey), and those who ask for help, and in freeing human beings from bondage, and keeps up the prayer, and renders the purifying [social welfare] dues (zakat); and [truly virtuous and good-doers are] those who keep their promises when- ever they promise, and are patient in adversity and hardship and in time of peril; it is they that have proved themselves true, and it is they who are conscious of God" (2:177). Justice and kindness, "al-adl wal-ihsan", concisely represent all virtues, as the Quran sometimes indicates (e.g. 16:90).

It is significant that early Muslims sought shelter from persecution in Abyssinia with its Christian just king, and were granted asylum there. Ibn Taymiyya, the prominent Muslim jurist (d. 728H./1328), maintained that God lets the just unbelieving power persevere and flourish, while He does not let the unjust Muslim power persevere and flourish.

Someone asked mhz Hassan albasri r.a : "What is the secret of your piety...?"

He replied , "I understood **4** things:

1. I understood my rizq cannot be taken by anyone so my heart contended..
2. I understood no one can do my actions (worship) so I start doing them myself.
3. I understood Allah swt is watching me, so I felt shame to do wrong
4. I understood death is waiting for me so I start to prepare for my meeting Allah swt. "