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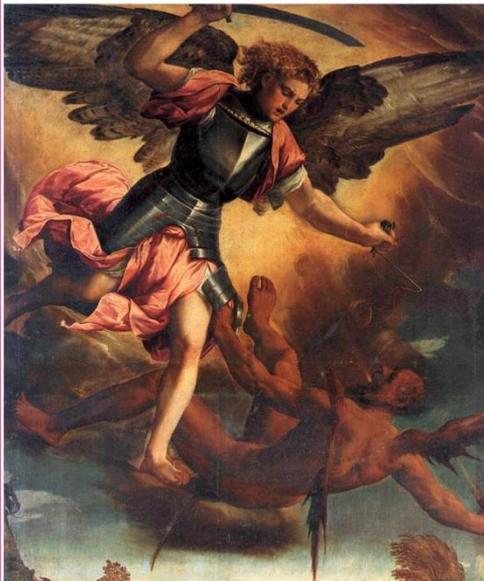
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A Critical Study of the Relationship of Faith and Action

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Abstract

The aim of the study is to investigate a critical study of the relationship of faith and action from the Muslim thinkers' point of view. The methodology of current research is library based studies on the ideas of Muslim thinkers including theologians and philosophers. As a result, the action plays a decisive role in the levels of faith; because mere faith and without action is not a perfect faith. In conclusion, the chosen view is that the minimum faith is attestation or confession but with reaching the higher levels of faith one must pass through the stages of righteous action.

Keywords: Religious, worldview, faith, knowledge, attestation.

Un estudio crítico de la relación de fe y acción

Resumen

El objetivo del estudio es investigar un estudio crítico de la relación de fe y acción desde el punto de vista de los pensadores musulmanes. La metodología de la investigación actual consiste en estudios basados en bibliotecas sobre las ideas de los pensadores musulmanes, incluidos teólogos y filósofos. Como resultado, la acción juega un papel decisivo en los niveles de fe; porque la mera fe y sin acción no es una fe perfecta. En conclusión, el punto de vista elegido es que la fe mínima es la atestación o la confesión, pero al alcanzar los niveles más altos de fe, uno debe pasar por las etapas de la acción recta.

Palabras clave: Religioso, cosmovisión, fe, conocimiento, atestación.

1. INTRODUCTION

Faith is basically grounded in one's worldview and as long as the worldview is not determined, one cannot provide a correct judgment of an individual's faith and the effective factors in faith as well as the foundation upon which his faith is laid. Worldview is of three types in respect of the source from which it is nourished: scientific worldview, philosophical worldview and religious worldview. We are speaking of the religious worldview which has its origin in the divine revelation. The religious worldview in this context represents first the monotheistic worldview, and secondly,

monotheistic worldview as has been introduced in Islam. Then, we are concerned with a religious worldview as depicted in Islam. The discussion of the definition of faith and analysis of its factors is a historical problem and the account of the theologians of its nature has a decisive effect on their theological system.

The current essay seeks to provide a report, analysis and criticism of the notions of Islamic scientists of faith and its relation with action. The main question is that which criticisms can be leveled against the perspective of Muslim scholars of the relationship of faith and action? The question of the essence of faith and its relationship with action can be outlined in various forms: what is the truth and essence of faith? What is the semantic structure of faith? Whether faith lies under the category of knowledge or the category of emotion or the category of action? The methodology is focused on library-based investigations of various ideas mentioned in the works of Islamic thinkers. In the coming five sections of the article, we discuss the various types of the ideas proposed by Muslim scholars regarding the concept of faith and at the end of each section, we will explain what relationship this definition of faith has with action.

This view can be criticized by saying that Holy Quran has denied the sufficiency of verbal attestation as to faith and has promised hell to the hypocrites who just say the Shahadah while they do not believe it in their hearts. As to the aforementioned prophetic tradition, one should say that the reason of refusal from challenging one's beliefs in his heart would be the fact that the word in one's mouth does indeed translate his heart. If faith was just a matter of verbal attestation one

would be a believer just when he was saying the Shahadah because the word disappears as soon as it is said while attestation is not so and stands forever (Indriastuti, 2019; Ebrahimi Nasab et al, 2017; Jaramillo, 2018).

This view is construed as bidimensional theory and is endorsed by a number of Shia and Sunni theologians. This group of theologians believes that faith is of two dimensions of cordial attestation and "verbal confession" (Baghdadi and Abdulhamid, 1998: 203). The proponents of this view have propounded the following argument in order to demonstrate their own view: faith means attestation and there is no evidence that would suggest anything else other than this. The proponents of this view refer to two verses of Quran and believe that it is not fair that faith to be understood just as mere cordial know because according to the latter verses although Pharaoh and the Jews knew the prophecy of Moses and Holy Prophet of Islam with all their certainty they denied them out of enmity. Then, knowledge and infidelity have come together and this shows that cordial knowledge is not enough alone and we need verbal attestation either.

This group insists on the verse: O mankind, indeed we have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted; because they believe that the latter verse shows that mere verbal confession is not enough for the realization of faith (Yang et al., 2019; Soo et al., 2019). The cordial attestation and verbal confession are simultaneously required for original faith to take form. The result

of the argument of this group is that these two factors are not individually enough rather true faith is the outcome of their integration.

To analyze this view one should say that though one's refusal from the verbal confession of his belief and faith seems to sound the evidence show that there should be also verbal attestation when something's attestation is associated with denial it loses its validity because the stipulation of its contrary is against its validity. For this reason, the veracity of cordial attestation is conditional upon the verbal refusal, not verbal attestation. To put it in clearer words, one can say that true faith has not taken form in such people because if it was so it would have never been associated with its contrary. This view suggests that action plays a significant role in the realization of faith. This view is held by two groups: Khawarij: In the Battle of Siffin, this group claimed that it is only Allah who can judge when the parties had chosen representatives to negotiate and by doing this they paved the path for recognizing the element of action in the concept of faith.

Mutazilites: Although it was expected that by the domination of rationalism in the Etezzalite school this group would have given priority to the epistemic and rational element in the realization of faith against everyone's expectation they gave the priority to the element of action (particularly obedience) in the formation of the concept of faith. Of course, this is not tantamount to the denial of the role of knowledge in general rather they insist on not taking knowledge as the axis. The most important argument used by Khawarij was based on the following two verses: To Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and

whatever is on the earth. And to Allah will [all] matters be returned. So I have warned you of a Fire which is blazing. None will [enter to] burn therein except the most wretched one.

Who had denied and turned away? Here there are two groups of people among whom one group will face the Hell Fire they are not prosperous and will face torment as the following verse suggests: "then taste the punishment for what you used to reject" (Jorjani and Khaledian, 2016: 355). On the other hand, according to the verses of the chapter Layl, whoever enters the Hell Fire is an infidel and since they have committed mortal sin they are away from the faith (Subhani, 1978). But the argument based on the first verse for a demonstration of the infidelity of the lewd can be challenged in some respects: Firstly, the word faces in this verse is not general and does not include all faces. This exclusive classification of all humans into the righteous and vicious is not justifiable, because there would be some people who are not described this way; lewds belong to the latter group of people and have their own particular features.

Secondly, according to this argument, all people in hell should be apostates. But one cannot accept it that hell would host merely the apostates. Thirdly, acceptance of the idea that all lewds belong to the vicious is baseless because the aforementioned verse refers to those who have become infidels after believing. Then, one cannot say with certainty that all lewds belong to the black-faced vicious people. The most important reasons offered by the Mutazilites of the identity of faith with the action of the body members are as follows (Ibnmanzur, 1988):

1- Reference to verse 143 of Al-Baqarah: And never would Allah cause you to lose your faith. Some commentators have suggested that faith in this verse refers to prayer. If the religious meaning of faith was the same and one with its lexical meaning, i.e. attestation, faith could not be described as prayer. Then, in religious parlance faith has been construed as prayer instead of attestation. Then, faith is an action.

2- Reference to verse 15 of Hujurat as well as the verses 2-4 of Anfal; according to these verses, believers have been recommended to do righteous actions like reading prayer, charity and Jihad. If the action was not involved in the concept of faith the true believers never would have been recommended to do these. Then, mere knowledge cannot build true faith rather action is involved in its realization.

The reasons for the proponents of the latter view can be criticized as follows:

Firstly, 1- the tradition with reference to which faith has been construed as prayer is a single tradition while in such cases a single tradition is not dependable; 2- even if we accept that faith in this verse refers to prayer we cannot still interpret faith as prayer referring to it because faith would refer to religiosity in general no the prayer itself; 3- some thinkers believe that since prayer is among the best effects of faith one can take faith to be an allegory of prayer.

Secondly, the aforementioned features which have been noted in the second argument express the perfection of faith, not the faith that denotes attestation.

This view is known as a tripartite idea which has been endorsed by some Shia and Sunni thinkers. Allameh Helli attributes this view to some past masters and Sheikh Mofid (Allameh, 1995). Taftazani is also one of the proponents of the tripartite view (Taftazani et al., 1989). Ibnhazm is also among the most important proponents of this view who have sought to demonstrate it by reference to some particular Quranic verses. He used a negative method in order to refute other alternative views through long discussions and after that demonstrate the tripartite theory of faith (Ibnhazm, 2016). Ibnhazm (2016) seeks to focus on the point that righteous deeds are part of faith in his demonstration of this theory. In this regard, he believes that no doubt, cordial attestation is a firm and simple affair and could not be reduced or increased but we see that in Holy Quran faith is described as a gradational entity.

This shows that faith is not just a matter of cordial attestation and belief and righteous deeds play their role in the realization of faith. Although some objections can be leveled against this theory we accept this theory to some extent. After the study and introduction of various classifications concerning the concept of faith and its relationship with action one can conclude that action plays a decisive role in the levels of faith; because mere faith and without action is not a perfect faith. Although man is called faithful with attestation and he is exposed to Islamic decrees a question remains unanswered, i.e. why do we need to insist on the actions? Whether they have been expressed in the religion in vain? The answer is that the faith is of levels the least of which is

the attestation or confession that will be followed by superficial decrees in the world but without any doubt, for reaching the highest levels of faith and eternal prosperity one needs to act.

God will examine our faith along with our relevant actions otherwise mere cordial belief and verbal confession will not lead to one's liberation from divine torment. Then, faith leads to eternal prosperity that is associated with an action. As to the denial of bodily action as a condition of faith various reasons have been offered that was provide a short critical discussion of them. Criticism: Given the prophetic traditions as to the engagement of action in faith the consensus of the later scholars is not valid because it does not endorse the view of the Immaculate Imam. Second Reason: action's reference to faith; in many verses of Holy Quran righteous action has been referred to faith and this suggests their difference. This reason is voiced by most thinkers like (Brojerdi, 1986; Esfahani, 2003; Estanesti & Vazifeh, 2017).

Criticism: Firstly, faith includes cordial, rational and bodily actions at the same time and since cordial attestation is the head of faith the word faith is used alone as to it. In other words, here one part has been referred to another part, i.e. righteous action's reference to cordial attestation and since due to the significance of cordial attestation it is called faith it has been used with faith. Secondly, if in some verses the word faith refers to cordial attestation this cannot be a reason to construe it as cordial attestation in all places. As a result, mentioning righteous action is not a repetition because it is the reference of a part to another part which itself is called faith. Thirdly, it

might be mentioned because the issue of cordial faith dates back to Meccan era when it was associated with verbal attestation while practical issues like prayer, fast, Hajj and etc. were decided in Medina.

Thus, those verses in which righteous action has been mentioned with believing in your Lord are revealed more in Medina and they suggest that practical faith is also needed along with attestation faith for reaching paradise. In order to inform people that faith is not just a matter of attestation and there should be also action, God states that besides belief there should be righteous action too. Esfahani (2003) in which advising to truth and patience is an example of righteous action but since it is concerned with others it is mentioned after faith. Likewise, sometimes the difference is comparative and one part is referred to another part in which case one part is cordial attestation and the other is bodily actions. Cordial attestation has been described as faith because it is the head of faith while bodily action has been called righteous action.

Then, righteous action which is action based on pillars is a part of faith in the sense of action according to the religion of God. Fourthly, this righteous action is not called faith as such rather faith is a title for action based on the religion of God which absolute action is including the rational and cordial actions while the righteous actions refer to the bodily actions. Fifthly, if righteous action includes all actions based on revealed religion its stipulation by the phrase believe in God can add to its eloquence and in the same way that He could have said that be honest and believe in God but since first faith is prior

and the head of faith it is attestation and cordial belief and Muslims thought that faith is just a matter of righteous action and highlighted it.

Third Reason: attribution of faith to heart; in many of the verses of Quran, faith has been attributed to heart like except for one who is forced [to renounce his religion] while his heart is secure in faith and but say [instead], We have submitted, for faith has not yet entered your hearts. This reason has been mentioned by a number of scholars like (Esfahani, 2003). Criticism: firstly: addition of faith to heart does not suggest that faith is just cordial rather it refers to the necessity of entrance of faith into a heart for the attestation of faith and as we mentioned earlier, cordial faith is the head of faith. Secondly, the addition of faith to heart contrary to what was said implies that in the element of faith there are other things besides the cordial faith; for example, the verse when the faith has not entered the hearts suggests that even despite verbal confession some major parts of faith have not been realized. This is confirmed by the verse that but say [instead], we have submitted, for faith has not yet entered your hearts.

Fourth Reason: the refusal of privation; refusal of depriving one of the attribute faithful who has committed a mortal sin suggests that righteous action and the refusal of righteous action are not part of the faith. In the verses of the Holy Quran, we also observe that faith does not disappear with certain sins. Among those who have mentioned this reason, one can refer to (Esfahani, 2003). They resort to such verses as They who believe and do not mix their belief with injustice - those will have security, and they are [rightly] guided and most of them believe not in Allah except while they associate others with Him. Criticism:

These verses of Holy Quran do not suggest that when a man of faith oppresses or thinks of someone like the Lord or commits a murder he is still a man of faith rather it suggests that if someone is faithful and he commits these what would happen to him.

In fact, in these cases, the man of faith loses his general faith with sin and regains it with repentance and even if we say that this man retains his faith despite his sin this faith is the cordial attestation which is the head of faith, not the true faith. Fifth Reason: action the confirmatory of faith; the prophetic traditions that consider action as the confirmation of faith underline this fact as a reason. The following traditions can be mentioned as examples. Imam Baqer has been quoted to have said: faith is what resides in the heart and it becomes realized under divine auspices in the form of obedience.

Holy Prophet has been quoted to have said: "faith is what purifies the heart and corrects actions" (Ibnbabuyah and Jafari, 2010: 187). Criticism: Firstly, these traditions suggest that action is also part of faith because in these traditions the cordial element of faith has been integrated with bodily action. In other words, the truth of faith is composed of these elements and it is what that form faith is in heart and the action together. However, other traditions suggest that cordial element of faith secures the attestation. Then, these traditions seek to cast light on the truth of faith while those traditions express the essence of faith. There is no contradiction between these two groups of traditions in the same way that Quranic verses are interpreted in view of each other.

2. CONCLUSION

One of the existing challenges in this world is a lack of faith or infidelity. The explication of the relationship between faith and action can be effective in convincing people to follow the doctrines. Our subject matter in this research is a religious worldview. There are numerous ideas regarding the history of the discussion. The founders of this discussion are Khawarij and Murjeah and Mutazilites. For faith one can offer five senses: security, trust, surrender, faith as against apostasy and attestation as against refusal. The semantic essence of faith is a type of confidence that leads to trust and surrender. Various views of Muslim scholars are classified into six groups. First group, faith in the sense of knowledge and science; the second group believes that faith is just a matter of cordial attestation, Qaziji and Ghazali, are the proponents of this view; third group has construed faith as verbal confession and does not allocate any role for action.

Fourth group has taken faith in the sense of cordial attestation as associated with verbal confession; part of the last group considers the action neither as part of faith nor as its condition but there is still another group inside this group who see the action as the condition of faith; fifth group has considered bodily action tantamount to faith; the followers of this theory are Khawarij and Mutazilites of course with some differences; sixth group has also considered action as part of faith and argues that faith is the total sum of attestation, confession and action. Sheikh Mofid and IbnHazm (2016) are among the proponents

of this theory. For refusal of making the action the condition of faith, various reasons have been mentioned to all of which we have responded.

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