

Identity of a Momin

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A man is hidden behind the following two aspects of his personality:

- *His Belief*
- *His Conduct*

*His beliefs cannot be seen by the human eye but we can recognize them on the basis of his actions. Thus **his conduct** is the mirror which **reflects his beliefs**.*

*Consider this, if I consider myself as your friend, **unless I help** you when you need me the most, you **might not come to know about my feelings**. But once I came to your rescue **you would know me as your true friend** even if I **did not acknowledge this verbally**. My **deed spoke what words had not**. But if somebody, after making many false promises fails you; you would not consider him to be your friend any more. Thus here again **what mattered was his action and not his promises**. That is why the English idiom aptly says '**Actions speak louder than words**'.*

➔ Thus if we wish to know how a person is we need to observe his conduct. **It will reveal his true identity**. In that sense even in Islam, the parameter of differentiation between a believer (*Momin*) and a non-believer (*Kafir*) is the conduct of an individual. His actions speak a great deal about his faith. With this article we will try to establish this inference.

Let us see what Allah (SWT) says about faith in Quran:

- *"Kya logon ne ye samajh liya hai (sirf) itna keh dene se ke hum imaan laye, chhod diye jayenge aur **unnka imtihaan na liya jayega** aur Humne to unn logon ka bhi Imtihaan liya jo unn se pehle guzar gaye garaz **Khuda unn logon ko jo sacche hain yaqinan alaheda dekhega aur jhoothon ko bhi zaroor dekhega.**" – (Surah-e-Ankabut, ayah 2-3)*

*"(Do people think that once they say, '**We believe,**' they will be left alone and **not be put to the test**? We certainly **tried those who have gone before them**, so God will certainly **distinguish between those who are truthful and those who are lying.**)"*

Mere verbal acceptance of faith is not considered anything by Allah (SWT) and He puts to test all the people who claim to be believers. He differentiates a believer (*Momin*) from a non-believer (*Kafir*) after trying their faiths. Hence **Allah (SWT) gives importance to conduct and action instead of words**.

We will now see the following two ayahs from Surah-e-Tawba:

- *“Aur Musalmanon yeh log to Khuda ki qasmein khayenge ke woh tum main hi ke hain halanke woh log tum main ke nahin hain. Magar hain yeh log buuzdil ke agar kahin ye log panah ki jagah (Kila’a) ya chhupne ke liye ghaar ya ghus bhaithne ki koi aur jagah pajayen to usi taraf rassiyan todte hue bhaag jayen.” – (Surah-e-Tawba, ayah 56-57)*

“(They swear by God that they are believers like you; but they are not. They are afraid (to appear in their true colours): if they could find a place of refuge, or a cave or any hiding-place, they would run there with frantic haste.)”

→The above ayah discusses certain hypocrites who **claimed to be believers** but **they were coward and Allah (SWT) detests their actions**. It further substantiates our inference that the believer is judged solely on the basis of his **deeds and actions**. And a **believer (Momin) is brave in his conduct and ready to sacrifice everything for the cause of Allah**.

Having inferred this now let us see the life of Abu Talib (A.S). There are differences amongst Muslims related to the faith of Abu Talib (A.S); some people conveniently forget **what he did for Islam and the holy Prophet (SAW)** and they consider him as a non-believer as they cannot find any documented proof of his reciting **‘Kalema’** on the deathbed. Let us see what Quran has to say on this:

- *“Aur Hum ne Bani Israel ko dariya ke uss par kardiya phir Firaun aur uss lashkar ne sarkashi ki aur shararat se unn ka peechha kiya yahan tak ke jab woh doobne laga to kehne laga ke jis Khuda per Bani Israel imaan laaye hain main bhi uss per imaan laata hoon. Uss ke siwa koi Ma’abud nahin aur main farmabardar bandon se hoon. Ab (marne ke waqt imaan laata hai) halaanke isse pehle tu nafarmani kar chuka aur tu to fasadiyon main se tha.” - (Surah-e-Yunus, ayah 90-91)*

“(So We brought the Children of Israel across the river. Pharaoh and his troops pursued them arrogantly and aggressively. When he was about to drown, [Pharaoh] exclaimed, ‘I believe that there is no deity save Him in whom the Children of Israel believe, and I am of those who surrender themselves to Him!’ ‘Only now? When you had always been a rebel, and a wrongdoer.)”

In his entire life Firaun did everything **to oppose Musa (A.S), the prophet of his time**. He created hurdles and harassed the Bani Israel and thus he was rebel and a wrongdoer throughout his life. His **showcasing faith in Allah (SWT) on his deathbed did not give him any benefit** and he **remained a ‘Kafir’ and died so**.

On the contrary Abu Talib (A.S) did everything to **protect Mohammed (SAW) - the last prophet**, from the pagans of Arab. He helped the Prophet (pbuh) in his mission and was his guardian. After all his efforts do you still feel that Allah (SWT) would have waited for Abu Talib (A.S) to recite a '**Kalema**' to accept his faith and services? Did not his **deeds speak a lot about his love for the Prophet (pbuh) and his belief in the religion of Islam?**

We have understood that Allah (SWT) judges people on the basis of their deeds in the light of various ayahs which we have contemplated upon. Now Let us see those deeds which Allah (SWT) likes the most:

- *“Madina ke rehne walon aur unn ke gardo nawah dehatiyon ko **yeh jaaiz na tha ke Rasool-e-Khuda ka saath chhod dein aur na ye (jaaiz tha) ke Rasool (SAW) ki jaan se be-parwah ho kar apni jaanon ke bachane ki fikr karein**, ye hukm us sabab se tha ke unn (jihad karne walon) ko Khuda ki raah mein jo taklif pyaas ki mehnat ya bhook ki shiddat ki pahonchti hai ya aisi raah chalte hain jo kuffar ke ghaiz or ghazab ka baais ho ya kisi dushman se kuch yeh log haasil karte hain to **buss uske aewaz main (unnke nam’ae amal main) ek nek kaam likh diya jayega**. Be-shak Khuda neki karne walon ka ajr (wa sawab) barbaad nahin karta.” – (Surah-e-Tawba, ayah 120)*

*“(It was not proper for the people of Madinah and those desert Arabs around them to **hold back from following God’s Messenger, and to prefer their own lives to his life**. This is because whenever they suffer from thirst or weariness or hunger for God’s cause, and whenever they take any step which provokes those who deny the truth, or inflicts any loss upon the enemy, **it shall be counted as a good deed in the sight of God—God will not deny the righteous their reward**)”*

Allah (SWT) likes those who are ready to sacrifice their own life for the sake of holy Prophet (pbuh) and his mission. For such people Allah (SWT) has **promised great rewards** and their good deeds would be accepted by Him. Thus **protecting the holy Prophet (pbuh) and being there when he needed is the most rewarding and appreciated virtue by Allah (SWT).**

After the holy Prophet (pbuh) began preaching Islam, members of the other Quraishite clans felt threatened and they started pressurizing Abu Talib (A.S) to stop his nephew and control him. Despite all this, Abu Talib (A.S) remained supportive of the holy Prophet (SAW) and defended him from the other heads of Quraish.

Prominent Islamic historians have documented his noble gestures. Ali b. Burhanuddin Shafei in his book '*Insanul Oyoon*' has described the benevolence of Hazrat Abu Talib (A.S) towards the Prophet (SAW) as follows:

'Every night Hazrat Abu Talib (A.S) would ask the Prophet (SAW) to go off to bed, and when everybody was asleep, **Hazrat Abu Talib (A.S) would make any one of his sons or brothers or cousins to sleep on his (SAW) bed** so that people who intended **to attack the Prophet (SAW) could not do so.**'

It was during this period that the unbelievers of Mecca tried to trouble the Prophet (SAW) in various ways. All sorts of difficulties and tortures were inflicted upon him. Thinking Abu Talib (A.S) to be old, they threatened him with their plots, but this could neither stop his endeavors nor did it affect his steadfastness.

Thus the deeds mentioned in the above ayah are in sync with whatever Abu Talib (A.S) did for the sake of holy Prophet (SAW); hence it again establishes him as a **Brave and Selfless Momin**.

➔ In order to further understand this we will see his life in the light of Quran. Mentioning ayahs that indicate the virtues of a *Momin* we would relate them with his conduct during his lifetime. Let Quran give its own verdict on the faith of Abu Talib (A.S).

As Quran says in the following ayah:

- ***“Ae Imaandaro agar tum Khuda ke deen ki madad karoge to Woh bhi tumhari madad karega aur tumhain saabit qadam rakhega.” – (Surah-e-Mohammed, ayah 7)***

“(O you who believe! if you help (the cause of) Allah, He will help you and make firm your feet.)”

Virtue of a **believer is to readily help the cause of Allah**, and in return Allah (SWT) **promises to make him firm on his feet** and thus **keep him steadfast on the right path**.

Most of the Islamic historians unanimously write that without the help of Abu Talib (A.S) and his son Ali (A.S) it would have been difficult for Islam to get established and gain so much popularity and acceptance among the people. (*Ref: Tahzeebul Mateen, Vol 1 P 13, Ibne Abil Hadeed in his work*)

Thus Abu Talib (A.S) contributed a lot in the cause of Allah (SWT) and thus to think that he was an unbeliever is **contradicting the above ayah** and hence **a great sin in itself**.

Another ayah on conduct of a *Momin*:

- *“Ae Rasool (SAW) unn logon se kehdo ke **agar tum Khuda ko dost rakhte ho to meri pairvi karo ke Khuda (bhi) tum ko dost rakhega** aur tum ko tumhare gunaaah bakhsh de ga aur Khuda bada Bakhshnewala Maherbaan hai.”* – (Surah-e-Aale Imran, ayah 31)

*“(Say, ‘**If you love God, follow me and God will love you and forgive you your sins. God is most forgiving, and most merciful.**’)”*

A person who claims to love Allah (SWT) should follow the holy Prophet (SAW). If he does so Allah (SWT) would love him in return and would be forgiving and merciful towards him. **Thus the parameter for love and belief in Allah (SWT) is a person’s support to the holy Prophet (SAW).** When someone is a constant source of support and comfort to the holy Prophet (SAW) and remains his guardian throughout his life, would not **he be one of the greatest believers then?**

In the presence of Abu Talib (A.S) once the holy Prophet (SAW) was preaching his followers. The apostates of Quraish in order to destroy the mission of holy Prophet (SAW) approached Hazrat Abu Talib (A.S) with the demand of surrendering the holy Prophet (SAW) to them right away. Determined Abu Talib (A.S) replied “If a she-camel could surrender its young one to somebody else, then I also will hand over Mohammed (SAW) to you.” (Ref: *Minhajun Nabuwwah Muhaddise Dehalvi vol. 2 pg. 77*)

In the light of above ayah we can further establish the credentials of **Abu Talib (A.S) as a God-fearing, God-loving True Momin.**

Let us see the following ayah now:

- *“**Momineen momineen ko chhod ke kafiron ko apna sarparast na banaaye. Aur jo aisa karega to use Khuda se kuch sarokar nahin** magar (iss qism ki tadbiron se) kisi tarah unn (ke shar) se bachna ho to (khair) aur Khuda tumko Apne hi se darata hai aur Khuda hi ki taraf laut kar jana hai”* – (Surah-e-Aale Imran, 28)

*“(Let not **the believers take the non-believers for wali (guardian) rather than believers; and whoever does this, he shall have nothing of (the guardianship of) Allah, but you should guard yourselves against them, guarding carefully; and Allah makes you cautious of (retribution from) Himself; and to Allah is the eventual coming.**)”*

Allah (SWT) orders all the believers specifically in the above ayah **not to take non-believers as their guardian and if somebody does so he shall not find Allah (SWT) as his guardian.** So when

an ordinary believer cannot have a non-believer as a guardian, why did Allah (SWT) allow the **holy Prophet (SAW) to be guarded by Abu Talib (A.S) had he been a non-believer?** Would not it contradict the above ayah? This further confirms that he was a true-believer and **Allah (SWT) appointed him as the guardian of the holy Prophet (SAW).** The following ayah endorses his guardianship:

- *“Kya Uss ne tumhain yateem paakar panah na di (zaroor di)?” – (Surah-e-Zoha, ayah 6)*

“(Did He not find you an orphan and give you shelter (and care))?”

In the major *tafseer* of the holy Quran by Islamic scholars of various sects it is mentioned that the above ayah has been revealed to showcase the protection and shelter provided by Abu Talib (A.S) to the holy Prophet (SAW). **Thus his protection to holy Prophet (SAW) was Allah (SWT)’s protection.**

Ibn Hajar in his book writes 'When Abdul Muttalib (A.S) expired he wrote in his last will to Abu Talib (A.S) to raise the Holy Prophet (SAW). Hence **Abu Talib (A.S) nurtured him (SAW) with lots of love and affection, not even raising his own son Ali (A.S) in the same manner.**

And Allah (SWT) confirms that it is He who guides the fathers, forefathers and descendants of his chosen Prophets in the following ayah:

- *“Aur Humne Ibrahim ko Ishaq wa Yaqub (saa beta pota) ataa kiya **Humne sabki hidayat ki aur unn se pehle Nooh ki bhi Hum hi ne hidayat ki aur unn hi Ibrahim ki aulaad se Dawood wa Sulaiman wa Ayyub wa Yunus wa Musa wa Harun (sabki Hum hi ne hidayat ki) aur nekokaron Hum aisa hi sila ataa farmate hai aur Zakariya wa Yahya wa Isa wa Ilyas (sab ki hidayat ki) aur (ye) sab Khuda ke nek bandon se hain. Aur Ismail wa Yosha wa Yunus wa Lut ki (hidayat ki) aur sabko sare jahan per fazilat ataa ki aur (sirf unhiki nahin balke) unnke baap dadaon, aur unnki aulaad aur unnke bhaibandon main se (bahoteron ko) muntakhab kiya aur unhain sidhi raah ki hidayat ki.” – (Surah-e-An’am, ayah 84-85-86-87)***

*“(And We gave to him Ishaq and Yaqoub; **each did We guide, and Nuh did We guide before,** and of his descendants, Dawood and Sulaiman and Ayub and Yusuf and Musa and Haroun; and thus do We reward those who do good (to others). And Zakariya and Yahya and Isa and Ilyas; every one was of the good; And Ismail and Al-Yasha and Yunus and Lut; and every one We made to excel (in) the worlds: **And from among their fathers and their descendants and their brethren, and We chose them and guided them into the right way.)”***

From the above ayah it is clear that Allah (SWT) guides his Prophets to the right path and not only them He also guides their **fathers, descendants and their brethren** and keeps them steadfast on the true path.

Hazrat Abdul Muttalib (A.S) was **the grand-father of the holy Prophet (SAW)** and father of Abu Talib (A.S) – the guardian and uncle of holy Prophet (SAW).) They were guided descendants of Ibrahim (A.S) and believers of *deen-e-Ibrahim* before Islam was revealed. And since they were always on the true-path **their reciting ‘Kalema’ or not** should not be used as a pretext to claim that they were not true *Momins*.

Hazrat Abdul Muttalib (A.S) followed the religion of Ibrahim (A.S) and the proof of this is the event of the elephants which Abraha had brought to destroy the Ka’aba. The event also finds mention in Quran in the form of an ayah. Abdul Muttalib (A.S) was the caretaker of Ka’aba and hence prayed to Allah (SWT) to protect the Holy Ka’aba from Abraha. He then approached Abraha and asked him to release his livestock. Abraha got shocked and said “You are the chief of this tribe and I thought you would plead to me to spare the Ka’aba.” To this Abdul Muttalib (A.S) replied “I am the owner of these animals and have therefore come to ask for them. **As for the Ka’aba, its Master is there to take care of it.**”

Maqatil narrates that Hazrat Abu Talib (A.S) made a will to Bani Hashim on his death bed in the following manner:

“O Bani Hashim, if you all obey the holy Prophet (SAW) and if you all believe in his truthfulness you will be guided.”

In Midarajan Nabuwwah (of Mohaddisse Dehalvi) and in Rauzatus Safa vol. 2 the following sermon of Hazrat Abu Talib (A.S) addressing the people, which also served as his will, has been recorded:

'O Quraish! You are the most pious servants of Allah. **I recommend Muhammad (SAW) to you in matters of righteousness and virtue. He is the trusted one of Quraish and the truthful one of Arabia and he possesses all the virtues for which I am making a will to you.** He (SAW) has brought such good news, which has been accepted by your hearts, but your tongue has chosen to deny it on account of fear of taunts. On the contrary, I see that the weak and the defenseless have accepted his (SAW)'s invitation and have testified in his Shariat and revere him. Thus they have become the leaders and your chiefs have been humiliated. The proud ones have been humbled and the humble ones have become self-sufficient. Those who distanced themselves from him (SAW) are the unfortunate ones. I can see that the people of Arabia are attached to him (SAW) and have expanded their hearts for his love and have very dutifully and diligently prepared themselves to follow him and serve him. O Quraish! Befriend Muhammad (SAW) and supporters of his group. **I swear by Allah those people who do not tread the path shown by him (SAW) will not find guidance,** and only they will accept and adhere to his ways and

qualities who are virtuous. **If death could have been delayed and there would have been some more time left in my life, I would be helping him and as far as possible I would have repelled all dangers from his path.'**

→Life of Abu Talib (A.S) in the light of Quran has proved that **he was a devout Momin committed to protect the holy Prophet (SAW)**. Let us now see few references about his faith:

- Abu Talib (A.S) supported the holy Prophet (SAW) since he had a great faith in his message being the last and final message from Allah (SWT). The faith of Abu Talib (A.S) was expressed through his sayings which came in the form of poetry as he used to say **'I verily know that the religion of Mohammed is the best amongst all religions.'** (Ref: *Tareekh Ibn Katheer 3:42, Fath al-Baari Fi Shar-h Saheeh al-Bukhari 7:153, Al-Isaabah 4:116 and many more*)
- Imam Jafar Al-Sadiq (A.S) asked Younus Bin Nabatah: "O Younus, what do people say about Abu Talib?" Younus replied: "People say that he is in a shallow in the fire from which his brain is boiling. Imam al-Sadiq (A.S) said: **"The enemies of Allah are lying. Abu Talib (in the paradise) is with the prophets, truthful, martyrs and pious people, who are the best to be with.** (Ref: *Shaikh al-Abtah 32, al-Hujjah 17, al-Ghadeer 7:394 from Kanz al-Fawaa'ed*).
- Imam Ali (A.S) said: "By Allah, Abu Talib was a faithful Muslim (Mo'min), keeping his faith secretly, **not to cause to Bani Hashim harm from Quraish boycott.** (Ref: *Al-Hujjah 24, Al-Ghadeer 7:389, Mo'jam al-Qoboor 1:200*).
- Imam Ali (A.S) also said: "By Him who sent Muhammad as a prophet, if **my father's intercession is given to forgive** all the sinners on earth, **Allah will forgive all of them.** (Ref: *Tathkirat al-Khawaas 11*).
- The reason of the allegation against Abu Talib is clarified by the Prophet (SAW) when he told Imam Ali: "O Ali, **you have an example** from my brother **Isa (A.S); as the Jews hated him, they accused his mother.**" (Ref: *Kanz al-Ummal by al-Muttaqi al-Hindi*)
- It is narrated by Hazrat Abu Bakr that Abu Talib (A.S) did not die but after he said: **"I bear witness that there is no God but Allah, and Mohammad is His messenger."** (Ref: *Sharh al-Nahj by Ibn Abil Hadeed 3:312, Shaikh al-Abtah 71, Al-Bidayah wal-Nihayah 3:123, Al-Isaabah 4:116, Dala'il al-Nobowwah by al-Bayhaqi 1:120, Kash al-Ghummah by Al-Sha'rani, 2:144*).

After seeing the above references on his faith, let us end the article with few words of Abu Talib (A.S) recorded by prominent scholars which showcase his love for our beloved Prophet (SAW).

Mohammed b Ishaq (author of *Seeratun Nabuwwat*) has recorded more than 80 couplets long poetry of Hazrat Abu Talib (A.S) in praise of holy Prophet (SAW). This was composed when Mecca was under a severe famine. People approached Abu Talib (A.S) as he was *Shaikh al Bat'ha* and their leader. Abu Talib (A.S) requested the holy Prophet (SAW) to pray for rains and when it rained he praised the holy Prophet (SAW) in the following words:

“O Muhammad! Looking at your luminous face, raindrops fall. Your merciful existence is a refuge for the helpless orphan and a protection for the modesty and chastity of widows.”

→ Abu Talib (A.S) was amongst **the greatest of Momins**. He was chosen by Allah (SWT) to protect the holy Prophet (SAW), which is a great honour in itself. He was the main support to the holy Prophet (SAW) and **laid the foundation of ‘Kalema’** during the formative years of Islam. And Allah (SWT) has accepted his services and **rewarded him immensely by making the pious progeny of the holy Prophet (SAW)**; piety of which is testified by Quran (Surah-e-Ahzab, ayah 33), as the **Progeny of Abu Talib (A.S)**.