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## **The Ultimate Desire of Man: Vision of Allah**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

All praise is reserved for Allah and His choicest blessings upon Mohammad Rasool Allah (pbuh) and Mohammad Mahdi Ma'ud (pbuh) and their companions (RZ) and their progeny.

In Quran, Allah says “And when thy Lord said unto the angels: Lo! I am about to place a viceroy in the earth, they said: Wilt thou place therein one who will do harm therein and will shed blood, while we, we hymn Thy praise and sanctify Thee? He said: Surely I know that which ye know not (The Cow: 30).” In this verse Allah is informing His angels that He is creating His viceroy for the earth even though there were enough angels who praise His name and pray Him all the time. Therefore, the point to understand here is Allah does not need another creation to pray Him but there is another purpose of this creation. Then the question arises, what was the purpose of creating His viceroy for the earth? Allah, Himself clarifies in a self-description (Hadith) “I was a hidden treasure, I loved to be known, and I created the world.” Thus the desire to be known and to be seen is the ultimate desire of Allah, thus the creation of Aalam-al-Amr and Aalam-al-Khalaq. Rumi describes this in a couplet as:

*“David said: O Lord, since thou hast no need of us  
Say, then what wisdom was there in creating the two worlds?  
Allah said to him: O temporal man, I was a hidden treasure,  
I sought that the treasure of loving kindness and bounty should be revealed,  
I displayed a mirror – its face the heart, its back the world-  
Its back is better than its face – if face is unknown to thee” (selected poems from Diwan-e-Shams-e-Tabriz, by Jalaluddin Rumi. Edited and translated by R.A. Nicholson, Bethesda, MD, 1999; poem 4).*

Allah describes in Quran “It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces to the East and the West; but righteous is he who believeth in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the Scripture and the prophets; and giveth wealth, for love of Him, to kinsfolk and to orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and to those who ask, and to set slaves free; and **observeth proper worship** and payeth the poor-due. And those who keep their treaty when they make one, and the patient in tribulation and adversity and time of stress. Such are they who are sincere. Such are the God-fearing (The Cow: 177).” In this verse Allah is calling you to “observe proper worship”. The question here arises what is the “proper worship”? Will five times prayers a day constitute the proper worship? Based on the above Quranic verse it does not appear that five times prayers constitute the proper worship as Allah clearly says “It is not righteousness that you turn your faces to East and West”. In another place Allah says five times prayers keeps you away from immorality “Recite that which hath been inspired in thee of the Scripture, and establish worship. Lo! worship preserveth from lewdness and iniquity, but verily remembrance of Allah is more important. And Allah knoweth what ye do (Al-Ankabut (The Spider): 45).” In fact Allah’s message to mankind through His prophets is “the vision of divine Allah”. Allah directs Mohammad Rasool Allah (pbuh) to call people to vision of Allah through this verse “Say: This is my Way: I call on Allah with sure knowledge (towards vision of Allah). I and whosoever

followeth me - Glory be to Allah! - and I am not of the idolaters (Yusuf: 108)". Here in this verse the "term whosoever followeth me (Mohammad <sup>pbuh</sup>)" refers to Hazrath Imam Syed Mohammad Jaunpuri, the Promised Mahdi" <sup>(pbuh)</sup> as has been stated by Mahdi Ma'ud <sup>(pbuh)</sup> and his companions. Thus, their message was nothing but to call humans towards "vision of Allah". It has been clearly defined in the Quran that the reason for human creation is "Allah wanted to reveal Himself" and therefore "vision of Allah" should be our ultimate desire. Allah says "Lo! those who believe (in that which is revealed unto thee, Muhammad), and those who are Jews, and Christians, and Sabaeans whoever believeth in Allah and the Last Day and doeth right surely their reward is with their Lord, and there shall no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve." (Al-Baqara: 62). Through this verse Allah not only is directing the Muslims but also the whole humanity to be "righteous" meaning Allah is sending a message through His last messenger <sup>(pbuh)</sup> towards "vision of Allah". Thus five times prayers for Muslims, going to the Church for Christians, or going to the Temple for Jews characterizes their faith but not the absolute prayers and therefore by just doing these acts one does not fulfill the desire of Allah.

The above discussion leads to a question "does teachings of vision of Allah are an innovation in the religion of Allah or is just restricted to Muslims in general or Mahdavia in particular?" The view of religious scholars and companions of Rasool Allah <sup>(pbuh)</sup> and Mahdi Ma'ud <sup>(pbuh)</sup> is the desire for "vision of Allah" is as old as the human race. Allah reveals in Quran regarding the observations of Ibrahim <sup>(pbuh)</sup> "And thus We gave Abraham [his first] insight into [God's] mighty dominion over the heavens and the earth - and [this] to the end that he might become one of those who are inwardly sure. Then, when the night overshadowed him with its darkness, he beheld a star; [and] he exclaimed, "This is my Sustainer!" -but when it went down, he said, "I love not the things that go down." Then, when he beheld the moon rising, he said, "This is my Sustainer!"-but when it went down, he said, "Indeed, if my Sustainer guide me not. I will most certainly become one of the people who go astray!" Then, when he beheld the sun rising, he said, "This is my Sustainer! This one is the greatest [of all]!" - but when it [too] went down, he exclaimed: "O my people! Behold, far be it from me to ascribe divinity, as you do, to aught beside God! Behold, unto Him who brought into being the heavens and the earth have I turned my face, having turned away from all that is false; and I am not of those who ascribe divinity to aught beside Him. (Al-Anam: 75-78)" and finally Ibrahim <sup>(pbuh)</sup> says as reported in Quran "For, [as thou hast been shown in thy dream,] even thus will thy Sustainer elect thee, and will impart unto thee some understanding of the inner meaning of happenings, and will bestow the full measure of His blessings upon thee and upon the House of Jacob -even as, aforetime, He bestowed it in full measure upon thy forefathers Abraham and Isaac. Verily, thy Sustainer is all-knowing, wise (Yusuf: 6)." Herein we have an example of "vision of Allah" being imparted to Ibrahim <sup>(pbuh)</sup> in his dream. Similarly, if "vision of Allah was impossible" in this world then why would a messenger of Allah of the ranks of Moosa <sup>(pbuh)</sup> asks Allah for His vision? Allah says in Quran "And when Moses came [to Mount Sinai] at the time set by Us, and his Sustainer spoke unto him, he said: "O my Sustainer! Show [Thyself] unto me, so that I might behold Thee!" Said [God]: "Never canst thou see Me. However, behold this mountain: if it remains firm in its place, then - only then - wilt thou see Me. And as soon as his Sustainer revealed His glory to the mountain, He caused it to crumble to dust; and Moses fell down in a swoon. And when he came to himself, he said: "Limitless art Thou in Thy glory! Unto Thee do I turn in repentance; and I shall [always] be the first to believe in Thee! (Al-Araaf: 143)." Most theologians are of the view that Moosa <sup>(pbuh)</sup> did not fell down unconscious because the mountain was crushed to death but

because he had “vision of Allah” and upon seeing Him, Moosa (pbuh) says he is the first among the believers (Exegesis of Quran by Imam Zahid). Allah does not restrict “vision” to Ibrahim and Moosa but says “And verily We gave unto Moses the Scripture and We caused a train of messengers to follow after him, and We gave unto Jesus, son of Mary, clear proofs (of Allah's sovereignty), and We supported him with the Holy spirit. Is it ever so, that, when there cometh unto you a messenger (from Allah) with that which ye yourselves desire not, ye grow arrogant and some ye disbelieve and some ye slay? (Al-Baqara: 86)”. And lastly there is no doubt that Allah revealed Himself to Rasool Allah (pbuh) during “the Miraj” as has been described in Quran “And He revealed unto His slave that which He revealed. The heart lied not (in seeing) what it saw. Will ye then dispute with him concerning what he seeth? And verily he saw Him yet another time. By the lote-tree of the utmost boundary, nigh unto which is the Garden of Abode (Al-Najm: 10-15).” Thus there is no denying that the basic purpose of human creation was “vision of Allah”. Allah says about those who does not believe in “vision of Allah” in this world “They indeed are losers who deny their meeting with Allah (vision of Allah) until, when the Hour cometh on them suddenly, they cry: Alas for us, that we neglected it! They bear upon their backs their burdens. Ah, evil is that which they bear! (Al-Anam: 31)

The next question arises, “Is the vision of Allah restricted to the messengers of Allah or is there any example among the companions of Rasool Allah (pbuh)?” The answer is very clear to the keen readers of Islamic history. Umar (RZ) says, “I have not seen anything similar to the vision of Allah”. Hazrath Ali (RZ) similarly says, “I have seen Allah with my own eyes”. It has been narrated in Zahedi regarding Hazrath Abdullah son of Umar (RZ). Once he (Abdullah RZ) was performing circumambulation of Ka’aba and Usman (RZ) was also circumambulating at the same time. Abdullah (RZ) stopped at one place and while passing him, Usman (RZ) saluted Abdullah (RZ) but he did not replied. Usman (RZ) complained to Abdullah (RZ)’s father, Umar (RZ). Umar (RZ) admonished his son but Hazrath Abdullah responded “Please forgive me Oh my father, at that time I was seeing Allah and Allah was seeing me, I did not see Usman.” In the later times, Mansoor Al-Hallaj expressed “vision of Allah” by declaring “an-al-haq” for which he was martyred. Thus, the concept of “vision of Allah” cannot be considered as an innovation of Mahdavi community or the followers of the Promised Mahdi.

From the above discussion, one would argue that this concept of “vision of the divine Allah” may be restricted to Islam in general and Mahdavia in particular. However, reading of Old testament tells you otherwise and that this concept is universal to all religions. For example “He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear (Isaiah: 11-3)”; “I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind (Isaiah42: 6-7)”; “For who has stood in the council of the Lord so as to see Him and to hear His word? (Jeremiah 23:18)”; “Those who walk righteously and speak uprightly, who despise the gain of oppression, who wave away a bribe instead of accepting it, who stop their ears from hearing of bloodshed and shut their eyes from looking on evil, they will live on the heights; their refuge will be the fortresses of rocks; their food will be supplied, their water assured. Your eyes will see the king in His beauty; they will behold a land that stretches far away (Isaiah 33: 15-26)”; “While he was speaking these words to me, I turned my face towards the ground and was speechless. Then one in human form touched my lips, and I opened my mouth to speak, and said to the one who stood before me, ‘My lord, because of the vision such pains have come upon me that I retain no

strength. How can my lord's servant talk with my lord? For I am shaking, no strength remains in me, and no breath is left in me (Daniel 10: 15-17)"; and "As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness; when I awake I shall be satisfied, beholding your likeness (Psalm 17: 15)."

From the above discussion it is clear that the main purpose of creation of human beings was Allah wanted to reveal Himself and thus our main desire should be the desire for "vision of Allah" and nothing else.