

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent The Merciful

Journey of Victory vs. Journey of Defeat

Part 2

In the first article of this series, we have already established the understanding that victory and defeat are purely internal affairs. When a person is victorious inside, this victory is manifested outside- in multiple forms, and the same goes for defeat. The previous article explained the problems with physical, spiritual, and emotional relaxation; how this relaxation from our *deen* lets us drop our guard and we commit sins which cause our *Iman* to go down, thus we start the journey of defeat.

Elements of Victory and Elements of Defeat

Allah SWT sent us to this earth with a complete constitution. He SWT does not want us to spend our precious time on mundane things; rather He wants us to be busy with the larger affairs of this world and the hereafter. He SWT has told us the recipe of success in life. Qur'an is full of stories with direct messages for us on how to achieve this success. In this article, by the will of Allah, we will try to lay out the elements of victory and defeat from Qur'an.

Elements of Victory:

1. *Iman* in Allah
2. *Iman* in the *Qadr* of Allah
3. *Iman* in the promises of Allah

Any minus in the *Iman* of any of these will result in defeat from Allah. Vice versa, complete *Iman* in all the above mentioned aspects will result in absolute victory from Allah SWT. We will discuss the nature of this victory in detail later on *InshaAllah*. This point forces us to analyze our current situation as Muslims, from private to public sectors; are we in a state of victory or defeat? Do we really believe in Allah SWT, His power, His ordainment, His

promises or are these just meaningless words with no substance? Do our actions contradict our professed convictions or have we become hypocrites?

Elements of Defeat:

1. Following the desire, rather than the teachings of Allah SWT.
2. Lack of obedience
3. Lack of consultation

When one looks at these elements, they seem quite harmless. But an in-depth analysis of these traits make their dreadful effects quite clear; we will *inshaAllah* clarify these effects for you.

Nafs, desire, is usually opposite of surrender. Our desires do not necessarily conform to the message of Islam. If one follows his/her desires rather than the advice of Allah and His prophet, then that person has been defeated because he/she chose himself above Allah SWT. The second element of defeat is lack of obedience which is a key part of Islam; obedience to Allah, His prophet, and those pious people who we need as spiritual guides. If a person doesn't have the habit of obedience he becomes arrogant, stubborn, and emotional, and acts according to himself instead of Allah and the teachings of Quran. It means that the *nafs* is high, which is the ultimate defeat for a person. Majority of the family problems, the amount of complaints husbands and wives bring against each other, and the reasons spouses are fighting, is all due to high *nafs* and internal defeat.

Nafs is opposite of Iman and obedience is a way to conquer our *nafs*; lack of obedience is the reason *ummah* has lost unity today. We can't handle anyone above us; let it be a leader, teacher, or a sincere advisor.

We will use the story of Ashab-al-Ukhduod, people of the trench in order to explain our topic further. It is the story of a community that believed in Allah SWT in defiance of the tyrant king who forbade them to do so. They were unknown people, during unknown time and place but they are mentioned in

the Qur'an¹. It is mentioned in Surah Al-Burooj, the Stars; it is a small *surah* consisting of 22 verses which was revealed in Makkah. Allah SWT did not name the chapter after *Ashab-al-Ukhdood*, rather it is called 'the stars'—one of the most elevated and phenomenal creation of Allah. The *surah* starts with an oath which means that the news following the oath is great. But the *surah* does not talk about great people; rather it talks about a young, unknown boy who believed in Allah SWT and caused his entire town to believe in Allah as well. As a result, they were all killed by the tyrant king. Instead of sharing the story with us, Allah SWT told us the ending: Believers are going to jannah, disbelievers are going to hellfire. What is the message that Allah SWT wants us to get? Is the boy victorious or defeated? He died so young; he didn't even have time to be a man. He certainly is victorious because he had all the elements of victory: absolute belief in Allah, His Qadr, and His promises; and all his efforts were focused in spreading the message of Allah. From *dunya* perspective, the boy and his community were all losers, since they died a brutal death; but in reality they had the ultimate victory which is to die with absolute belief in Allah SWT.

Another message we get from the story is the mercy of Allah SWT. Allah warned the torturers of the believers of a severe punishment but at the same time, He gave them a chance to repent. Allah SWT says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَتَنُوا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَتُوبُوا فَلَهُمْ عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ
وَلَهُمْ عَذَابُ الْحَرِيقِ ﴿١٠﴾

Those who persecute (or draw into temptation) the Believers, men and women, and do not **turn in repentance**, will have the Penalty of Hell: They will have the Penalty of the Burning Fire. 85:10

This means Allah gave disbelievers a chance. Allah SWT, from His unlimited knowledge knew that these people will not believe, than what is He trying to

¹ The significance of not having names, time, and place mentioned both in the Quran and Sunnah is to help us remain focused on the character and the message, rather than drift to technicalities. Reference: Sahih Al-Bukhari:

tell me? The message is clear: Don't be arrogant over people who are weaker than you. A sign of the victorious person is that he hates the sins and actions of people, but never hates the person. When a person starts hating people and starts looking down at them, he develops arrogance and ego. Victory brings quality in a person and the more the quality, the more humble a person becomes; basically, the sign of internal victory in a person is humbleness and humility.

If we analyze the elements of victory and those who have attained this victory, we come to a question: what is the difference between us and them? The difference is simpler than we think; they were willing to sacrifice everything for the pleasure of Allah whereas we are willing to sacrifice the pleasure of Allah for our worldly status. Why can't we take loss in material wealth and status? We worship and have become enslaved to this material. Any time we, as humans, suffer any material failure, we get shaken and develop psychological disorders, depression and suicidal tendencies. At the same time, any material gain causes us to become greedy, boastful, and stingy. These are all signs of defeat because we are following our *nafs*, are not obeying Allah SWT, and have forgotten the promises of Allah.

Peace, security, and happiness are not attained through things we own; rather it is a gift from the owner of the souls. He created us to worship Him; it is through this worship and closeness to Him, that we will attain tranquility and felicity. If this were not true, then why do rich and beautiful people commit suicide? It is the internal defeat of human beings that fail them in life to the point they despair and take away their own souls. People despair because they don't think they can attain their wishes; but a believer in the ordainment or *Qadr* of Allah knows that no one can take what is written for him.

Therefore, we clearly see that the victory and defeat are purely spiritual affairs. The more we strive to achieve the elements of victory inside, the more we will be victorious outside-both as individuals and as nations. But if we continue to have elements of defeat in us, we will always be hasty, egotistical, and insincere in our goals which will bring nothing except defeat to us.

In conclusion, eternal happiness or victory is attained through belief in Allah, development of character, and spreading the message of the Creator. Whereas, disbelief, following of *nafs*, accumulation of wealth, and focusing on worldly status rather than developing the character will bring nothing except diseases of the heart such as ignorance, arrogance, stinginess, and greed—which lead us on to the journey of eternal sadness and defeat in this life and the hereafter.

Important Message:

Since we will be using stories from the Qur'an, it is imperative that we do a quick introduction to the stories of the Qur'an. Qur'an has three types of stories:

1. Stories of messenger and prophets:

They are the role models of humanity and were chosen and given the ultimate victory by Allah SWT. Their victory was ultimate faith in Allah, wisdom and spreading of the message.

2. Stories of the nations:

Those nations who obey messengers and accept the message are elevated by Allah by the promises of paradise, even if they appear to be losers materialistically. The nations that deny the message get the curse of Allah, His punishment, or complete annihilation; and they are promised severe torture in hellfire, even if they have great worldly status.

3. Stories of creature such as the young man, other men or women, ant, spider, hoopoe, cow, elephant, etc.

These stories are mentioned to give us real examples of simple creatures that chose the road of belief and carried the message; and we can see in all the stories that Allah SWT elevated them as a character in this life, and with *jannah* in the afterlife.

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