

DREAM: A SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE

M. AZRAM

DOMAS, College of Science, Sultan Qaboos University Muscat, OMAN
azram50@hotmail.com

ABSTRACT: Human beings are blessed as the Khalifa of Allah (swt) in this world. To perform, to fulfil and take care of his responsibilities, Allah (swt) has blessed him with the potentials of creative, observational & conceptual knowledge. To facilitate mankind, Allah (swt) has blessed us the faculties such as, eyes, ears, head & heart. Not only this, Allah (swt) has also blessed mankind with revelational knowledge which offers him the requisite wisdom & values. Revelational knowledge is the supreme of all other kinds of knowledge. Knowledge is the source for the transformation of life and life has different forms, so is the case with knowledge. Consequently, a dream is also a source of knowledge. In this paper, we will discuss the difference between dream and vision, different types of dreams, epistemology of dream, aspect of dream in Qur'an and most important is the pre-requisite for good and true dreams.

INTRODUCTION

Inner goodness and inner evil are always in conflict in all human beings. The same is also going on in the surrounding society. Whichever element (goodness or evil) excels and dominates, one is attracted to the same in the society. Consequently, one becomes either a party to Allah (swt) (الله حزب) or a party to Satan (الشيطان حزب). The first group, i.e. messengers of Allah, faithful, righteous, martyrs, saints, mystics, devoted people, blessed people etc., calls human beings to the guidance of Allah according to His Command and Will. They guide for self-purification and *Taqwa*, i.e. mysticism. In fact, this group calls human beings to be the obedient servants of Allah (swt), Who is the real Creator and Master.

They call to establish equity and justice in the society; to learn, to act and perform according to His Command, Will and Guidance; to respect the rights of other human beings. Scholars have divided the Islamic rights, duties, and responsibilities into two categories, i.e., pure worship only for Allah (swt) (الله حقوق) and the rights of human beings (حقوق العباد). This can only be achieved with exemplary character and knowledge. In contrast, unfortunately, the present situation of the Muslim Ummah is just the reverse. One can hardly find this kind of moral decline or degradation in any other society. The reality is that moral decadence is the root cause for this. On the other hand, if inner evil dominates, mankind joins the party of Satan (الشيطان حزب) and consequently, degrade to an even worse state than brutes, resulting in a real loss, resolve on mischief, worship lust rather than Allah (swt), which is self-destruction. They misguidedly assume their performance as extraordinary, while the fact is, that their deed's foundation is nothing but a spider's web. Nothing can be achieved while in darkness.

Knowledge and guidance is pre-requisite to control, eliminate or dominate inner evil. Through Qur'an and Hadith, Islam provides us a very unique and comprehensive theory of knowledge. It tells us that not only life but death is also a source of knowledge. In fact, Islam admits various levels of life and consciousness; and corresponding to these levels it also acknowledges various forms of knowledge, some of which are verifiable, effable and communicable while others are ineffable, non-communicable and confined exclusively to the individual percipient [5]. The Qur'an confirmed that mankind has been blessed with various faculties of knowledge, such as eyes, ears, head and heart as a decisive tool. These are the tools which enable us to acquire creative,

observational or conceptual knowledge. The Qur'an frequently reminded us to use these blessed tools in understanding the 'Signs' of Allah (swt), which are the main sources of wisdom. These blessed tools will enable us to acquire knowledge and understand the sources. This understanding will be incomplete and irrelevant unless we understand it with reference to Allah (swt), otherwise it may provide us power but the true values will be hidden from us. Consequently, knowledge from Islamic perspective cannot be dispense with metaphysical dimensions. Otherwise we may fall in serious difficulties.

In addition to these blessed tools for creative, observational and conceptual knowledge, Islam also emphasises the need and necessity of Revelation as another source of guidance to mankind, otherwise, the Qur'an insists, man may remain groping in darkness but will never find the right way to success (*Falah*) here or in the hereafter. In materialistic and naturalistic theories of knowledge, the source of knowledge ends with physical death but Islamic theory of knowledge indicates that death is also a source of knowledge. It is interesting to note that in Islam, even dreams are considered as a source of knowledge, but unfortunately, our scholars and researchers have completely ignored this source of knowledge and guidance, which was not the case in early days of Islam.

In brief, Islam teaches us that life and knowledge go hand in hand and knowledge is an essential tool to reform and transform our life to a higher level. For instance, the Qur'an enquires "Is one who knows equal to one who does not know (or is ignorant)" (Q39:9); "Is the blind man equal to seer or is the darkness equal to light" (Q13:16). The objective of the Qur'anic reference to eschatology is to teach and cultivate in us *taqwa* and consequently, enabling us to stay away from Satan and self-destruction. Our faith in the Prophets and their teachings also becomes central to the Islamic way of life and its orientation towards knowledge. 'Knowledge' falls short of expressing all the aspects of *'ilm* [1]. Knowledge in the Western world means information about something, divine or corporeal, while *'ilm* is an all-embracing term covering theory, action and education [2]. Naquib al Attas[6] had once made a very interesting observation. He noted that, "All wisdom is knowledge but all knowledge is not wisdom." Divine revelation explicates to us two very important concepts, '*fikr*' (reflection) and *dhikr* (contemplation/remembering). *Fikr* is the quest for knowledge through the *ayat* (signs) of Allah (SWT) while

dhikr is a recollection of previously given knowledge. It is *fikr* that is rational and attempts to 'reach' Allah, i.e. the final stages of *Ilm al Yaqin* and *Ainal Yaqin*. However, Dhikr, does not and cannot 'reach' God through rational methods [4].

Therefore, when we *do* dhikr, instead of really remembering Allah (swt), we actually praise Him! In other words, we are not really recollecting the previous knowledge. From an Islamic point of view, praying to Allah (swt) and serving mankind are the two main goals of knowledge. Allah (swt) has blessed mankind with the following types of knowledge [3];

(a) CREATIVE, OBSERVATIONAL, CONCEPTIONAL OR ACQUISITIONAL KNOWLEDGE.

This type of knowledge is pre requisite for mankind's struggle and initiative. The Qur'an confirmed that mankind has been blessed with various faculties of knowledge, such as eyes, ears, head and heart as a decisive tool. These are the tools which enable us to acquire creative, observational or conceptual knowledge. These faculties enable and lead us to the following types of knowledge:

i. 'Ilm al-Yaqin: Sam' (the ears). It is the knowledge gained at the authority or testimony of others. With reference to the Qur'an, scholars suggest that these *Sam* (ears), *Basar* (eyes), and *Fu'ad* (heart) should not be considered narrowly but instead, in a very broad sense and comprehensive connotation. Collective heritage of the past is included in *Sam'* or *'Ilm al-Yaqin*.

ii. 'Ayn al-Yaqin: basar (or the eyes). This is the knowledge obtained through observation, experience or experimentation, consequently empirical or scientific discoveries.

iii. Haqq al-Yaqin: Fu 'ad (or the heart).

This faculty provides a cognitive role to establish natural laws. It also apprehends the moral laws. We may call it an intuitive and/or an apprehensive faculty. It's both cognitive and regulative in nature. This is the faculty through which mankind can go beyond the testimony of senses and reasons and establish natural and moral laws. It may be noted that this faculty cannot work in isolation but is rather dependent upon the data provided by the senses and reasons. According to the Qur'an, man was born ignorant out of his mother's womb. But then, Allah (swt) out of His sheer mercy, blessed him with eyes, ears, head and heart in order that he may see, observe and understand the phenomenal world around him, acquire knowledge and power there from, and recruit them to his own good as well as the good of mankind [5]. The following verses of the Qur'an support our views:

"And it is God who brought you forth, knowing nothing from your mother's womb, and He blessed you with hearing, and sight, and hearts, that haply so you will be thankful" (Q16:78): "It is He who created for you ears, and eyes, and hearts: little thanks you show" (Q23:78). "Say: It is He Who created you, and blessed you with hearing and sight and hearts; little thanks you show" (Q32:9). Then He shaped him, and breathed His spirit in him. And He appointed for you hearing and sight, and hearts; little thanks you show" (Q67:23).

It's obvious that Allah (swt) through His Holy Book the Qur'an asked us that by virtue of these faculties, we should

have rational and reasoned approach toward life and faith. He has also asked us: "And pursue not that thou hast no knowledge of; the hearing, the sight, the heart— all of these shall be questioned of: (Q17:36).

(b) REVELATIONAL KNOWLEDGE (AL-WAHY)

It may be observed that if we are totally dependent on the faculties that is, eyes, ears, head and heart, we might be lost and find oneself in darkness. Consequently, we need guidance. As per Islamic teaching, without Revelation and Guidance of Allah (swt) through His Blessed Prophets, all our faculties that is, eyes, ears, head and heart could have failed. Hence, we conclude that Revelation is the primary & principle source of knowledge through which mankind can properly utilise all faculties granted to him by Allah (swt). Revelational knowledge is granted by Allah (swt) to His blessed Prophets for the Guidance of mankind. "And verily We had established them in that We have not established you, and we blessed them with hearing, and sight, and the hearts, and yet their hearing, and their sight and their hearts availed them nothing since they denied the revelations of Allah, and they were encompassed by that they mocked at" (Q46:26). "We send Messengers as a Mercy from your Lord" (Q44:5-6). While addressing the holy Prophet, the Qur'an says: "You never did expect that the Book would be given to you— it is only a Mercy from your Lord" (Q28:86). "You did not know before this what the Book is nor Faith — We have made it a light whereby we guide whomsoever we will" (Q42:52). The Qur'an frequently reminds the holy Prophet that His revelation is sheerly the "mercy of thy Lord. Surely His favour to thee (O' Muhammad) is great" (Q17:87).

(c) DREAMS/VISION

Many of us are confused on the concept of dream and vision. I feel obliged to explain it here; Vision is a blessing from Allah (swt) to humankind, wherein, he can observe either in sleep or while awake. True dream is also a blessed gift to humanity which cannot be observed while awake. It is worth mentioning that Prophet (pbuh) strongly prohibited for addition or subtraction in a dream. Prophet (pbuh) said, "Indeed the worst of the lies is that of a person who falsely claims to have dream" (Sahih Al- Bukhari).

The *Sufi* epistemology recognizes Dreams as a subject which is located in knowledge, *internally* received, and is highly important for the believer. The Prophet (pbuh) said: "When the time (of the end of the world) draws close, and a dream of a believer will hardly fail to come true, and a dream of a believer is one of the forty-six parts of prophethood." (Sahih Al-Bukhari). It may be pointed out that the Qur'an does not rule out the possibility of the Freudian or Satanic dreams and the negative whisperings or misgivings of visible (man) or the invisible (Jinn) evil mongers [4]. As has been mentioned before that the Qur'an also acknowledges dreams as an important source of knowledge. It may be emphasized that not only the dreams of the Prophets, but even the dreams of the ordinary mortals—virtual non-believers—are also acknowledged by the Qur'an as a vital source of knowledge [4]. Dreams of Prophet (pbuh) and his companions, Dreams of Yusuf (ra), Dreams of King of Egypt, Dreams of King Butler and Baker, Dreams of Ibrahim (ra), Dreams about Azan, Dreams of Musa (ra) etc. are some of the references:

“It is worth noting that continuous good and true dreams and visions deliver confirmation of *internal goodness*”.

i. TYPES OF DREAMS

Scholars have classified dreams in three categories;

a) TRUE DREAMS (RU'YAA)

These types of dreams are a blessing from *Allah* (swt). For example, seeing the Prophet(pbuh) in a true dream. Prophet (pbuh) said “true dreams are from Allah (swt) and bad dreams are from Satan (Sahih Al-Bukhari). Prophet (pbuh) also said. “If any one of you has dream that he likes then it is from Allah (swt). He should thank Allah (swt) for it and narrate to others (Sahih Al-Bukhari) This is our faith that not believing in true dreams is like not believing in Allah (swt) and the Day of Judgement. The Prophet (pbuh) said that the best dreams are the ones wherein you see your Lord, or your Prophet, or your Muslim parents.”

b) EVIL DREAMS OR NIGHTMARES (HULUM)

These types of dreams come from Satan (Iblis) wherein, he misguides us. It can be dangerous and harmful if we follow these blindly. Realizing this danger, The Prophet (pbuh) guided us;

- “When any of you has an evil dream, he should spit three times to his left, seek refuge with Allah (swt) from Satan thrice and change the side which he was lying (Sahih Al-Bukhari).
- Stand up and offer prayer (Sahih Muslim).
- Prophet (pbuh) said, ---“if he has a dream which he dislikes, then it is from Satan. He should seek refuge with Allah (swt) from its evil, and he should not state to anybody, then it will not harm him” (Sahih Al-Bukhari).

c) EMOTIONAL DREAMS.

These types of dreams are mostly emanated from our own emotions and *Nafs*, i.e., self. The strong possibility is one’s own thoughts. These may result due to rambling of thought processes but these are not from Allah (swt) or Satan. Some scholars believe these have no significance and must be ignored, but from others, these are of great importance in the sense that these portray a very valuable yet private picture of the state of health of our own inner being. These dreams are in fact windows to the heart, and this was recognized by the Swiss Psychologist, Carl Jung, who made the analysis of dreams an important means of discovering the causes of mental illnesses *etc.* It was called psycho-analysis. Unfulfilled desires can lead to mental distress and can result in inner disequilibrium [4]. A dream often functions as nature’s means of seeking to restore mental peace and equilibrium. A dream can reveal the cause of the distress. Allah (swt) thus, created dreams as a medium through which the heart can not only see itself, but also heal itself [4]. It is agreed upon that these types of dreams are the source for moral and spiritual development.

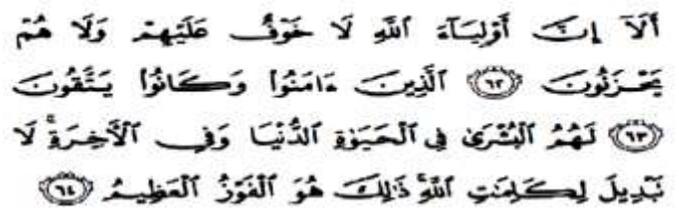
NOTE: It is an essential duty and responsibility of each mature believer to acquires minimum knowledge enabling him to classify dreams and recognize the satanic one. Protective actions as per guidance from Prophet (pbuh) must be taken immediately. Young children should be encouraged to discuss their dreams with elders.

ii. THE METAPHYSICS OF A TRUE DREAM OR VISION.

The true dream is a religious experience. William James has done an extreme useful service to religious thought in producing his classical work: ‘Varieties of Religious Experience’, in which the true dream has a place of pride [4]. What possible scientific method could there be for examining the phenomenon of a true dream? Knowledge must be de-secularized if religious Truth is to be allowed to play the role which only Truth can play in the development of thought and the growth of knowledge [4]. True dreams and visions come from Allah (swt) and, more often than not, He sends them as gifts or rewards to those whose hearts qualify for Divine gifts. Christians, Muslims and Jews who follow religions which have come from *Ibrahim (ra)* would be mistaken if they were to believe that they are the only ones whose hearts can qualify for such gifts. A pagan, who worships idols made of wood and stone, may yet have a heart which can qualify for good and true dreams and visions.

iii. DREAMS AND VISIONS IN QUR’N

Anas bin Malik narrated: Allah’s Apostle said, “A good dream of a righteous person (which comes true) is one of forty-six parts of prophethood.” (Sahih Al-Bukhari). A Divine promise of knowledge that would come directly from Allah (swt). The *Qur’an* has directed our attention to the subject of dreams and visions by making mention of no less than seven, and, perhaps, as many as nine dreams/visions [4]!



“Now surely the servants of Allah have nothing to fear or regret. Those that have faith and keep from evil shall receive *Bushra* (good news or glad tidings) both in this world and in the next: the words of Allah do not change. That is the supreme triumph.”

(Qur’an, Yûnus, 10:62-64)

(d) PRE-REQUISITE FOR TRUE DREAMS.

True dreams are more likely to happen to those who are truthful in their life. Prophet (pbuh) said, “Those of you with the truest dreams will be those who are most truthful in speeches” (Sahih Muslim).

If mankind wishes to be blessed by Allah (swt) with true dreams than he:

- Must believe that Allah (swt) is absolute, one and the only creator.
- Must believe in unity of His creation i.e. scientific discoveries are valid only if in line with Qur’an.
- Must know and live with the laws of Allah (swt).
- Must summon the faith to have *Tawakkul*
- Must believe that *Tazkiyah* is a path to success.
- Must dominate evil thinking and learn to forgive.
- Must Fast and pray at night.
- Must love all those whom Allah (swt) loves.
- Must be charitable etc.

- Must eat in moderate, sleep less, talk less and dislike undesirable noise
- Must spend their lives in pursuit of knowledge and with life-long devotion to the mission of Truth and Justice.

CONCLUSION

Allah (swt) has blessed mankind with the faculties of creative knowledge. He Guided mankind by Revelation through His Prophets. Consequently Allah (swt) is the only and ultimate source of creative and revelational knowledge. He guided us through His Holy Book the Qur'an that success is only with combination of these sources. According to the Qur'an, revelational knowledge is the main supervisor for all kind of creative knowledge. Attitude of Taqwa and a sense of responsibility results in combination of creative and revelational knowledge. The non-believers think their creative faculties alone are sufficient without revelation.

Anas bin Malik narrated: Allah's Apostle said, "A good dream of a righteous person (which comes true) is one of forty-six parts of prophet hood." (Sahih Al-Bukhari). It is an essential duty and responsibility of each and every mature believer to acquire minimum knowledge enabling him the classification of dreams and to recognize the satanic ones. Very little work has been done. There are hardly any institutions wherein intensive study and research has been carried out in the light of Qur'an and Sunnah. We are ignorant to this source of true knowledge. Our scholars and researchers should feel their responsibilities to guide us to enhance our capabilities to gain true knowledge through dreams.

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