



# Dealing with Doubt and Skepticism

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To build foundations of faith we must take into account the doubts that arise in our minds. This presentation will explore what Islam says about perplexity and doubt, and discuss how we can channel the doubts into certainty

## Certitude a quality of a Mutaqqi

○ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ \* أَلَمْ \* ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى  
لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ \* الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ  
يُنْفِقُونَ \* وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ  
هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ \* أُولَئِكَ عَلَى هُدًى مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

In the Name of God, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful.

2:1 Alif, Lam, Mim. 2:2 This is the Book, there is no doubt in it, a guidance to the *mutaqqi*, 2:3 who believe in the Unseen, and maintain the prayer, and spend out of what We have provided them with; 2:4 and who believe in what has been sent down to you and what was sent down before you, and are certain of the Hereafter. 2:5 Those follow their Lord's guidance, and it is they who are the felicitous.



## Yaqeen essential in Prophets & Imams

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- وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا لَمَّا صَبَرُوا وَكَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يُوقِنُونَ
- 32:24 *And amongst them We appointed imams who guide [the people] by Our command, when they had been patient and had conviction in Our signs.*
- Imam al-Sadiq (a): Indeed Allah distinguished His Prophet (s) with noble, moral traits, so examine yourselves, and if you find yourself possessing any of them, praise Allah & desire more of it. He listed 10 things: certainty, contentment, patience, gratitude, forbearance, good manners, generosity, honour, bravery & valour.

# Yaqeen & shak on a scale

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- Looking at a scale you will notice one of the of three possibilities:
- 1) tilting on one side
- 2) totally tilting one side
- 3) both sides weigh exactly same

Question: From your experience which possibility is the most popular & easy to maintain



# Understanding doubt & scepticism

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- Positive and negative aspects
- Test: Imam Ali (a): *If things had been beautiful and easy, doubt would have been removed* (NB, sermon, 192)
- Motivation to ask, thus gateway to knowledge. H. 39, p. 51 *Tuhaf al-Uqoul*
- It is disease of heart & Rijs: Holy Qur'an 9:125, rijs=shak according to 6<sup>th</sup> Imam
- Waswaas (satanic insinuations) – Al-Sadiq (a) about an intelligent person who had doubts in wudu and salaah
- Difference between doubt and scepticism (*rayb, taradud*)



## Source of *waswaas* per Khumayni

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Heart is like a two-faced mirror; One side is turned towards the world of *ghayb*, and in it the *ghaybi* forms are reflected. The other side faces the world of *shahadah*, and in it worldly forms are reflected outward senses and some inner cognitive faculties such as imaginations. Should the worldly aspect of the heart preponderate and its attention be wholly absorbed by the pursuit of the mundane, becoming its sole concern, the hidden side becomes attuned to the realm of lower faculty which is the dark reflected image of the world-the realm of the jinn, devils and evil spirits.

*Forty Hadith*, 25<sup>th</sup> Hadith, p. 412



## Causes of doubts

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- Lack of knowledge = we no longer seem to be having love for knowledge
- Not taking the knowledge to the level of wisdom thru observing, thinking and analyzing
- Lack of confidence
- Trivializing sacred things or people
- Constantly listening to negative things, events & stories; media preoccupied in reporting this.
- Hadith about being careful about the intake of food (akal) but not intelligence (‘aql)



# How can we remove doubts?

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## **Use intellect in the correct way**

The Holy Quran says: O Prophet, declare that it is God who brought you out of your existence and bestowed upon you hearing, vision, and an aware heart, though there are few people who are grateful to their Lord for His gifts.

Al-Mulk, 67:23

Imam al-Kadhim (a) says:

The intellect is man's most precious asset, for it restores his dignity after his humiliation, uplifts him if he falls, guides him if he is lost, and gives firmness and rectitude to his speech when he speaks.





## Find correct answers to your doubts or questions, untiringly

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It is not wrong to question in order to understand. Even angels asked Allah why He created the human being. But when they were given the answer they accepted and submitted. See Sura al Baqarah, verses 30-33

Find the correct answers through:

- Books
- Scholars
- Reliable internet sites



# Inspire and strengthen your faith

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا آمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ

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*4:136 O you who have faith! Have faith in God and His Apostle and the Book that He has sent down to His Apostle*

Strong faith is an equipment against doubt and scepticism. It can withstand an attack because the foundation is strong.

Hadith: al-Sadiq quoting Amirul Mu'mineen (a): Faith has 4 supports: patience, conviction, justice & struggle. Conviction branches into: enlightenment of insightfulness, hidden depths of wisdom, knowledge of underlying moral in everything & lesson from past.



## Be in the company of strong believers

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Other people have influence on us and when we keep company with those who are strong in faith, it rubs off on us.

To befriend a person who is intelligent and understanding gives life to the soul – **Imam Ali (a)**

I am surprised at one who wants many friends why he does not befriend the knowledgeable, the understanding, the pious, whose excellence is a gain, whose knowledge disciplines him and whose company adorns him.

**Imam Ali (a)**



## For further reading

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- Chapter on “Doubt” from *Qalb-e-Saleem* of Ayt. Dastghayb
- Hadiths Nos. 25 & 32 from *Forty Hadith* of Imam Khumayni
- Chapters 5,7,8 & 9 from *Combat with the Self* of al-Hurr al-‘Amili
- Chapter on “Conviction” from *The Ahlul Bayt; Ethical Role Models* by Mahdi as-Sadr.