

How and Why Every Human Being Is Responsible For Primordial Covenant with Allah (ﷻ) Before Our Birth in This World?

The primordial covenant with Allah refers to the concept that all human beings made a covenant with Allah before their earthly existence. This covenant is based on the recognition of Allah's Lordship and is considered a pretemporal agreement between Allah and humanity. It is believed to be the foundation of all later covenants and is connected to the idea of the primordial nature (Fitrah) of human beings. The Quran mentions various covenants between Allah and believers, prophets, and different groups, but the primordial covenant is seen as a universal and unmediated agreement between Allah and all of humanity.

The primordial covenant with Allah mentioned in the Quran refers to a pre-creation agreement between Allah and all future human beings. This event is specifically detailed in the Quran in Surah Al-A'raf (7:172). According to this verse, Allah brought forth from the loins of Adam all his descendants who would ever live and made them testify concerning themselves by asking them, "Am I not your Lord?" To this, all the souls responded, "Yes, we have testified." This covenant is often referred to in Islamic theology as the "Covenant of Alast" or the "Day of Alast," deriving from the Arabic word "alastu," which means "Am I not."

This covenant is fundamental in Islamic thought because it establishes the innate recognition and acknowledgment of Allah's lordship and sovereignty by all human beings before their physical existence on Earth. The idea suggests that every human soul has an inherent understanding of and a natural disposition (fitrah) towards believing in one Allah, which is seen as a basis for moral accountability in life. The verse is often interpreted to mean that humans are born with an innate

sense of Allah and their submission to Him, which can guide their spiritual life unless overridden by external influences.

In Islamic theology, this pre-earthly event is crucial as it forms the basis for human responsibility to remember and adhere to this original commitment to Allah, and it explains why the message of monotheism (Tawhid) resonates as a fundamental truth across different prophetic teachings throughout human history.

Detail Analysis of the Aya:(Surah Al Ahzab, Ayat 72-74)

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ شَهِدْنَا أَن تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ

أَوْ تَقُولُوا إِنَّمَا أَشْرَكَ آبَاؤُنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا ذُرِّيَّةً مِّنْ بَعْدِهِمْ أَفَتُهْلِكُنَا بِمَا فَعَلَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ

وَكَذَٰلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

(7:172) And recall (O Prophet) when your Lord brought forth descendants from the loins of the sons of Adam, and made them witnesses against their own selves. Asking them: 'Am I not your Lord?' They said: 'Yes, we do testify.' We did so lest you claim on the Day of Resurrection: 'We were unaware of this fact (that You are our Rabb and that there will be a Day of Judgment). Or lest you say: "Our forefathers started the practice of shirk

and we just followed, being their descendents. Will you then destroy us on account of following the sin committed by those wrongdoers?" Thus We do spell out our revelations so that they might return to right path.

This event, according to several traditions, took place at the time of the creation of Adam. Apart from the prostration of the angels before Adam and the proclamation that man would be Allah's vicegerent on earth, all the future progeny of Adam were gathered, and were endowed with both existence and consciousness in order to bear witness to God's lordship. The best interpretation of this event is found in a statement by, 'Ubayy b. Ka'b, who has probably given the substance of what he had heard from the Prophet (SAW)

That Allah gathered all human beings, divided them into different groups, granted them human form and the faculty of speech, made them enter into a covenant, and then making them witnesses against themselves He asked them: 'Am I not your Lord?' They replied: 'Assuredly you are Our Lord.' Then Allah told them: 'I call upon the sky and the earth and your own progenitor, Adam, to be witness against you lest you should say on the Day of Judgment that you were ignorant of this. Know well that no one other than Me deserves to be worshipped and no one other than Me is your Lord. So do not ascribe any partner to Me. I shall send to you My Messengers who will remind you of this covenant which you made with Me. I shall send down to you My Books.' In reply all said: 'We witness that You are Our Lord and our Deity. We have no lord or deity other than You. (Ahmad bin Hanbal, Musnad, vol. 5, p. 135 - Ed.)

If someone considers calling all human beings together in one assembly impossible, that shows, more than anything else the woeful paucity of his imagination. For if someone accepts that Allah has the power to create countless human beings in succession, there is no reason to suppose that He did not have the power to create them all at some given moment prior to the creation of the universe, or that He will be unable to resurrect them all at some given moment in the future. Again, it stands to reason that at a time when Allah wanted to designate man as His vicegerent on earth after

endowing him with reason and understanding, He took from him an oath of allegiance. All this is so reasonable that the actual occurrence of the covenant should not cause any wonder. On the contrary, one should wonder if the event did not take place.

أَوْ تَقُولُوا إِنَّمَا أَشْرَكَ آبَاؤُنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا ذُرِّيَّةً مِّنْ بَعْدِهِمْ ۗ
 أَفَتُهْلِكُنَا بِمَا فَعَلَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ

(7:173) or say: 'Our forefathers before us who associated others with Allah in His divinity; we were merely their offspring who followed them. And would You destroy us for that which the unrighteous did?'

The verse describes the purpose of the primordial covenant. The purpose is to make every person responsible for his deeds so that if he rebels against Allah he will be held fully accountable for that rebellion. Because of the covenant, no one will be able either to plead for acquittal on grounds of ignorance, or blame his misdeeds on his ancestors. In other words, this primordial covenant has been mentioned as the reason for the inherent awareness in every single person that Allah is the only Lord and Deity. Thus, none can totally absolve himself of his responsibility on the plea that he was altogether ignorant, or transfer the blame for his error to the corrupt environment in which he was brought up. Now, it can be argued that even if the covenant did take place, no human being remembers its occurrence. No human being is aware that a long time ago, at the time of creation, he had affirmed, in response to Allah's query, that Allah indeed was his Lord. This being the case, it can be further argued that no charge can be legitimately brought against man on the ground of a covenant with Allah which he no longer remembers to have made. In response to this it can be said that had the covenant been made fully in man's conscious memory, it would be meaningless for Allah to put man to the test in this world. Hence, there can be no denying that the covenant is not preserved in man's conscious memory. But it has doubtlessly been preserved in man's sub-conscious mind. In this respect the primordial covenant is no different from other pieces of knowledge in man's sub-conscious mind. Whatever man has so far achieved in the way of culture and civilization can be attributed to his latent potentialities. All external factors and internal motivations

simply account for helping the actualization of those potentialities. Neither education nor training nor environmental factors can bring out anything which is not potentially found in the human mind. Likewise, external factors have no power to root out man's latent potentialities. External factors may, at the most, cause a person to deflect from the course dictated by sound human nature. However, man's sound nature is inclined to resist the pressure of external forces and exert itself in order to find an outlet. As we have said earlier, this is not peculiar to man's religious propensity alone, but is equally true of all his mental potentialities. In this regard the following points are particularly noteworthy:

- (1) All man's potentialities exist in the sub-conscious mind and prove their existence when they manifest themselves in the form of human action.
- (2) The external manifestation of these potentialities requires external stimuli such as instruction, upbringing and attitudinal orientation. In other words, our actions consist of the responses of our inherent potentialities to external stimuli.
- (3) Man's inner potentialities can be suppressed both by false urges within him as well as external influences by trying to pervert and distort those latent potentialities. The potentialities themselves, however, cannot be totally rooted out. The same holds true of man's intuitive knowledge regarding his position in the universe and his relationship with his Creator.

In this connection the following points should be borne in mind:

- (1) That man has always had such intuitive knowledge is evident from the fact that this knowledge has surfaced throughout history in every period and in every part of the world, and which no power has so far been able to extirpate.
- (2) That this intuitive knowledge conforms to objective reality, is borne out by, the fact that whenever this knowledge has influenced human life, it has had beneficial results.

(3) That in order to manifest itself in his practical life, man's intuitive knowledge has always required external stimuli. The stimuli have consisted of the advent of the Prophets (peace be on them), the revelation of the Heavenly Books, and the striving of those who have tried to follow them and invite others to do the same. It is for this reason that the Qur'an has been designated as *mudhakkir* (the reminder): *dhikr* (remembrance); *tadhkirah* (admonition). And the function of the Qur'an has been characterized as *tadhkir* (reminding). What this suggests is that the Prophets, the Heavenly Books and those who invite people to the truth do not seek to provide human beings with something new, something which exists outside of them. Their task rather consists of bringing to the surface and rejuvenating what is latent, though dormant, in man himself.

Throughout the ages man has always positively responded to this 'Reminder'. This itself is testimony to the fact that it is embodied in a knowledge which has always been recognized by; man's soul.

Forces arising from ignorance and obscurantism, lust and bigotry, and the erroneous teachings and promptings of devils - human as well as jinn - have always attempted to suppress, conceal, and distort the fact that the truth preached by the Prophets is embedded in man's soul. These attempts gave rise to polytheism, atheism, religious misdirection and moral corruption. Despite the combined efforts of the forces of falsehood, however, this knowledge has always had an imprint on the human heart. Hence, whenever any effort was made to revive that knowledge, it has proved successful.

Doubtlessly those who are bent on denying the truth can resort to a great deal of sophistry in order to deny or at least create doubt and confusion about the existence of this knowledge. However on the Day of Resurrection the Creator will revive in man the memory of the first assembly when man made his covenant with Allah and accepted Him as his Only Lord. On that occasion Allah will provide evidence to the effect that the covenant always remained imprinted on man's soul. He will also show how from time to time man tried to suppress his inner voice which urged him to respond to the call of the covenant; how again and again his heart pressed him to affirm the truth; how his intuition induced him to denounce the errors of

belief and practice; how the truth ingrained in his soul tried to express itself and respond to those who called to it; and how on each occasion he lulled his inner self to sleep because of his lust and bigotry.

However a Day will come when man will no longer be in a position to put forth specious arguments to justify his false claims. That will be the Day when man will have no option but to confess his error. It will then be impossible for people to say that they were ignorant, or negligent.

In the words of the Qur'an:

يَا مَعْشَرَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنسِ أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنكُمْ يَقُصُّونَ عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِي وَيُنذِرُونَكُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا قَالُوا شَهِدْنَا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِنَا وَغَرَّتْهُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا وَشَهِدُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا كَافِرِينَ

'...and they will bear witness against themselves that they had disbelieved' (al-An'am 6: 130).

وَكَذَلِكَ نَفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

(7:174) And thus do We expound the signs¹³⁶ that they may turn back (to the right path).

'Signs' here refer to the imprints made by knowledge of the truth on the human heart which help towards cognition of the truth.

'To return' here signifies giving up rebellion, and reverting to obedience to Allah