

THE VALUE OF THE RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE IN THE FORMATION OF FAITH

Assoc. Prof. Ramazan BICER

University of Sakarya Faculty of Theology, Turkey.

Abstract *Religion is related to person's will. But faith of the people is established on the basis of their environment, experience, and knowledge. The most important factor which plays great role in the formation of one's faith is the religious knowledge. Nonetheless, person's increasing other knowledge and experience cannot be denied in this process. According to Islamic theology, person's faith develops unceasingly. During this development, people are expected to increase their level of consciousness. However, it is observed that external factors like environments are the main determiners on the faith of the people.*

Faith necessitates an anxiety and fear. Belief in unknowable requires mental effort. Without this mental effort, real faith cannot be achieved. Major world religions ask person to make mental efforts to form such a belief. Consequently, real conscious believers are the people who work mentally and spiritually to achieve this faith. According to Islamic theology, faith is established on the basis of intellectual efforts. No matter what religion person follows, if he or she bases his or her belief on the sound reason, his or her faith represents real, healthy and strong belief.

In spite of the most important factor which plays great role in the formation of one's faith is the religious knowledge, many of the people have not basis of the their religion knowledge.

In this paper we will discuss the value of the religious knowledge for the religious formation.

Faith

Generally speaking, the definition of imān is given as follows: 'imān is to confirm' (approve), 'imān is confirmation in heart', 'imān is the contrivance of the heart', 'imān is to confirm by heart and to confess by speech', 'imān is contrivance in heart and is confession through speech', 'imān is confirmation of heart,

confession through speech, and performed by deeds', 'imān is speech and deeds'.¹ According to Paul Tillich, imān is a total and centered act of the personal self, the act of unconditional, infinite and ultimate concern.² Briefly Faith is the state of being ultimately concerned.³

According to the father of all modern Protestant Theology, Schleiermacher, imān is the feeling of unconditional dependence. Of course, feeling so defined does not mean in religion what it means in popular psychology. It is not vague and changing but has a definite content.⁴

Also confirming messages preached by the Muhammad in detail is called *tafsilī*; while confirming his regulations as a whole is called *icmālī imān*. To achieve this, it is enough a faithful believer (*mu'min*) to think that the Prophet is truthful.⁵

Because Islamic theologians recognize intelligence (reason) as a basic condition for iman they questioned the *taqlidī* (imitated, following the authority, imitation in legal matters) so they claimed that iman should be the result of observation (*nazar*) and proof (*istidlāl/reason*). Even so, the opinion of rejecting *taqlidī imān* has become so extreme that common people who have no knowledge about logic and dialect are considered as non-believers, and this view has been expressed with the term *kufir al-āmmeh*. *Mu'tazilite* sect claimed that a person having *taqlidī imān* is a *fāsiq* (sinful) or a non-believer. *Ash'arites*, among *Ahl al-Sunnah* (main stream orthodoxy), who consider *taqlidī imān* as something null had been criticized⁶. Because of this doctrine according to their criticism, this person is not a Pagan and non-believer, but cannot be called a *mu'min* (true believer) as well.

Besides this, Mātūridī stated that the path leading to Īmān is proof (*istidlal*)⁷ and the knowledge acquired by thus way is a means leading to confirmation. He puts knowledge (*ilm*) at the heart of imān and states that a person having *taqlidī imān*

¹ Ash'ari, *al-Luma*, ed. Richard J. McCarty, Beirut 1952, p. 75; Mātūridī, *Kitāb al-Tavhid*, ed. F. Hulaif, Beirut 1970, p. 380.

² Tillich, P. *Dynamics of Faith*, New York, 1965, p. 4.

³ Smith, W. C. *Religion and Reason Method*, Netherlands 1981, p. 141; Smith, "Faith as Tasdiq" *Islamic Philosophical Theology*, ed. P. Morewedge, USA 1979, p. 99.

⁴ Tillich, *ibid*, p. 38.

⁵ Sachakhlyzāde, *Nashru 't-tawāli*, Cairo 1924, p. 375.

⁶ Izutsu, T. *Islam Dusuncesinde Īmān Kavrami*, Tr. S. Ayaz, Istanbul 1984, pp. 148-149.

⁷ Mātūridī, *Kitāb al-Tawhīd*, p. 287.

(imitated faith) cannot be excusable. But representatives following Māturidī in the later centuries have accepted that taqlidī imān is acceptable.⁸

The basic feature of imān is described as believing in *ghayb* (unseen). Thus when the qualities of believers (mu'mins) are being stated in the Qur'an it has been emphasized that they have faith (imān) in *ghayb*; "Who believe in (that) the unseen" (Q. 2:3). This acknowledgement influenced the famous Christian theologian St. Thomas. According to his opinion: "knowledge is related to objective-seen being, whereas, imān is related to the unseen. This is why imān cannot be mentioned where knowledge exists."⁹ That's why it has been accepted that there is certainty within imān. As a matter of fact, it has been stated in the Qur'an: "Only those are Believers who have believed in God and His Apostle, and have never since doubted" (Q. 49:15)

Generally speaking imān is a human attribution (homo credo faith). Because suggestion as regards imān are suggestions which no man can refuse or ignore¹⁰, besides being a human attribution, imān is connected with man's soul. Thus, the Christian theologians described the word as mental acceptance, confidence of heart and submission of the will power¹¹ therefore; this is an explanation, which shows that it is a concept that surrounds a person completely.

Tillich, who describes imān as the most exalted interest of mankind, also accepts that it is a central act. He states that: "Faith is the state of being ultimately concerned". According to him, imān is in the center of the person's private life, and it surrounds all aspects of life.¹² According to him, faith as ultimate concern is an act of the total personality. İmān at the center unites all emotional, mental, spiritual,

⁸ Nasafi, *Tabsirat al-adilla*, ed. Huseyin Atay, Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayinlari, 2004, I, 25; Ghazali, *Ihyā 'ulum al-Din*, Cairo, 1357, I, 162; Suleyman Akkus, Ebū'l-Muin en-Neseffī'ye göre Taklidin İnanç Boyutu, Sakarya Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakultesi Yayinlari, 2009, 18, 99-128

⁹ Hick, J. "Faith", *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards, New York: Macmillan, 1972, III, 165; Swinburne, R. *Faith and Reason*, New York 1983, p. 106.

¹⁰ James, W. *The Will to Believe*, New York, 1979, p. 14; K. James Clark, *Return to Reason: A Critique of Enlightenment Evidentialism and a Defense of Reason and Belief in God*, USA 1990, p. 103; Armand Maurer, *St. Thomas Aquinas, Faith, Reason and Theology*, Manitoba 1987, p. Int. XVIII.

¹¹ Meagher, P.K. "faith", *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, V, 798.

¹² Tillich, P. *Dynamics of Faith* p. 4.

physical and even conscious and unconscious aspects of personal life. Just like how mankind is made up of the unity of these elements without separation and they form mankind's aspects, which cannot be separated, similarly imān, which penetrates mankind's soul, has connections with and makes influence over these elements.¹³ Therefore, imān can neither be created as a product of the mind, nor can it be considered as the effort of the will nor can it be regarded as the results of emotional acts. İmān is an unknown phenomenon, which includes all of these elements.¹⁴

Belief

Belief may be divided into different categories. As a matter of fact, stages of this concept have been examined.¹⁵ Also in English 'belief' which is separated into two parts 'belief in' and 'belief that' is given as different meaning. Having examined different degrees of belief in detail, H. H. Price (1899-1971)¹⁶, focused on examples concerning both parts. But the result Price reached, it can be seen that outline of this classification cannot be drawn absolutely. Since sometimes 'belief in' (*amana bih*) can be reduced to 'belief that' (*amana leh*).¹⁷ In addition to this, the slight difference between the two can be explained as follows: Belief that is only accepting certain propositions. When we talk about such a belief regarding 'being of Allah', we would only accept the existence of a 'being called God'. This states a mental acceptance. The belief of the Satan's in God is in this category¹⁸. So for a person accepting the suggestion that God Exists", it does not necessarily mean that he must be real Muslim (mu'min). A person can be satisfied by only claiming to be a believer in accordance with the first degree (belief that).¹⁹

¹³ Tillich, *ibid*, p. 106.

¹⁴ Tillich, P. *Systematic Theology*, Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1951, III, 133.

¹⁵ Clark, W.H. *The Psychology of Religion*, USA 1961, p. 220.

¹⁶ Price, H. H. "Belief 'in' and belief 'that'", *The Philosophy of Religion*, ed. B. Mitchell, Hong Kong, 1989, p. 144-167.

¹⁷ Nasafi, *Tabsira al-adilla*, I, 59-60.

¹⁸ Plantinga, A. "Is Belief in God Exist" *Rationality and Religious Belief*, London, 1979, p. 7.

¹⁹ Price, *ibid*, p. 149, 152; comp. Nasafi, *Tabsira*, 56.

Taking the difference between faith and belief into consideration, we can say that imān, is a more special concept²⁰, being privileged with religious attribution. In other words, imān is used in connection with a specific religion. Belief is not a religious category. Thus the acceptance of a religious person is basically called imān, not belief.²¹

THE STRUCTURE OF COGNITIVE OF FAITH

Emotions

Having made comments on religion psychologists stated that there is no one whole, unique religious excitement; there could be generally widespread and deep common excitements stimulated by religious topics.²² For example, divine love, is not different from emotional love, it is only a feeling of human love which has tendency towards religious topics and values.²³ Sacred love, which is one of the basic aims of all religions, is emphasized as divine love in the statements of Qur'an and it has been considered as the property of a sound belief.

Just like all the acts of mankind's spiritual life, according to Tillich, there is emotion in imān, and emphasizes that this emotion does not form faith. According to his opinion, faith has unity within the act of imān that does not prevent one from the domination of the objects. This can dominate so much as to determine the formation of imān, but it cannot create the act of faith.²⁴

Islamic theology (Kalām), which forms the philosophy of religious belief, has been criticized because of the lacking of feelings in hearth/emotions.²⁵ Still, it cannot be said that they deny the emotional aspect of belief²⁶. But it is a fact that the Islamic theologians have ignored such topics.²⁷ The explanations about confirmation

²⁰ Tillich, *Ibid*, p. 37, 40; Hokelekli, H. "Dini Kisiligin Kurulusunda Iradenin Rolu", *Diyanet XXI*, Ankara 1985, p. 21.

²¹ Smith, W. C. *Religion and Reason Method*, The Netherlands 1981, p. 115.

²² Allport, G. W. *The Individual and His Religion*, New York, 1950, p. 5; Ozbaydar, B, *Din ve Tanrı İnancının Gelismesi Uzerine Bir Arastırma*, Istanbul 1970, p. 8.

²³ W. James, *ibid*, p. 27.

²⁴ Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, p. 8.

²⁵ Gardet, L- Anawati, G. *Introduction a la Theologie Musulmane : Essai de Theologie Comparee*, Paris 1948, p. 460-461.

²⁶ Anawati, *Mystique musulmane*, Paris 1968, p. 275-279.

²⁷ *Kitāb al-Tavhid*, p. 4-5, 109-111.

point out that imān have an emotional aspect as well as the “kulli” (whole) state of imān. According to Tillich’s opinion, imān having a “kull” state, it is natural that it has emotional aspect just like other element.²⁸ It has been seen that his opinion has been practised in Christian theology, and that generally in Islamic Kalām knowledge it’s not at this degree. In Islamic opinion this matter is more practised in Sufism (Islamic mysticism), Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728/1328), famous theologian, explains emotional element of imān as “deeds of heart” and states that imān comprises deeds of heart such as fear of Allah, divine love and reliance on God. Ibn Taymiyyah accepts and confirms deeds of heart with the exception of confirmation concept. This is why he criticizes scholars who equalize imān with confirmation. According to his explanation, in order to have imān in heart first it is necessary to confirm God and his messenger and later love them. Otherwise, while hating Allah and his messenger only confirming will not be accepted as imān.²⁹

Will

The ‘imān–will’ relation gives different results according to the point of view. In other words, is imān an act of will, or is it a psychological state? Is imān something, which we perform, or is it something, happens to us? The voluntarists who claim that we can control our belief say “yes” to the first question while, the involuntarists confirm the second part³⁰.

St. Thomas who describes belief as “a mental act motivated by the effect of the will”³¹, says that imān is formed with will. Soren Kierkegaard (1768-1864) says that every belief is gained by the decision of will, so he appears as a radical voluntarist at the extreme level.³²

Those who claim that imān is unwilling consider that it is not an act. Because faith is not an act it cannot be the element of any recommendation or can it be

²⁸ Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, III, 132.

²⁹ Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Imān*, ed. Muhammed Zübeydi, Beyrut: Dar Al-Kitab Al-Arabi, 1993, p. 43, 127.

³⁰ Penelhum, T. *Reason and Religious Faith*, Oxford 1995, p. 41.

³¹ Pojman, L. P. *Religious Belief and the Will*, New York, p. 145; John Hick, “Faith”, *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, III, 165; M.J. Meadow-R. Kahoe, *Psychology of Religion*, London 1984, p. 187-188.

³² Pojman, *ibid*, p. 146.

element of any commandment.³³ According to David Hume (1711-1776), who is a main representative of this idea, belief is unintentional.³⁴

The will forms the source of difference between confirmation and contrivance. Usually contrivance has nothing to do with will and personal effort, whereas for confirmation intervention of the will is necessary. To illustrate what I have said, let's consider a person who sees an object soon after his sight without the intervention of the will an acknowledgement of that object happens. However, confirmation does not happen like this.³⁵

There is a connection between the function of will and “confirmation” in formation of imān.

Taftazānī (d. 793/1390) says that this explanation is difficult to understand. He says that, such confirmation is a kind of knowledge, and that knowledge is a psychological condition rather than an intentional and willingful act. In other words, faith is completely a psychological phenomenon. In this situation can we say that will contributes in formation of imān? Taftazānī gives an answer to this question too. If imān is a psychological circumstance it cannot be defined as a willingful act. But, in order to reach to this circumstance the effect of will is needed. Will be able to seen during taking steps with means, in focusing ideas and thoughts towards that direction, in removing obstacles in order to gain imān. Mankind is given the responsibility to be faithful. Sometimes since it is not enough, contrivance can be manifested without such intentional achievements and acquirements.³⁶

According to Paul Tillich, who considers the act of imān as unwilling, certainly something which will ultimately worry a person could be a confirmation of his will. Faith is not a creation of the will. In the ecstasy of faith the will to accept and to surrender is an element but not the cause.³⁷

If we use think the nature of mental structure –such as one's imagination of world, the conditions around him, the physical and social environment in which he

³³ Penelhum-Terence *ibid*, p. 39.

³⁴ Pojman, *ibid*, p. 63.

³⁵ Taftazānī, *Sharh al-Aqaid*, ed. A. H. Sakka, Cairo, 1988, p. 82.

³⁶ Taftazānī, *ibid*, p. 82.

³⁷ Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, p. 7.

lives, his wills, targets -depends or early experience,³⁸ the problem will be automatically solved.

Deeds

Ahl al-Sunnah, arguing about faith-deeds relation, says that deeds are not a part of faith. At the same time they do not refuse the importance at the relation faith and believer's behaviors. They accept the relation between faith and deeds; even so, some of them say that these are signs of imān.³⁹ Thus faith, which is mystic concept, is reinforced with practice.⁴⁰ As Clark expressed, putting the belief into act reinforces faith.⁴¹ Put it this way deeds are protectors of faith and sustain it.

According to the Māturidī sect, a belief (doctrine) that faith increases or decreases is not acceptable. However, Māturidī believes that the faith is strengthened or being enfeebled.⁴² The Ash'ari and Mu'tazilite schools of thought, say that faith increases with obedience and decreases with sins.⁴³ But the increase this dimension of increase in faith is in terms of attributions, not essence.⁴⁴

Information/Knowledge

Religion as a subject of belief has developed with humanity and has become an establishment, which exists with the existence of mankind. No community has existed living in total atheism in any era. Social factors are important in establishing faith, which forms the main essence of religion.

The communication systems are one of the effective exterior elements, which influence formation of faith. Some researchers say that these systems are the most effective medium "that can be used to convince and to motivate people"; while others claim that these systems are limited.⁴⁵ According to the first opinion "likes

³⁸ Krech, D. *Cemiyet Icinde Fert*, tr. Turhan, M, Istanbul 1970, I, 26.

³⁹ Ibn Furaq, *Muğarrad maqalāt al-As'ari*, ed. Daniel Gimaret, Beirut: Dar al-Mashriq, 1987, p. 152.

⁴⁰ İbn Taymiyyah, *Al-Imān*, p. 127-129; Sabik, Sayyid, *al-Akāid*, Beirut 1985, p. 79.

⁴¹ Clark, W. H. *The Psychology of Religion*, New York: Macmillan, 1961, p. 231.

⁴² Ibn Hazm, *al-Fasl*, Cairo, 1903, III, 193; Nasafī, *Bahr al-Kalām*, Konya 1327, p. 23.

⁴³ Ash'ari, *al-Usūl Ahl Al-sunnah wa al-Jamaah*, p. 93; Ghazali, *Ihyā*, II, 19; Teftazānī, *Sharh al-Maqāsid*, ed. Abdurrahman Umeyre, Beyrut: Alem al-Kutub, 1989, V, 211.

⁴⁴ Pazdawī, *Usūl al-Din*, ed. H. P. Linss, Cairo 1963, p. 153.

⁴⁵ Topcuoglu, M. N. *Basinda Reklam ve Tuketim Olgusu*, Ankara 1996, p. 16.

and choices, beliefs and convictions of masses, interest and concerns, thoughts of people are under the control of communication systems.⁴⁶ This results in a considerable influence in the formation of people's faith. Results of a research have showed that, media not only motivates people towards certain ideas but also helps strengthening existing ideas of people.⁴⁷

Besides customs, traditions, and media there are other factors like school, family and close friends which effect formation of faith. In fact, the prophetic hadith expressed the influence of family as follows: "Every new born baby born within a natural creation. Father and mother of the baby makes him Jewish, Christian of Fireworshipper. If the mother-father is a Muslim, then the child is a Muslim".⁴⁸ Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), in connection with this hadith, writes that whichever faith is suggested to children from youth will determine their future life.⁴⁹

Many scholars of Islam acknowledge this "natural creation" concept as "being created with ability to direct towards religion" or "ability to believe" (have faith). According to some researches, the most influential 3rd, element is close friends after the family and school. According to the inquiries made on 400 students attending different high schools in Ankara, the influence of friends followed family and school in terms of having faith in God or disbelief⁵⁰. This result makes the hadith "The person follows the religion of his close friend. So be careful in selecting your friends"⁵¹ more meaningful.

Ghazālī considered exterior information factor, which influence the formation of faith, and he said: "I saw that always children of Christians were raised up as Christians, children of Jews were raised up as Jewish, children Muslims were raised up as Muslims"⁵². J. J. Rousseau (1712-1778) who says that the faith of people are "like geographical books of knowledge"⁵³ and he states that everybody accepts the religion taught to them, that they are "circumcised, baptized, Jewish, Muhammadan,

⁴⁶ Topcuoglu, *ibid.*, p. 219.

⁴⁷ Kaya, M. *Din Eđitiminde İletisim ve Dini Tutum*, Samsun 1998, p. 220.

⁴⁸ Muslim, "Qadar", 6. Bukhāri, "Janāiz", 80, 93; Abū Dāwud, "Sunnah", 17.

⁴⁹ Ghazali, *Ihyā*, I, 162; Cf. Brown, W. A., *Pathways to Certainty*, London 1930, p. 52.

⁵⁰ Bilgin, B-Selcuk, M., *Din Ogretimi*, Ankara 1991, p. 201.

⁵¹ Abū Dāwud, "Adab", 16; Tirmidhi, "Zuhd", 45.

⁵² Ghazali *al-Munqiz min al-Dalāl*, Beirut 1987, pp. 25-26.

⁵³ Rousseau, J. J. *Emil*, Tr. H.Z. Ulken, Istanbul 1956, p. 260.

Christian”⁵⁴ according to the country they live in and that “God knows how many Christian Catholics live in Rome, who could have been good Muslims if they were born in Mecca. Similarly, the honorable and good Turkish living in Asia could have been good Christians if they were living together with us”⁵⁵. In this regard, the research made on students in America Berkeley University, which shows that their religious beliefs are the same with their neighborhood, is very meaningful.⁵⁶

The observations of Ghazālī and Rousseau are emphasized by the following statements in the Qur’an “And Noah, said: "O my Lord! Leave not of the unbelievers, a single one on earth! "For, if Thou dost leave (any of) them, they will but mislead Thy devotees, and they will breed none but wicked ungrateful ones”. (Q. 71:26-27) This Qur’anic verse states that they rise up their children in the direction of their own religious beliefs.

In this point, the society has a considerable effect over conversions to different religions in other words conversions in faith. The need for social support to protect religious beliefs and making influence over individual faith by using social pressure are because of this pressure of the society. An investigation made on youngsters converting to different religions in the West, says that 42 % percent of them convert as a result of social pressure.⁵⁷

In the Qur’an it has been commanded “Already has He sent you Word in the Book, that when ye hear the signs of God held in defiance and ridicule, ye are not to sit with them unless they turn to a different theme: if ye did, ye would be like them.” (Q. 4:140; See. 6:68)

THE COGNITIVE FORM OF BELIEF

Cognition is a word, which means mental functions for learning about our world, and understanding it, this concept comprises stages such as perception, memory, reasoning, thinking, and understanding.⁵⁸ How a person receives information from the world surrounding him and how he selects them, how he

⁵⁴ Rousseau , *ibid*, p. 303.

⁵⁵ Rousseau , *ibid*, p. 314.

⁵⁶ Ronald J.-Janet S. Schwartz, *Sociology*, Canada 1983, p. 477.

⁵⁷ L.B. Brown–D. J. Pallant, “Religious Belief and Social Pressure”, *Psychology and Religion*, 1973, p. 282.

⁵⁸ Bullock, A-Stallybrass, O. *The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*, “Cognition” art. G. Britain, 1977.

conveys information and how he arranges it; how he constructs the imaginative form of reality and turns it into knowledge, all these questions are answered by the term cognition.⁵⁹

A believer thinks that he knows about the truthfulness of some religious principles. This situation is similar to the accepted knowledge we obtain from our community; knowledge which we have no doubt. Believer (mu'min) will acknowledge the basis of faith, which he learns from books or religious authorities⁶⁰ This has been stated in the Qur'an as follows "Only those wish to hasten it who believe not in it: those who believe hold it in awe, and know that it is the Truth. Behold, verily those that dispute concerning the Hour are far astray." (Q. 42:18) In terms of Kalām knowledge, to become a believer, it is not enough to know only the basis of faith in religion. A person must consider them important. Just gaining knowledge like a western student of Islam is not enough in Islam, having this knowledge does not mean that a person possesses the cognitive form of faith seen in believers.

A person, who has a certain faith and attitude when encountering opposite attitudes he turns away from it. While he is successful in this withdrawal attitude, he will not understand the contrary things and his belief and attitudes will be protected, and will be ensured.⁶¹ In the Qur'an it has been said: "Say: "Everyone acts according to his own disposition: But your Lord knows best who it is that is best guided on the Way." (Q. 17:84) It is possible to say that the character here is a cognitive form, which has shaped the personality with advantages.⁶²

For example, a person who is opponent of a religious sect does not attend meetings held by members of that sect or does not read articles supporting their doctrine.⁶³ With the expression of Qur'an "The unbelievers say: "Listen not to this

⁵⁹ Arkonac, S. *Sosyal Psikoloji*, Istanbul, 1993, p. 80.

⁶⁰ Terence, P. *Problems of Religious Knowledge*, Macmillan, 1971, p. 131-132; Guler, I, "Kur'an'da İmān ve İnkārin Ahlakı Bilissel (Kognitif) Temelleri", *İslamiyat*, Ankara 1998, p. 8.

⁶¹ Krech, D–Crutchfield, R.S. *Sosyal Psikoloji Teori ve Problemler*, trc. E. Gungor, Istanbul, 1980, p. 222.

⁶² According to Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144), "shakilah" is the cognitive form of a person's faith accuring within axis of perversion and way of Islam (hidayah) (Cf. *al-Kasshaf*, Beirut 1980, II, 373.

⁶³ Krech-Crutchfield, *ibid*, p. 222.

Qur'an, but talk at random in the midst of its (reading), that ye may gain the upper hand!" (Q. 49:26) by talking with these expressions they wanted do prevent it from being read.

According to the news of Qur'an, the non-believers say: "Our hearts are under veils, concealed from that to which thou dost invite us, and in our ears in deafness, and between us and there is a screen: so do thou (what thou wilt); for us, we shall do what we will." (Q. 49:5) In these above expressions there is a rebellious psychological nature. Besides trying to understand they do not even want to listen to. Whereas, understand something, it is necessary to request it. As a matter of fact, the Qur'an emphasizes this point as follows: "But people have cut off their affair of unity, between them, into sects: each party rejoices in that which is with itself." (23:53)

This attitude shows that a person's needs during formation of faith, his mental set and mood are effectives in the selections of comprehension.⁶⁴

Initially, a person cannot understand every event in his surroundings, he selects only appropriate ones among many objects and then he gets it. The perception of the world occurs beyond the senses of physical body depending on the society. People only listen to and read propagations of their own ideology and doctrines, or obey only leaders of their religious groups, societies. We support our worldviews and insist that these opinions are correct.⁶⁵

The same object with individuals having different mental sets shall be commented on a different way by selective sensitization method this is because of the mental set. This is why; a person's expectation, previous experiences and acceptances put forward different connections in producing new perceptions.⁶⁶

The mental structure of mankind has been expressed by some Qur'anic verse. (Such as Q. 2:26) The above-mentioned verse points out to the difference between understanding and comprehension of believers and non-believers. Similarly, while increasing one's perversion, it motivates the other to the way of Islam.

⁶⁴ Krech-Crutchfield, *ibid*, p. 111-113.

⁶⁵ Condon, J. C. *Kelimelerin Buyulu Dunyasi Anlambilim ve İletisim*, trc. M Ciftkaya, Istanbul 1995, p. 34-35.

⁶⁶ Watts, F-Williams, M. *The Psychology of Religious Knowing*, London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1988, p. 54.

Every individual accepts his own cultural and social values accordingly his behaviors as something logical or at least he believes in it.⁶⁷ The mind settled within faith is not an objective mind, it is a subjective mind, which protects and supports faith and serves for it. A faith, which looks like something illogical, is logical for the individual who has this faith.⁶⁸ This is why Qur'an accuses non-believers of being foolish; this means that they reduce their minds to certain fields.

This explanation reminds the claim of D.Z. Philips, one of the followers of Neo-Wittgensteinian, who thinks that there is a rationality internal to the religion. Although we agree with Philips claim of internal rationality in religion, we do not accept his rejection of looking for external evidence for it. We sincerely believe that external evidences can contribute greatly to the formation of faith.⁶⁹ Confirming such an opinion is impossible in terms of the Qur'an. Because the Qur'an commands the believer to look at the earth and the heavens after then think wisely in remembrance of God. (Q. 77:17-20)

This is why theologians who are members of Māturidī and Mu'tazilite sects oppose the Ash'arites and support the idea that regardless of being addressed by the revelation, the mind has the capacity to discover God. In the other words, they claim that whether an individual has the chance to be illuminated by revelation or not does not change the fact that the intellect is responsible for believing in God.⁷⁰ The Qur'an gives the example of Prophet Abraham as evidence of discovering God by using the intellect. Again the Qur'an emphasizes the importance of using the mind in various verses and it has been said that by using the mind an individual will be delivered from eternal hell fire.

Besides this, the ontological evidence in philosophy on the idea of the most true and effective concept of God in the human mind puts forward existence of Allah. This way of proof was first expressed by Ibn Sina (Avicenna), St. Anselm later it was applied by Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz.

Because the matter of faith is a complex phenomenon, to support the idea that imān (faith) is only a matter of intelligence and ideas; means to put it in the

⁶⁷ Aydın, S. *Bilgi Cagında İnsan*, Izmir 1994, p. 82.

⁶⁸ Krech-Crutchfield, *ibid*, p. 196.

⁶⁹ Kellenberger, *ibid*, p. 54.

⁷⁰ Razi, *Mafātih al-'Ghayb*, Cairo 1934-1962, XIII, 41.

limitation of narrow blocks. This is why the mental process of faith while being a part of every educated person's religious belief, is not the fundamental part.⁷¹

Faith consists of strong emotions, but emotions are not the source of faith. With faith's content it is subjective, so it is certain in its focus, and therefore it claims truth, consequently, it demands submission. It has a tendency towards the One and only absolute, therefore it claims truth and commitment, it is directed toward the unconditional, and appears in a concrete reality that demands and justifies such commitment.

CONCLUSION

It is known that the cognitive form of imān (faith) has complex features. In this regard it has a kind of mosaic nature. Ability and earnings made up the mosaic formation. Both categories (ability-earnings) have a special importance in existence and formation of faith. Imān is rejoicing feeling, consists of rational conscious, has a cognitive form of confirmation featured with a total acceptance and submission.⁷² According to St. Thomas, in classical Roman Catholic theology "will to believe" is not an act which originates in man's striving, but it is given by grace to whose will is moved by God to accept the truth of what the church teaches. This kind of interpretation agrees with the authoritarian attitude of the Roman Church.⁷³

No command to believe and no will to believe can create imān (faith). In this respect, the arguments of faith cannot form imān.⁷⁴ This is explained as; one demands "obedience of faith", the term can mean the element of commitment, which is implied in the state of ultimate concern. Our oscillating will cannot produce the certainty, which belongs to faith.

"Commitment to the traditions of ancestors" emphasized in the Qur'anic verses and hadiths, and "attending groups of the same religion", "influence of family motivating the child's faith", "being careful in selecting friends" such explanations make clear that at the beginning of the formation of faith, the exterior factors have an initial effect. Deeds and thinking in remembrance of God (tadhakkur) which appear after acquiring faith, present us the emotion, nature and will factors. The idea

⁷¹ Clark, W. H. *The Psychology of Religion*, p. 219.

⁷² Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, p. 6.

⁷³ Maurer, A. *ibid*, p. Int. XVI-XVII.

⁷⁴ Tillich, *ibid*, p. 37.

of increasing of faith, becoming conscious in faith and exception in faith according to Islamic theology (Kalām) shows considerable differences. In the Qur'an following verse "O ye who believe! Believe in God and His Apostle, and the Scripture which He hath sent to His Apostle and the Scripture which He sent to those before him" (Q. 4:136) addresses to the emotions of believers (mu'mins) through the will dimension.

In this regard, a person who has a tendency towards religious belief and faith in God having faith (imān) is a godsend gift –this will is called natural will- is a result of his surrounding. According to Teftazānī, faith is a divine light granted by Allah who "motivates his slave's will". After this stage, come emotions and will and they direct the structure and dimension of faith. This is why there are conscious (muhaqqiq) religious and faithful people among Muslims, as well as Christians, and Jews.

With rejoicing and emotions and perfect will these people within enthusiasm of their faith form mental and physical state by using them to enrich their cognitive structure of faith. A hadith "The ones who were good in the era of ignorance (Jahiliyyah), are good also in the Islamic era"⁷⁵ expresses good quality of the individuals.

In this respect, when Ghazālī who is a Islamic theologian, says in his autobiography that he wants to be free from traditional belief (taqlīd) that has been taught to him by his parents and teachers, and expresses this as a result of a natural habit, a godsend blessing. Again he emphasizes that his striving is not a result of his will. Finally, -with his own words- he recedes from "traditional belief" that has been given to him by his parents and teacher.

Ghazālī, searched thoroughly which of the knowledges he obtained was "haqq" (righteous), and which of them was "batil" (perverted). He obtained faith which he defined as knowledge does not bring any doubt of a matter, a position of perfect faith.⁷⁶

At this point it will be useful to call attentions to one of the prophet's hadiths that is "Jewishs have separated by seventy, also Christians by seventy one, my followers will be separated into seventy three sects. Just one of them will go to the

⁷⁵ Bukhārī, "al-Anbiyā"; 8, 14, 19, "al-Tafsīr", Sūrah 12/2; Muslim, "al-Fadāil", 168.

⁷⁶ Ghazālī, *al-Munqiz min al-dalāl*, Beirut 1987, pp. 25-26.

heaven.”⁷⁷ Then among Muslim, Christian and Jewish communities, which have been separated into different sects, there are still believers who are on safe ground and who have degree of *yaqin* (absolute knowledge) information of faith, although their number is very little. In this context, many of the Qur’anic verses, which start with “most people”, end in a negative way.⁷⁸

Ash’arī and Māturidī representatives of the Ahl al-Sunnah (main stream orthodoxy) sect do not give excuse for those who have taqlidī imān (imitated) because they aim to raise up informed and conscious believers.

In the cognitive structure of disbelief and faith when effects of physical and spiritual elements of morality are considered, universal dimension of faith becomes meaningful.

⁷⁷ Abū Dāwud, “Imān”, 1.

⁷⁸ Qur’an II, 243; VI, 116; VII, 187; XI, 17; XIII, 1; XXX, 30.