

## Halqa Meeting of March 15, 2015

Abdul Hayy: As the great poet Hafiz frequently reminds us, it is vanity and self-regard in worship that are more dangerous than the usual kinds of sins. Everyone makes mistakes, everyone sins. Seeking God's forgiveness is what helps us to advance on the spiritual path. Let us bear in mind that the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) stated that he asked for God's forgiveness at least seventy times a day. Our Ustad Zaray not infrequently quoted the hadith in which God states that if people did not sin, He would bring into the world another people who did. This is because God has several Divine Names related to forgiveness, and these would not come into manifestation unless there was a need for them. On the other hand, smugness and self-righteousness in worship are rarely recognized for what they are, which is egotism and self-worship. This is the greatest sin, according to God who states that he will forgive any sin if He wishes but that He will not forgive idolatry. The self-righteous, absolutist, narrow-minded worshiper is, in fact, only worshiping himself or herself.

Masnawi Book I starting at verse 3346:

That ugly man saw himself in the mirror;  
He turned his face away and was enraged.

When the vain one saw a person's sinfulness,  
It was the fire of hell itself that flared in him.

He calls that self-pride a support of the Faith;  
He doesn't see in himself the idolator's soul.

Support of the Faith has a different trace,  
since from that fire, a world is made verdant.

The True Reality said, "If you are heart-polishers,  
Don't look heedlessly at those of dark deeds.

Shabistari, line 962 of the Garden of Mystery:

**Go and pull yourself from the way of selfishness  
At every moment renew your faith in selflessness.**

Lahiji:

In other words, if you would like to travel the way to Reality, tug and remove yourself, meaning that supposed existence and imaginary selfhood from which are derived all the spiritual veils, out of your own way. Don't attribute perfection to yourself and impute failings to others in the manner of the spiritually veiled egotists lest this should cause pride and vanity, and act instead by sincerely turning to God. Since the human ego, before such time as it reaches the station of security and peace, is ever engaged in deceiving and tricking people by playing on their whims as it engages in unseemly and unacceptable actions, the poet [Shabistari] writes, "At every moment renew your faith [in selflessness]." In other words, since the ego is in each moment fantasizing unworthy actions and qualities, and desires to cast you into egotism and hypocrisy's perdition, you must in each breath and moment negate and shun those bad fantasies and futile actions, and renew those particular expressions of faith and sincerity, while not for a moment remaining without faith because of the ego's deceptions. Against every fantasy among these weird fantasies that are truly the cause of infidelity and spiritual veiling, and which pull a person from the sublime level and bind him or her to the lowest of levels of the ego and the lower nature, be sure to renew your faith, and don't allow the fortress of your faith to be pulled into ruin by the lasso of lust and the blade of rage.