

Trust In God

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Putting one's trust in God has been surveyed from different viewpoints in this article. The presupposition of the author is that this positive quality enables the believers to deal with the problems they face in life more easily, be more persistent in seemingly hopeless situations in life, control their anxieties more effectively and avoid depression in desperate conditions and under high pressure in tough circumstances.

This article is based on a research project under the same title. The author has aimed in this article to provide an instrument for measuring the degree of having trust in God in different individuals in order to compare the effects of this quality with psychological states of mind.

Trust in God is defined in the article and its main characteristics are analyzed.

The psychological characteristics of this quality and their relation with the theories of "Attribution Styles", "Source of Control", and "Primary and Secondary Controls" are furthermore surveyed.

Innovative methods have been applied to survey in which circumstances the believers feel more inclined to have stronger trust in God.

Finally, the psychological methods of devising a tool for measuring the degrees of trust in God are briefly explained.

Methodology Of Research

There are numerous problems and inconsistencies with which the modern societies are afflicted today. Anxiety and depression are among the most usual problems of our youth.

In order to solve these problems and to avoid further psychological difficulties, the psychologists apply different methods, including behaviorist and cognitive ones, psychoanalysis, psychotherapy.

This writer's experience, gained through clinical consultations, proves that having trust in God increases courage, adds to self-confidence, enables the believers to take high risks in their lives. Moreover, it is an effective remedy for many kinds of obsessive-compulsive behaviors.

Clinical interviews with university students of different faculties and findings of the Center for Psychological Consultations of the University of Tehran all bear proof for the positive role played by trust in God in lowering the degree of anxieties and depression, helping the individuals remain calm, and giving them courage in tough situations of life.

This researcher and his colleagues believe that the psychologists, psychiatrists and social workers can take good advantage of this quality in securing the mental health of the individual who seek their help, and the societies faced with such crises.

In order to measure the effects of having trust in God scientifically we need to construct a reliable instrument to measure the degrees of trust in God in members of the test group.

Such a tool would enable the researchers to survey the relationship between different degrees of having trust in God with such psychological states of mind as anxiety, depression, self-confidence, job exhaustion and other factors involved in mental health of societies and individuals.

In order to make such an instrument, the researcher and his colleagues prepared a scheme as the framework for their project. In this article, we have summarized the various stages of our research work.

We have first defined the forms and barriers of having trust in God as well as different dimensions of its quality.

Then we have surveyed about the reasons why having trust in God is considered a positive value, and finally surveyed this quality from the psychological point of view.

Lastly, we have referred to our efforts aimed at innovation of the instrument used for measuring the degrees of having trust in God.

Definitions

Before giving a definition for the quality of having trust in God we have to attract the attention of the readers to the following points:

A: A personal relationship between the individual and God is discussed in this research work.

Such a relationship influences the individual's different behaviors and is the best and most reliable factor for judging the quality of the person's relationship with God.

In the relationship between man and God, such deeds as different types of prayers, seeking refuge in God, performing the religious duties, refraining from doing what is prohibited by the divine laws, being inclined towards the recommended rites (*Mustahabbat*).

But when we talk about having trust in God, we are in fact focusing on a certain aspect of the individual's relations with God that is often covert. Before being able to form such a relationship with God, the believer needs to have full faith in God's Omnipotence, Omniscience and Benevolence towards all His creatures.

Such an assurance enables the faithful believer to form a distinctly different type of relationship with God, manifested in the quality of his having trust in God.

If Molla Ahmad Naraqi categorizes "trust in God" in a chapter entitled "Favorable Opinion About the Exalted Allah" of his book *Meraaj-us-Sa'ada* (Ascension to Salvation), it is exactly due to this particular distinction.

This trust, from a mystical standpoint, is very important like friendship, or love, having trust in God, too, has different stages, the highest of which is "confidence in God".

If God likes those who have 'trust in Him it is mainly due to this highest stage of this quality, where He says in the Holy Qur'an:

"... for Allah loves those who put their trust [in Him]" (3: 159).

B: The individual who has trust in God is assured that (God's promises in Qur'an will definitely come true and also that God's goals will certainly be achieved. Thus, he would also be sure that man's efforts for the divine cause of God would never be fruitless or unrewarded.

In order to implement "trust in God" in practice in our deeds, we need to be able to distinguish between different types of our responsibilities, to recognize what our duty is, and to realize what is God's plan and what is our own plan. That is exactly where the distinctly clear role of God in our destinies becomes evidently clear, although His role is evident in every other aspect of our lives as well.

It is in such areas that we have to leave everything up to the Almighty Allah.

C: It is furthermore necessary to know in what areas we should rely on the quality of having trust in God and where it is illogical to depend merely on this eternal source of power.

In order to clarify the range of effectiveness of this quality we have to elaborate the following two points:

1. It is obviously clear that man has to do all his best to make a living and to use all his talents to solve his problems. When one cannot think of any way to manage one's affairs, one has to rely on his trust in God for saving him out of the tough conditions, from which one cannot manage to escape without God's assistance.

Meanwhile, there is nothing wrong with having full trust in God and at the same time doing all your best as well. You can take advantage of all the causes and effects, as well as all the material tools that are needed for saving you from tough situations, and at the same time have trust in God, who has put those qualities in those tools, or causes, and the capability and wisdom to use them in you.

One meaning of having trust in God is leaving everything up to Him and stopping to make one's own decisions. But that does not mean that we have to deprive ourselves of using the tools required for our purpose.

Moreover, to leave one's own affairs to God is one of the ways to transcend the normal avenues of getting things done in this world.

2. Any believer knows that his efforts would bear desirable fruits if they are compatible with God's will. This means although we have to do all we can in order to gain our desirable goals, but these efforts are by no means enough in achieving of those goals. God's approval, that is the divine seal guaranteeing favorable results, would have to be there.

Keeping the above-mentioned points in mind, we can define the quality of having trust in God as:

Having trust in God is one form of relationship between the individual and his Creator, in which, the individual fully believes in God's Omnipotence, Omniscience, Benevolence and Mercifulness. The believer who has trust in God actually feels he is at God's presence in performing all his deeds at all times.

Therefore, in order to succeed, he seeks God's assistance at all moments of life.

The individual who has trust in God also uses his wisdom in tackling his problems and takes full advantage of all the required material means, and his wisdom, but at the same time is sure that the precondition of reaching any goal is God's approval of his plans and His approval seal.

While Attributing occurrence of all the world events to God's Will, he is certain that God's Will is always

in his favor.

Analysing Factors Comprising Trust In God

The following factors were extracted from various verses of the Holy Qur'an, several sayings and traditions from the Prophet (S) and the Imams ('a), as well as the answers given to this researcher and his colleagues by university students and professors:

1. Attribution Of All The Occurrences And Events To Allah's Will

Those believers, who have full trust in the Exalted Allah, experience such a calmness and confidence that all sorts of anxieties and worries fade away from their lives. They can move towards their desired goals easily and strongly.

One of the characteristics of the believers who have trust in God is that they neither boast so much or get overjoyed when they gain success, nor get too sad and anxious when they lose worthy belongings or loved ones. Instead, they do their best in order to secure their goals but leave achieving the results up to God. They feel sure that they have God's assistance at all times and in all cases.

The feeling of these believers is comparable to one who has taken refuge at a fortified castle whose strong portals are locked to the enemies and outsiders.

These people have taken refuge in the castle of having trust in God. They believe nobody could break into the premises of this castle without God's permission and consent. That is why they neither ever get scared, nor have any anxieties.

2. Giving Divine Meanings To Life Events

The believers who have trust in God associate their lives' events with such meanings that help them to have clear interpretations of the phenomena of life. This leads them to reaching a state of cognitive and emotional equilibrium, which saves them from nihilistic tendencies, aimlessness, and useless wanderings.

These people do their best to achieve their goals, but if their efforts would not bear favorable fruits, they are sure that only God knows the end of all the stories and that they might not realize the blessing concealed in some defeats.

They believe in the Holy Qur'an's verse:

"... It is possible that ye dislike a thing which is good for you; or that ye love a thing which is bad for you. And Allah knoweth and ye know not" (2:216).

3. Being Optimistic About God

One of the other aspects of having trust in God is that the believer who possesses this quality always feels optimistically that God's blessings will shower on him in toughest situations of life.

Hoping for eternal salvation and reaching the ultimate goals, being sure that all the difficulties are preludes to desirable situations, having no doubt that God is on our side when we are fighting for his divine cause against the evil forces, knowing that He is the Light in the dark moments of life and would finally lead us to His Eternal Light are just a few of the abundant blessings of having trust in God.

The Muslim believer who has trust in God fully believes God's promises in the Holy Qur'an, and that is why he does not lose heart under the pressure of tough conditions of life.

There are many examples for God's direct interference in His pious servants' lives when they were trapped or in serious trouble. These examples calm down the believers who have trust in God when they are in trouble and rekindle the flames of hope in their hearts.

Some of the verse of the Holy Qur'an include:

“And [remember] Job, when he cried to his Lord, “Truly distress has seized me, and Thou art the Most Merciful of those that are merciful” (21:83).

“So We listened to him; removed the distress that was on him; and restored his people to him, and doubled their number – as a Grace from Ourselves, and a thing for commemoration, for all who worship Us” (21:84).

“And [remember] Ismail, Idris and Dhil-Kifl, all [men] of constancy and patience” (21:85).

“We admitted them to Our Mercy; for they were of the righteous ones” (21:86).

“And (remember) Dhannoun, when he departed in wrath; he imagined that We had no Power over him! But he cried through the depths of darkness, “There is no God but Thou; glory be to Thee; I was indeed an oppressor!” (21:87).

“So, We listened to him, and delivered him from distress; and thus do We deliver those who have faith” (21:88).

Therefore, having trust in God brings about calmness in the heart of a human being, because the believer is sure about fulfillment of God's promises and this state or certainty is so strong that it leaves no room for fear or for anxiety.

4. Playing An Active Role In Life

A careful survey of the Holy Qur'an's verses, sayings and traditions reveals the fact that having trust in

God, that is considered as the best quality found in all Prophets (‘a) and the pious believers, never contradicts doing our best in order to achieve our goals. Such a trust even encourages the believers to do all they can, while leaving the final result up to God.

When guiding the Muslims how to perform the Fear Prayer, for the Muslim combatants at the battlefield, God orders the pious Mujahidin to be divided into two groups. The first group should perform the congregational prayer behind the imam, while the other group should accept the responsibility of defending them so that the enemy will not succeed to launch an ambush while the Muslims are all praying.

“And when thou (O Messenger) art with them, and standest to lead them in prayer, let one party of them stand up (in prayer) with thee, taking their arms with them; when they finish their prostrations, let them take position in the rear, and let the other party come up, which hath not yet prayed. And let them pray with thee, taking all precautions, and bearing arms; the unbelievers wish if only ye were negligent of your lives, your arms and your baggage, to assault you in a single rush” (4: 102).

“But there is no blame on you if ye put away your arms, because of the inconvenience of rain, or because ye are ill; but take (every) precaution for yourselves. And for the unbelievers, Allah hath prepared a humiliating, severe punishment” (4: 103).

Elsewhere in the Holy Qur’an we read about when Jacob (‘a) was sending his sons to Egypt to the court of the King to buy wheat from him. He advises them to:

“...Further he said, ‘O my sons! Enter not all through the same one gate; but enter ye through different gates. And think not that I can profit you aught against Allah (with my pieces of advice), for none can command, except Allah; on Him alone do I put my trust; and let all who trust put their trust on Him” (12:67).

As you notice, in these verses all the suggestions regarding the necessary precautions to be taken in order to achieve a goal are made, but the final result is left up to God’s Will.

The authentic traditions that have been transmitted to us from our infallible religious leaders, the Prophet (S) and the Imams (‘a), all emphasize necessity of the individual’s own efforts. They encourage the Muslims to be hard-working and to have comprehensive plans, while not forgetting to have full trust in God.

There is a famous story about a desert dweller Arab who once attended the presence of the Prophet (S). The Prophet (S) asked him, “Where is your camel now?”

“I trusted God and left the animal untied in the desert!” replied the Arab.

“Tie the camel’s legs tightly and maintain your full trust in God,” suggested the Prophet (S). [1](#)

Blessings Of Having Trust In God

There are numerous blessings bestowed on those who trust in God. Some of these blessings, which influence the personal and social lives of these believers, are:

1. Peace Of Mind And Heart

One of the blessings of having trust in God is achieving peace of mind for the believers, whose hearts too, will be home to God's love, which leaves no room for fear or anxiety.

Moses ('a) was guiding his tribe towards the Promised Land amid the darkness of the night, trying to keep alive their faith in God in their hearts. The exhausted tribe that had walked all through the night noticed before dawn that the strong army of Pharaoh was chasing them. When the two groups encountered each other, the tribe of Moses ('a) were trembling with fear. They gathered around their prophet and said, "We are not strong enough to resist!"

But Moses ('a) told them to fear nothing because God was on their side:

"And when the two bodies saw each other, the people of Moses said, "We are sure to be overtaken" (26:61).

"(Moses) replied, "By no means! My Trainer is with me! And soon He will guide me!" (26:62).

Prophet Muhammad (S) was the epitome of having full trust in God. He had reached such a high state of mind and soul that when Abu Bakr got scared in the cave, where the two of them had taken refuge and the Prophet (S) noticed this fear in his behavior, he calmed Abu Bakr down, assuring him that God was with them

"If ye help him (the Prophet) not (it is no matter); for Allah did indeed help him, when the unbelievers drove him out (of Mecca); the two of them were in the cave, when he said to his companion, "Have no fear! For Allah is with us." Then Allah sent down His peace (of mind) upon him with forces which ye saw not and humbled to the depths the word of the unbelievers. But the Word of Allah is Exalted to the heights; for Allah is Exalted in Might, and He is Omniscient" (9:40).

2. Strength Of Heart And Unbelievable Might

Among the other blessings that are bestowed on those believers who have trust in God is that these servants of Allah have strong hearts and are unbelievably capable of making tough decisions.

The Prophet Muhammad (S) says:

"He who will be delighted if he would be the most popular person among the people, should fear God;

and he who will be delighted with being the strongest of all the people should have trust in God; and he who will be delighted if he is the wealthiest among the people should realize that [the wealth] that is at God's disposal is more secure than what is in his own hand²

The Holy Qur'an quotes Noah ('a) as saying:

“And relate to them the story of Noah when he said to his people, “Behold! O My people, if it be hard on your (mind) that I should stay (with you) and remind (you) the Signs of Allah; I will all the same put my trust in Allah. Get together ye then and come up to an agreement about your plan with all your partners; so that your plan be not to you dark and dubious. Then pass your sentence on me and give me no respite” (10:71).

“And if you turned away, I would not ask you any rewards. Indeed, my reward comes from Allah, and I have been ordered to be of those who have submitted” (10:72).

Also, the prophet Houd ('a) has a similar approach when he senses faithlessness in his people. Very bravely and frankly, he argues:

“He (Houd) said, “I call on Allah to witness, and do you (too) witness that I am free from the sin of ascribing other gods to Him as partners!” (11:54).

“So scheme (your worst) against me, all of you, and give me no respite” (11:55).

“I put my trust in Allah, my Trainer and your Trainer! There is not a moving creature, but [those who] He hath grasp of their forelocks. Verily it is my Lord that is on the Straight Path” (11:56).

And when Shu'ayb ('a) argues with his people, he shows the same strength of heart that is due to his full trust in God³.

3. High Self-Esteem

Having a high degree of self-esteem and living a dignified life among companions are among the other blessings of having trust in God. The believer who puts his trust in Allah relies on Him and is therefore relatively needless of the others. He will not plead to the people for a position of worldly belongings. Therefore, such a person enjoys high self-esteem and will be a respected personality in the society. Above all, since the Almighty Allah is Exalted, He will not let those who take refuge in him to live a wretched life.

“And put thy trust on the Exalted in Might, the Merciful” (26:217).

Or when he gives those who have trust in Him further assurance, saying:

“... But if anyone [has] trust in Allah, behold! [For] Allah is Exalted in Might, the Omniscience”

(8:49).

Ja'far ibn Muhammad As-Sadiq ('a), the sixth infallible Imam from the Holy Household of the Prophet (S) says: Needlessness, dignity and glory rotate [from place to place], till they spot [someone who has] trust in God, then they dwell there."⁴

Among the other blessings of having trust in God, we can refer to contentedness with life, leading a peaceful life, being pleased with what life has to offer us, logical optimism, and hoping for a better future. In order to avoid lengthy discussions, we will not discuss them here⁵.

Psychological Roots Of Having Trust In Allah

In psychological research works that have to do with perception of the individual of the extent of his control over his living conditions, we can find traces that help us understand the concept of having trust in God better and more easily.

Two of the famous theories in this regard is the Primary Control Theory of Rothbaum, Weisz and Snyder (1980), contrasted to the Secondary Control Theory of Band and Weisz (1988).

Primary control, which is more like the real and objective control, will be observed when the individual takes control of his affairs personally and pursues his goals in order to achieve favorable results.

Those who have an introvert approach toward the issue of controlling the events and affairs, assume they can change the circumstances in a way to match their objectives. These people act according to the pattern of the Primary Control Theory.

For these people the topmost point of control is when they succeed to apply their policies and change the peoples' minds as well as the circumstances in their own favor.

Secondary Control is observed when Primary Control becomes impossible. While in the process of the Primary Control, the person tries to change everything in a way to suit his purpose; in the process of the Secondary Control, he would try to adjust himself in a way to make the best of the current conditions.

When the individuals encounter uncontrollable situations, they resort to one or more Secondary Control strategies in order to maintain perception of having control over the affairs as much as possible. The most important types of Secondary Control are:

Vicarious Control

Those who adopt this kind of Secondary Control evaluate the situation to see who is in charge and in control over the affairs. Then they begin a process of effective self-assimilation with him so that they too would become eligible for taking control of the affairs in a similar manner. Such people feel they are qualified for taking control over the affairs and strong because they are allies of the person who has

control over the affairs.

Such characters encourage the strong and influential authorities, urging them to do certain things to get stronger and more influential. That is how they themselves feel they have control over the affairs through the stronger personality.

In other words, although these people might not have enough strength themselves, they properly take advantage of the power of the influential people in order to secure their own interests.

This theory is related to our discussion of “trust in God,” because the believers who trust in God, when they feel they can do nothing to change a tough situation in their own favor, due to their strong belief in God and his Might, make sure that He would change the course of events in their favor. They are always certain that God will never leave them alone when they are in trouble.

That is what gives the believer an unbelievable amount of strength, which does not allow him to feel alone, tired or desperate.

It was such a mentality that enabled Noah (‘a) to stand firm against all the threats, tortures and bullying of his people and announce:

“... O My people, if it be hard on your (mind) that I should stay (with you) and remind (you) the Signs of Allah; I will all the same put my trust in Allah. Get together ye then and come up to an agreement about your plan with all your partners; so that your plan be not to you dark and dubious. Then pass your sentence on me and give me no respite” (10:71).

“But if you turn back [consider] no reward have I asked of you: My reward is only due from Allah, and I have been commanded to be of those who submit to Allah’s Will [in Islam]” (10:72).

So much strength, bravery and feeling of having control over the matters under those tough conditions is due to Noah’s full trust in God, whom he had recognized as the Eternal Source of Power and the One that the source of all the developments in one’s life.

In order to have a better understanding of this aspect of having trust in God, we can focus on the mottoes of those who possess this quality. Below we have referred to a few of them:

1. I put my trust in the Living One, Who will never die.[6](#)
2. I put my trust in the Mighty, Omnipotent, Exalted One Who is the Highest.[7](#)
3. I put my trust in the Mighty, Omnipotent, Exalted One Who is Needless.[8](#)
4. There is no power except from Allah, and I put my trust on Him.[9](#)

In all these mottoes, when referring to the source of his trust, the person who trusts in God, refer to Him

as being the Living, the Omnipotent, the Mighty, the Exalted, the Highest, which is a sign that he feels himself on the side of this Source of Power that is stronger than all the material powers, hence the believer vicariously feels stronger.

And that is why the beloved Prophet (S) says:

*“He who is delighted to see himself as the strongest among the people should trust in God”*¹⁰.

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¹. Fayz Kashani, Molla Mohsen, *Al-Mahhajjat-ul-Baydha’ fi Tahdhib-il-Ahya’*, Vol. 7, p. 426.

². *Al Mustadrak*, Vol. 4, p. 270.

³. Refer to verses 7:88 and 7:89 of Sura Al A’raf of the Holy Qur’an.

⁴. Kulayni, Sheikh Muhammad ibn Ya’qoub, *Usul al-Kafi*, Vol. 2, p. 64.

⁵. For instance, refer to verse 15:56 of Sura al-Hijr, verses 12:83 and 12:87 of Sura Yusuf, and Verses 21:83–88 of Sura al-Anbiya.

⁶. Bihar ul-Anwar, vol. 76. p. 249.

⁷. Bihar ul-Anwar, vol. 98. p. 81.

⁸. Bihar ul-Anwar, vol. 98. p. 67.

⁹. Bihar ul-Anwar, vol. 43. p. 93.

¹⁰. *Al-Mustadrak*, Vol. 4, p. 270.

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