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Basic Preliminaries

Necessity of Obtaining Recognition

The possibility of a Beginning and a Return necessitates the study and the struggle to obtain religious recognition. The human being believes in the possibility that there may be a Creator for this world who is All–Knowing and All–Wise, that death is not the end of human life, that there is a purpose behind his creation, and that the Creator has made a law for him to follow, which if he does not implement, he will be placed in eternal adversity.

Human nature requires that he gives importance to this possibility; no matter how little it may be, because the outcome is enormously dangerous. Its prevention is to study the reality of this issue and not rest until and unless one reaches a clear result, either in its negation or confirmation.

It is like if someone suspects the presence of some explosives in his house, or if someone suspects an electrical fault that would cause the house to burn down with everyone in it. That person will not sit still for a moment; rather, he will search until he is certain that the danger is not present.

Human Need of a True Religion

Human beings are made up of body and spirit, and intellect and desires. Due to this composition, it is man's nature to search for material and spiritual privilege. He tries to obtain the perfection which is the purpose of his existence.

From another viewpoint, every human being has two aspects to his life: personal and social. Likewise, even though every part of the human body has its own function, it also has an effect in connection with all other parts of the body.

Based on this example, human beings require a system and set of laws in order to have a good personal and social life, and to achieve material and spiritual privilege.

This system and set of laws is that true religion, which the human nature necessarily requires:

Then set your face upright for religion in the right state—the nature made by Allah in which He has made men. 1

Hence, there is perfection for every being, which cannot be reached without following a specified practice for its perfection and nurture. Human beings are not exempted from this law:

He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to everything its creation, then guided it (to its goal).2

Effect of Religion on Personal Life

A human's life has a root and branches, a main text and margins. The root is the human being himself, while the branches and margins are his attachments such as wealth, status, spouse, children and relatives.

Due to the love human beings have for themselves and their attachments, they are connected to two scourges: distress and fear; distress over what he does not have and fear of losing what he does have.

Faith in Allah eliminates these two scourges from their roots, because faith in Allah, the All-Knowing, the All-Powerful, the All-Wise, the Most Merciful, makes the human being rise to his duties. When he performs his duties as a servant to his Lord, he knows that Allah, the Exalted, due to His wisdom and mercy, will make him reach what is good and prosperous for him, and He will save him from what would result in evil and regret.

All realities are metaphors when compared to the absolute reality, like a mirage which seems like water to the thirsty. When the human being finds the absolute reality, he will not miss anything. His faith becomes: What is with you passes away and what is with Allah is enduring.3

He does not find in himself any attraction for the worldly debris, to distress over not having something or fear for its decline:

Now surely the friends of Allah—they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve. Those who believe and guard (against evil): They shall have good news in this world's life and in the hereafter; there is no changing the Words of Allah; that is the mighty achievement.4

In this worldly life, the cause of nervous breakdowns in human beings is anxiety from the pleasure in conquering materialistic desires, and the fear and regret of not reaching them.

The only thing that gives peace to human beings in the waves of this flood is the faith in Allah:

So that you may not grieve for what has escaped you, nor be exultant at what He has given you5

Those who believe and whose hearts are set at rest by the remembrance of Allah; now surely by Allah's remembrance are the hearts set at rest.6

Effect of Religion on Social Life

The human being possesses the two faculties of desire and anger. If the faculty of desire of wealth overcomes him, then the treasures of the earth will not satisfy him. Even more, if the desire of status and power overtakes him, then even ruling the whole of the earth will not satisfy him. In fact, he will aspire to extend his sovereignty to other stars:

And Fir'awn said: O Haman! Build for me a tower that I may attain the means of access, the means of access to the heavens.7

Indeed, the oppressive human desires of hunger, lust, wealth and status, which are served by the faculty of anger to feed its endless desires, are not humble before anything. They do not stop at any boundary, nor do they turn away from wasting any entitlement.

A life with all these desires can only result in corruption in life. With this anger there is no result but bloodshed, which destroys tilth and stock. In fact, human beings are capable of using their intellectual powers to discover secrets of the universe in order to attain their unlimited evil desires. Thus, they will drag the human life on this planet to ruin and destruction.

Corruption has appeared in the land and the sea on account of what the hands of men have wrought. 8

The only power that can control the defiant human self, take hold of excess anger and desire, train him until he becomes modest and establishes personal and social rights, is the faith in Allah and the Return, and reward and punishment. For, indeed the belief in Allah, Who

(He) is with you wherever you are,9

and with the requital, which:

So, he who has done an atom's weight of good shall see it, and he who has done an atom's weight of evil shall see it. 10

This belief raises the human being to every good and stops him from every evil. Hence, they will follow the philosophy of reconciliation rather than struggle for existence.

Distinction of the Science of the Principles of Faith

Since it is a part of their nature, human beings love to seek knowledge. After all, what makes the human a human is intellect. The fruit of intellect is knowledge. This is why if you call an ignorant 'ignorant,' he

will be hurt, even though he knows that he is ignorant. On the contrary, if you called him 'knowledgeable,' he will be pleased, though he knows that he is not knowledgeable.

As Islam is the religion of nature, it has compared knowledge and ignorance to light and darkness, and to life and death.

Indeed, it (knowledge) is light. It arises in the heart of whomsoever Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, wills to quide. 11

A learned between the ignorant is like a living between the dead. 12

All sciences are distinctive in themselves. However, the status of all sciences is different based on a number of issues: the topic, the result, and the method of reasoning used in them. Thus, the science discussing the human is more honourable than that of studying plants, due to the honour of human beings over plants.

The science studying human safety is more honourable than the one studying the security of human wealth, due to the honour of the human being over his wealth. The science that results in evidence is more honourable than the one that results in supposition, due to the honour of certainty over assumption.

Based on this, the most honourable of all sciences is the one whose topic is Allah, the Blessed and Exalted. Bearing in mind that the connection between Allah, the Exalted, and other than Him is not that of the oceans to the drop, nor of the sun to an atom. Rather, it is of the Everlasting to those that are temporary. With a profound vision, it is not possible for the needy in essence to be compared with the Needless in essence:

And the faces shall be humbled before the Living, the Self-Subsistent. 13

The fruits of studying this science are faith and good deeds, both of which are the only means of human privilege in this world and the hereafter. They also fulfil the personal and social rights:

Whoever does good whether male or female and he is a believer, We will most certainly make him live a happy life. 14

The method of analysis used in this path is reasoning and proof that is useful for certainty, which leaves no path for conjecture.

- Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom, 15
- follow not that of which you have not the knowledge; 16
- surely conjecture will not avail aught against the truth. 17

Thus, the implication of this noble tradition is clarified: *The most honourable of all obligations, and the most important one of them, is for mankind to recognise the Lord and acknowledge the service to Him.* 18

Condition for Attaining Recognition and Faith in Allah

When a human being sees any visible existence, he looks and searches for its Creator. Human nature is thirsty for understanding the One who gives existence its beginning and its end.

However, the gem of faith in Allah and His recognition, which is the most precious gem from the treasure of knowledge and recognition, is not achievable by the one who is regarded as an oppressor to this faith and recognition. This is based on the rule of justice, because bestowing wisdom to the one who does not deserve it is oppression against wisdom, and holding back wisdom from one who deserves it is oppression upon the person who deserves it.

It is impossible for a human being to deny the belief in God and the Return in any state, unless he encompasses all beings and chains of all causes and effects, and still does not find God and the Return. So long as this does not happen, his certainty in the nonexistence of God and the Return is impossible. In fact, what is possible is ignorance of the two.

Consequently, justice demands that the nonbeliever in Allah's existence must follow the demand of doubt verbally and practically. He must admit not knowing and must not claim knowing the nonexistence of God.

For example, if one gives the possibility that a god may exist, belief in whom may cause him eternal privilege, and disbelief in whom may cause him eternal adversity; then his logical responsibility is to not deny Him with his tongue or heart and to always investigate about Him with all of his abilities.

He should take precaution in his practice so that he may not lose eternal privilege and should not be placed in eternal adversity, in case there is a God. That is just like the intellect commanding to abstain from tasty food which may contain poison that can cause death.

All those who doubt Allah's existence, if they did what justice demands them to do, will most certainly achieve recognition and faith:

And (as for) those who strive hard for Us, We will most certainly guide them in Our ways. 19

Otherwise, the stains of oppression regarding this reality make it impossible to achieve the recognition of that Holy Exalted God:

He grants wisdom to whom He pleases, and whoever is granted wisdom, he indeed is given a great good;20

and Allah causes the unjust to go astray, and Allah does what He pleases. 21

After consideration of these preliminaries we begin the explanation of the Principles of Faith:

- 1. Holy Qur'an, 30: 30.
- 2. Holy Qur'an, 20: 50.
- 3. Holy Qur'an, 16: 96.
- 4. Holy Qur'an, 10: 62-4.
- 5. Holy Qur'an, 57: 23.
- 6. Holy Qur'an, 13: 28.
- 7. Holy Qur'an, 40: 36-7.
- 8. Holy Qur'an, 30: 41.
- 9. Holy Qur'an, 57: 4.
- 10. Holy Qur'an, 99: 7-8.
- 11. Mishkat al-Anwar: pp 563.
- 12. Al-Amali by al-Mufid: pp 29, al-Majlis no. 4, hadith no. 1; Al-Amali by al-Tusi: pp 521, al-majlis no. 16, hadith no. 55.
- 13. Holy Qur'an, 20: 111.
- 14. Holy Qur'an, 16: 97.
- 15. Holy Qur'an, 16: 125.
- 16. Holy Qur'an, 17: 36.
- 17. Holy Qur'an, 10: 36.
- 18. Kifayat al-Athar: 262.
- 19. Holy Qur'an, 29: 69.
- 20. Holy Qur'an, 2: 269.
- 21. Holy Qur'an, 14: 27.

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