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# Chapter 1: In the outward dimension of this religion there is an inward dimension, and there are realities within the true form of this religion

We say: Existents [mawjudat – things that exist] from one aspect can be divided into two kinds. Any meaning which we intellectualize has either a correspondent in the external world existing in itself, such as external substances like minerals, plants, animals and so on, whether there is an agent of intellection [aqil] or not.

Or that its correspondent exists only in terms of how we intellectualize it and does not exist without this process, such as ownership.

Concerning the matter of ownership, one does not find anything in the external world called 'ownership' beyond the actual substance of the thing owned, such as land, and the substance of the 'owner', which is the human being, and it is this relationship that is called 'ownership'.

Therefore, the meaning of ownership is rooted in the process of intellection and thus had the process of intellection not existed, the concept of 'ownership', 'owner' and 'the owned' would not have existed and there would have only been a man and a piece of land.

The first kind of existent is called 'real' [haqiqi] and the second kind is called a 'mental construct' [itibari]

We have proven in our book al-l'tibarat that every mental construct is subsistent [mutaqawwim] of a reality behind it.

If we were to investigate and contemplate, we would find that all the notions determined by human beings and the relationships that exist between these very notions, like ownership and other specialties, leadership, relationships and issues related to them, etc., are all mental constructs and imaginary ideas

which, through their subjective import, compel men to consider them as his primary requirements for social life and civilization in order to secure what is good and beneficial, and to ward off evil and harm.

Just as a plant has a natural system operating within the cycle of its existence from organized natural properties that are extrinsic to it which protects its substance through nourishment, growth and reproduction, so too does the human being.

For example, the human being also has a natural system of properties that protects its substance, with the difference that this human system is mentally constructed system behind which is the natural system. The human being outwardly lives according to a mentally constructed system and inwardly lives according to a natural system. Understand this.

In generally: This mentally constructed system is existent within the context of society and civilization to the extent that if there was no society, there would have been no such mental constructs. This is an obverted contra positive of what has been mentioned above.[2]

Moreover, sincere reflection can prove that religion has presented and explained all the teachings related to the Origin and thee laws, and also the teachings regarding the world hereafter in a mentally constructed way.

Since socializing and co-operating cannot be considered outside the context of law they would have to be expressed in a mentally constructed way also. There are the other realities that are elucidated by this form of expression, as well as the levels of law.

In other words: In matters that precede this social life in worlds prior to the existence of social man and worlds succeeding this social realm that man faces after death where there is no civil society in it, these mentally constructed meanings do not exist.

Therefore, the teachings that are explained in religion which are related to these worlds speak about other realities, but are expressed through mental constructs, just as they do on the level of religious law. This is because the divine religion considers existent things that come after this life as consequential to the stage of laws and actions, and are also related and connected to them in reality.

The existence of a connection between two things is real, and it necessitates their unity with respect to the type of existence and origin, as we have proven in its proper place in other writings.

As these existents are real and external, there is a relationship or connection between them and the reality behind these mentally constructed things, and not between the things themselves. It has now therefore been proven that for the outward aspect of religion there is an inner aspect to it, and this is the desired conclusion.

## Addendum: Evidence from the Holy Quran and Traditions regarding the aforementioned

We Say: It is indisputable among all who refer to both the Book and the Sunnah that there are teachings, secrets and hidden sciences that are concealed from us that no one knows except Allah, may His name be exalted, and those whom he wills and accepts. The divine Book has many examples of this, and it suffices to only mention His saying:

"The life of the world is just a play and diversion." Quran 47:36

#### "But the abode of the Hereafter is indeed Life, had they known." Quran 29:64

Meaning, it is only the life hereafter that is the real and true life, by virtue of the fact that He Almighty mentioned this worldly life as a life of 'play and diversion'. He has done this by confining life only to the life of the hereafter and negating anything that might be considered similar to it or it being similar to anything. His words bear witness to this:

### "They know just an outward aspect of the life of this world, but they are oblivious of the hereafter." Quran 30:7

This verse indicates that the life of the world has something else besides its outward characteristics and this is the life of the hereafter because of the usage of the word 'oblivious'. It is similar to what a friend understands when you tell him: "You have grasped the outer meaning of what I said but you are unaware of something else". This saying of yours demonstrates that the friend was unaware of the hidden and intended part of your words which was something else.

The divine saying of Allah also proves this:

"So avoid those who turn away from Our remembrance and desire nothing but the life of the world. This is the ultimate reach of their knowledge. Indeed your Lord knows best those who stray from His way, and He knows best those who are [rightly] guided." Quran 53:29–30

It is understood from this verse that remembrance of Allah the Almighty is the path towards Him, and to turn away and avoid Him is to stray from His path. Remembrance of Allah Almighty can only be achieved by turning away from the life of the world, and those who turn away from His remembrance will only attain the knowledge of this world.

Furthermore, knowledge of this world cannot transcend and go beyond anything further in comparison to that which can be achieved only through remembrance. Therefore, there is something other than this worldly life that is vertical to it, and one could acquire knowledge of it or one could remain in this life of this world.

For more explanation, refer to what is written towards the end of this book, by the will of Allah the Glorious.

Among the traditions mentioned in this regard is a narration in Bihar al–Anwar, from al–Mahasin, narrating from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w) who said:

"We are the kinsfolk of the Prophets; we speak to people according to the capacity of their intellect." Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 1, p. 106, h.4.

I say: This expression can only be correct if people were not able to understand what they were listening to and this is evident. The Prophet (s.a.w) said: 'We speak...' and He did not say 'we say', 'we explain', 'we mention' and words like this. This confirms that the teachings given by the prophets (a.s) have been presented according to the capacity of the intellects of their people, changing these teachings from being hard to being easy.

However, this does not mean that a great amount of knowledge has been restricted out of leniency towards the [weak] intellects and limiting its accessibility to some and not to rest of the society.

In other words: The expression is dealing with quality and not quantity, and this shows that the realities these teachings have are beyond these intellects that follow teachings by demonstrative arguments (burhan), dialectics (jadal), and rhetoric (khitabat). The prophets (as) have perfectly explained their statements in every intellectual manner, from demonstrative arguments to debating and preaching, covering every possible way of teaching the people.

From what has been elucidated above, it can be understood that their sayings are on a level beyond the level of literal statements, and if they were to descend to the level of statements the common intellect would reject them, either because they are contrary to necessity in the view of people or because they would conflict with the statements that have been presented to the people which their intellects have accepted.

It also becomes clear that the manner of perceiving these teachings in their real form is different from the intellect's method of perception, which is through 'thought perception' [al-idrak al-firi]. So, understand this!

Here is another well-known, abundantly-mentioned tradition:

"Truly our speech is hard and difficult. No one can bear it except a near-stationed angel, a sent prophet or a believer whose heart has been tested by Allah for faith." Bihar al-anwar, vol 2, p. 189-192, h. 21-35.

This following tradition is more explicit than the previous tradition. It is narrated in al-Basa'ir from Abu al-Samit who said he heard Abu Abdillah al-Sadiq (a.s.) say:

"Truly amongst our uttering's are things that cannot be endured by a near-stationed angel, a sent

prophet, or a believing servant."

I asked: "Then who can endure it?"

He said: "We endure it."

I say: There are numerous traditions mentioned in this regard, some of which say: "And who can endure it, may I be sacrificed for you?" and He (a.s.) says: "Those who we want to".

It has also been stated in *al-Basa'ir*, narrating from al-Mufadil who said: "Abu Jafar al-Baqir (a.s.) said:

"Our speech is hard and difficult, incendiary and unembellished; a near-stationed angel cannot endure it, or a sent prophet, or a believing servant whose heart has been tested by Allah for faith. As for the hard, it is something that has not yet been ridden. The difficult is that which one would flee from it if it is seen. The incendiary is the flaring up of the believers.

The unembellished is that to which nothing is attached, not in front of it or behind it. It is as Allah says: "Allah has sent down the best of discourses." So, the best of discourses is our discourses. It cannot be endured by any intelligent being in its completeness without that person limiting it. And the person limiting it must be greater than it [the limited]. And praise is to Allah for success and denial is disbelief."

His saying from 'cannot endure' until 'without that person limiting it' and what is mentioned earlier on in the (previous) tradition about not being able to endure indicates that the sayings of the Imams (a.s.) have different level, some of which can be endured by limiting them.

The expression 'from our sayings...' in the tradition of Abu al-Samit proves what we have just mentioned, and therefore the purpose of these traditions and the first tradition that states, 'No one can endure it other...', all imply the same thing, that these sayings each have different levels of graduated intensity. In this vein one can also include the earlier Prophetic (s.a.w.) tradition, which says:

"We are the kinsfolk of the Prophets; we speak to people according to the capacity of their intellect."

The reason behind the limiting of their sayings (a.s.) by every individual of creation is because the capacity of every person in bearing something is limited in its own essence, thus making that which is borne to also being limited.

This is the reason for the impossibility of enduring their sayings in their most complete form, because their sayings are unlimited and therefore outside the limitations of possibility. This is their status given to them by Allah Almighty in which there is no limit restricting it, and this is the 'Absolute *Wilayah*'. This will be discussed more elaborately in the later chapters, by the will of Allah.

There are other traditions that support the aforementioned. It is stated in al-Basa'ir, narrating from Marazim that Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

"Our affair is the truth, the truth of the truth. It is the manifest, the inner of the manifest, and the inner of the inner. It is the secret, the secret of the secret, the hidden inner secret and the secret veiled by a secret."

Another traditions says:

"The Quran has an outward and an inward, as for its inward there is an inward until (it reaches) seven inwards."

And:

"Its outward is a rule, and its inward is knowledge."

It is mentioned in some traditions on predestination and freewill, as is quoted in al-Tawhid, narrated from Mahzam who says while having a discourse with Imam Sadiq (a.s.): I asked him:

"So what is it? May Allah make you more virtuous."

He turned about his hand twice or thrice, and then said: "If I was to answer you, you will become a disbeliever!"

It is ascribed to Imam Sajjad (a.s.) as having said in a poem:

"And if I reveal some of the substance of knowledge;

It will be said to me: You are of those who worship the idols!"

There are also the traditions concerning the appearance of the Awaited Savior Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten His reappearance) that after He appears he will disseminate the secrets of the shariah and the Quran will verify what He says.

It is stated in *al-Basa'ir*, quoting Mas'adah ibn Sadaqah who narrated from Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) who narrated from His Father Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) who said:

"One day I mentioned dissimulation (*taqiyyah*) to Ali ibn al-Hasan (a.s.) and he said: "By Allah if Abu Zarr knew what was in the heart of Salman, he would kill him, even though the Prophet (s.a.w.) had made them brothers."

In a tradition it states that Imam al-Bagir (a.s.) uttered some words to Jabir, and then said to him:

"If you make public my statements then upon you will be the curse of Allah, His Angels and all humankind."

There is another tradition in *al-Basa'ir* narrated by al-Mufadal from Jabir, and the summary of it as follows:

"He (Jabir) complained to Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) of distress in his self in enduring and concealing the sayings after Abu Jafar al-Baqir (a.s.). So the Imam ordered him to dig a hole, lower his head into it, speak what he endured, and then cover the hole again for the earth would conceal it for him."

I Say: The Traditions mentioned on this subject are extremely numerous. Some of the companions of the Prophet (s.a.w.) and the Imams (a.s.) were considered to be among the Bearers of Secrets, like Salman al-Farsi, Uwais al-Qarani, Kumail ibn Ziyad, al-Nakhai, Meesam al-Tammar al-Kufi, Rashid al-Hijri, and Jabir al-Jufi, may Allah Almighty be pleased with them all.

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