

Conclusion

We found out that face-to-face with natural and social factors and their clash and confrontation, man should not be a neutral observer. On the contrary, he should play a decisive and effective role in employing specific human powers. With his voluntary and conscious activity, man should use all (his) powers (by setting them) in the right track. He should mobilize them in the way of reaching the main objective and the ultimate perfection.

Without doubt, the power of reasoning is one of the human faculties that could aid this fruitful effort. Solidification of this power will have a tremendous impact on the process of man's development. Even Socrates (according to the different interpretations related from him) saw virtue in reason, learning and wisdom.

But Aristotle cavilled at him saying that many men possessed of learning and wisdom do not use them and thus are not qualified with ethical virtues. For this reason, (Aristotle believed that) it could not be regarded as the foundation of all virtues. By accepting this criticism we add that basically the function of perceptive powers is not to stimulate and instigate. Even divine guidance and illuminations transcending reason cannot spontaneously give rise to will-power and do not guarantee man's attainment of the desired perfection:

...“الَّذِي آتَيْنَاهُ آيَاتِنَا فَانْسَلَخَ مِنْهَا... وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنَاهُ بِهَا وَلَكِنَّهُ أَخْلَدَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ”...

"... Of him to whom we give our communications, but he withdraws himself from them.... And if we had pleased, we would certainly have exalted him thereby; but he clung to the earth and followed his low desire... (7: 175-176)."

The requirement of prosperity is the domination of the sublime desire to worship Allah (SWT) and the defeat of base carnal and satanic desires. At the same time however, we stress the significant role of man's power of reason in justifying (his) will-power. The reasoning faculty assists us in providing the preliminaries for selection and the manner of regulating and justifying them. These discussions are instances of its effects. As a result, we should always determine our course of action in the light of the

guidance of reason and we should prepare ourselves for the reception of divine illuminations.

The power of reason has great importance in determining the objective and recognizing the main course of action. However, it is not sufficient for the recognition of details of the course of action and exact plans. One must necessarily seek help from the *wahy* and reap benefit of the all-embracing programmes of religion. Thus it is exigent to strengthen the religious insight and to expand (the range of) awareness of religious sources and resources, as solidification of innate perception by means of heartfelt concerns and exercise to concentrate them in various forms of worship is an important – or rather the most genuine factor for true development. Recognition of all these realities takes place owing to reason and rational reflections.

But in this part of the discussion, it is of exceptional importance for us to know how to provide grounds for stimulating the sublime human demand and desire to reach *qurb* with Allah (SWT) and how to strengthen this demand and make it overpowering.

It was previously noted that at times, a desire is stirred due to actions and reactions inside the body. At other times, contact with external factors provides this. Still at other times it is due to psychological activities which are, in themselves stimulated by external stimuli. Normally instincts related to the branch of self-preservation are roused naturally with the first two factors. The philosophy behind the fact that their stimulation is not dependent on man's conscious activity is that man's individual and social existence in this world is directly related to the functioning of these instincts.

If the instincts were dependent on man's will and choice, they would be abandoned and no ground would be left for the process of development because of heedlessness or erroneous ideas. Yet after ground is paved for development, it is man's turn to reach perfection through voluntary activity. As man's true perfection is voluntary, the greater the range of free choice, the greater possibility will there be for voluntary development. For this purpose, the activity of the second branch of instincts, even the stimulation of the instincts and the determination of the means to satisfy them have been, to a large extent, entrusted to man so that he would reach a developmental result by preparing the means for it.

When a desire is stirred in man and when upon satisfying it, a pleasure is derived or a pain is removed, the soul will pay greater attention to it. In the second phase, this desire will appear in a stronger form. And finally as a result of its recurrence, it will be implanted in the soul. Likewise the soul will become interested in the external factor which promotes the action and which somehow serves as a means to fulfill the desire. In this state, we express love for such and such an act, object or person.

The requirement of love is the incessant concern of the soul for the beloved and the performance of deeds harmonious with this concern. So if we want to give a particular direction to our process (of development) and to mobilize all our powers for the attainment of a specific goal, we must strive for the persistence of the soul's concern for the objective and for its direction. We must do something, so that the soul would become acquainted with the objective and would develop strong love and affection for it.

Persistence of the soul's concern for and concentration on a single objective hinges on ignoring whatever is contrary to it and on abstaining from independently considering any other demand. The soul should employ all instincts at the service of its sublime and perfectionist demand and deem their satisfaction secondary to the fulfillment of this (main) demand. Success in this endeavour depends on a practical programme comprising specific positive and negative efforts to strengthen the desire for (reaching) perfection and theism: The most significant positive items of this programme are as below:

Worship and especially the timely performance of the *wajib* daily *salat* with full concentration and sincerity:

“قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ. الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ”

"Successful indeed are the believers who are humble in their prayers (23: 1-2)."

If possible, we should devote a part of our time to heartfelt remembrance (of Almighty Allah) and we should allocate an appropriate time and place to it:

“وَأذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ تَضَرُّعًا وَخِيفَةً...”

"And remember your Lord within yourself humbly and fearing ... (7:205)."

Continuation of this act would bring about the heartfelt intimacy with Allah (SWT), the pleasure of praying to Allah (SWT) and indifference towards material enjoyments. Likewise we should not abandon charity donations and sacrifice which are the best means to dispense with worldly pleasures and to purify the soul from being tarnished by the worldly affairs:

“...وَمَنْ يُوقِ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ”

"... And whoever is preserved from the niggardliness of his soul, these it is that are the successful ones (59:9)."

“لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ...”

"You shall not attain goodness unless you spend out of what you love... (3:92)."

“خُذْ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَتُزَكِّيهِمْ بِهَا...”

"Take alms out of their property, you would cleanse them and purify them thereby... (9: 103)."

Salat and charity donation are complementary to one another. It is perhaps for this reason that they are often cited with one another in the Holy Qur'an:

“...وَأَوْصَانِي بِالصَّلَاةِ وَالزَّكَاةِ مَا دُمْتُ حَيًّا”

"... And He has enjoined on me prayer and poor-rate so long as I live (19:31)."

Each day, we should allocate a part of our time to meditation over the features and signs of Allah (SWT), the goal behind creation, His infinite blessings and beneficence, determination of the sound course of action, the prolonged nature of the path, shortage of time and power, multiplicity of barriers (in the way), futility of worldly objectives, limited and infected nature of worldly pleasures, attachment of worldly pleasures to pains, hardships and afflictions, as well as other matters which encourage man to tread the path of servitude and which preclude him from egotism and mammonism.

“...إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ”

"... Most surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect (13:3)."

We should make a daily programme for the recitation of the Holy Qur'an with concentration and meditation. Likewise we should study the traditions, sermons, philosophical statements, jurisprudential decrees and ethical orders so as to always remember the objective and the sound means of reaching it, and so as to use them (as signals) to remind us of our desire to seek perfection.

“وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ”

"And certainly We have made the Qur'an easy for remembrance but is there anyone who will mind? (54: 17, 22, 32, 40)."

The most important negative aspects of this programme are as follows:

(1) We should not go to excess with regard to material pleasures, as these would habituate the soul with animal drives. In using worldly blessings, our motive should be to prepare the means for the development process. These means include salubrity, power and vivacity of the body for worshipping and being grateful to Allah. Among factors involved are fasting, not eating to satiety, saying little and sleeping little while observing moderation and health.

“وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ”

"And who keep aloof from what is vain (23:3)."

“...وَأَنْ تَصُومُوا خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ ۗ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ”

"... And that you fast is better for you if you know (2: 184)."

(2) We should control the sensory and visionary powers which could stimulate animal drives through association. We should especially safeguard the eyes and the ears from seeing sensuous scenes and hearing vain and amusing words and sounds. On the whole, we should abstain from whatever draws our attention to things that do not satisfy Allah (SWT):

“...إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَٰئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا”

"... Surely the hearing and the sight and the heart, all of these shall be questioned about that (17:36)."

(3) We should keep our thoughts from declining. We should especially avoid studying and discussing doubtful matters which we do not have the power to answer. If we occasionally conceive of doubtful matters or hear them, we should immediately set to find a convincing answer to them:

“وَقَدْ نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتَابِ أَنْ إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ يُكْفَرُ بِهَا وَيُسْتَهْزَأُ بِهَا فَلَا تَقْعُدُوا مَعَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَخُوضُوا فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ ۗ إِنَّكُمْ إِذًا مِثْلُهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَامِعُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْكَافِرِينَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ جَمِيعًا”

"And indeed He has revealed to you in the Book that when you hear Allah's communications disbelieved in and mocked at, do not sit with them until they enter into some other discourse; surely then you would be like them; surely Allah will gather together the hypocrites and the unbelievers all in hell (4: 140)."

"Whoever listens to (the words of) a speaker has worshipped him. Thus if this speaker represents Allah, the listener has worshipped Allah and if he represents Satan, the listener has worshipped Satan. [1](#)"

The point which must be kept in mind in the regulation and implementation of the programme is the observation of gradualness and moderation. That is to say, we should never inflict an intolerable pressure on ourselves because, in addition to bringing about rebellion and revolt in the soul, it might produce irreparable physical or psychological damage. As a result in drawing up a programme, it is apt to consult an informed and reliable person. On the other hand, we should not be slack in carrying out the specified programmes and we should not make excuses for abandoning them, because the continued pursuit of these programmes brings about useful results. At any rate, we should put our trust in Allah (SWT) and ask Him to grant us success.

“All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.”

1. Wasa' ilush – shi'a, Section on the Features of a Judge, chapter 10, wisdoms 9 and 13

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