

Lesson Three: A Rich and Fruitful School of Thought

The first condition for attaining the true goals of life, the lofty rank of happiness, and not least, a comprehensive and authentic system of governance, is to appreciate, in a precise and scientific way, the necessity for a message and a Messenger. This recognition will enable us to conquer new horizons and journey toward undiscovered and virgin territories of human thought.

The human being has extensive resources at his disposal and he may enter a network of guidance, both within his own being and within the world where he lives, through the laws that God has laid down for him. That guidance is protected against all deviation and error, and its bearer is preserved, through the inerrancy bestowed on him by the Creator, from all sin, error, and forgetfulness in the receipt, promulgation and implementation of revelation. Therefore, for those who draw their inspiration from sound thought, no doubt will remain that a system based on such guidance is able to secure the true interests, moral and material, of mankind.

The efforts of the Prophets in their summons to the human beings are directed to giving shape to God's rule over mankind, this being the most just form of rule conceivable. In such a system, the domination of the human being over the human being and his imprisonment in the grasp of demonic oppressors will be fully negated. The intrinsic value and force of the words of the Prophet derive from the fact that he is the bearer of God's message.

The knowledge of the true human being and of human reality forms the basis of the worldview and the planning of all Divine schools of thought. A school of thought that is based on the very creation of the human being, that is aware of all the dimensions of his existence, and that supervises with infinite knowledge all of his natural properties, is well able, in the course of its planning and elaboration of laws, to take into account all the fundamental and authentic concerns of the human being.

Setting itself against all ego worship, all desire for fame, all search for mastery over the powers of nature, the movement of the Prophets derives its substance from the Divine will; it is God Who is the

source of their actions. If the Prophets come into conflict with the human beings, it is fundamentally because of the limited ideas of the human beings; the Prophets attempt to bring to an end the narrow and limited vision of the human beings and to introduce them to a more productive mode of thought.

The distinctive feature of the system of governance established by the Prophets is the realization of justice in the true and comprehensive sense of the word. By virtue of the principles underlying the movement of the Prophets, the most just social relations come into existence in a way that edifies the human being's inner being. The equality of the human beings on a basis of brotherhood is translated into reality. It is therefore impossible to ensure social justice in the true meaning except by way of God's message.

At the same time, the schools of thought established by the Prophets give positive answer to the human being's profoundly felt need for freedom, and thereby break all the inner chains that fetter the human being's capacities, energies and will, and transform his vitality into stagnation. Parallel to this inner liberation of the human being, the Prophets also endow his outer life with freedom, setting him free from servitude to the tyrants of his age.

Under such conditions, there is no longer any question of laying down laws that are inadequate and erroneous, nor of rulers coercively enforcing their arbitrary will. For then, the legislator is God, God Who has created the world and all its inhabitants and knows in a precise and perfect fashion how to meet all the needs of the human beings in their various dimensions.

Similarly, there is no question of ignorance or imperfect knowledge or of the slightest degree of oppression and injustice; selfishness and self-interest do not exist. These are realities that deserve our deepest attention, and we must recognize the objective effect of all those ordinances which God has promulgated for the sake of social life and the resurrection of the human being. The Qur'an says:

"Who can rule better than God?" (5:55)

"God it is Who determines our social relations and rules over our deeds and conduct; He is the best of all rulers." (7:87)

"Do they desire the rule of ignorance, whereas there is no ruler better than God?" (5:50)

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the school of thought founded by the Prophets is that according to their teachings, the interests of society also benefit the interests of the individual, because the life of the human being never terminates, his interests being ensured by a long line that continued after his death.

Wherever the laws of heaven make their appearance and a prophetic mission, appearing as a Divine phenomenon, takes on the responsibility of responding to the intellectual, spiritual and material needs of the human being, as well as reforming both the individual and society – wherever this occurs, nothing

will be reflected but reality. With respect to God, the question of environmental conditions and susceptibility to the concepts prevailing in society and culture does not even arise; there is also no question of the effect of change giving thought a new direction. The factors that cause the human being to lose faith in his ability to attain the truth and perceive his true interests are thus totally negated.

In the Divine school of thought, it is faith, the symbol of the human being's intellectual ascent, which functions as a powerful support for ensuring the implementation of the law. This is another advantage of systems of governance based on religion, as well as being a gushing spring from which the reality of existence flows forth.

In societies that are founded by Prophets, the human being is commonly entrusted with the supervision of his own person; he relies on his own findings, acquisitions and efforts. At the same time that the human being is thus free, he feels an intense sense of responsibility toward God. He measures every act he wishes to undertake and every position he wishes to take up against the criteria of religion, and then personally assumes the responsibility for that act and position.

He knows that to act on the basis of duty will bring numerous fruitful results, and that if he turns his back on his duties, he must be ready to face harmful effects and to endure evil consequences. A sense of duty vis-à-vis the Divine laws that embrace all dimensions of human life causes the human being to submit to the will of God with all of his being.

The training of the human being in the school of the Prophets takes place in such a way that gradually his passionate inclinations gradually yield to truly human and Divine desires, permitting him ultimately to rise to the glorious station of servitude to God and being His representative on earth, this being the true nature of the fully evolved human being.

By contrast, in legal systems of human origin, where there is no question of religious belief in a legislator, law lacks moral underpinning and the ability to influence the human beings profoundly and comprehensively.

Everyone is constantly thinking how he might best shake off the constraints of the law, with the result that the implementation of the law faces all kinds of difficulty. Various coercive forces must be broadly deployed in order to ensure it.

If the law contradicts the desires of the people, the task of its implementation becomes particularly complex and difficult. When such a law is enforced, it will be met with a storm of anger, dislike and repulsion, and it is only pressure that can then impose it.

No Guarantee for the Implementation of Human Law

It is, of course, possible to find people in society who believe in and adhere to laws and regulations of human origin, but it must be affirmed that such individuals are extremely rare and form the exception.

They certainly do not represent the average member of society and cannot be regarded as a principal support of the social order. The practical effectiveness of a conscience that is not guaranteed by religious faith or principle is, moreover, very slight when compared to effectiveness of religious beliefs.

It must, therefore, be accepted that this advantage deriving from the teachings of the Prophets is restricted to the heavenly religions. If the spirit of people is nurtured with faith in God and religious belief serves as a support for legal principles, law takes on a universal aspect, and its implementation is guaranteed to a degree superior to the ability of human laws to influence the human beings.

Since belief has its roots in the activity of the existential mechanism of the human being and since it plays a basic role in the structure of human personality, profoundly altering the conditions of the soul, the human being comes to believe in and adhere to the laws of religion not only with his brain but with the entirety of his being. The certainty that religion shines like a light in the depths of the human being's being, illumining it and warming it at the same time.

The impetus that religion can create in the human being cannot be found in any non-religious school of thought. Experience has shown that other schools of thought are unsuccessful in this respect, because it is religion alone that relies on the heart, and the more firmly rooted faith becomes in the heart, the more it will serve as a source of dynamic activity.

The human being witnesses today the elaboration and ratification of laws on the part of societies that officially recognize all the human beings, irrespective of racial, national, religious or geographical differences, as possessing certain rights and values.

Nonetheless, although scientific advances have created today more suitable conditions for the acceptance of reality, the attitude of different groups to the laws that represent their own accomplishment is entirely negative and denies those laws any influence or value.

What people accept in theory they do not observe in fact.

Whenever the law concerns them directly and their interests and desires are threatened, they will not hesitate to cross the boundaries of the law, to perform inhuman acts, and to engage in trickery and sabotage. It is obvious that the attitude of others towards laws of this nature will also not be one of positive acceptance.

This disregard for the value of the human being, this violation of law and the expansion of political struggle and conflict, the unhealthy economic rivalries of powerful states with most countries in the world, the tempestuous waves of social crisis and moral corruption – all this shows clearly how shaky and un-firm is the position of man-made laws, how slight are their influence and standing from the point of view of implementation, and how limited is the sphere of their rule.

A brief look at the manner in which the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has been observed and

implemented suffices to show that the only effect this declaration has had consists of the celebration of festivals, and the delivery of empty, meaningless lectures.

If we follow, step by step, the development of religious ideas among the masses of humanity, will this not cause us to conclude that non-religious principles, which do not derive from exalted concepts, are weak and inadequate? Will it not bring us to believe firmly in the veracity and truthfulness of religious systems which are nurtured with the power and majesty of the Lord of all creation and the influence of whose culture and ideology on the entire cultural life of the human being becomes more fully known every day through the researches of thinkers?

We must look at results, at the fruits that different schools of thought have borne in human society. Is not the reason for the failure of human laws in ensuring the human being's progress and happiness not to be sought in their having remained ignorant of the true nature of the human being and their neglect of his real needs and creative abilities?

All of this serves to elucidate a single truth: that belief in the school of thought of the Prophets is a guarantor for the life of society, a support for all healthy relationships among the human beings, and a protector for the oppressed masses, and it has always bestowed the gift of freedom and brotherhood on mankind.

Whatever society, group or system does not set its face on this path and does not respond affirmatively to the liberating summons of God's Messengers to a more elevated life, will never experience true prosperity and salvation.

The school of thought of the Prophets has provided penal laws for those persons who may exceptionally transgress against God's law. These laws weigh the offense carefully and specify a punishment corresponding to the degree of seriousness of the crime and take into consideration the situation of the criminal.

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