

Orders of Existence

There are two orders in the beings of the world. We can call them the longitudinal order and the transversal order. The longitudinal order is the place of things in the cause and effect chain of creation. In the language of religion, Angels, The Book (of Allah), The Distributors, The Pen and so on, all show of a certain order and arrangement in existence.

This order is not formal but necessary. In this order, the flame of a matchstick cannot compete with the Sun, and the change of a possible thing into something necessary is not imaginable. A cause cannot change its place with its own effect (at the same time and place).

All the mistakes that we make that why 'this' couldn't have been in the place of 'that' or why an imperfect being can't change its place with a perfect being is because we have not understood the necessary and essential relations of things. We compare the existential order with conventional orders and social stratifications.

We think that when we can change a manager with his worker, or a landlord with a peasant, then why couldn't have a sheep been a human being. When the exploited workers and proletariat can overthrow and replace the rich exploiters, with belief and class struggle, why couldn't have God made a lame person a perfect athlete.

This is impossible, because the cause being the cause and the effect being the effect is not conventional or formal. If 'A' is the cause of 'B' it is because there is something in the nature of 'A' that has made it the cause.

Also, the specification of 'B' has made it relate to 'A' and this specification is nothing but those attributes that have made 'B' exist. Once you take the specifications away from 'B,' you are left with something else and not 'B.'

These specifications are real and not conventional or transferable. Take the number '5.' It comes after '4' and before '6.' You cannot put '5' anywhere else without losing its identity. If you put it, say, before '4' it will be '3,' even if you call it '5.' You cannot change the reality of '3,' although you change its name. [1](#)

Between all creatures of the universe exists such a deep and existential order. If you take anything out of its existential place, it will lose its substance and will not be the same thing anymore. If you give four sides to a triangle instead of three, it is not a triangle anymore; in fact it is a square. Ibn Sina (Avicenna) has a nice sentence here. He said: "God did not make apricots into apricots, but He created apricots." What it means is that there was no stage when all the fruits were equal and then God discriminated between them.

Each fruit is unique. This uniqueness, applies to different beings and personalities as well. The holy Qur'an says:

".....Our Lord is He who gave unto everything its nature, then guided it aright " (20:50).

In another place it says:

"Our word for a thing, when We intend it, is only that We say to it: . Be! and it is " (16:40).[2](#)

Now, let us go on to the transversal order:

The transversal order determines the temporal and material conditions of phenomena. And it is with this order that history takes a definite and certain form. Qur'an refers to this order of existence in this way:

"...., and you shall not find any change in the course of Allah " (Qur'an, 33:62) .

Some of these deterministic laws are mentioned in the Qur'an, like this law:

"Allah changes not the condition of a people until they change that which is in their selves?" (13:11)

A wonderful sentence from a wonderful Book.

Now, to sum up this section:

1. The universe has orders and necessary laws, and every phenomenon is within that system. Our freedom is also in harmony with that system.
2. For the universe to have an order, there should be differences and stages in existence; and this is the cause of imperfections.
3. Differences are not created. It is a necessary attribute of creatures, and God has made no discrimination between creatures.
4. What is against justice is discrimination and not difference, and in the universe there is difference and not discrimination.

Now that we have understood this section, let us go back to the benefits of suffering for the individual.

1. Extracted from `Adl-i ilahi by Murtadha Mutahhari

2. This is not contradictory to evolutionary theories, given that they are valid, since the question still remains that why one evolved into that thing and the other into another thing.

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