

Translator's Epilogue

From the brief introduction to the issues of jurisprudence that has been given here, it is to be seen how jurisprudence, like the Shari'ah itself, enters into all the aspects of Islamic life, a necessity if life is going to be Islamic.

One of the results of this has been that there has never been general agreement as to how the different issues of jurisprudence (or, in other words, the laws of Islam) should be classified, as to justly arrange and classify the different aspects of life, even Islamic life, is very difficult. After the success of the Islamic revolution in Iran, however, a new development has taken place in this regard, which, although such classifications are of minor importance, and although it is yet to be seen how this new classification can be adapted to the existing classifications, promises to revolutionize the outward appearance of jurisprudence.

The new classification is wonderful in its simplicity. It divides all the Islamic laws and legislations into four groups, under the headings of "Worship and Self-Perfection", including the issues of cleanliness, ritual prayer, fasting and the *Hajj*; "Economic Affairs", which includes *khums*, *zakat*, endowment, partnership, etc.; "Family Affairs", including marriage, divorce, wills and inheritance; and "Political Affairs", which includes arbitration, Islamic punishments, the jihad of defense and so on.

As has been said, the sum of the Islamic teachings are basically divided into three: knowledge of the unseen reality, knowledge of the perfection of one's inner self, and knowledge of the perfection of one's external actions. Perhaps the reason why of all three it is the least important external actions that have been given such importance within the schools is that they are less inherent than belief and virtue and are, therefore, more demanding of the intellectual capacities, and are dependent upon the other two.

That is a person having some knowledge of God, Prophethood, Imamate and the Hereafter, may become engaged solely in the struggle to purify himself, attaching no more concern to his external actions than ensuring that they accord to his moral values. A person who has a mastery of the external laws of actions, however, cannot be without sure knowledge of the realities and sublime moral excellence.

To learn and act according to the Shari'ah without certainty or at least profound and sincere belief, without moral excellence and without a well trained intellect is almost impossible . If one has scant knowledge of the realities, or has knowledge of the realities but little virtue, one will never see the point of adhering to the intricacies of living according to the Shari'ah.

Therefore, although the teaching of jurisprudence is the centre of all the religious institutions, the two more urgent studies also have their place. If the students of jurisprudence did not themselves develop their knowledge of the realities and of self-perfection, there simply would not be any students of jurisprudence; the laws of the Shari'ah would be forgotten and many of the words and commands of God, the Prophet and Imams would no longer be acted upon because they would no longer be understood

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