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A Healthy Society under the Grace of Ethics

Without ethic, the plan of a healthy society is defeated

We know that man has a social life, and undoubtedly, "society" is the most important factor in development, improvement and or retardation and degeneration of men.

The sociologists believe that man without society loses everything (sciences and knowledge, mental perfection, affections, and even speaking and similar subjects).

The situation of children being isolated from the human society for any reason, and trained in an inhuman environment, like "forest", besides wild animals, proves this matter. In history, we have repeatedly observed such children. Neither they could speak and comprehend high concepts of human life, nor there was any trace of humanistic affections in them, and their behavior and deed was just like wild animals of forest.

Observing the situation of desert wanderers and nomadic tribes, whose society is very limited and small, and their communication with others is less, is a good proof for showing that if man loses the society, what will be his destiny!

This and a lot of other evidences exactly approve the belief of sociologists that "society is prior to the individual". Of course, an individual as a "living being" may be prior to the society, but as a "human", he will not be prior to the society.

And also for this reason, the more social relations of man develop, the more his civilization, although in special aspects, improves.

Facility of communication tools in the present world, which has caused more proximity and contact of individuals, is one of the main causes of formation of present civilization, and also is considered as a criterion for assessment of degree of civilization in different countries of world.

Privileges of man's social life

Of course, social life is not restricted to man, because we know a group of insects as "social insects", like honey bee and termite, which enjoy a considerably respectable social life, and there is also a group of "social birds" among the birds, like swallows and storks, and there is a class of "social animals" among the wild animals like most of the monkeys.

Social life of such animals may be even more developed than men in some aspects. For example, in the beehive even does not exists an idle and hungry one, while it is not so in the most developed industrial countries of world.

Method of distribution of work and income among them is very interesting and strange, and is peerless in human environments.

However, their social life has two basic differences, totally separating them from man's social life:

a- Social life of animals, whatever superior and more developed it may be, is limited to special parts, and the appearances of their social life are only summarized in some limited subjects, including nest, collecting purveyance, training infant, and such like, while the appearances of social life in man are much more, and approximately infinite, and not restricted to one or more subjects.

b- Social life of animals is completely uniform and without any change and alteration, and in other words, they are always repeating the same so that for example, the present beehives are completely similar to the petrified beehives of several millions years ago which are discovered currently, and this certifies that engineering and in general, form of their life is not changed during these long years.

While even during one century or less, the form of social life of man is so changed in all stages that basically it is not comparable with the past.

These two great differences distinguish man's social life from other animals.

In summary, whatever perfection a man has achieved, either in mental, practical and moral aspects, or in material and industrial sections, or the other sections, he has indebted to the society, and without society, the civilization and humanity and such like will never be meaningful.

Source of formation of society

There are a lot of words among sociologists about why man has exceeded social life, and accepted its relatively difficult rules and regulations, but typically we can mention following opinions:

1- Some believe that sense of solidarity is included in man's nature, and he seeks for the society according to an instinctive inspiration.

2– Some others say fearing dreadful natural factors and wild animals has been the cause of first tendency of man to social life.

3– Some others believe that the "instinct of employment", existing in man, has made him to social life.

4– Some others say present social life is the result of a series of customs and habits, which has gradually led to this form.

5– Some others recognize development of man's requirements and his disability in fulfilling them as the factor of man's social life.

6– Some believe that man's social life is the result of family life and gradual expansion of families.

7– And finally some say that discovering this concept that why man has intended to social life since millions of years ago when man is created, is not possible. Because, lapse of centuries and ages has obscured this and similar issues and we do not have sufficient documents available for judging in this respect.

Although the recent view seems more realistic than the other opinions and judgments about the main cause of man's attention to the society in the past is not an easy task, but obviously first of all, present continuation of this social life is indebted to "desire in perfection" and "development of man's requirements" and "disability in fulfilling them".

It should be explained that on one hand man sees that his corporeal requirements including cloth, food, house, medicine, and his spiritual requirements, including sciences, knowledge, training, various tastes and initiatives, and feeling spiritual security and attracting others' affections are so extensive and numerous that it is not possible for one to fulfill all of them alone. Rather, supplying each of these requirements, according to the fastidious nature of human, should be performed by the individuals and groups being proficient and skillful in their task.

And on the other hand, man's escape from monotony and uniformity of life and willing to a better and more perfect life,–the features of man's life, which are rarely found in the animals, make him to join social life, because this objective is not possible unless thanks to the accumulation of different thoughts, powers and talents. These two are the most important factors making man to continue his social life.

Social value

Although, all people are the same in all regulations in view of social rights, and the principle of equity before law is one of the most basic foundations of progressive legal rules, but observance of this principle does not account that value of individuals is actually equal in the society.

Rather, it is mostly due to unavailability of any other way for preserving discipline and preventing

misuses of the arrogant and influential classes and colonization of man by man. Otherwise, it is undeniable that social value of individuals is very different.

For example, the existence value of a resourceful, gracious and competent scientist is never equal with an illiterate, improvident and vicious person. But if we want to consider privileges in view of social rights, it will result in the corruptions, the harms of which are much more than observance of difference in social values.

In general, social value of individuals depends upon the degree of utilization of the society from them, and the wisely valuable utterance of Prophet (S) in this respect may refer to this reality, where he says:

«خَيْرُ النّاسِ اَنْفَعُهُمْ لِلنّاسِ».

The best people are the most beneficial ones.[1]

Islam and social concerns

Undoubtedly, no religion has respected relation of individual and society, and has strengthened the social chains by its decrees and regulations like Islam. Of course, a divine and eternal religion, guaranteeing education of hidden talents of man, and his perfection and progress should certainly be so.

For understanding the importance of society in view of Islam, and special concern of Islam to this subject, studying following instructions is sufficient:

1- If you do not surprise, there is not even one individual instruction among the basic instructions of Islam! The best reason is enactment of Islamic jurisprudence, consisting of sorbs, transactions and policies. There is no need for explaining the sociality of the second and third parts making the major part of jurisprudence. In the first part too, which is based on relation of creature with Creator, the spirit of society patently governs on it.

Daily obligations, which are the most important Islamic sorbs, are so mingled with social concepts that separating them is difficult, and when they are performed individually it seems that they have lost their real sense.

For instance, the introduction of prayer, which is "prayer call and prayer perform" is nothing else than a public invitation and declaration to the society, and performing this obligation in congregation, and in case of solitude, it does not have any sense save preserving a practice and establishing a sort of mental readiness for inclusion in this obligation.

Al- Hamd sura, which is the beginning of the prayer and includes the main invocation and supplication, is uttered in a plural form (**نَعْبُدُ ـ نَسْتَعينُ ـ اِهْدِنا**). And the salutation at the end of prayer is in a plural form,

and in case of solitude, it nearly loses its main concept. All of these indicate that the foundation of this great obligation is based on society, and moreover, strange and unique emphases are made in respect to performing this obligation in congregation.

Among Islamic sorbs, pilgrimage is stronger than the others in view of disregard to the material world and its formalities, attachments and privileges, and notice to the realities is observed therein very strikingly, but it is strange that nevertheless in view of "social appearance" and its effects, it is stronger and more rooted than all other sorbs.

2– Importance of social relations in view of Islam is so high that it is considered as one of the signs of God and indications of monotheism, where it says:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً

And of His signs is this: He created for you helpmeets from yourselves that ye might find rest in them, and He ordained between you love and mercy. (***30:21***)

3– Holy Qur'an reiterates that one of the miraculous deeds of Prophet (S) was creation of more friendship among the hearts, where it says:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَيَّدَكَ بِنَصْرِهِ وَبِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ

وَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ ۚ

He it is Who supporteth thee with His help and with the believers,
And (***as for the believers***) ***hath attuned their hearts.*** (***8:62, 63***)

The above verse makes an interesting reference to this point that material things could not create friendship alone, because they themselves, in contrary with belief and spirituality, are the causes of scattering, disturbance and struggle.

It is remarkable that in this phrase of Qur'an, confirmation of the believers is immediately mentioned after divine confirmation, and this shows the high importance of the subject.

4– Qur'an calls scattering and hypocrisy as one of the divine chastisements:

قُلْ هُوَ الْقَادِرُ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَبْعَثَ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابًا مِنْ فَوْقِكُمْ أَوْ مِنْ تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِكُمْ أَوْ يَلْبِسَكُمْ شِيَعًا وَيُذِيقَ بَعْضَكُمْ بَأْسَ بَعْضٍ

Say: He is able to send punishment upon you from above you or from beneath your feet, or to bewilder you with dissension and make you taste the tyranny one of another. (***6:65***)

And somewhere else Qur'an has placed it besides the burning fire, which swallows and incinerates everything:

وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْهَا

And (***how***) ***ye were upon the brink of an abyss of fire, and He did save you from it.*** (***3:103***

5- Qur'an calls the relation of believers "brotherhood" which is the nearest and more respectful family relations established based on equal and mutual respect.

6- In Islamic instructions, there are a few sins equal with creating enmity and scattering among people, as there are a few good deeds equal with bringing hearts of people together.

It is narrated from Imam As-Sadiq (A.S.) in Ehtejaj book:

«اِنَّ مِنْ اَکْبَرِ السِّحْرِ النَّمِیمَةُ یُفَرَّقُ بِها بَیْنَ الْمُتَحابّیْنَ وَ یُجْلَبُ الْعَداوَةُ عَلَی الْمُتَصافِینَ وَ یُسْفَکُ بِهَا الدِّماءُ وَ یُهْدَمُ بِهَا الدُّورُ وَ یُکْشَفُ بِهَا السُّتُورُ، وَ النَّمّامُ اَشَرُّ مَنْ وَطِیءَ الْأَرْضَ بِقَدَم».

The most important charm (in view of effect of causing disunity) is gossip, which causes dispersion among the friends and attracts enmity. A lot of bloods are shed as a result of it, and the houses are ruined, and the secrets and mysteries of people will be disclosed. The informer is the worst one stepping on the earth.[2]

Moreover, it should be considered that in some of Islamic traditions, charm is compared with blasphemy.

7- Islam even does not permit Muslims, save in exceptional cases, to sulk each other so that their amity is weakened and the cordiality of their friendship is decreased.

In the numerous traditions being narrated from Islamic leaders in this respect, it is forbidden in a harsh tone in more than seven traditions, and if inevitable, its permitted limit is determined to be three days.

Prophet (S) says:

«لا یَحِلُّ لِمُسْلِم اَنْ یَهْجُرَ اَخاهُ فَوقَ ثَلاثَةِ اَیّام».

It is not permitted for a Muslim to sulk more than three days with his religious brother.[3]

And in another tradition, he says:

«نُهِیَ عَنِ الْهِجْرانِ، فَمَنْ کانَ لابُدَّ فاعِلا فَلا یَهْجُر اَخاهُ اَکْثَرَ مِنْ ثَلاثَةِ اَیّام، فَمَنْ کانَ هاجِراً لِاَخِیهِ اَکْثَرَ مِنْ ذلِکَ کانَتِ النّارُ اَوْلی بِهِ».

Sulking is forbidden, and one who performs it of necessity, shall not be in sulks with his brother more than three days. One, who is in sulks more than this, is more worthy of the Fire.4

In these traditions, Islamic leaders have introduced continuation of sulk as exclusion from Islam's reality, and taking the lead in placation as the cause of taking the lead in entry to paradise.

8- In Islam, kindness, friendship, equality, assistance and cooperation are the certain duties of each Muslim, and all are obliged to observe these principles.

We read in a tradition from Imam As-Sadiq (A.S.):

«یَحِقُّ عَلَی الْمُسْلِمِینَ الاِجْتِهادُ فِی التَّواصُلِ، وَ التَّعاوُنُ عَلَی التَّعاطُفِ، وَ الْمُواساةُ لِاَهْلِ الْحاجَةِ، وَ تَعاطُفُ بَعْضِهِمْ عَلی بَعْض، حَتّی تَکُونُوا کَما اَمَرَکُمُ اللهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلّ رُحَماءُ بَیْنَهُمْ».

It is obligatory for the Muslims to try for bringing their hearts together, and do not neglect cooperation mixed with kindness, observe equity among the needy, and express their affection to each other to become the proof of utterance of God "they are kind with each other".5

9- Islam has not only mentioned the matters of friendship, kindness, social cooperation, and equity as a command and obligation, but also has offered comprehensive plans for bringing forth these commands.

Thus, in one hand Islam has forbidden the factors causing dispersion, hypocrisy and scattering, including slander, gossip, overriding, strictness in adjudication, suspicion, mis-nomination, too much humour, and on the other hand has eulogized the factors resulting in consolidation of kindness, friendship and mutual trust, such as visiting, shaking hands and embracing, good opinion, expressing friendship to each other, defending the reputation of each other in one's absence, reconciliation of difference and disunion, attempt in fulfilling supplications of each other and such like, and thereby Islam has founded a humanistic society in its full sense based on real affections, and has proceeded this issue as far as has called it one of the most essential means of life.

Prophet (S) says:

«اِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنَ لَیَسْکُنُ اِلَی الْمُؤْمِنِ کَما یَسْکُنُ الْقَلْبُ الظَمآنُ اِلَی الْماءِ الْبارِدِ».

The same tranquility, which the thirsty feel when finding water, the believers feel in solidarity with each other.6

Furthermore, it is inferred from this interpretation that the need of society's individuals to social life is based on a natural and normal need, without which it is not possible for a man to live.

10- It is noteworthy that Islam has never contented to any limit of social relations, and is continuously trying for making these relations more strong and nearer, and proceeds in this part as far as it says: there should be such a spiritual relation among the believers that even their bodies are influenced.

Prophet (S) in a tradition says:

«اَلا وَ اِنَّ وُدَّ الْمُؤْمِنِ مِنْ اَعْظَمِ سَبَبِ الاِْيمانِ ... اَلا وَ اِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنَيْنِ اِذا تَحابّا فِى اللهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ وَ تَصافَيا فِى اللهِ كانا كَالْجَسَدِ الْواحِدِ اِذَا اشْتَكى اَحَدُهُما مِنْ جَسَدِهِ مَوْضِعاً وَجَدَ الاْخَرُ اَلَمَ ذلِكَ الْمَوْضِعِ».

Pay attention that friendship with a believer is one of the greatest causes of belief, and two believers who make friends with each other for God, become like a body so that when one of them feels discomfort in one part of his body, the other too feels pain in the same part.7

It is deduced from above tradition that sometimes friendship and relation of two believers becomes so strong and solid that their bodies are unified, and when one of them feels discomfort in one of the organs of his body, the similar organ will become painful in the body of the other without any special cause. That is to say the relation of spirits is so strong that the complications of each body are transferred to the other (as it is narrated about some of Prophet's (S) companions).

This is not unlikely considering two introductions.

First, the relation of spirit with body is so close that mental discomforts leave a deep effect in the body. Nowadays, psychiatrists believe that most of physical diseases do not have any special physical cause, such as organ disorders or microbes, and are merely the effect of mental distresses.

Second, it is currently proved that transmission and exchange between two minds is possible even from remote distances. In other words, two persons can create a mental relation with each other through a particular spiritual agreement and or exercise without any physical means, and transmit their thoughts to each other's brain. This is called telepathy.

So, it is possible for distresses of a person to be transmitted to his friend through mental relation, and then that particular distress will influence on his body, and make the similar organ painful.

11- Joining to great assemblies: Islam instructs people to join greater assemblies.

Imam Ali (A.S.) in a sermon for repressing the thoughts of divisive minority of "Kharijites" (Rebels) says:

«وَ الْزَمُوا السَّوادَ الأَعْظَمَ فَاِنَّ يَدَ اللهِ مَعَ الْجَماعَةِ وَ اِيّاكُمْ وَ الْفُرْقَةَ فَاِنَّ الشّاذَّ مِنَ النّاسِ لِلشَّيْطانِ كَما اَنَّ الشّاذَّ مِنَ الْغَنَمِ لِلذِّئْبِ... وَ اِنَّما حُكِّمَ الْحَكَمانِ لِيُحْيِيا ما اَحْيَا الْقُرْآنُ وَ يُمِيتا ما اَماتَ الْقُرْآنُ، وَ اِحْياؤُهُ الاِجْتِماعُ عَلَيْهِ وَ اِماتَتُهُ الاِفْتِراقُ عَنْهُ».

Be with the great majority because Allah's hand (of protection) is on keeping unity. You should beware of division because the isolator from the group is (a prey) for Satan just as the isolator from the flock of sheep is (a prey) for the wolf. Certainly the two arbitrators were appointed to revive what Qur'an revives and to kill what Qur'an kills. Revival of Qur'an means uniting each other and acting accordingly, and killing it refers to scattering and isolation from it.[8]

Studying in the life of predecessors too indicates that smaller societies have been always more retarded in view of culture and appearances of human civilization, and developed cultures and civilizations have appeared in the great and extensive societies.

Thus, in the above phrases, first it is invited to attend in the great societies, and then it refers that God's hand is over such societies, and in contrast, the single footers are the victim of Satan, and are excluded from divine support, and the similitude mentioned in the next phrase shows that overcoming the social problems and salvation from the paws of wolfs is only possible within the society, and thereby, the more massive and condense society results in the more powerful and victorious society against the events.

And finally, he says in the last phrases that reviving Qur'an means gathering and uniting around it, and killing it means scattering and proceeding in a path alone!

Moreover, we can use two following issues for showing Islam's attempt for the greater societies:

1- In view of Islam, significance of each congregation prayer depends on the number of its participants, and also the reward of mosques, including Bazar mosque, city's great mosque and the mosques belonging to the Muslims, and finally The Sacred Mosque, which is the greatest center of Islamic society, is in proportion with their social situation.

2- Islam has encouraged breeding and increasing population. Prophet (S) says:

«اُطْلُبُوا الْوَلَدَ فَاِنّى مُكاثِرٌ بِكُمُ الأُمَمَ غَداً».

Desire child because I will boast in the day of resurrection for plentitude of your population.[9]

It should be noted that plentitude of population may cause discomforts and problems in some societies in view of insufficient foodstuffs, and such like, but these transitory and exceptional problems can never devaluate human resources for a society. These problems may occasionally occur for those nations for example lacking abundant underground resources or agricultural products and such like.

Social seclusion

Reaction of dissociability and monkery in retardation of individual and society

The sociologists believe that social seclusion, in any form and in any case, have very unfavourable effects in the spirit and body of individual and society.

This is approved both in respect to those living in seclusion, and also the tribes and nations and in general the groups living separately for social, political and or geographical reasons.

One of the sociologists, Rousse, in his book "Principles of Sociology" has studied the effects of social seclusion on a large number of prisoners being imprisoned in individual cells. He says: Ten percent of them have died or committed suicide or become insane after one year, and the others too have suffered from a sort of mental disease (depression).

Then he adds: among the individual prisoners, the challenge of social spirit of a person against death is really pathetic, because sometimes only offering one flower or one candy to a prisoner may quench his thirst for social contact and save him from death.

He stipulates about the monks and coenobites that seclusion has ill effects in their spirit, and causes depression, despair, delusion and most often a sort of mental disorder.[10]

The effects of social seclusion in desert travellers and nomadic tribes, who live in a sort of permanent seclusion, are particularly visible, because their retardation is manifest in all mental and social aspects and in proportion with the manner of their tribal seclusion.

In addition, the countries dissociating the others for special political regimes will be involved in retardation in different aspects, if they do not communicate through other means like publications, and such like.

Considering previous discussions and the point that we are indebted all developments to the accumulation of thoughts, experiences and innovations of nations and individuals, the main cause of this issue is completely clear. So, we shall accept that social seclusion is the greatest enemy for perfection of societies and progresses and men's development in all aspects and it is also the source of all types of deviations.

Islam and Monkery

Now, we shall see what the view of Islam in this respect is:

Islam condemns social seclusion and all of its appearances, being commented as monkery. The well-known tradition, "there is not any monkery in Islam" «لا رَهْبانِيَّةَ فِى الاِسْلامِ»is narrated in most of tradition

books. Monkery is commonly applied to those who dissociate and seclude people for worship and fear of God.

Historical origin

This action has been popular among the Indians from old times, and then it became common among Christians. Some believe that its prevalence among Christians or the Jews originated from the repeated defeats, which they suffered from one of the cruel and dictator kings of that time, and then they decided to become scattered and engage in worship in deserts until the promised prophet appears, and delivers them from humbleness and scattering.[11]

Mental origin

Basically, the mental reaction of various individuals and nations to defeats and failures is different. Some tend to seclusion and subjectivism, and disturb the course of their social thoughts in general, but some others, the number of which is less than the first group, become more rigorous and harsh, and return from superficial challenge to the rooted and underlying challenges. Monkery is actually the same reaction of defeated individuals and nations of the first group.

Now that we know the historical and mental origin of monkery, and it is made clear that monkery is against man's healthy nature, the following tradition can explain the attitude of Islam towards it:

Osman Ebne Mazoun inclined to monkery as a result of a mental defeat (losing his beloved child) and resorted to worship to relieve his grief. When the Prophet (S) was informed, he forbade him and said:

«اِنَّ اللهَ تَبارَکَ وَ تَعالی لَمْ یَکْتُبْ عَلَیْنَا الرُّهْبانِیَّةَ».

The Great God has not assigned monkery for us.

Then he added to it a fundamental phrase:

«اِنَّما رُهْبانِیَّةُ اُمَّتِی الْجِهادُ فِی سَبِیلِ اللهِ».

Surely, the monkery of my nation is struggle in the way of God.[12]

In other words, if monkery means neglecting the pleasures and comforts of life, it should be applied for serving preservation of Islamic principles and magnificence of the society, like warfare.

And it is narrated from Imam Mousabne Ja'far that someone asked him:

«عَنِ الرَّجُلِ الْمُسْلِمِ هَلْ يَصْلُحُ اَنْ يَسِيحَ فِى الْأَرْضِ اَوْ يَتَرَهَّبَ فِى بَيْت لا يَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ؟ قالَ(عليه السلام): لا».

Is it permitted for a Muslim to select journey and vagabondage, or monkery, and not going out of house? He said: no.[13]

Wandering in this tradition may refer to a sort of monkery in the form of tourism without luggage and provision with the purpose of separation from cities and societies and or escaping house and family.

Anyhow, it is deduced from above tradition that monkery and social seclusion, either in the form of sitting at home, closing the door and leaving the world, or in the form of wandering without any means and escaping home, life and society, is condemned in Islam because it is in contradiction with the spirit of Islamic instructions.

Moreover, Holy Qur'an has called monkery, which is common among Christians, a condemned innovation:

وَ رَهْبانِيَّةً ابْتَدَعُوها ما كَتَبْناها عَلَيْهِمْ اِلاَّ ابْتِغاءَ رِضْوانِ اللهِ فَما رَعَوْها حَقَّ رِعايَتِها

And (as for) monkery, they innovated it-- We did not prescribe it to them-- only to seek Allah's pleasure, but they did not observe it with its due observance.[14]

The total of these evidences explains the attitude of Islam towards monkery. And one point remains here unsolved, that is: Has monkery existed in the other religions?

According to the Islamic documents there has been a sort of monkery in Christianity, but very different with the present monkery and program of monks. Because the appearance of above phrase indicates that God has prescribed a sort of monkery for them, with the purpose of seeking God's pleasure, but they did not observe its limits, and invented another one instead of it that Qur'an has called it an innovation.

Now, we shall see what this legitimate monkery meant.

Certainly, in the original Christianity, as per historical and religious documents (even the gospels) there have not been giving up marriage absolutely, social seclusion and separation from society, and habitance in the convents and cloisters, which are among the today's monkery ceremonies.

As per definite documents, a number of apostles and Disciples of Christ married and associated with people.

Therefore, the legitimate monkery may signify the same lexical meaning and fear of God mingled with a sort of asceticism, and being heedless to worldly splendour, and simplicity while living within the society,

as Christ (A.S.) and his disciples were.

But the phrase "but they observed it not as it should be observed", has two senses.

First, they did not observe the limits of legitimate monkery, and violated its regulations, and innovated therein, and altered it into monasticism and leaving normal life in the world and giving up marriage absolutely.

Second, they did not observe the same false and innovative monkery, and as it will be later referred, some of them committed unlawful deeds in the covenants instead of righteousness, chastity and being heedless of the world, and proceeded in the way of worldliness, and provided the facilities for revelry, pleasure, and carouse in some of those centres, being established with the name of monkery.

Monkery among Christians

The existing histories of Christianity indicate that monkery, in present form, did not exist in the first centuries of Christianity, and its appearance dates back to third Christian century, when the Roman Emperor, called Dissious, conflicted vigorously with the Christians, and after being defeated by this Emperor, they escaped and resorted to the mountains and deserts.[15]

It is noteworthy that the same is narrated in the traditions of Prophet (S), when he said to Ebne Masoud: Do you know whereof monkery originates?

He said: God and His Prophet are more informed.

He said: Some of the unjust rulers appeared after Christ (A.S.), and the believers fought them three times, and when they were defeated, escaped to the deserts and mountains and waited for appearance of the Promised Prophet of Christ (Mohammad (S)), and engaged in worship therein.[16]

Will Durant, the famous Christian historian wrote a detailed discussion in respect to monks in the volume 31 of his history. He believes that joining of nuns to the monks was started from fourth century A.C., and monkery developed increasingly so that it was in its utmost degree of progress in the tenth Christian century.

Then he narrates a detailed explanation about the situation of convents, and the custom of giving up marriage and attempt of monks for inhabiting the arid lands and agriculture, hand crafts, embroidery and other amusements of nuns.

One of the most basic requisites of monkery was giving up marriage absolutely.

Farid Vajdi narrates in the encyclopaedia that some of the monks assumed attention to the female so satanic that they even did not accept to take a female animal into the house, for the fear of their spirituality to be damaged by its satanic spirit.

However, the history remembers a lot of calamities and tragedies so that Pop "third Inossan" described one of the convents as "lupanar".17

And some of them were a centre for gathering of epicures and secularists and sensual people and the best wines were prepared there.

1. Nahjol Fessahe, page 315
2. Tabarsi, Ehtejaj, 340/2
3. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 189/75
4. Hurr al-Amili, Wasa'il ash-Shi'a, 586/8, narration 8
5. Hurr al-Amili, Wasa'il ash-Shi'a, 552/8, narration 2
6. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 280/74
7. The same document
8. Nahjul Balaghah, sermon 127
9. Hurr al-Amili, Wasa'il ash-Shi'a, 3/14, narration 2
10. Sociology, Samuel King, page 428
11. Refer to the history of "Viel Dorant"
12. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 170/8, narration 112
13. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 119/70, narration 10
14. 57: verse 27
15. Refer to the encyclopedia of twentieth century, article monk
16. Refer to Majmaol Bayan commentary, under verse 27 of Suratul Hadid, and Bihar al-Anwar, volume 70, subject "forbiddance of mockery"
17. Will Durant, history of civilization, 443/13

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