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26) Everything is From Allah And Allah Will Return

"فَتَفَهَّم يَا بُنَيَّ وَصِيَتِي وَاعلَم اَنَّ مَالِكَ المَوتِ هُوَ مَالِكُ الحَيَاةِ وَاَنَّ الخَالِقَ هُوَ المُمِيتُ وَاَنَّ المُفْنِيَ هُوَ المُعِيدُ وَاَنَّ المُبْتَلِي هُوَ المُعَافِي وَاَنَّ الدُّنيَا لَم تَكُن لِتَستَقِرَّ اِلاّ على مَا جَعَلَها الله عَلَيهِ مِنَ النَعْمَاءِ وَالاِبْتِلاءِ وَالجَزَاءِ في المَعَادِ اَو مَا شَاءَ مِمَّا لا تَعلَمُ فَاِن اَشْكَلَ عَلَيكَ شَيءٌ مِن ذَلِكَ فَاحْمِلهُ على جَهَالَتِكَ بِهِ فَاِنَّكَ اَوَّلُ مَا خُلِقتَ جَاهِلاً ثُمَّ علِمتَ وَمَا اكثَرَ مَا تَجْهَلُ مِنَ الاَمْرِ وَيَتَحَيَّرُ فِيهِ رَأيُكَ وَيَضِلَّ فِيهِ بَصَرُكَ ثُمَّ تُبْصِرَهُ بَعدَ ذَلِكَ فَاعْتَصِم بِالَّذِي خَلَقَكَ وَرَزَقَكَ وَسَوّاكَ وَلِيَكُن لَهُ تَعَبُّدُكَ وَاِلَيهِ رَغْبَتُكَ وَمِنْهُ شَفَقَتُكَ"

“My son, understand my will. Know that the Owner of death is the Owner of life, that the Creator is the One Who causes death, that the Destroyer is (also) the Restorer (to life), and that the One Who afflicts is (also) the One Who grants soundness. (Know) that this world is only established in accordance with what God has ordained for it of blessings and trials and recompense on the Day of Resurrection, or whatever He wills which you do not know of.

If any of that is confusing for you, then attribute it to your ignorance of it, for at first you were created ignorant, then you acquired knowledge. How often it is that you are ignorant of a matter which perplexes you and your perception of it is erroneous, then after that, you perceive it! Thus, resort to the One Who created you, provided for you and proportioned you. Let your worship be for Him, your request be to Him and your fear be of Him”.

Commentary

In this part of the letter, Imam ‘Ali (as) draws our attentions to several constructive points, some of which are the following:

1. Monotheism and the negation of polytheism

Since early times, there were groups such as Disanieh, Manawieh, Mazdakieh, and the like who were of the opinion that there should be relatedness and relation between cause and effect. Therefore, they used to believe that there were two Gods. The reason for this assumption was that there were dichotomies in the world creatures: good–bad, for instance. The God of good things, because of the relatedness between cause and effect, could not be the God of bad things, and vice versa: the God of light, health, abundance, happy life and beautiful creatures was Yazdan or light. And the God of Darkness, death, storms, earthquakes, famine, disease and harmful and ugly creatures was Ahriman or Devil.[1]

Allamah Hilli, in his commentary on “Tajrid”, talks about the ideology of the magi (Plural of magus) in the following way:
"The magi believe that good stems from God and evil stems from the Satan. This is because God is the Absolute good and the doer of evil should be vicious".

But as it is proven, anything which exists in this world is either the absolute good or its goodness is more than its badness. This is because the absolute evil does not exist. Mawlawi has said:
Thus the absolute evil does not exist,
Know that evil is relative;
There is no poison or sugar,
Which is not related to the other;
One is free, the other is fettered,
One is poison, the other one is sugar;
The snake poison is the life for the snake,
But its relation to man is that of death.[2]

Thus, the absolute good is in harmony with God, and God is its creator; but absolute evil does not exist. As we saw before, Imam ‘Ali (as) said, "the Owner of death is the Owner of life as well; the Creator is also the One Who causes our death; and the Destroyer is the same as the Restorer (to life), and finally the One who afflicts is the same as the One Who grants soundness." Some of these stem from good and some have roots in evil. In the erroneous ideology of dualism, good and evil stand in contrast.

The summary of Imam ‘Ali's statements is the following: The dualists contend that there are two Gods: The God of good and the God of evil. But since the absolute evil does not exist, therefore, there is no need for the God of evil. Some superficial people think that the snake's poison, diseases, death, floods, tornadoes and the like are nasty and evil. But a world which lacks one of these is not perfect. Their very presence is good. The principle of the relationship between the cause and the effect forces us to believe in only one God: The Owner of life is the Owner of death as well. The One who afflicts, cures as well; and the One who destroys, restores as well…[3]

2. A World Composed Of Happiness And Sadness Is Beautiful And Makes Perfection Possible

Although this world is a mixture of treasure and snake, flower and thorn, sadness and happiness, asset and misery, hardships and ease, sweetness and bitterness, it is harmonious and lovely and every particle and part of it is in its proper place. And man's caravan should pass through this turmoil for the destination of meeting God.

"أَلَا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَصِيرُ الْأُمُورُ"469

"Now surely to Allah do all affairs eventually come" [***Surah al-Shura, v.53***].

"يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنسَانُ إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَى رَبِّكَ كَدْحًا فَمُلَاقِيهِ" 470

"O man! Surely you must strive to attain to your Lord, a hard striving until you meet Him." [***Inshiqaq, v.6***].

The beauty of this world lies in its present structure which is a mixture of contrasts such as sorrow and delight. If it were not like this, it would neither show the value of beauties nor would it make possible the perfection of man.

Whereas, according to the logic of the Qur'an, man is created to be in distress.

"لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنسَانَ فِي كَبَدٍ"

"Certainly we have created man to be in distress.[4]

Mawlawi, in different places of Mathnawi, has explained this fact through interesting allegories. One of these parables is the story of prison and Joseph's well:
Although they ground the pearl in the mortar,
It enlightened the eyes and cured the calamity;
They put a wheat seed under the ground,
Then they harvested a lot of clusters;
Then they ground it in the mill,
Its value and its product (bread) became precious;
Then they ground the bread under the teeth,
It turned into wisdom, soul, and cognition;
The soul became enchanted in love,

Then the harvester came to harvest again.

To elaborate on this issue, Mawlawi tells of an animal which becomes fatter the more it is beaten. At the end, Mawlawi mentions the multitude of distresses of the believers and the Prophets:

There is an animal called Osqor,
Which becomes fatter when beaten;
When you beat it, it will become fatter,
It becomes fatter through the wounds it gets;
A believer's self is like Osqor,
Which becomes fatter through the wounds;
Because of this, for the Prophets,
There are lots of sufferings and failures.

Elsewhere, Mawlawi likens the effects of sufferings in the cleansing of the soul to the effects of a drug used in tanning for cleansing the hides (skins):

The hide suffers the wounds of the drug,
Then it becomes as fresh as Adim Taefi;
But if you rub something else on it,
It would become big, ugly and bad-smelling;
Now man is like that hide,
From different moistures, it has become ugly and fat;
Now you should rub it hard,
Till it becomes clean and thin;
If you can't, let it be,
Then God will make you suffer a lot;
God's hurting is your cleansing,
His knowledge is above yours.

3. If You Do Not Know The Philosophy Of Something, Do Not Deny It

There are many people whose personal knowledge is used for the evaluation of things and events. If they assume something is true, they accept it, or else they would reject it. But we should know our scientific knowledge and means are limited.

"وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنْ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا"

"And you are not given aught of knowledge but a little" [***Qur'an, 17:85***].

It is always possible that, on the one hand, our so-called knowledge might turn out to be wrong, and on the other hand, it might happen that others, through better instruments and means might have found the

truth. It might happen, as well, that nobody yet has access to the right means, and such means might be found in the future. Thus, Avicenna has said:
"Whatever strange thing strikes your ears, while incisive reasoning can not reject it, assume that it might materialize."[5]

It is for this reason that Imam ‘Ali (as) has said that whenever you are faced with a problem regarding the events of this world, and you are not aware of the philosophy behind the so-called disastrous events such as earthquakes, storms and diseases, find the reason in your own ignorance, and do not claim that since you do not know the secrets of these phenomena, therefore, they are not assets at all.

This is because when you were born, you lacked all sorts of knowledge. Then gradually, through your senses, such as sight, hearing, touch, taste and smelling, you were connected to the outside world and you started analyzing the events through your reasoning.

"وَاللَّهُ أَخْرَجَكُمْ مِنْ بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ"

"And Allah has brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers -you did not know anything- and He gave you hearing and sight and hearts that you may give thanks" [***Qur'an 16:78***].

It is obvious that the rays of this knowledge are limited, but the affairs which are within the radius of creation are unlimited and immensely broad and widespread.

Some Interesting Confessions

Einstein has said, "The puzzle of creation is still unresolved. We may even assume that this puzzle shall always remain intricate. What we have so far learned from the book of creation has been illuminating. Through this knowledge we have come to know some of the principles of the nature, but we are well-aware that compared with the volumes of this book which we have read, there still remain an immense number of unresolved problems."[6]

William James says, "Our knowledge is a drop compared with our ignorance which is an ocean. The only thing which we can definitely say is that our natural knowledge is dependent on another vast world of another type the properties of which we have not grasped"[7]

Charles Ritchie says: "A genuine scholar is the one who is simultaneously bold and courteous. He should be courteous since our knowledge is meager, and he should be bold since the road towards mysterious world is open to us."[8]

Oliver Lodge says, "What we know, compared with what we suppose to know, is very little. Some say this without believing what they say; but I say it with complete conviction"[9]

Alexis Carrel, in the book, "Man, the unknown", writes: "Those sciences which deal with living creatures, in general, and with man, in particular, have not progressed enough and they have stuck at the descriptive level. Man is a completely complex creature who can not be easily recognized. We do not yet have at our disposal sufficient means to know man and his relations with the outside world. In fact, our ignorance about ourselves is immense. We still do not have answers to many questions concerning our selves: How do genes carry the heredity characteristics? How do cells live in groups called tissues?"10

Camille Flammarion in the book "The unknown powers of Nature" writes on the limitation of man's knowledge, "We do think, but what is the essence of thought?" Nobody can answer this question. We do walk, but what is the nature of the activity of the muscles? Nobody knows. I know that my decision consists of unmaterialistic power, and I am also aware that all my spirit is unmaterialistic. However, when I decide to raise my hand, I will notice that my decision moves my body muscles. But how does my decision move my hand. Nobody tells me how my optical nerves transfer the outside configurations into my thought. How is the essence of this thought conceived? Where is it located? How does the mental activity take place and what is its essence? I can extend the number of such questions for ten years whereas your greatest scientists can not answer even my fundamental questions."11

4. Carry Out Everything For His Sake

Since God is the Creator of everything and every creature, and He initiates creation and resurrection, and mixes sorrow with happiness, ugliness with beauty, assets with miseries and has made this principle of juxtaposition as the basis for perfection, “you have to resort only to Him and devote your worship just to Him and have your love only for Him and fear Him solely”.
It is because this exclusive devotion is a sign of your gratitude and of your perfect monotheistic belief, which is not given to everybody. God in His Qur’an has trained the Prophet in this manner:

"قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَبِذَلِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ قُلْ أَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ أَبْغِي رَبًّا وَهُوَ رَبُّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَلَا تَكْسِبُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ إِلَّا عَلَيْهَا وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَى ثُمَّ إِلَى رَبِّكُمْ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ"

“Say: Surely my prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are all for Allah, the Lord of the worlds. No associate has He; and this am I commanded, and I am the first of those who submit. Say: Shall I seek a lord other than Allah? And He is the Lord of all things; and no soul earns evil but against itself, and no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another; then to your Lord is your return, so He will inform you of that in which you differed [***Qur’an 6:162-164***].

1. . For this see Shahristani's Milal and Safai's Ilm al-Kalam and Mulla Hadi Sabzwari's Manzumah.
2. . Mathnawi, Part 4, p.2.
3. . For the philosophy of dualism and for the study of the fact that evil is non-existent and does not need a cause, refer to Mutahhari's valuable work called Divine justice; and also refer to al-Asfar, vol.7, item 8, pp.55-148.

4. . Qur'an 90:4.
5. . Avicenna's Shafa.
6. . A Philosophical Summary of Einstein's theory, pp. 19–20.
7. . The Creator of the world, pp.282–294.
8. . Op. cit.
9. . The Creator of the world, pp.282–294.
10. . Man, the Unknown, pp.2–4.
11. . 'Ala Itlal al–Mazhab al–maddi, p. 138.

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