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'Adl , Justice Of God

This was a short sketch of our belief in Allah. Now we come to the second Root of Religion and that is "Justice of Allah." Frankly speaking, this root of religion is the most important one to study, if anybody wants to know the real and basic difference between Sunnis and Shi'ah Ithna `Asharis. So far as the existence and Unity of God is concerned, it comes under the First Root `tawhid," that is,

"The Unity of God." But the actions of Allah come under this second root; and here the differences are vast and manifold: Here I propose to show the differences in a few words:

i) First and foremost difference is that while certain Muslim sects hold that nothing is good or evil by itself; and only what Allah has commanded us to do, is good; what He has forbidden is evil. The Ithna `Asharis on the other hand, believe that irrespective of religious commandments, there is real merit or demerit in different courses of action, and it is because a certain thing is good that. God commands us to do it; and because the other thing is bad that lie forbids it.

ii) Stemming from the above mentioned difference is the fact that the Shiahs believe that Allah never acts aimlessly; i.e. without any purpose or design. All His actions are based on wisdom and intelligent purpose, though we may not know them. The Sunnis on the other hand, say that there is no real demerit in acting aimlessly, and if Allah does anything without purpose, the mere act of Allah will make that action good.

iii) The Shi'ah Ithna `Asharis say that if a person can do good to any other person and he does not do it, it is against the virtue. Likewise, they say that if Allah can do anything beneficial to His creatures and then, suppose that, He does not do it, it will be against Virtues of Allah and not commendable. Therefore, the Ithna `Asharis say that: "It is morally incumbent upon Allah to do every act of Grace dealing with mankind."

Here is a quotation from our book of beliefs:

"By Grace is understood that action on the part of Allah which would help to bring His creatures nearer to

His devotion and obedience and facilitate their moral correction (which is) morally incumbent on Him i.e. GOD. Allah has commanded us to be just, while He Himself treats us with something better, namely Grace (tafaddul). Justice (al-adl), means that He requites a good act with a good reward and an evil act with a punishment. The Prophet said: `No man ever enters Paradise by virtue of his good actions alone except by the Mercy of Allah.' " (I`tiqadatu 'l-Imamiyyah, by ash-Shaykh as-Saduq)

The Sunnis, on the other hand, do not believe that *lulf* i.e. Grace is incumbent on Allah. They say that even *adl,* i.e. Justice, is not incumbent on Allah, even if He sends good and virtuous persons to Hell, it will be quite right.

iv) Then comes the most vital difference between Ithna `Asharis and Sunnis, i.e. the question of jabr' (compulsion) and `ikhtiyar' (choice). The position of Sunnis in this respect, according to general belief, is that:

"No act of any individual, even though it be done purely for his benefit, is independent of the will of Allah, for its existence; and there does not occur in either the physical or the extraterrestrial world the wink of an eye, the hint of a thought, or the most sudden glance, except by the decree of Allah, of His power, desire and will. This includes, evil and good, benefit and harm, success and failure, sin and righteousness, obedience and disobedience, polytheism and true belief." (al-Ghazzali).

We the Ithna `Asharis on the other hand say that we know the difference between falling down from a roof-top and coming down by ladders. The second act is done by our power, will and intention; while the falling down is not done so. And we know that our own actions are not like falling down from a roof-top; but they are like climbing down with our own will and power. Therefore, they are our acts and they cannot be attributed to Allah.

Again we see that we are praised or blamed for some of our acts, while for other acts we are neither praised nor condemned. It means that the first category comes within our power and will; and the second is beyond our power and will. We may be advised to treat our ailments in such and such a way, but we cannot be advised to recover from the illness. It means that getting treatments is within our power; but getting recovered is not within our sphere of activities.

Therefore, we say that there are many things and aspects of life that are within our own power and will, while some are not within our power. Those things about which we can be ordered to do or not to do, for which we can be advised, for which we can be praised or blamed, all those acts are within our power and will. And as the commandments of religion come under this category, therefore, it is wrong to say that our sins or righteousness, our obedience or disobedience or polytheism or true belief, are by the decree of Allah. Therefore it has been written in the book of our creed that: "Allah possesses fore-knowledge of human actions, but does not compel mankind to act in any particular manner. When Allah will collect His servants on the Day of Resurrection, He will ask them concerning what He had enjoined on them and will not question them concerning what He had destined for them."[1].

But it does not mean that man is quite independent of Allah. In fact, the power and will to act as we like is given to us by God. Thus, Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (peace be upon him) said: "There is no compulsion (by Allah); nor is there absolute delegation of power (from Allah to man); but the real position is between these two extremes."2

And at what point does our ability to do things start? Imam Musa al-Kazim (p.b.u.h.) said: "A man acquires that ability when four conditions are fulfilled: 1. When there is nothing to hinder his plans; and his 2. health and 3. faculties (needed for that work) are up to the required standard; 4. and God provides him the occasion of that work. When all these conditions are fulfilled a man becomes able to act according to his own free will."

When asked about an example, he said: "Let us suppose that there is a man, without any hindrance, of good health and strength; yet he cannot commit adultery unless he finds a woman. When (the 4th condition is fulfilled, and) he gets a woman, then it is up to him to choose one of the two alternatives – either he controls his evil emotions and saves himself as Joseph did; or, on the other hand, commits adultery; if he protects himself from that sin, it will not be by compulsion of Allah (as some people think), and if he commits the sin, it does mean that he was above the power of Allah (as others think)."

According to our point of view, if anybody believes in predestination, he cannot, at the same time, believe in the Day of Judgment. Because, if Allah decrees every act which is done on our hands, then it is gross injustice to inflict punishment upon us for those sins and evils and polytheism and disbelief and immoralities which were predestined by Allah Himself.

Need for Religion

As you are aware, man is a social animal, every man is- dependent on millions of people for his life and its necessities. And you know that every society needs some laws to prevent injustice and preserve the rights of every member of the society. But who is the right person to make the Laws? One man? (Be he a monarch or a dictator.) No! Because he, instinctively, will look, first of all, after his own interest. A group of people? (Be it an aristocracy or democracy.) No! Because every one of them is capable of wrong judgment; and a lot of wrong decisions do not add up to a right decision. Also, it is apparent that no group of people can disengage itself from self interest.

Moreover, you will agree with me that no man or group of men is in a position to make a comprehensive law based on perfect equity and justice. So it is necessary that the laws should be made by someone who is superior to man, who has nothing to loose or gain by that law and with Whom every man has equal relation. And that one is "Allah."
Hence the need for religion.

Allah

Allah can do no wrong. I do not use this phrase in the sense of "King makes no mistake."

Because "King makes no mistake" means actually that he does nothing at all; he just signs what is passed by the Parliament. So this tribute is based upon 'in-action.' But "Allah does no wrong" means that He is active and powerful but He can do no wrong. Anybody who commits wrong or injustice does so either because he does not know that it is wrong, but Allah knows every thing; or because he needs something which cannot be obtained without wrong-doing, but Allah has no need; or because he has been compelled by somebody else to commit that wrong, but Allah is Omnipotent and nobody can compel Him to do anything. So, logically it is impossible for Allah to do any wrong or commit any injustice.

We believe that Allah created man so that he may acquire those virtues that may bring him nearer to Allah in the life hereafter. Man comes in this world like a blank paper. During his life time, various designs appear upon it by the effect of his works and deeds. Virtues acquired are like beautiful designs; and the vices are like monstrous drawings.

We believe that Allah has given the man wisdom, will and power to acquire the virtues. lie has shown the man the right path, and has warned him against going astray. But fie has not compelled him to do good works nor to commit vices. He has given him power to do as he wishes.

We believe that the actions of Allah are intended for the benefit of His creatures. May be, a man who is repairing his roof, feels annoyed because of heavy torrents of rain. But rain is intended for the common benefit; and even the person who at this particular time feels annoyed by it, will derive benefits from it in the long run.

Even such so-called disasters as earthquakes and floods are for common benefit. We deem it as disaster, because we do not know its ultimate purpose. We are like a man who has never seen a house being built. He comes to a city and sees earth being dug out, stones being cut and broken, trees being felled, and he just wonders why all these destructions!, In his eyes, it is destruction, because he does not know its ultimate result. But in fact, it is construction and not destruction. Likewise, we are unaware of the ultimate result of a particular earthquake or flood.

So, we say it is disaster, but if we look backwards, we see that the present good condition of the Earth is, mainly an outcome of the very so-called disaster. Geography and Geology bear testimony to these facts.[3]

But now arises another question. There is no denying that these acts of God, though intended for common benefit, cause inconvenience, hardship and even death to hundreds and thousands of people. Is it not injustice against those victims of those disasters? Why should they be sacrificed for the benefit

of others? To understand it clearly, we should remember that death on this Earth is not the end of life. We die here to live another life which we call "Life Hereafter." Every inconvenience in this insignificant life will be rewarded for in the life hereafter. In fact, the troubles in this world, like the World itself, are not lasting; while their rewards in the form of the Grace of Allah in the life hereafter are everlasting. As we believe in the life hereafter, in the presence of Allah, we appreciate that the troubles and disasters of this world are not `Injustice.' Instead, they are Mercy of the greatest magnitude.

It will not be out of place to mention here that most of the beliefs (mentioned under this second root of religion) are specialities of Shi'ah Ithna `Ashari sect. Other sects in Islam differ from us in these beliefs. In the past, they gave us (together with the Mu'tazilites) the name "al`adliyyah" that is "Believers in the Justice of God." For instance, they say that human beings are not the actual doers of their acts. They believe that their actions are done by Allah Himself. Man is only an instrument to perform the actions of Allah. But even then he is responsible for those actions which were performed by Allah upon his hands. But we say that it is gross injustice to make a man commit robbery and then inflict punishment for that felony to commit which he was compelled by the Judge himself.

Now for some things which are more or less common in all the sects of Islam and which are connected with this topic. We believe that Allah does not give us any command which is beyond the limit of our power. We believe that every instinct and desire has been created in the man for some reasons. These instincts or desires should not be crushed but harnessed for the general benefit of the mankind. For instance, sexual desire has been embodied in human nature by Allah Himself. To crush that instinct will be a protest against the Creator. It should not be, and cannot be crushed but of course, its function should be regulated for the benefit of mankind. And hence the necessity of marriage.

Likewise, fear and desire are natural instincts and should be utilized for human upliftment. A Muslim is taught not to fear anybody or anything except ALLAH, and not to desire anything in this world, but to be anxious to receive the Grace of Allah.

Nubuwwah, Prophethood

As I have said before, society needs rules and laws to preserve peace and justice, that the law cannot be free from inequities unless it is given by Allah. But I have told you earlier that Allah cannot be seen, He cannot appear Himself before human beings to give them His law.

Therefore, Allah appoints somebody to represent Him on the earth. That Viceregent of Allah is called "Prophet." As a mirror has a bright side to receive light and another side to reflect that light, so a Prophet has the highest spiritual purity which enables him to receive the divine message and a human body which enables him to communicate that message to his fellow human beings. The purpose of Prophethood is two-fold: First to bring people nearer to Allah and the Second to bring peace and happiness in the world.

According to our belief, all the Prophets were infallible and sinless. Suppose that there is a man who, just like ourselves commits or can commit sins or wrongs, and then such a man claims that he has been sent by Allah as a Prophet to lead people on the right path. Naturally, the people cannot believe that what he says is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth; because his every word is liable to be wrong. So he cannot command unreserved respect and indubitable obedience from his people. Therefore, to carry out the mission of Allah, it was necessary that the Prophets be infallible and sinless.

The Prophets were given miracles as their credentials. Miracles, according –to our belief, are such performances which are not impossible, but which cannot be done without apparatus, medicine or practice. But the Prophet performs them without any practice and without any machinery. Curing the blind persons or lepers is not impossible. But Jesus Christ cured them without any medicine, and that was his miracle. Muhammad (peace be upon him and his progeny) had innumerable miracles, but his greatest living miracle is the Qur'an.

When Prophet Muhammad (S) went to heaven in his lifetime and narrated the happenings after his return, his enemies said, "How was it possible to go to heaven with body?" But we believed from the beginning that if an infallible Prophet says that he did go to heaven, it was not impossible. Now the recent advent of science has proved that we were right. Where scientists are trying to go by spaceships Muhammad (S) went without any aid from any machine and that was his miracle.

The Qur'an says that Allah sent Prophets in every part of the world. Their basic Faith was the same. According to common belief, one hundred twenty–four thousand prophets were sent by Allah from time to time. Adam was the First of them and Muhammad (S) was the Last.

Muhammad (S) brought Islam which is the last Divine Religion and which cancels all previous religions. Islam is intended for all the world without any distinction of colour or origin. Islamic teachings are embodied in Qur'an which is the Book of Allah. It was revealed to Muhammad (S) in the course of twenty–three years of his Prophethood.

Life Sketch of the Prophet (S)

A brief sketch of the life of the Prophet of Islam will not be out of place here. Muhammad (S) was born in the year 570 A.D., at Mecca. He was the only son of `Abdullah and Aminah. His grandfather,`Abd al–Muttalib son of Hashim was a Chief of Quraysh. `Abdullah, father of Muhammad (S), died about four months before his birth and he lost his mother when he was in his sixth year.

The charge of the orphan was undertaken by his grandfather, who also passed away when Muhammad (p.b. u.h.a.h.p.) was eight years old. `Abd al–Muttalib at the time of his death, entrusted the boy to the care of his son, Abu Talib, who was poor but very respected person. Abu Talib and his wife, Fatimah hint Asad showered upon Muhammad (S) more love and care than they ever did for their own children.

From his early childhood till the age of forty, Muhammad (S) showed all the noble traits of highest human character that commanded respect from everyone who knew him. The Arabs conferred on him the title "as-Siddiq al-amin" (The Truthful and Trusted One). At the age of twenty-five he married a noble lady, Khadijah, who gave birth to his only surviving child, Fatimah, the Lady of Paradise.

At the age of forty he was called to the mission of Prophethood by Allah. The first to accept his call were those who were nearest to him in the daily life. Khadijah, his wife, was the first to accept Islam. His cousin, `Ali, son of Abu Talib, was his first male follower. Then come the names of Zayd ibn Harith, Abu Bakr, Arqam and so on.

The propagation of Islam, at first was a secret mission. But three years after the first revelation, came the command:

"And warn your nearest relations" (26:214)

Having got this command, the Prophet ordered Ali to prepare a feast. When all the members were assembled and the feast began, the Prophet said, "I have been sent to you by Allah and I have brought to you the good tiding for this world and for the life hereafter. Who among you will help me in this great task? Whoever accepts this responsibility will be my wazir (vizier), my brother and my successor."

No body came forward, only `Ali stood up and said "O! Prophet of Allah! I will help thee and I am ready to sacrifice everything on thy command." Three times the Prophet asked them the same question and three times it was only `Ali who gave assurance to help him with all his power. At last the Prophet declared: "O! People of Quraysh! Listen to me! Here is `Ali who is my wazir, my brother and my successor. Listen to him and obey him." The people left the place cutting jokes with Abu Talib, father of `Ali, telling him he should obey his own child. The coming years proved that it was not a laughing thing.

The hurling of open denunciation at the ancestral idols of Quraysh by the Prophet set all Arabia ablaze. The resentment, at first, let them to approach his uncle and guardian, Abu Talib, to persuade him to silence his nephew. Abu Talib conveyed their message to Muhammad. Muhammad replied: "Uncle dear, even if they place the Sun in my right hand and the Moon in my left hand in order to turn me away from the work which I have been entrusted by Allah to do, I will not listen to them." Saying this he burst into tears. Abu Talib said: "Go in peace, my son! and do what thou wilt for, by God! I will not abandon thee."

This decision of Abu Talib infuriated the Quraysh. As a last attempt they approached Muhammad himself. They told him: "If your ambition is to acquire wealth, we will amass wealth for you as much as you may ever desire; and if you are aspiring for power and honour, we are prepared to accept you as our King and overlord; and if you have any fancy for beauty, you shall have the hand of the fairest maiden in the land."

Muhammad's reply was short and clear: "Neither I want wealth nor do I want power or beauty. I have been commissioned by Allah as a warner to the mankind, I am communicating His message to you. If

you accept it, you shall have facility in this life and the life hereafter and should you reject it, verily, Allah will decide between you and me."

So began the bitterest persecution of Muslims in the first years of its birth at the hands of the Meccans. Islam was making slow but steady progress. At the same time, the persecution and the torture of the poor Muslims was growing in its intensity day by day. The Prophet ordered some eighty Muslims of both sexes to seek refuge in the Christian country of Abyssinia. Ja'far, the third son of Abu Talib was the leader of this caravan. Negus, the Ethopian King of that time received them with honour, and as the history says, after a short period, he himself became converted to Islam. Africa can be proud of the fact when Islam was being persecuted in the land of its origin, Africa gave shelter to the poor Muslims, and whenever any list of the Muslim Kings will be prepared, the name of Negus, the African king, will be on the top.

After seven years of these atrocities, Quraysh decided to boycott Banu Hashim, the Family of Muhammad, because they had persistently refused to disown him. Three years of the most cruel hardships passed and Banu Hashim suffered such tortures that were beyond human endurance. At last, the Quraysh themselves were ashamed of their inhuman behaviour, but still they did not lift the ban. Then a miracle occurred and the ban was lifted after more than three years.

Shortly afterwards, as a direct result of these sufferings both Abu Talib and Khadijah died. Just at the time when Muhammad stood sorely in need of the protection of his loving uncle and the comfort of his wife, the hand of death snatched them both away from him. Now Quraysh had a free hand in dealing with Muhammad and his followers. And they lost no time in deciding that Muhammad should be killed on a certain night. Muhammad under the divine guidance, asked `Ali to sleep in his bed to keep Meecans unaware of his absence, and he left Mecca to Medina, 280 miles from Mecca. Abu Bakr accompanied him on his own accord. This epoch-making event in the history of Islam marks the beginning of the Muslim Era, called "Hijrah. "

The Meccans did not let Muhammad remain in peace even at Medina. They waged war after war against him. After six years of continued anxieties, Muhammad concluded a peace treaty with Meccans on apparently humiliating terms, in order to keep peace in the land. But the Quraysh violated even that treaty within two years. Now seeing that there was no alternative left, Muhammad marched and made a bloodless entry into Mecca, from which, eight years before, he had fled a hunted fugitive. The Meccans, remembering fully well their own dark past and shameful record, were apprehensive of him. But they were surprised to hear the Prophet speaking: "There is no reproof against you. May Allah forgive you, for He is Merciful and Loving; Go, you are free."

Three months before his death, the Prophet went for his last pilgrimage to Mecca. In the return journey he ordered the caravan to halt at a place named Khumm. It was a place where several routes met. It was mid-day and the Sun of Arabia was pouring its full heat upon the parched earth. A temporary platform was prepared for the Prophet and he delivered a long Khutbah, (lecture) at the end of which he

asked the Muslims: "Have I not more authority upon you than you have got upon yourselves?"

All of them responded by saying: "Surely O Messenger of Allah!" Then, the Prophet took the arms of `Ali, and showing him to the audience, declared:
"Whomsoever I am master, `Ali is his master too."

Saying it, he took the arms of 'Ali and showed to the audience. Then he ordered them to go and greet 'Ali as their Amir (i.e. Leader and Guide). Less than three months after this declaration the Prophet died at Medina.

The announcement at Khumm: The detailed account is given in, besides hundred of books, Kanz al-'Ummal, the famous book of traditions, (vo1.6, pp.390, 397 & 399) and Khasa'is (by an-Nasa'i, p.48). From these accounts the following words of the Prophet should be copied here:

"Remember! I am leaving behind among you two most precious things – One of them is greater than the other – i) The Book of Allah, which is the rope of Allah from the heaven up to the earth, and the other ii) My Descendants who are my family-members. So look how you deal with them, and verily, both will not be separated from each other until they come to me (in Qiyamah) at the Kawthar. . . Verily, Allah is my Master and I am Master of every believer." Then he took the hands of `Ali in his hands and said: "He whose Master am I, `Ali is His Master. . ." This tradition, jointly and severally, are narrated, in every book of tradition which is worth its name.

There is no argument about the fact, though some Muslims try to interpret it in some other way, but the fact is undisputed. The famous Scholar of Ahl-i hadith (generally known as al- Wahabiyyah) Nawwab Siddiq Hasan of Bhopal, says: "Hakim Abu Saeed says that the traditions of "two most precious things" and "Whose Master am I, `Ali is his Master" is `mutawatir' i.e. narrated by so many people that no doubt can be entertained about its authenticity, because a great number of the companions have narrated it, so much so that Muhammad ibn Jarir has written these two traditions by 75 (seventy-five) different chains.[4]

I have left many events in the life of the Prophet because most of them are common knowledge. Here I have mentioned only those events which, though commonly narrated in Arabic histories, traditions and commentaries of Qur'an, are not known, for one reason or another, to non-Arabic-speaking public.

1. I`tiqadatu 'l-Imamiyyah
2. I`tiqadatu 'l-Imamiyyah
3. It is only one of the causes of these natural phenomena. Sometimes, a hardship or disaster is intended as a warning to mankind or a group or individual; at other times it may be just a test to a person's spiritual virtues to see his submission to the will of Allah. It might have been, in earlier times, a punishment to the mankind for its unabated sins (like flood of Noah), but such punishments have been expressly discontinued after the advent of the Holy Prophet of Islam.
4. Minhdj al-wusul, page 13

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