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Pleasure and Perfection

With a little consideration in his own being, each person can very clearly realize that he is by nature in search of pleasure, happiness and comfort, and that he escapes from pain and agony. The indefatigable efforts and endeavours in life are for the purpose of enjoying more powerful and more enduring pleasures and of escaping from or at least, diminishing the pains, agonies and illnesses. When these coincide, they are compared; that is to say, slight pain and hardship is endured for being released from greater pain and affliction, and a slight and limited pleasure is sacrificed for a greater and more enduring enjoyment.

Likewise, enduring slight pain to reach a great and lasting pleasure and dispensing with a slight pleasure to be relieved of great pain are the requirements of man's reason and nature. All rational functions are performed on the basis of these calculations. Differences seen in people with regard to preferring certain pleasures and pains are due to differences in discernment, mistakes in calculation and other factors which will be discussed later.

Therefore from one angle, pleasure is the motive behind activity and effort in life, and from another angle it is the outcome and result of this effort. From a final viewpoint, it can be regarded as perfection for sensible beings because it is an existential trait which human beings are apt to possess.

An act which provides pleasure and draws pain away is desired and wanted by man. Man likes and is fond of anything which is pleasurable to reach. Likewise, the term affection is used in the case of desirable deeds and traits. And this clears up the relationship among pleasure, determination and affection.

But it must be borne in mind that, at times, man aspires for a specific pleasure reaching which requires a great deal of preparations. As a result, he decides to carry out deeds, each of which might be a preparation itself. In fact, the determination to carry out each of the deeds is a reflection of the genuine will accorded to performing the main deed.

In the same way, genuine affection is given to a being that is genuinely desired by man. In the light of

this, minor affections are developed towards its preparations and attachments, reaching each of which brings about a minor pleasure and conforms to its relationship with the genuine object of desire and pleasure.

In earlier discussions, we arrived at the conclusion that man's true perfection is the ultimate existential degree and the most sublime perfection which man is able to reach. All other perfections are like preliminaries and are organic or relative. Their being preliminary perfections hinges on their effect in making man reach his true perfection, even though the latter might be of various degrees.

As a consequence, true perfection is man's genuine desire and the desirability of other objects is minor and depends on their involvement in reaching true perfection. Likewise, the pleasure desired by man is one derived from reaching true perfection. Other pleasures are like preliminary steps, because, as already pointed out, genuine pleasure is derived from fulfilling a genuine desire.

Consequently, recognition of true perfection depends on recognition of genuine pleasure. Conversely, recognition of genuine pleasure hinges on recognition of true perfection. As genuine pleasure provides the greatest pleasure possible, recognition of genuine pleasure is accompanied by recognition of something which can provide man with the greatest, the most sublime, and the most enduring of all pleasures. For this reason, if we get to know the most pleasurable beings, we will also recognize the genuine pleasure and true perfection.

Thus it is befitting to ponder over the reality of pleasure and the reason behind differences in its degrees, so that we could recognize the most sublime and the most enduring pleasures of man.

What is Pleasure? And what Are the Most Sublime Pleasures of Man?

What we experience within us and interpret as pleasure is a conceptual state overcoming us when we reach a desired objective, provided that we consider that objective as desirable and that we be aware of it and pay heed (to it) upon reaching it. Thus if we do not regard something desirable, reaching it will bring about no pleasure for us. Likewise, if we pay no heed to reaching something, we will derive no enjoyment from it.

As a consequence, in addition to the presence of one who takes pleasure (in something) and the object of desire, taking pleasure depends on having a specific perceptual power with which reaching the desired objective could be perceived. In the same way, it hinges on recognition of desirability and paying attention to reaching it. Various degrees of pleasure depend on the intensity and weakness of perception, as well as desirability or attention paid by man.

That is to say, a person's enjoyment of eating delicious food might be more than someone else's, as he might have a stronger and healthier taste. Or a person might derive more enjoyment from eating a

particular type of food, as it might be more pleasurable for him. Or a particular person might derive more enjoyment from a special dish when he fully concentrates on the food rather than on other objectives. In like manner, two students might derive different types of enjoyment from learning a specific branch of science due to their different views on the desirability, utility and practicality of it.

It is also clear that the stability of the pleasure depends on the endurance of conditions which lead to its emergence. The supposed pleasure is cut off when the one taking pleasure or the object of pleasure is destroyed or when it is no longer desirable or when the person changes his mind or ceases paying attention to it.

The multiplicity seen among the person taking pleasure, the objective of pleasure and the conditions leading to the emergence of pleasure has general applicability in the case of ordinary pleasures. The essence of pleasure however, can be traced in other cases where no such multiplicity exists. In these cases, the word pleasure could be used with a kind of conceptual interpretation as is the case with regard to science and affection.

For example, to gain knowledge, the presence of the scholar, the object of learning and the trait of having knowledge is required, but its interpretive meaning also applies to the soul's speculative knowledge of itself or Almighty Allah's knowledge of Himself, even though in these cases, there is no multiplicity among knowledge, the scholar, and the object of learning likewise, the common meaning of affection requires the presence of the lover, the beloved, and the state of love but no such external plurality exists in the case of self-love.

As a consequence, instances of pleasure can be found which do not require the said multiplicity. For example, in the case of Almighty Allah, it could be said that enjoyment emanates from Him, even though in this case, the *Bihjat* interpretation is more befitting as some scholars have remarked. In the same manner, with regard to man, it could be said that he takes pleasure from his own being.

As his own being is dearer than anything else for him, the pleasure he derives from himself will be more than what he experiences in the case of other pleasures due to its desirability. In other words, all other pleasures serve as a reflection of his self-enjoyment because they have emerged in the process of reaching a phase and perfection in his being.

Failure to derive pleasure in normal conditions is due to inattention. Whenever man can pay full attention to himself and ignore aught else by the help of external factors such as great dangers, exercise and concentration, he will derive exceptional pleasure. For example, if a person is sentenced to death and considers the verdict binding, he will derive an unparalleled enjoyment when he later realizes that the verdict has been annulled.

Of course, in this example, pleasure is related to being brought back to worldly life after being disappointed at it. Yet it is a good example for our discussion, as it elucidates man's love for life and his enjoyment of himself.

The outcome of discussion is that the pleasure experienced by man is either derived from his own being or his own perfection or from other beings which he is in need of and is somehow related to. Thus, he will reach the most sublime status of pleasure if he can see himself tied to one who embraces all connections and links, and who makes man needless of any other dependence. If he finds his own being linked to Him and sees no independence for himself, he will take the pleasure of independence from Him.

As a consequence, man's true object of desire from whom he derives the greatest pleasure is one to whom he is inextricably linked. Genuine pleasure is derived from seeing his own relationship with Him or from seeing Him while he himself is linked to him or in fact, from viewing a reflection of His grandeur and elegance.

The Peak of Desires and Extreme Limit of Aspirations

The conclusion derived from earlier discussions is that man's innate desires extend to infinity. There is no limit or boundary to any of these desires they do not require restriction or halt at a particular level. On the contrary, they all lead man to the ultimate (point). Having boundless desires is verily one of the characteristics of man. Temporary and limited success does not content man. Even the non-religious philosophers do not deny man's innate desires. Rather this is regarded as one of the most important principal differences of man and animals.

Russel notes (as below):

"One of the most important principal differences of man and animals is that human desires, as opposed to those of animals, are boundless and cannot be fully materialized.[1]."

Although these wishes are variegated, they are all finally brought together and their ultimate satisfaction is summed up in one thing: relationship with the Infinite source of Knowledge, power, beauty and perfection. It is the feature of the states of being that the more severe, powerful and perfect they become, the more they incline towards unity and extension. Human faculties which are dispersed when belonging to the body are united when attached to the soul. While possessed of unity and extension, the soul embraces all human powers:

In like manner, the extreme point of each of the innate desires which extends to infinity and which is then united with other desires is, in fact, one ultimate desire perceived from various viewpoints and angles. And that is dependence on a perfect Infinite Being, that is to say, proximity to the Almighty Allah.

In such a state, man realizes his complete relationship with the creator. He sees himself dependent on and linked to Him or rather (he sees himself as) the incarnation of dependence on and relationship with Him. Before His presence, man observes no independence for himself. In this state, he sees all objects dependent on the holy divine Being and acquires speculative knowledge of the realities of existence. On

the basis of his own existential involvement, he reaps benefit from rays of divine grandeur and beauty. Then man's innate desire to recognize the realities of existence is materialized.

Likewise, in this state, man finds a way to the source of infinite power. By being related to this source, man obtains the power to perform whatever he wills and wishes. Thus, his innate desire to seek power is satiated.

Similarly, in this state, man can reach the greatest degree of love for the most eminent of the beloved. And he can establish ultimate proximity, closeness, union and true relationship with Him. In other words, he can see his proximity and relationship very clearly and can consequently reach the best and most permanent pleasures:

"فِي مَقْعَدِ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ مَلِيكٍ مُقْتَدِرٍ"

"In the seat of honour with a most powerful king* (*54:55*).*"

As a consequence, innate human desires which spring from humanity and which are the requisites of this present state and of his type lead man to infinity. Their full satisfaction is not feasible without establishing proximity to Allah (SWT) and being linked to eternal world.

Thus man's true perfection is (to reach) the state of proximity Allah (SWT). Other physical and spiritual perfections are only a means to reach this end. And these means should be used on the basis of criteria already set forth, that is to say, to the extent of their impact on reaching true perfection. None of them – not even the most sublime and delicate one of them – could be regarded as genuine human perfection, even if they are the distinctive features of man and are not found in other animals.

To put it in other terms, man will truly and actually become a human being and go beyond the animal state when he takes strides towards the proximity to Allah (SWT). Prior to stepping in this path, he is either a potential human being while he still has the gift to reach this state or he has totally fallen and has been ranked as animals or below animals, while he has lost this gift by misuse of his will–power.

It is for this reason that the Holy Qur'an regards the *kafirun* (disbelievers) who have lost the gift of faith and piety as the worst beings and elsewhere regards them as being more misled than the quadruped.

In Suratul Anfal, He says:

"إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ"

"Surely the vilest of animals in Allah's sight are those who disbelieve, then they would not believe* (*8:55*).*"

In another verse, He says:

"وَلَوْ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا لَأَسْمَعَهُمْ ۖ وَلَوْ أَسْمَعَهُمْ لَتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ مُعْرِضُونَ"

"Surely the vilest of animals, in Allah's sight, are the deaf, the dumb, who do not understand (8:22)."

In chapter Araf, He says:

"أُولَٰئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْغَافِلُونَ....."

"... They are as cattle, nay, they are in worse errors; these are the heedless ones (7:179)."

Is Full Satisfaction of Innate Desires Feasible?

At this point, the doubt might arise that even though innate desires incline towards infinity, can they be satisfied fully, especially with regard to the fact that man is a weak and infirm creature with limited natural and acquired powers which are finite in terms of time and which cease with the approach of death no matter how extensive these powers are?

To remove this doubt in terms suited to the style of this discussion, (it can be said) that (man's) nature in itself is proof for their feasibility, because innate desires are among objective realities and the laws and principles of being. They resemble attractions which are proof of the attractive force. They are not like mental pictures which are developed through the senses and the mental powers. Their relation to objective realities is like the relation of the discoverer to the discovered, so that there would be the possibility of their being contrary to the truth.

But limitation of human powers and their cessation with death is based on materialism and on restriction of life to the material world, both of which are in contradiction to (man's) nature. Man's innate desire for metaphysical perfections and for life in the Hereafter renders the afore-cited point null and void and amply proves the metaphysics and life in the Hereafter.

Of course, (man's) nature is not the sole proof for this matter. Numerous logical and historical proofs can be cited for them. We will make reference to just one of them.

Deliberation on the system of creation indicates that, ranging from the smallest atoms to the greatest galaxy, everything follows a wonderful and astonishing order. The permanence of the world and the evolvement of its numerous phenomena are indebted to this firm, measured and calculated order. The more the sciences are promoted, the better they can unveil the grandeur of this order and the subtlety of its mysteries and philosophies.

The wonderful human inventions and industries have taken place in the light of discovering these mysteries and the relationship among the creatures. As a result of this, one cannot regard the development of a phenomenon in the world as unaccounted for and superfluous and (one cannot) deem it void and useless, because its evolvement is an outcome of this system. It is in itself a part of this system; an element in the grand system of creation, and it is effective in the system's movement towards the objective and the ultimate end.

Principally a void and useless being will, willingly or unwillingly, bring about disorder and corruption. Thus the presence of innate desires in man will not be void and useless. Rather it is an important factor for man's progress, development and attainment of prosperity and happiness. If man's happiness and perfection was exclusive to material prosperity and was limited, the presence of boundless wishes would have been null and void.

Placing these desires in man's being without the possibility of their satisfaction is like showing someone a path and feigning that it is very long and far off such that the person musters all his courage to tread the path and moves towards the imaginary destination at full speed. While moving with full speed, his head would suddenly collide with a stone and he would realize that the path was nothing but a blind alley. It goes without saying that this act of deception is not befitting Allah, the Wise. It is only done by the foolish ones who enjoy deceiving the people and who take pleasure in the suffering and failure of the people because of their own psychological complexes and who finally laugh in a languishing manner at the disappointment of those deceived.

The Holy Qur'an says:

"أَوَلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ ۗ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ....."

"Do they not reflect within themselves: Allah did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them two but with truth....(30:8)."

"....وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَٰذَا بَاطِلًا سُبْحَانَكَ ...."

"... And reflect on the creation of heavens and the earth: Our Lord! You have not created this in vain! Glory be to you .....(3:191)."

"وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لَاعِبِينَ"

"And we did not create the heaven and the earth and what is between them for sport (21:16)."

"أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُونَ"

***"What! Did you then think that we had created you in vain and that you shall not be returned to us?* (*23:115*)."**

Is A Completely Conscious Relationship with Allah Rationally Possible?

On the basis of the conclusion derived from earlier discussions full satisfaction of man's innate demands is possible only in the light of complete and conscious relationship with the source of being. The possibility of such a relationship can be proven by philosophical reasoning. And that is: all creatures are inseparably linked with their lord and the essence of their beings is relationship with and dependence on Him. As man can have conscious speculative knowledge about his essence and as his essence is nothing but relationship with the lord, he can establish a fully conscious relationship with Him. Or in other words, he can recognize and objectively see his own complete existential relationship with Him.

Divine philosophers unanimously accept the speculative knowledge of the soul. Whenever man dispenses with concern for sense perceptions and sensual desires and whenever he focuses attention on his own being, he will realize this through speculative knowledge. This knowledge is traced in other conditions as well, even if ample attention could not be paid to it due to being occupied with other perceptions. One can strengthen this (knowledge) by way of diminishing material attachments, practicing self-examination and focusing attention on oneself, and can elevate it to a state of clarity and awareness.

Existential relationship with and dependence on the Lord can be proven by (using) the principles of sublime wisdom as explained by the late Sadrul-Mutaallihin, in this manner that existence has linear degrees. The descending degrees, with radial order range from sublime degree, its effect and what is linked to it.

True causality refers to existential relationship (but) not between two objects which exist independently because in this case, neither would be in need of the other object for existence. It rather exists between an independent being and a dependent one whose being is linked with and dependent on the cause. Thus the relationship of the effect to the true cause that imparts existence to him is nothing but absolute link and intuitionist annexation. If a person sees its reality, he will find it as dependent on the cause and as a reflection of it.

As a result, whoever succeeds in seeing his essence will find himself dependent on and linked with the Lord. Or, he will find himself as the incarnation of dependence on and relationship with the Lord. Such an observation will not be separate from observing ray of Almighty Allah's illuminations because understanding the relationship of the dependent being is impossible without understanding the

possessor of relationship and the independent Being who eternalizes it:

"Enlighten our inward eyes towards yourself with the light of sight, so that the inward eyes would strip off the curtains of light and reach the source of grandeur and our souls would be attached to your sacred presence.2."

Thus observation of the essence of being is coupled with the independent observation of a ray of divine light of beauty and grandeur:

"Whoever recognizes himself has recognized his Lord."

The vaster the existential sphere of the soul, the more perfect its status, and the more profound and concentrated its observation, the greater and more will the understanding of divine illuminations be:

“And link me to the most luminous ray of Your power, so that I would know You only and turn away from aught but You.3"

The better man understands this attachment and dependence, the greater attention he will pay to the promoter of (this) attachment and the Genuine and Independent Being, and the more he will derive benefit from the rays of His glory, so much so that he will become a thorough reflection and a perfect manifestation of the Almighty Allah (glory be to His power):

"There is no separation between You and them, except that they are Your servants and creations and that their management is in Your Hands and that they begin (their lives) from You and return to You"4

By finding such a connection, man's desire to seek the truth and to pursue power is fully satisfied. By obtaining what he truly desires and establishing an existential link with Him, man reaches the greatest degree of pleasures. The most perfect phase of this develops when the soul totally dispenses with the management of the body, when it pays attention to nothing but Allah, when worldly occupations do not attract its attention and do not keep it from submerging in observation:

"And on the day of meeting You, light up our eyes with seeing You. 5"

The Simplest Way

The simplest way to believe in the possibility of connection with Almighty Allah is that which Allah has shown the people through His messengers and through this, He has greatly favoured His servants and given them the final notice:

“...لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللَّهِ حُجَّةٌ بَعْدَ الرُّسُلِ ...”

"...So that people should have no argument against Allah after the (coming of) the

messengers… (***4:165***)***."***

Without exception messengers of Allah have called the people towards proximity with Allah and connection with the source of Infinite knowledge and power. They have given tidings to the people to enjoy eternal blessings, infinite pleasures and whatever they wish:

"لَهُمْ مَا يَشَاءُونَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ"

"They shall have with their lord what they please; that is the reward of doers of good (***39:34***)***."***

"…. فِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهِيهِ الْأَنْفُسُ وَتَلَذُّ الْأَعْيُنُ..."

"… Therein shall be what their souls yearn after and (***wherein***) ***the eyes shall delight…*** (***43:71***)***."***

"فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَا أُخْفِيَ لَهُمْ مِنْ قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ..."

"So no soul knows what is hidden for them of that which will refresh the eyes… (***32:17***)***."***

"لَهُمْ مَا يَشَاءُونَ فِيهَا وَلَدَيْنَا مَزِيدٌ"

"They have therein what they wish and with us is more yet (***50:35***)***."***

"...الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي صَدَقَنَا وَعْدَهُ وَأَوْرَثَنَا الْأَرْضَ نَتَبَوَّأُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ حَيْثُ نَشَاءُ..."

"… (***All***) ***praise is due to Allah, who has made good to us His promise and He has made us inherit the land; we may abide in the garden where we please…*** (***39:74***)***."***

The principal privilege of their call over that of other reformers is that they remind (the people) that this limited and transient life is not man's final abode. It rather is a prelude to reach eternal prosperity and it is a bridge to get to an eternal world:

" بَلْ تُؤْثِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى .إِنَّ هَٰذَا لَفِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَىٰ صُحُفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى"

"Nay! You prefer the life of this world, while the Hereafter is better and more lasting. Most surely this is in the earlier scriptures, the scriptures of Ibrahim and Musa (***87:16-19***)***."***

As the main reason behind the denial of the disbelievers and the rejection of the messengers has been

(due to) considering this truth improbable:

"وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هَلْ نَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ رَجُلٍ يُنَبِّئُكُمْ إِذَا مُزِّقْتُمْ كُلَّ مُمَزَّقٍ إِنَّكُمْ لَفِي خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ"

"And those who disbelieve say: Shall we point out to you a man who informs you that when you are scattered the utmost scattering you shall then be most surely (raised) in (to) a new creation (34:7)?"

" زَعَمَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنْ لَنْ يُبْعَثُوا ۚ قُلْ بَلَىٰ وَرَبِّي لَتُبْعَثُنَّ ثُمَّ لَتُنَبَّؤُنَّ بِمَا عَمِلْتُمْ ۚ وَذَٰلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ....يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُكُمْ لِيَوْمِ الْجَمْعِ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ يَوْمُ التَّغَابُنِ ۚ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ وَيَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا يُكَفِّرْ عَنْهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِ وَيُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ۚ ذَٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ۚ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ "

"Those who disbelieve think that they shall never be raised. Say: Aye! By my Lord! You shall most certainly be raised, then you shall most certainly be informed of what you did. And that is easy to Allah... On the day that He will gather you for the day of gathering, that is the day of loss and gain, and whoever believes in Allah and does good, He will remove from him his evil and cause him to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow, to abide therein forever; that is the great achievement. And (as for) those who disbelieve and reject our communications, they are the inmates of the fire, to abide therein evil is the resort (64:7, 9, 10)."

"وَنَحْشُرُهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عَلَىٰ وُجُوهِهِمْ عُمْيًا وَبُكْمًا وَصُمًّا ۖ مَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ ۖ كُلَّمَا خَبَتْ زِدْنَاهُمْ سَعِيرًا. ذَٰلِكَ جَزَاؤُهُمْ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَقَالُوا أَإِذَا كُنَّا عِظَامًا وَرُفَاتًا أَإِنَّا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ خَلْقًا جَدِيدًا. أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ قَادِرٌ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ مِثْلَهُمْ وَجَعَلَ لَهُمْ أَجَلًا لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ فَأَبَى الظَّالِمُونَ إِلَّا كُفُورًا"

"... And We will gather them together on the day of resurrection on their faces, blind and dumb and deaf; their abode is hell; whenever it becomes allayed We will add to their burning. This is their retribution because they disbelieved in our communications and said: What! When we shall have become bones and decayed particles, shall we then indeed be raised up into a new creation? Do they not consider that Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth, is able to create their like, and He has appointed for them a doom about which there is no doubt, but the unjust do not consent to aught but denying (17:97 – 99)."

The messengers of Allah did not suffice with invitation, promise, and warning. Rather, with the permission of the Lord, they reflected instances of the signs of relationship with divinity and with the infinite source of knowledge and power, so that everyone would understand that resorting to the limited material means is not the sole way of acquiring knowledge and power and that it is possible for man to use divine sciences and metaphysical powers.

By presenting news of the unseen, discovering hidden secrets, and expressing the sciences and the philosophies while being unschooled, the messengers practically proved the possibility of establishing connection with divinity and acquiring unseen are mystical sciences:

"وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ...."

"And He taught Adam all the names... (2:31)."

" وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ مِنْ لَدُنَّا عِلْمًا ...."

"... And whom We had taught knowledge from Ourselves (18:65)."

"وَآتَيْنَاهُ الْحُكْمَ صَبِيًّا...."

"... And We granted him wisdom while yet a child (19:12)."

"قَالُوا كَيْفَ نُكَلِّمُ مَنْ كَانَ فِي الْمَهْدِ صَبِيًّا. قَالَ إِنِّي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ آتَانِيَ الْكِتَابَ وَجَعَلَنِي نَبِيًّا"...

"... They said: How should we speak to one who was a child in the cradle? He said, surely 1 am a servant of Allah; He has given me the Book and made me a prophet (19:29 - 30)."

"... وَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا تَأْكُلُونَ وَمَا تَدَّخِرُونَ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ..."

"... And I inform you of what you should eat and what you should store in your houses... (3:49)."

"...عُلِّمْنَا مَنْطِقَ الطَّيْرِ وَأُوتِينَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ..."

"... We have been taught the language of birds, and we have been given all things,- (27:16)."

"...وَكُلًّا آتَيْنَا حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا..."

"...And to each one We gave wisdom and knowledge... (21:79)."

Above all is the Holy Qur'an which is the eternal miracle of the prophet (SA) of Islam, which has been revealed to an unschooled individual in a degenerated and backward society and which, from its

revelation, has challenged the jinn and the men to bring a chapter like it. And as we know, despite numerous claims in this regard, no one has ever been able to challenge it. And on the basis of the explicit foretelling of the Qur'an, this will never be materialized.

In like manner, by performing extraordinary deeds and triumphing over natural forces, the divinely appointed messengers have practically proven the possibility of freedom from material bonds and attainment of an invincible power.

Emergence of a live cattle from the heart of the mountain by Prophet Salih, Prophet Ibrahim's deliverance from Namrud's great fire, transformation of a cane into a dragon or the ripping of the sea or making twelve springs flow from a stone by Prophet Musa, curing those blind by birth or giving life to the deed by Prophet Isa, taming of perceptible and imperceptible forces for Prophet Sulayman are examples of the extraordinary deeds performed by the prophets as related by the Holy Qur'an. The successors of the messengers and even many of their true followers also enjoyed possessing such knowledge and powers.

A holy *hadith* given by the Prophet (SA) states:

"My servant, obey me that I make you an example of myself. To whatever I say "Be", it will be created. I will make you such that to whatever you say "Be", it will be created."

And if the miracles proven by authentic and successive relations are gathered, they will make up great many volumes.

With all this is it befitting that some people, blindly and impudently, deny the existence of the metaphysics and the possibility of establishing connection with it and preclude others from pursuing this path as well.

The truth is that even if such miracles and clear verses did not exist, it would be apt for man to implement the programmes set forth by the messengers even experimentally and to evaluate their grand impact on man's material and spiritual prosperity. Because the matter is of such great importance that it justifies any sacrifice to have it fulfilled, especially with regard to the fact that implementing the programmes of the messengers, as opposed to many other plans, does not require dispensing with all worldly blessings and pleasures, it rather guarantees comfort and peace in this world as well. Among the messengers and their followers, there have also been people who have enjoyed worldly blessings more that the mammonists have done.

Would not the unexceptional insistence of all messengers on this matter and the unrivalled sacrifice of themselves, their successors and their true followers to propagate it, develop in the heart of the just person the possibility of the rightfulness of their claim?! What a great thing fairness is!

Is the value of such a reality less than the value of discovering natural secrets and conquering heavenly

spheres? Enduring great pain and difficulty and using numerous natural forces as well as man power for scientific discoveries is worthy of attention and praise but using a part of (these) forces to establish connection with the infinite source of knowledge and power and to reach eternal prosperity and happiness is not correct and logical? What a great thing wisdom and far-sightedness is!

Proof from the Verses and the Narrations

What we deduced from moral and rational premises is confirmed by the Book and the *Sunnah*. In some instances, we made reference to traditional proofs. Now we will mention some other examples from among the verses and narrations.

The Holy Qur'an introduces man as pious by nature and claims that all human beings, in a phase of being, have clearly observed their Lord and confessed His divinity:

"...أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ ..."

Am I not your Lord? They said: Yes! (***7:172***)

The worldly life is for the sake of carrying out the covenant of servitude and determining man's fidelity towards this innate promise and covenant and finally reaching voluntary development through piety:

"وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ"

"And I have not created the jinn and the men except that they should serve Me (***51:56***)***."***
For this evaluation, various conditions are put forth so that each person would freely choose his path:

"...لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ..."

"... That He might manifest you, which of you is best in action (***11:7***)***."***

In the dark labyrinths of life, only those who love their Lord, who take refuge with Him, and who seek His satisfaction are guided unto the right and safe path and unto Allah:

"...وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ..."

"...And those who believe are stronger in love for Allah... (***2:165***)***."***

"قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ..."

"Say: If you love Allah, then follow me, Allah will love you (3:31)."

"يَهْدِي بِهِ اللَّهُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانَهُ سُبُلَ السَّلَامِ وَيُخْرِجُهُمْ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ"

"With it Allah guides him who will follow His pleasure into the ways of safety and brings them out of utter darkness into light by His will and guides them to the right path (5:16)."

"وَمَنْ يُسْلِمْ وَجْهَهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ..."

"And whoever submits himself wholly to Allah and he is the doer of good (to others), he indeed has taken hold of the firmest thing upon which one can lay hold... (31:22)."

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَاعْتَصَمُوا بِهِ فَسَيُدْخِلُهُمْ فِي رَحْمَةٍ مِنْهُ وَفَضْلٍ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَيْهِ صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا

"Then as for those who believe in Allah and hold fast by Him, He will cause them to enter into His mercy and grace and guide them to Himself on a right path (4:175)."

Such people will finally succeed in meeting the grace of Allah and reaching His proximity and being united with their Beloved:

" يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ .ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَرْضِيَّةً. فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي. وَادْخُلِي جَنَّتِي"

"O soul that art at rest! Return to your Lord, well – pleased (with him), well – pleasing (Him), so enter among My servants, and enter into my garden (89:27–30)."

"فِي مَقْعَدِ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ مَلِيكٍ مُقْتَدِرٍ"

"In the seat of honour with a Most Powerful King (54:55)."

" وُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَاضِرَةٌ. إِلَىٰ رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ"

"On that day, some faces shall be bright, looking to their Lord (75:22–23)."

But those who dote on worldly ornaments, who prefer the love of others to that of Allah and who have no eagerness for His mercy will suffer an infinite and painful torment and will be deprived of seeing their innate Beloved.

"إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا وَرَضُوا بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَاطْمَأَنُّوا بِهَا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِنَا غَافِلُونَ. أُولَٰئِكَ مَأْوَاهُمُ النَّارُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ"

"Surely those who do not hope in our meeting and are pleased with this world's life and are content with it and those who are heedless of our communications. (***As for***) ***those, their abode is the fire because of what they earned*** (***10: 7-8***)***."***

"قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالٌ اقْتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسَاكِنُ تَرْضَوْنَهَا أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِي سَبِيلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوا حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ"

"Say: If your fathers and your sons and your brethren and your mates and your kinsfolk and property which you have acquired, and the slackness of trade which you fear and dwellings which you like, are dearer to you than Allah and His messenger and striving in His way, then wait till Allah brings about His command… (***9:24***)***."***

"كَلَّا إِنَّهُمْ عَنْ رَبِّهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَمَحْجُوبُونَ"

"Nay! Most surely they shall on that day be debarred from their Lord (***83: 15***)***."***

In the Prophetic *ahadith* and the narrations of the *Ahlul Bayt* (*AS*) there are also numerous proofs, instances of which will be related from the holy *ahadith* narrated by the Prophet (SA), as well as the prayers of the infallible *Imams* (*AS*).

In *Hadith-ul-miraj*, the Holy Prophet (SA) is addressed as below:

"Whoever is to please Me will be accorded three traits by Me: I will teach him a gratitude which will not be coupled with ungratefulness, a *dhikr* which will not have forgetfulness, a love by which he will not prefer the love of the creatures to that of Mine. I will love him when he loves Me and I will make him loved by My servants and I will open up his inward eyes to My glory grandeur and I will not hide from him knowledge of the select of My people in the darkness of night and in the light of day, I will tell him secrets so that his conversation with creatures and with his companions will be cutoff (i.e. so that his heart will always be inclined towards Me and he will deem Me the partner to his conversation). I will make him hear My words and the words of my angels and I will reveal to him the secret I have hidden from the people ...

I will make his mind overflow with My knowledge and I will substitute for his reason (i.e, I will manage his affairs in such a way that he would not need the working of reason in them and that he would use his reason only in the way of knowing Me). (When the believer's soul leaves the body and receives kindness before Allah, it says:) O Allah ! You made Yourself known to me, so by knowing You, I became needless

of Your servants. By Your power and glory, if Your satisfaction lay in my being torn to pieces and severely killed for seventy times, I would prefer Your satisfaction.... (Almighty Allah confirms His words and says in His right): I will open his eyes and ears so that he would hear My words whole heartedly and see My glory and grandeur with inward eyes.

O Ahmad! If a servant prays as much as the (entire) dwellers of the heavens and the earth, if he fasts as much as the (entire) dwellers of the heavens and the earth, if he takes no food like the angels and if his clothes are like those of the naked (scant), he will not be in proximity with Me if I see in his heart only a tinge of love for the world or concern for the reputation, mastery, fame or ornaments of the world, I will draw My love away from his heart and I will make his heart gloomy, so that he would forget Me and I will not make him taste the sweetness of Knowing Me. My peace and mercy be upon you."

In another *hadith*, He states:

"The Almighty Allah states: None of my servants will seek proximity with Me by that which is more dear to Me than things I have made *wajib* to him. Then with the *nawafil*, he will seek proximity, so that I would love him, When I love him, I will be the ear with which he hears, the eyes with which he sees, the tongue with which he speaks and the hand with which he takes hold (of things). If he calls Me, I will answer his call. And if he makes a request, I will grant it."[6]

In another *hadith*, He says:

"O son of Adam! I am a Needless One who will not become needful. Obey Me in what I have ordered, so that I would make you a needless one who will not become needful. O son of Adam! I am a living one who will not die. Obey Me in what I have ordered, that I would make you a living one who will not die. O son of Adam! To whatever I say "Be", it will be (created). Obey Me in what I have ordered so that I would make you say "Be" to whatever you wish and it will (be (created)."[7]

In the prayer of the month of Sha'ban, Amirul-Muminin(AS) addresses Allah as below:

"Set my effort in a comfort derived from reaching Your names and Your holy presence... O Allah, grant me the ultimate connection with Yourself. Open our inward eyes with the light of observation towards Yourself; so that the inward eyes would tear apart the veils of light and reach the treasure of glory and our souls would cling to Your holy presence... Attach me to the most luminous ray of Your power, so that I would know You alone and would turn away from aught but You."

In Kumayl Prayer, he says (the following) to Almighty Allah:

"O Allah, supposing that I bear patience on your torment, how could I bear patience on being separated from you? And supposing that I have patience on the heat of your fire, how could I have patience of not looking towards your glory and greatness?"

The Imam (AS) is related as saying:

"I saw nothing except that I saw Allah before (seeing) it."

In response to a person who asked him: "Have you seen your Lord?" he said: "Would I worship One Whom I cannot see?"

In the Arafah prayer, the *sayyidush-shuhada'*, Al-Imam Al-Husayn(AS) says (the following) to Allah..

"O Allah! Through the variety of Your signs (in the world of being) and the changes in states and conditions. I found that the purpose is to make Yourself known to me in everything, so that I would not be ignorant of You in anything... O Allah! Association and engagement with the signs creates a gap in meeting (You), so grant me the blessing of service that would near me to You. How can they set proof of Your existence, a being that needs You for existence? Is there any other appearance that You lack, so that it would lead to Your appearance? When have You been absent to require proof? And when have You been away, so that Your signs would draw (the others) to You?! Blind be the eyes which do not see You keeping a watch over them and unprofitable be the transaction of a servant to whom You have not bestowed Your love. O Allah! You have ordered reference to the signs, so draw me to Yourself by the overflow of the illuminations and the guidance of mental insight, so that like the moment of entrance (into Your presence, I would return in such a way that my heart would be immune from observing the sign and trusting them. O Allah! Teach me with your treasure of knowledge and preserve me with Your veil of immunity. Inform me of the truth of those seeking Your proximity and guide me to the path of those You draw towards Yourself. With Your management and will-power make me needless of my own management and will-power. You are the one Who cast rays in the hearts of Your friends so that they recognize You as being possessed of unity. And You are the One who removed (love for) the others from the hearts of those fond of you so that they would not love and resort to aught but You. You are their Companion when everything appalls them. And You are their guide when the signs become manifest to them. What has been gain, by one who has lost You? And what has been lost by one who has found You? Whoever prefers others to You has verily become disappointed. And whoever turns away from Your presence will suffer great loss. O Lord! Call me with your mercy, so that I would reach You so that would turn my face....eager from observing your beautiful visage."

Munajat ul Raghibin includes (the following):

"I beg You on the manifestations of Your visage and Your holy illuminations. I abjectly want You to fulfill my conception as to what I wish from You through Your sentiments of mercy and subtleties of beneficence: (my wishes are) with respect to Your bounteous honour and beauteous reward; with respect to proximity with and closeness to You; and with respect to seeing You."

Munajat ul Muridin includes (the following):

"O Allah! Lead us towards reaching You and set us out on the closest way to come to Your Presence. You (and naught but You) are my aim. My wakefulness and vigil are for You and for naught by You. Meeting You is the refreshment of my eyes. Being united with You is my heartfelt desire. I am infatuated

with Your compassion. I am enamoured of You. Your satisfaction is my objective. And meeting You is my desire. And proximity with You is my ultimate demand....O heaven and blessing of mine! O world and hereafter of mine!"

Munajat ul – Muhibbin includes (the following):

"O Allah! Place us among those whom You have chosen for Your proximity and guardianship, whom You have made sincere for Your love and friendship, whom You have made eager to meet You and satisfied with Your satisfaction, whom You have granted seeing Your visage, whom You have favoured with Your satisfaction, whom You have safeguarded from being away and separated from Yourself, whom You have placed in the true status before Yourself;... whom You have chosen to observe (Your elegance)...and grant me the favour of seeing You."

Munajat ul Mutawassillin includes (the following):

“And place me among those whose eyes you have lighted up with seeing You on the day of meeting (You) and whom You have made the inheritors of real abodes in Your presence.”

Munajat ul Muftaqirin includes (the following):

"Nothing but union with You would extinguish my mental agony. And nothing but meeting You would put out the fire of my heart. And nothing but seeing You would quench my avidity. And nothing but closeness to You would calm me down... and nothing but proximity with You would remove my sorrow and grief."

Munajat ul Arifin includes (the following):

"(Place me as one of those) whose eyes have been refreshed by seeing their Beloved. How tasty Your compassion is and how wholesome each sip of Your proximity is! So grant us refuge from expelling and driving away."

Mundial ul Dhaikirin includes (the following):

“O Allah! Infatuated hearts are enamored of You. Various intellectuals have gathered around Your knowledge, so the hearts will not calm down except by Your remembrance and the souls will not be at rest except by seeing You.... And I deprecate any pleasure but Your remembrance, any comfort but acquaintance with You, any happiness but proximity with You, and any deed but worshipping You.”

Munajat uz zahidin includes (the following):

“Plant trees of love in our hearts and make perfect for us the rays of Your knowledge.... And refresh our eyes with seeing You on the day of meeting (You).”

Conclusion Derived From Previous Discussions

Efforts made in the course of life in various scientific, practical, individual and social spheres will be human only when they take place for the purpose of reaching man's true perfection. In other words, these moves which forcibly have a direction will be deemed human endeavours when they are directed towards human perfection. Giving them a human direction will be possible only in case they are regarded as the ultimate point of man's development, because man's movement for perfection is scientific and voluntary and requires an objective and a direction. Thus recognition of the objective is not possible prior to acquiring moral and speculative understanding. Then it will forcibly be a mental idea and image. Thus the more vivid and conscious this recognition is, the more possibility for voluntary and optional development there will be.

Without a tinge of doubt, man's development takes place with the help of internal forces and psychological motives vested in his being. As a result, giving direction to innate desires is the best means for the recognition of man's ultimate goal and true perfection. The result of deliberation on the direction of each of these desires is that they all lead man towards infinity. A temporary and limited materialization of their demands does not fully satisfy man. Their full satisfaction is not feasible except by having connection with the source of knowledge and power and by being linked with the infinite treasure of Beauty and Perfection. It is only in the state of proximity with Allah and attachment to the illumination of divine glory that man sees his own essence and that of the entire world of existence dependent on Almighty Allah:

“And I will open up his inward eyes to My glory and grandeur and I will not hide from him knowledge of the select of My people."

And his desire to seek the truth is fulfilled. He will, likewise realize the influence of Allah's infinite power through his own will and he will create whatever he wishes with the permission of Allah:

“So that I would make you say "Be" to whatever you wish will be (created)."

Thus, man's desire to have an invincible power is satisfied. In this state man will be united with a Beloved possessed of infinite beauty and perfection, will see himself embraced by His endless grace and favour, and will have all his needs fulfilled by Him. Truly, how pleasant is the elimination of a need carried out by the beloved and coupled with His endless grace and compassion:

"When I love him, I will be the ear with which he hears..."

In this state, he will engage in nothing but uniting with Him and will think of nothing but satisfying Him:

"You and naught but You are my aim."

"Being united with You is my heartfelt' desire.. and Your satisfaction is my objective."

"... وَرِضْوَانٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ ..."

"... And best of all is Allah's goodly pleasure... (9:72)."

And there will be no separation between him and his Beloved till eternity and he will not suffer from His separation.

"Then the veil between Him and me will be lifted and then He gets attracted to my conversation and He looks towards me with affection."

"Whom You have safeguarded from being away and separated from Yourself."

Finally in this state, man sees his being possessed of ultimate perfection and dependent on the Creator and reaches the greatest of all pleasures. As he sees no independence for himself in this observation, his self-love is also deprived of independence. His genuine, independent affection is bestowed upon Allah. Instead of loving Allah for himself, he will love himself for Allah, he will thus no longer have any concern for himself and he will be totally submerged in the beauty of the Beloved:

"I will make his mind overflow with My knowledge and I will substitute for his reason."

As a result, man's true desire and inherent beloved is Almighty Allah and man's true perfection lies in connection and proximity with Him. Other material and spiritual perfections should be used in the way of reaching this perfection. All forces should be mobilized to reach this goal. Each step man takes in a path other than this draws him away from the destination and any power he uses in a path other than Allah's satisfaction will be to his loss:

"And I deprecate any pleasure but Your remembrance, any comfort but acquaintance with You, any happiness but proximity with You and any deed but worshipping You."

1. Power, p 19
2. Al-Munajtitush-shabeiniyyah
3. Al-Munajdtush-shalminiyyah
4. Prayer cited on the days of the month of Rajab
5. Munajat uz-Zilhidin
6. Al-usul al-kafi, Vol2, p 352; weal' Mahasin Barqi.
7. Iddatud Ibn Fand, p 291

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