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Question 1: Do we have the right to ask about the Logic behind Islamic Laws?

Now we discuss the most important topics about Islamic laws, its rules and regulations and their philosophy and most of the questions and answers are based on this.

“Why should we pray Prayers is the question every person asks himself? Why should a person go for the pilgrimage of House of Allah? Why it is forbidden to take interest in Islam? What is the philosophy for prohibiting pork? Why is polygamy allowed in Islam? Why it is prohibited to eat in gold and silver utensils? etc…etc…

Some learned people and scholars have discussed about these in a beautiful way. From them some have derived only one side of the question. Some think that we should not inquire about the Logic behind the Islamic Laws and others think the opposite of this; that it is necessary to understand the logic behind the Islamic laws.

Keeping in mind the views of these scholars, we present our views on the subject:
You may be astonished that both the groups are right. We have this right to ask and we also don't have this right. We mean that while idea of each group is not accepted, but only the special part of it is accepted.

It can be explained in this way:
From the holy Qur’an, Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and the traditions of Holy Imams (a.s.) and from the sayings of the companions and friends we come to know that there was always a tradition of discussing the philosophy of Islamic laws among themselves and it should also be like that because they were thinking that the holy Qur’an was an independent and logical way and they had given the right to themselves that they should discuss the Islamic laws in a logical way and ask questions about its philosophy.

According to the principles of Islam, which introduces Allah in this way:

He is such an existence, which has infinite knowledge and wisdom and He is independent from all things and persons. All His acts are based on wisdom, whether we understand it or not. His acts never include any foolishness or meaninglessness and He has sent the Prophets for teaching, training and inviting the people towards truth and justice.

The introduction of Allah in such a way encourages us to question about the Islamic laws, its effect and it's Philosophy, which naturally have great influence on our life.

It is a mistake to think that the holy Qur'an is not about the practical law and other information; and that it only is about the roots of religion and beliefs because we see that the holy Qur'an after the command of fasting in the holy month of Ramadhan says:

"You keep fast so that you can become pious."[1]

In this way He wants us to know that the logic behind Fasting is to remain away from sins, which can be attained through this spiritual exercise and through controlling the desires. The Qur'an says about the sick and travelers who are exempted from keeping the fast:

And whoever is sick or upon a journey, then (he shall fast) a (like) number of other days; Allah desires ease for you, and He does not desire for you difficulty...[2]

And Allah doesn't want hardships and mistakes; this is the philosophy behind it.

The Qur'an prohibits gambling and wine and says about them:

The Shaitan only desires to cause enmity and hatred to spring in your midst by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to keep you off from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer. Will you then desist? (Surah Maidah 5:91)

The Qur'an says about the strange women by not looking at them:

Say to the believing men that they cast down their looks and guard their private parts; that is purer for them; surely Allah is Aware of what they do. (Surah Nur 24:30)

This deed is good for their chastity. And it says about the prohibition of the entering of the infidels in the mosque of Mecca that:

O you who believe! the idolaters are nothing but unclean, so they shall not approach the Sacred Mosque after this year...[3]

The infidels are impure and that is why they are not allowed to enter the holy mosque.
The Qur'an says about the public property and its one part should be spent on the poor people that:

Whatever Allah has restored to His Apostle from the people of the towns, it is for Allah and for

the Apostle, and for the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, so that it may not be a thing taken by turns among the rich of you... [4]

Allah has reserved this wealth for the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and general expenses, so that the wealth many not be limited between the rich and wealthy people and that the common people may not remain poor.

And in this way many philosophies of the Islamic laws are explained, to mention all of which would lengthen the book unduly.

We also get such examples from the traditions of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and Imam's (a.s.). The Imam's (a.s.) themselves explained the philosophies of the Islamic laws or replied when asked by their companions. The great Scholar Shaykh Sadooq (a.r.) has written a famous book, *Ilalush Sharaeh*, as the name itself shows the book is the Collection of such traditions.

Therefore when we see that the glorious Qur'an itself and the Islamic leaders on many occasions have explained the logic behind Islamic Laws, it is a proof that they have given us the right to discuss about it. If the situation were opposite they would have refrained us from contemplation and research in the Islamic Laws.

From whatever is said above we conclude that it is allowed to do research and find the reasons behind Islamic laws.
And in this way the style and explanation of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and the Holy Imams (a.s.) has given us the right to know the secrets of Islamic laws.

It is wrong to think that by explaining the philosophies of Islamic laws their importance and value is decreased, but in fact explanation of these things satisfies intellect and reason of a person and then he applies laws in his practical life, which makes their life more dynamic. And in this way a person doesn't follow the Islamic law in a dry way but acts on the laws of Islam with a great fervor. This was one side of the question.

The other is that, as the time goes no matter how much our knowledge increases, also shall always be limited. We cannot come to know everything. If man had known all the things of the world, then the caravan of knowledge and research would have been stopped.

Rather the things, which we do not know is like a huge ocean, and the things, which we know is just like a drop, or the things, which we know is like one line from a big book. And to know the things, which we do not know, we will require a Professor from the other world, and then also we will be not be able to understand them. In the same way if the people who lived a thousand years ago were taught the scientific knowledge of this age so they would not have been able to understand. They would not have been able to reach the depth through their own thinking and intelligence.

We all know that the source of heavenly wisdom is from the infinite knowledge of the Almighty Allah. He

is such a source that He is aware of the whole Universe. For Him words like past, future, absent, present have no meaning; rather He is all knowing and aware of everything.

After considering these facts can we expect that we can understand all the philosophies of Islamic laws? If this was so, what was the need for Prophets? We would sit and correct those things, which we feel right according to our whims and fancies and would lead a life roaming the deserts. And on the other side the question arises: are we aware of the philosophy behind each existence of each creature in the world and about the laws, which govern them? The religious laws are not different from the creation and our knowledge regarding both of them is limited.

From this discussion we conclude as follows:

In all the ages only those philosophies of the Islamic laws can be understood, which are in the ambit of their knowledge and according to their standard. Basically, we should not expect more because of our limited knowledge and the depth of the laws. We conclude by saying that for following the Islamic laws we cannot put the condition of knowing their philosophies, otherwise it means we are claiming to have unlimited knowledge and we are considering our intelligence equal to Allah's and this is itself against logic.

In short the discussions about the hidden logic behind the laws and the right to discuss about them is one thing and to obey these laws is another. The latter is not conditional to former.

We discuss about religious laws to increase our knowledge about their benefits, importance and different effects. We do not discuss these things to decide whether we should practice these laws or not.

It is like asking the doctor about our treatment, about the medicines prescribed; their effects and benefits etc. so that we can acquire more information about these things. However our taking of medicine is not conditional on his explanation, otherwise it would be necessary that the person should also be a doctor.

It is necessary to keep this point in the mind, that the purpose to discuss the secrets and hidden wisdom of the laws to the utmost level is to guess and imagine with fancy ideas the philosophies of the high religious laws. For example if it is said that Azan is the medium to make loud sounds, Prayers is a kind of Swedish exercise and the purpose of fast is to lose weight, Hajj is the means of income for Arabs and prostration (sajdah) and bowing (ruku) are the means to protect the bones.

No – Not at all, this is not the purpose about the Islamic laws, because fancy ideas and imagination not only distract a person from Islamic laws but also reduce their value and it implies that the Islamic laws are unreliable.

1. Surah Baqarah 2:183
2. Surah Baqarah 2:185
3. Surah Tawbah 9:28
4. Surah Hashr 59:7

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