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Section Three: Anthropology

The human race is mysterious and mystifying. The various aspects of existence are more profound than can be understood. Despite constant endeavor throughout history to solve the riddle of humanity's existence, there are still incalculable unrevealed mysteries. Even now that we stand upon the heights of a multitude of anthropological studies and research, we are still faced with a number of ambiguities. It is astonishing that with the development of these studies still more unconsidered perplexities unfold.

Appreciation of the importance of anthropology does not require much explanation or emphasis. The major difference between anthropology and other fields of research is that in anthropology the problem is not understanding it, but understanding me. Thus, any results from anthropological research can be greatly effective in our interpretation of the philosophy of life, our own status in existence, and our relationship with other elements of existence. In this way, anthropological research can give our lives special meaning.

From this perspective, there is an irrefutable difference between understanding humankind and understanding a type of plant or animal or faraway star. In addition, many current theories and debates regarding various branches of science are based on specific anthropological hypotheses. For example, the many theories in education are established on a particular portrayal of the human race and its abilities and potentials.

Various Branches of Anthropology

Despite their astonishing variety, the different discussions in anthropology may be classified into the four spheres of scientific, philosophical, theosophical, and theological anthropology. These four branches may also differ in their principles and methods of research.[1]

Nonetheless, it seems that comprehensive understanding of humanity cannot come about without considering the findings of all these divisions. In this treatise, our object of debate is mostly Islamic anthropology. In view of the remarkable comprehensiveness of the Islamic principles and teachings that are related to understanding humanity, we shall endeavor to present a short representation of Islam's

view of humankind by selecting a few major issues.

The Importance of Anthropology

In addition to the general aspects of the importance of understanding human nature, anthropology is especially significant from the religious perspective. The understanding of humanity and the mysteries of its being open up new doorways to understanding God. Humans are the only creation that can be the manifestation and absolute mirror of the Supreme Truth. Thus, similar to the exterior world, our inner being is also a focus of divine signs:

﴿سَنُريهم آياتِنا في الآفاقِ و في أَنفسِهم حتّى يَتبيّن لهم أَنَّه الحقّ﴾

"We shall soon reveal unto them Our signs in the horizons and in themselves, till it is clear to them that He is the Supreme Truth (that it is the truth)."[2]

Moreover, the Qur'an considers neglecting oneself concomitant with neglecting God:

﴿نَسُوا اللهَ فَأَنساهُم أَنفسَهم﴾

"They forgot Allah so He caused them to forget themselves."[3]

Various Hadiths also emphasize this concomitance.[4] Additionally, anthropology has an intricate relationship with other Islamic ideological—like prophethood and resurrection—, moral and jurisprudential [fiqh] teachings such that correct understanding of these teachings cannot be realized without understanding humanity.

The Creation of the Human Race

According to Islamic belief, all humans that have ever existed, regardless of their racial, cultural, lingual, and other differences have arisen from a single and common origin. In the beginning, God created a single man and woman and the rest of humankind were born of their filiation. Thus, through consecutive generations, the number of humans slowly increased:

"O People! Be pious towards your Lord, who created you from a single soul (person), and from it created its mate, and scattered from them many men and women."[5]

Accordingly, some Qur'anic verses call humans the children of Adam and in this way the Qur'an stresses their relationship with the first link in humanity's history.[6] Also, in several verses it is emphasized that Adam ('a), who was the first human to lay foot on earth, has been created differently than the creation of his children because, in contrast to his descendants, he has not been born through the coupling of a

man and woman. Like many other truths in existence, the manner of genesis of the first human is hidden from us. We know nothing more than the fact that the original substance from which the human race was created is what the Qur'an terms dust (tur□b) or clay (□□n):

﴿إذ قالَ ربّك للملائكةِ إني خالقٌ بشراً من طينٍ﴾

"When thy Lord said unto the angels: Verily, I shall create a human from clay."[7]

According to this, we can say that the Qur'an denounces theories that regard humanity as an evolved product of animals or humanoid beings.[8]

God's unique genesis of the first human shows an aspect of humanity's intrinsic greatness and their supremacy over all other creatures in existence.

Aspects of Humanity's Being

According to the Islamic perspective, humankind is not a completely material and natural creature. In fact, humanity's existence consists of a material aspect—the body—and an incorporeal aspect—the spirit or soul. Regarding the inception of humans, the Holy Qur'an declares that after the completion of several stages in the formation of the fetus, a new stage begins that is related to their incorporeal aspect:

"Then of the sperm We created a blood-clot, next of the blood-clot We created tissue, and then of the tissue We created bones, afterwards We covered the bones with flesh, and then We originated within it a different existence."[9]

Even though the qualities of this new existence are not revealed, the difference in phrasing and the use of the verb "انشأنا" (we originated) instead of "خلقنا" (we created) is a subtle indication of the fundamental difference between the respective stage and the previous stages—which were all concerned with humanity's material aspect. Therefore, many exegetes consider this verse to be a testimony of the creation of the human spiritual gem.

Also in several Qur'anic verses, the creation of the spiritual and immaterial aspect of humanity is termed breath of spirit:

﴿ثمّ سوّاه و نَفَخَ فيه من روحِهِ﴾

"Then He shaped it and breathed in it of His spirit."[10]

According to this verse, after God brings order to the creation of the fetus, and makes its body well

proportioned and balanced, He breathes spirit[11] into its body.

The nature of humanity's spirit is a complex and controversial issue.[12] According to several Qur'anic verses, it seems that after death the soul continues its life independent of its corporeal body.[13] Since the endurance of the spirit after the body's extinction entails the continuity of one's existence, it is clear that between the two aspects of humanity's being, their spiritual gem has authenticity; this gem forms the essence of each human and it is usually interpreted as "me".

Of course, the existential independence of the spirit from the body after death does not mean that there is no true relationship between these two. In fact, as long as persons live in the natural world their body and soul are correlated and are affected by each other. Based on this correlation, religious teachings obligate us to protect the sanctity of both aspects. Thus, we must be utterly protective of our body and utilize it in the best possible manner on the path of attaining salvation and bliss.[14]

The advantages of humanity's nature, especially those that originate from the spiritual aspect, have provided them with an elite status in the expansive world of existence. Humans, in the core of their essence, are superior not only superior to animals, but also to all of God's creations.

Humans and Animals

The material aspect of humankind has many similarities to animals. However, our spiritual aspect has profound differences that affect our beliefs and propensities.

Humans are both superior to animals in their understanding and in the instruments and sources of their understanding. In addition, our cognitive system, regarding its qualities and applications, is far more complex than the faculties of animal cognitive systems. Animal cognition is restricted to a collection of sensory data which humans share but to which they are not restricted. In addition to the senses, humankind is also equipped with the intellect—something that animals do not enjoy.[15] Through deliberation, humans are able to understand more general concepts and laws of nature; they can discern the depth and core of a thing by studying its exterior; and can discover the relationships of apparently unassociated and scattered phenomena. Logic, philosophy, and even the disparate branches of empirical science would never have been conceived without the employment of intellect.

Moreover, humans possess various spiritual (non-material) aspirations that animals do no have. These are as follows:

1. The Aspiration for Knowledge

Humans are naturally scholarly and inquisitive and the propensity to know is fused deep within their souls. Amazingly, human curiosity is not restricted to sciences that directly concern their daily lives. In fact, discovering new truths is always fascinating to humans. Knowledge and awareness is always appealing and desirable to the human race. In short, due to their inner calling, humans flee from

ignorance and tend towards knowledge and awareness.

2. The Aspiration for Beauty

Another of humanity's spiritual inclinations is fondness of beauty and aesthetics. All humans prefer beauty to ugliness. Our beauty and the beauty of our living environment and the objects with which we relate are important to us. In contrast, animals only endeavor to resolve their instinctive needs. Gorgeous features, attractive scenery, beautiful homes, etc. are meaningless to them. Throughout history, aesthetical tendencies have been the source of timeless masterpieces and various spiritual disciplines.

3. Moral Aspiration

One of humanity's most elevated spiritual features is their ethics. Humans organize many of their deeds within the framework of moral standards and principles. Ethics has a decisive effect upon one's motives and behavior. Good and evil, and obligation and constraint have no meaning to an animal, whereas moral good and evil, and duties and restrictions are the criterion for assessment and evaluation of a person's deeds.

According to Islamic belief, understanding good and evil, and understanding the system of morals is amalgamated in humanity's being:[16]

﴿و نَفسٍ و ما سَوّاها. فَأَلْهَمَها فجورها و تقواها﴾

"By the soul and He who shaped it and then inspired it* [*with the understanding of*] *its lewdnesses and pieties."[17]

Also due to their nature, humans tend toward engaging in good and are inclined against committing evils:

﴿وَ لٰكِنَّ اللهَ حَبَّبَ إِليكم الايمانَ و زيَّنَه في قلوبكم و كَرَّه إِليكم الكفرَ و الفسوقَ و العصيان﴾

"But Allah has endeared to you faith and has beautified it within your hearts, and He has made repulsive to you unbelief and transgression and disobedience."[18]

Thus, disposition toward moral virtues is another quality that has made humankind superior to animals.

4. Aspiration to Worship

Propensity towards worship and veneration of a divine being is another of humanity's spiritual features. Historical investigations show that from long ago, humans have been familiar with worship and adulation.

The unique feeling of this disposition is so powerful and extensive that even deniers who boast of irreligion are not free of some type of exaltation and worship. Thus, prophets were not the initiators of worship and veneration. In fact, their duty was to show the correct method of worship and present humanity's religious feeling with a worthy orientation.

The Elect of Creation

Not only is the human race superior to animals, but in light of their various attributes and distinctions, humans possess a lofty and privileged status in contrast to the whole of creation. Here we shall enumerate several of these distinctions:

1. God's Vicegerent [Khalifah] upon the Earth

Humans are the only beings who—because of their impressive existential capacities—hold the status of divine vicegerency. While quoting a discussion between God and the angels, the Holy Qur'an reminisces of the creation of humans, which was carried out in order for them to be His representative upon the earth:

﴿و إذ قال ربّك للملائكةِ إنّي جاعلٌ في الأَرض خليفةً﴾

"And when thy Lord said unto the angels: Verily, I shall set a viceroy upon the earth."[19]

Various indications within this verse show that divine vicegerency is not specific to Adam ('a) and includes all human beings.[20] Additionally, when contemplating the meaning of khalīfah we realize that the humans are the only beings that can become the best possible manifestation of divine attributes of perfection and a symbol of His absolute good and beauty throughout the entire Creation. This is because khalīfahs or vicegerents are, in all aspects, representative of the office that appointed them. Therefore, the selection of humanity for this office indicates their genetic [takwīnī] potential and immense capacity for reaching perfection.

2. The Highest Capacity for Knowledge

The Qur'an states that God taught Adam a special knowledge of which the angels were ignorant. After they professed their ignorance, God ordered Adam ('a) to teach the angles some of this unique knowledge:

"And He taught Adam* [*the knowledge of*] *the Names, all of them, then He presented them upon the angels and said: 'Explain to Me these names, if thou speak truly.' They said: 'Glory be unto Thee! We have no knowledge save what Thou hast taught us. Surely Thou art the All-knowing, the All-wise.' He said: 'O Adam! Explain unto them their names.'"[21]

We do not completely know the truth of what it means to know “the Names”. Even so, it seems that knowing the Names does not merely mean understanding various words, but awareness of general truths in which all of humanity’s knowledge is rooted and which is attainable by God’s creations.

In any case, this verse indicates the awesome capacity for knowledge that humans possess. This potential makes humans worthy of the vicegerency of God on earth, and elevates them to the status of educator of angels.

3. Divine Trusteeship

Humans are the only creatures who accepted the heavy burden of the divine trust:

“Surely We offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to carry it and were afraid of it, but humans carried it; surely they are foolish wrongdoers.”22

Many exegetes consider this trust [amānah] a type of volition, duty, or perfection that is realized through the volitional choices of humans. No other creature carries the responsibility of its choices and its perfection; but humans are free in choosing between good and evil. Therefore, they hold responsibility for their own volitive actions.

In any event, humans—like their Creator—have free will and through righteous use of their volition, they can attain perfections that the rest of God’s creations cannot enjoy; and this is another feature of humanity’s intrinsic superiority.

4. The World as Humankind’s Instrument

Another point that reveals the lofty status of humans in the world is that God has made the universe their instrument and has given control of other things in nature to them:

﴿أَلم تروا أَنّ اللهَ سَخّر لكم ما في السّماوات و ما في الأَرض و أَسبَغَ عليكم نِعَمَهُ ظاهرةً و باطنةً﴾

“Have you not seen that Allah has subjected to you all that is in the heavens and earth, and has lavished upon you His blessings, both manifest and hidden?”23

Yea, the philosophy of the world’s existence is to bring about a foundation in which humans can ascend towards worthy perfections and volitional intimacy with God. The whole world belongs to humans, so that they live for God and remember Him.

The clouds, winds, sun, and sky exist;

that you earn some bread and eat it not in neglect.

For you all are bewildered and obedient;

it would not be fair that you be not dutiful.[24]

5. Obeisance of the Angels

After creating Adam (‘a), God ordered the angels to bow before him:

﴿و إذ قلنا للملائكةِ اسجُدوا لآدم فسجدوا﴾

“And when We said unto the angels: ‘Bow to Adam’, so they bowed.”[25]

Because Adam (‘a) is the manifestation of all of humanity’s existential potentials and abilities, obeisance of the angels reveals that, due to its unlimited capacities, humankind is superior even to the angels.

6. Humanity’s Inherent Honor

The intrinsic abilities of humankind, some of which we indicated earlier, have caused them to be honored by God:

﴿و لقد كرّمنا بني آدم﴾

“And truly We honored the children of Adam.”[26]

Doubtless, by this all-embracing honor, a sort of inherent honor was intended. Because of humanity’s unique abilities, this honor embraces all humans.[27] Accordingly, humankind is a lofty and elevated creature before God.

The Other Side of the Coin

Up to this point, humanity’s distinctions and merits have been discussed. However, the Holy Qur’an also has many critical verses regarding humanity and the enumeration of their faults and deficiencies: various Qur’anic verses introduce humans as foolish wrongdoers,[28] very ungrateful,[29] insubordinate and rebellious,[30] niggardly[31] and avaricious,[32] hasty and rash,[33] and the most disputatious of God’s creations. How is it that on one side, the Qur’an elevates humans to the highest of ranks and on the other side, it dispraises them with the strongest of admonishments?

The truth is that there is no contradiction in the Qur’an’s laudations and criticisms of humans. This is because each of these laudations and criticisms addresses a specific aspect of humanity’s being. Humans are unique creatures that possess an existential comprehensiveness, because both celestial [malak□t□] and animalistic aspects exist within them. This richness originating from the essence and

nature of humankind sets them in the highest echelon of Creation. This is because they have the capacity to attain the ultimate status of perfection by strengthening their celestial and empyrean aspects and harnessing their animalistic and ignoble facets. According to the religious perspective, because of this existential wealth, humankind is worthy of praise and are thoughtful and noble creatures. In contrast, if we only consider the base aspects of humankind and focus on their instinctive and natural necessities, we shall discover a being that deserves criticism and reproach. Persons who relinquish control to their instincts and carnality [shahwat] and whose intellects serve their animalistic instincts and tendencies would soon become avaricious, niggardly, ungrateful, rebellious, evildoers, etc. Sometimes, such humans advance so far on the path of animality that, according to the Qur'an, they become viler than beasts:

﴿اولئك كالأَنعام بل هم أَضلّ﴾

"They are like beasts; nay, rather, they are further astray."[34]

Additionally, in various narrations [riwāyāt] after comparing humans with angels and animals, it is declared:

فمن غلب عقلهُ على شهوتهِ فهو أَعلىٰ مِن الملائكةِ و مَن غلبَت شهوتُه على عقلِه فهو أَدنى مِن البَهائمِ.

"So whoever's intellect prevails over their carnality is better than angels, and whoever's carnality prevails over their intellect is lower than animals."

Mawlānā versified the substance of this narration in his Mathnavī al-Ma'navī (Spiritual Couplets):

Word has come that the Holy Creator;

Has created the creations of the world in three types.

One group's existence is all intellect and knowledge;

These are the angels who know naught but worship.

In their essence, there is no want or passion;

They are pure light and live by the love of Allah.

Another type is void of knowledge;

It is called animal and is satiated by forage.

It sees naught but the stable and fodder;

It is unaware of wickedness and of honor.

And the third is humankind;

It is half angel and half donkey.

Its donkey half tends towards baseness;

The other half tends towards greatness.

And which will prevail in the battle of morality;

Of this pair which will win the backgammon?[35]

Compulsion or Free Will

So far, we made it clear that God has established great potentials and abilities within humanity's being. Additionally, through use of their free will and correct choices, humans can realize their genetic [takwīnī] and inherent potentials and attain lofty ranks of perfection. However, do we humans truly possess this instrument of volition or is everything we do compulsory and enforced? In order to answer this question we must present a brief discussion on compulsion and volition, especially since various religious teachings sometimes reinforce belief in compulsion or determinism [jabr ingīrī].

An Ancient Question

The issue of compulsion and volition is a very timeworn issue that has continually called humans to contemplation. The fundamental question is this: Do humans have free will in some of their deeds or do they have no volition whatsoever, making their actions compulsory? Volition means that a person's behavior is based on their awareness, power, and will in such a way that they are able to abandon the said behavior. In other words, a volitional act is one which is founded upon the choice and selection of the agent and happens through one's intention and decision. Of course, the fact that an action is volitional does not mean that it is committed with desire and relish because it often happens that an action is selected while contrary to the primary tendency of the agent but due to knowledge of its advantage, such as the sick who drink bitter medicine against their initial desire.

In any case, there have always been two general perspectives regarding the answer to this question: some advocate determinism [jabr ingīrī] and believe that humans cannot commit true volitional actions and others favor free will or libertarianism [ikhtīyār] and believe that humans have volition in some of their deeds.[36]

Islamic Theology and Free Will

The issue of compulsion and volition can be analyzed from various aspects and approaches. Since this treatise does not have the capacity for an extensive discussion regarding this issue, we will merely investigate in short several religious teachings regarding the relationship of divine attributes with determinism.[37]

Some people assume that various fundamentals of Islamic belief are incompatible with belief in free will and therefore by accepting these beliefs one must also believe in compulsion. In short, these fundamentals consist of (a) creational unity, (b) the past eternal knowledge of Allah, and (c) the generality of Allah's will.

a. Unity in Creation

In favor of determinism, it is stated that creational unity means that the sole Creator of all things is God. Thus, because human actions are also phenomena of the world of creation, the generality of the attribute of God's creation includes human actions. Therefore, only God is the Creator of humanity's deeds. That is, humans have no role in generating their own actions. In effect, there is no place for free will within humans.

In contrast, the correct meaning of creational unity is that the only independent creator that creates without the permission of a separate entity is God. Thus, creational unity does not negate the fact that other beings may be the origin of creation and fabrication through divine will and according to the general laws that He has ordained. Additionally, as we have previously stated, the Holy Qur'an has attributed origination and influence to God's creations. Consequently, creational unity—according to its correct interpretation—is compatible with humanity's role in their own deeds and does not result in determinism.

b. God's Past Eternal Knowledge

Presented here is an abstract of the determinist rationale based on the past eternal knowledge of God: God knows beforehand what people will and will not do in the future. Additionally, the nonconformity of divine knowledge with external truths necessitates the alteration of divine knowledge to ignorance.

To state matters differently, if God knows that a specific person will perform a specific action at a specific time, but that person abandons that action at that time, God's knowledge would become ignorance because according to the assumption, that which was within God's knowledge did not conform to actuality. However, the absolute knowledge of God requires that He know all events and phenomena as they truly are.

Thus, performing an action that God knows will happen is necessary, and carrying out any action that

God knows will not occur is impossible. As a result, human deeds are either necessary or impossible. Which means that none of our deeds is volitional; because the occurrence of the actions that we perform is necessary and not accomplishing them is impossible; also, the actions that we do not perform are impossible to execute and abandoning them is necessary.

In response to this rationale, we can declare, there is no doubt that God has foreknowledge of our actions, yet that which is recorded in divine knowledge is human actions complete with all their characteristics and conditions. Some of these characteristics include space and time elements and some pertain to the agent. One of the characteristics of volitional actions is that they emerge though volition and free choices.

Therefore, the fact that God has foreknowledge of our volitional actions means that God knows that a specific person, utilizing their free will—not under compulsion—shall perform a specific action in a specific time and place. To state matters differently, if God knows that an individual shall perform an action at time A and location B, then performing that action becomes necessary at time A and location B and its occurrence at time B or location C would be impossible. Similarly, if God knows that a definite action shall be performed with volition, then that action must surely occur through volition.

Therefore, it is clear that the necessity for the occurrence of volitional actions—according to God's foreknowledge—is not only not contradictory to it being volitional, but it confirms it. Because God's foreknowledge means that, the compulsory and involuntary occurrence of these actions is impossible.[38]

The conundrum [shubhah] of divine knowledge and free will, in addition to having complex expositions such as the one we presented, has simple and more general forms that are usually expressed using terms such as destiny or fate.

It is clear from the response we gave for this conundrum that terms such as destiny or fate do not mean that humans have no volition; rather that a person's destiny is nothing more than the fact that the person shall perform their volitional actions with free will and their involuntary actions, involuntarily. In other words, destiny has two areas:

The domain outside volition: In this case, the duty of the believer is submission and contentment.

The domain of volitional actions: In this area, fate is not in conflict with our free will and choices. Thus, in this domain, humans are responsible for their actions.

c. Generality of the Divine Will

Another of the Islamic principles of faith, which may seem to necessitate compulsion, is the Divine Will predominance principle: according to religious teachings and various Qur'anic verses,[39] nothing happens outside the all-encompassing sphere of the Divine Will. As a requirement of this principle, all actions and even feelings adhere to God's will. In this case, is there any room left for free will?

The answer to this claim can be extracted from our previous discussion regarding the divine knowledge and human volition incompatibility conundrum. Here, God's will does not involve the occurrence of actions in an absolute manner and free of conditions. In fact, His will requires that every effect be originated by an immediate cause while preserving all the conditions of the effect. Hence, in the same way that the Divine Will requires involuntary emanation of heat from fire, His will also requires that our volitional actions be accompanied by human knowledge, will, and volition. Therefore, realization of the Divine Will not only does not negate free will, it guaranties it.

These discussions reveal that if the religious teachings regarding divine attributes are correctly understood, they will not contradict the principle of free will.

Not only is the doctrine of free will able to answer all determinist conundrums, there are many verifications to its validity. These verifications are moral or intuitional in nature and are more or less available to everyone. On the whole, these proofs provide a secure foundation for free will: inner feeling and intuition of free will; indecision; legislating social laws, prohibitions, and ordinances; existence of instructive systems and penal codes and rewards; and regret for performing acts of evil are several of these proofs.[40] The consequential and extensive existence of these affairs in our individual and social lives has made even hard fatalists unable to refute free will in practice.

Qur'an and Free Will

There are many verses in the Holy Qur'an that directly or obliquely speak of humanity's free will and its role in one's deeds. For instance, the Qur'an has stressed the voluntariness of faith and disbelief—both of which are innate acts:

﴿و قل الحقُّ من ربّكم فَمن شاءَ فَليؤمن و مَن شاءَ فَليَكفر﴾

"And say: 'The truth is from your Lord, so let whoever wills believe and whoever wills disbelieve.'"[41]

Additionally, verses that speak of testing and trialing humanity in their worldly life indicate their free will, since testing an agent without volition is futile.

﴿و نَبلوكم بالشَّر و الخَير فتنةً و إلينا تُرجَعون﴾

"And We shall try you with evil and goodness and surely, you shall return to Us."[42]

Moreover, various Qur'anic verses inform of our responsibility towards our actions. Needless to say, only volitive agents may be held answerable.

﴿وقِفُوهم إنّهم مَسئُولون﴾

"And stop them for surely they are responsible." 43

Furthermore, all Qur'anic verses that pertain to recompense and retribution for the actions of humans either praise the righteous and criticize the wicked, speak of humankind's injustice towards their souls, inform of appointing prophets or the establishment of religions, or include edicts and proscriptions. All these issues validate free will in some way because if there were no free will these Qur'anic verses would have no acceptable or coherent meaning.

In addition to the verses we have indicated, various verses speak of the generality of the Divine Will and its precedence over the will of humankind or the generality of divine knowledge. However, as we have previously stated, if the intent of these verses are correctly understood, there will be no inconsistency with the voluntariness of some of our deeds.

Human Perfection (Teleology)

Theological anthropology is not limited to the origin of humanity, the structure of its being, and its natural potentials. In fact, it includes a long eulogy regarding the purposes of humanity's creation, the levels of its perfection, and the methods of attaining these perfections. It would not be an exaggeration to claim that all the scientific teachings of Islam, both in the spheres of religion and ethics, have been presented in order to guide humanity toward their highest state of perfection.

The perfection of an object gains meaning through the purposes of its existence. The closer a being comes to the purposes of its creation, the more complete it is. The purpose of the creation of humans, contrary to many other creations, can only be realized through conscious choices. This is why humanity's perfection is volitive and must be obtained. In addition, because the ultimate objective of humanity's existence has no limits, humans can attain unlimited levels of perfection. As a result, one can always speak of a more perfect person and thus the path of perfection has no journey's end.

Of course, phrases such as walking the path of perfection do not mean that there is a path external to humanity's being that brings them closer to the purpose of their creation; rather, here, the traveler—mystic—and path are one. In other words, humans' path of perfection is "themselves". Thus, transitive and immanent acts can only help one attain perfection if they affect one's soul and cause it to transcend its respective status. Therefore, any external or unrelated affair to the human essence, such as fame, riches, and titles cannot bring about humanity's true perfection. The Qur'an indicates this truth in a very subtle manner:

﴿هم درجات عند الله﴾

"They [have] ranks before Allah."[44]

This assertion both indicates humanity's various levels of perfection and also signifies that the source of this difference is not external to their own essence but it is they themselves that are the ranks and statuses. In other words, spiritual ranks are not like worldly conventional ranks to which one can be appointed or discharged; rather, each person is a rank and level of perfection.

The Qur'an regards the ultimate purpose or telos of humanity's creation and the terminus of their perfection the attaining of the rank of God's servant:

﴿و ما خلقتُ الجنَ و الإنسَ إلّا ليعبدون﴾

"And I have not created the jinn and humans except that they serve Me."[45]

Thus, by increasing our servility towards God we become more complete. Servility towards God begins with outward humility and performing the sacred rites of religion. It progresses in synchrony with love of God, understanding Him, and sincerity [ikhl□s] in one's actions. Gradually, humans reach a position in which all their states, from their motives and thoughts, to their speech and deeds, become divine and their carnality [haw□ye nafs] and materialism are altogether extinguished. In this state, our truth-discerning eyes are opened and we see the degrees of divine Unity through our hearts and discover the entire world as a manifestation of the names and attributes of the Supreme Truth. It has been narrated from Amir al-Mu'min□n, 'Al□ ('a) that:

ما رأيتُ شيئاً إلّا و رأيتُ الله قبلَه و معَه و بعدَه.

"I have never seen anything but that I saw God before it, with it, and after it."[46]

As we have previously indicated, people are multidimensional beings. Therefore, their perfection requires that all of their existential aspects grow simultaneously and that all of their physical and spiritual potentials and capacities be employed in the best possible manner. In portraying the perfect human, the mundane doctrines only emphasize several specific aspects: some philosophers regard the perfection of humankind in the perfection of their intellect, and some mystics seek it in seclusion and ascesis [riy□□at]. Others perceive furthering the conquest and exploitation of nature as a standard for human perfection. According to Islam, human perfection cannot be realized but through coordinated and simultaneous development of all human abilities, such that all talents are utilized on the path of servitude and intimacy with God.

Islam's perfect human does not become attached to the world or bewitched by it. In fact, perfect humans regard the phenomena of the natural world as divine signs and blessings and consider the world a plantation for reaping for the next world. According to their perspective, their material bodies are not

cages but one of the gifts of their creation that must be utilized in the best possible manner. In addition, such persons do not retreat from society. Indeed, they regard being with people and helping their fellow humans a type of servitude and worship of God, which results in closer intimacy with God. They are also distressed and troubled at the pain and suffering of others. This is why the divine prophets and saints [awliyā’ ilāh]—which are exalted examples of human perfection—have lived within the society and worried about the spiritual and material problems of their peoples and became heartsick at the transgressions that caused their peoples to go astray and the persecution and privation that troubled them. The Qur’an declares of our holy prophet (S):

﴿لقد جاءكم رسولٌ من أَنفسكم عزيزٌ عليه ما عَنِتّم حريصٌ عليكم و بالمؤمنينَ رءوفٌ رحيمٌ﴾

“Surely, there has come to you a messenger from among yourselves; grievous to him is your suffering, anxious he is over your* [*guidance*]*, to the believers* [*he is*] *gentle and compassionate.”[47]

Another manifestation of human perfection in Islam is contemplation. In many verses, the Qur’an enjoins us to contemplate and think. Doubtless, here the intended faculty for contemplation is not ‘instrumental’ reason, which is the foundation of industry and technology. This is because history clearly shows that there is no interdependence between industrial development and the exploitation of nature and humanity’s perfection in either their material or spiritual aspects. The contemplation that Islam regards as a precondition to perfection is the reflection upon the fundamental truths of the world that bring about a more complete state of self-knowledge and understanding of God. For example, we must contemplate the inherent nature of humankind and the world, its origin and final destination, the status of humanity in the world, and our rights and obligations. Additionally, this contemplation must result in a foundation for conscious servitude towards God that is suffused with love and understanding. It must also strip the rust of ignorance and negligence from humanity’s heart and soul. According to various Hadith, such contemplation is greater than [heedless] worship, and is in fact the essence of meritorious worship:

تفكّر ساعة أَفضلُ من عبادة سبعين سنة.

“A moment’s thought is superior to seventy years of worship.”

و العقل ما عُبِد به الرحمن.

“And the intellect is that which is used to worship the Beneficent.”[48]

The intellect of faith is like a righteous person;

It is the guardian and ruler of the city of the heart.

That marvelous messenger said very beautifully;

A grain of your intellect is better than fasting and prayer.

This is because your intellect is essential and these two are incidental;

These two obligations complete that.[49]

There are many discussions about the attributes and manifestations of human perfection in Islam and the portrayal of the countenance of a perfect human is like the drawing of an exquisite painting that cannot be created without the use of hundreds of marvelous colors and unparalleled patterns. Here are several of the most notable qualities of a perfect human in one sentence. Perfect humans are self-knowing, god-knowing, contemplative, self-analyzing, faithful, pious, righteous, monotheist in thought and practice, adorned with all virtues and divested of all ethical evils, suffused with love of God, possessed of love and compassion for all of God's creatures, vigilant and heedful of the rights of the oppressed and deprived, true servants of God, nightly worshipers and daily toilers, predominant over their carnalities [shahawt al-nafsn], and utilizers of nature for divine purposes.

Of course, as we have previously stated, human perfection has unlimited stages. Therefore, the more extensive and deep-rooted a person can make these qualities within themselves, the higher the degree of perfection.

Worship and the Complete Human

One of the subtle and precious expressions of the human soul is worshiping a divine being, confiding in Him, and confessing one's needs to Him [rz wa nyz]. As we have stated earlier, humanity's need and propensity for worship is one of the characteristics that make them superior to animals. One of the achievements of divine religions is that they respond to this need in the best possible manner by enjoining people to worship the true Deity and preventing worship of false gods.

Confiding one's secrets and professing one's needs to his Lord is one of the most beautiful expressions of worship. This is because in this state a person perceives their Lord more intimately than a person perceives any other; they regard Him worthy of their confidence; and with faith in His power, benevolence, and grace they profess their needs to Him. Praying to God, if done with love and purity of heart, and with the help of divine attraction [jazabah-ye ilh], can promote a person to such heights that even the angels cannot attain and can bless a person with unrivaled ecstasy and bliss.

The Qur'an enjoins humans to call upon God at all times. Also, it regards the true enlightened [Ulul-Albb] to be those who do not forget God no matter what circumstances they have in their lives:

﴿الّذين يذكرونَ الله قياماً و قُعوداً و على جنوبهم﴾

"Those who remember Allah while standing and sitting and lying on their sides."50

Additionally, many Qur'anic verses enjoin people to ask for succor sincerely:

﴿هو الحيُّ لا إله إلّا هو فادعوه مخلصينَ له الدّين﴾

"He is the Living; there is no Allah but Him. So call upon Him, making your religion His sincerely."51

Various Qur'anic verses advise worshiping God in private. It seems that in private, our soul is better prepared for spiritual connection with God and soaring towards the Heavens:

﴿ادعوا ربّكم تضرُّعاً و خفيةً، إنّه لا يُحبُّ المُعتدين﴾

"Call upon your Lord, humbly and secretly; Surely, He loves not transgressors."52

In addition to enjoining humankind to worshiping the One God, Islam sets specific standards for worship. Besides various Qur'anic verses that are themselves supplications or prayers,53 we have inherited a legacy of valuable prayers [du'□] from the Infallibles ('a). These prayers display the most beautiful features of worship, sincerity, love, and devotion. Even so, the most important Islamic worship is □al□t (Farsi: Nam□z)—the Muslim daily ritual prayer.

□al□t, the Most Beautiful Aspect of Worshiping the Divine

Although the form of □al□t is no more than a set of specific gestures and utterances, the reality of □al□t is much more profound. In other words, like humans, □al□t also has a dual reality. Thus, we may speak of the 'perfection of □al□t' and the 'perfect □al□t'. The form of □al□t consists of precise actions and vocables, which must be preceded by specific preliminaries and special conditions. Religious jurisprudence [fiqh] discusses in detail the preliminaries, conditions, pillars [ark□n], and elements of □al□t. Observing the jurisprudential [fiqh□] edicts of □al□t is the first condition to benefiting from its spiritual effects and blessings. However, transcending all these forms are hidden secrets and truths. These inner secrets have caused □al□t to be one of the pillars of the Islamic religion54 and have made it the 'ascension [mi'r□j] of the faithful [mu'min]':

الصلاة معراج المؤمن.

“ṣalṣt is the ascension of the faithful.”

The more a person understands the secrets of the ritual prayer and reaches its depths, their ṣalṣt becomes more complete and perfect. Not only is the perfection of one’s ṣalṣt a sign of one’s perfection, it is in fact the practical manifestation of one’s perfection. During ṣalṣt, perfect humans lose all indications of egocentricity and selfishness and they become completely captivated by the beauty of the Deity.

While performing ṣalṣt I recalled the curve of your eyebrows;[55]

I attained a state in which I heard the shrine glorifying You.[56]

The depth and comprehensiveness of the ritual prayer is such that it can be regarded from many perspectives where its different effects and blessings can be analyzed. For example, academic specialists study the educative and moral effects of ṣalṣt, while psychoanalysts analyze its mental effects. One may also research the role of ṣalṣt in the Islamic society from a social perspective. However, mystics have a different frame of mind. The Gnostics of Truth and travelers on the path of the Beloved observe ṣalṣt with penetrating eyes and an intuition that tears the veils of materiality, and thus expose spiritual and mystical secrets. Herein, we shall briefly explain various inner secrets of some preliminaries and elements of ṣalṣt.[57] May it guide us to deeper wisdom and understanding of worship.

Secrets of ṣalṣt

As we have indicated, ṣalṣt has various aspects, which begin with the most manifest of facets (uttering various words and performing assorted gestures) and develops endlessly in accordance with the spiritual status of the worshiper. What we shall indicate herein is a drop from the boundless ocean of ṣalṣt and a whisper of its unlimited degrees and untold secrets.

1. Wuṣṣ

The outward appearance of Wuṣṣ[58] is washing and wiping [mash] various members of one’s body with clean and pure [pṣk/muṣahar] water through which our external dirtiness is purged. The essence of Wuṣṣ, however, is cleansing of the heart and soul of the worshiper with the water of divine manifestations [tajalliyṣt al-ilṣhṣ]. Just as the water that descends from the sky can clean one’s body, the water of divine manifestations descends upon the hearts of worshipers and cleanses their heart and soul. By washing their face—i.e. manifest countenance—worshipers purify their hearts—i.e. spiritual countenance—of all thoughts but God. By washing their hands and arms, they wash themselves of worldliness. By wiping their head and feet, they prevent themselves from pondering the mundane world and walking the path of secularism.

2. Call to Prayer [Adh□n wa Iq□mah]

“Adh□n” is an Arabic word meaning to announce and make aware and its outward aspect consists of announcing the time of □al□t and inviting Moslems to gather for performing this divine ritual. Moreover, “Iq□mah” means to set up or perform and its apparent facet is getting ready to perform □al□t and inviting to the divine worship.

As for the spiritual meaning of Adh□n, it is summoning all of existence to prepare to attend the presence of the Divine and announcing the good news of the time to appear before the presence of the Divine Oneness. Moreover, according to the illuminated [ahl al-ma‘rifat], Iq□mah is a call for all beings to present themselves before God and stand before Him. Adh□n begins with four Takb□r (i.e. Allahu Akbar)59 whose conspicuous meaning is professing the greatness and magnificence of God. Its inner meaning is professing our inability to properly understand and describe the truth of the Most Divine.60 By saying Takb□r four times, the worshiper regards all the creatures of the external, internal, and ethereal worlds nothing compared to the magnificence of God.

After making Wu□□ from the fount of love;

I said four Takb□r and thus professed the triviality of all but Allah.61

After Takb□r—the demonstration of God’s greatness—is uttered, by declaring the holy invocation “ashhadu all□ il□ha illall□h”62, worshipers bear witness to the fact that their Lord is united, and that godhead is exclusive to Allah. In order to emphasize this fact, worshipers repeat this avowal. Then worshipers enter the sanctum of the divine intercessors (the Prophet (S) and Am□r al-Mu’min□n (‘a)) and by saying “ashhadu anna muhammad ar-ras□l ul-l□h”63 and “ashhadu anna ‘al□yya-wwaliyyul-l□h”64 they attest to the prophethood of Muhammad (S) and the apostleship and vicegerency of ‘Al□ (‘a). Again, in order to emphasize and establish this fact within their soul, they repeat each avowal. Then they address their entire being and call upon it to hasten towards □al□t by saying: “hayya ‘alas-sal□h”65. In order to prepare their mind and body further for attending the celebration of divine intimacy and to intensify the fires of their enthusiasm, they repeat this command.

Then, the worshipers announce the epitome of □al□t—which is attaining salvation and bliss—and its superiority over all other deeds. Thus, they call to their perfectionist and liberal nature: “hayya ‘alal fal□h”66 and “hayya ‘ala khayril ‘amal”67. After awakening their nature, they again attest to the greatness of God and then twice declare the holy adage of monotheism: “l□ il□ha illal-l□h”68 in order to solidify their admission of inability to describe God and avowal of God’s unity within their heart.

In Iq□mah, worshipers repeat their previously declared truths and thus renew their covenant with these truths. After recourse to the prophethood and vicegerency and intensifying the fires of enthusiasm for intimacy with the Beloved, by declaring “qad q□matis-sal□t”69 worshipers proclaim their presence before the Magnificent.

3. Standing Motionless [q□y□m]

The outer appearance of q□y□m is standing upright and straight, free of all distortion and perversity, before God. The spirit of q□y□m is initiating one's heart into the status of servitude ['ub□d□yat] and establishing oneself upon the path of humane righteousness [sir□□ al-mustaq□m] and refraining from all immoderations and deviations. Standing in a balanced posture is a symbol of the spiritual and moral balance of worshipers and the equilibrium of fear [kha□f] (regarding God) and hope [raj□'] (of salvation) within their being, such that neither their fear of God surpasses their hope for salvation, nor their hope for salvation surpasses their fear of God.

One of the etiquettes of q□y□m is that worshipers must remember that they are standing in the presence of a God who knows them, manifest, secrets and all, and according to a Hadith, is closer to them than their jugular vein. It is befitting that in this state, worshipers bow their heads—which is the noblest part of the body—in humility and as a symbol of modesty and humbleness. They must be shameful of their shortcomings and offences and look at the place where they set their forehead in prostration [sajdah], and thus remember their abjectness compared to the grandeur and glory of their Lord.

4. Intention [n□yyat]

"N□yyat" is the decision and resolution to perform an action. In □al□t, n□yyat has various degrees that compare with the spiritual statuses of worshipers.

Ordinary people regard n□yyat as the intention to obey God in performing □al□t in covetousness for rewards or fear of divine retribution. According to the Qur'an:

﴿يدعون ربهم خوفاً و طمعاً﴾

"They call upon their Lord in fear and hope."[70]

According to the illuminated, the intention is to obey God as well as to magnify His Lordship. As stated by the adherents to the path of divine love and rapture [ahl al-dil], the intention is to obey God due to enthusiasm and love of the Deity.[71] Finally, according to divine saints [awliy□' il□h□] the intention is the resolution to obey while the worshipper has attained the status of annihilation in God [fan□].

One of the important etiquettes of n□yyat, which encompasses all worship, is sincerity [ikhl□s]. Ikhl□s is purging one's actions of all ungodly elements. Ikhl□s, like human perfection, has various degrees: For ordinary people, ikhl□s means to purify their worship of hidden and manifest polytheism [shirk al-□shk□r wa pinh□n], such as hypocrisy and vanity. In the worship of the elect [khaw□s], it is purging deeds of avarice (for blessings) and fear (of retribution). According to the advocates of divine love [ahl al-dil], ikhl□s is cleansing one's worship of all egocentricity, selfishness, and narcissist elements.

5. Recitation [qir□’at]

In the spiritual journey and divine ascension of □al□t, recitation also has various degrees and ranks in accordance with the spiritual rank of the worshiper. For ordinary people, recitation means uttering the words of □al□t correctly and worthily. The perfection of their recitation is that they deliberate the apparent meaning of the words they are reciting. However, the recitation of the elect is recalling the truths and subtleties of the divine words—as much as they are able to understand—within their hearts and souls. The deeper degrees of recitation are specific to the illuminated [ahl al-ma‘rifat] and the advocates of divine love [ahl al-dil]. For them, after they have gained knowledge of the truths behind God’s words and have realized the higher degrees of the interpretation of the Qur’an within their souls, recitation is the interpreter of their religious ecstasies and spiritual intuition in □al□t.

There are secrets in the recitation of the holy S□rah □amd and S□rah Tawh□d (and other Qur’anic S□rahs that the worshiper recites in □al□t) that for the sake of brevity, we cannot even mention within this treatise.72

6. Bowing [ruk□‘]

It is proper that the worshiper say a Takb□r after recitation and before ruk□‘. The etiquette of Takb□r is that worshipers keep in mind the greatness and glory of the Divine and remember their own weakness, inability, destitution, and abjectness compared to God. In this state, they must raise their hands beside their ears with their empty palms toward the Qiblah73 and empty-handedly with a heart brimming with fear and hope, regard God superior to all descriptions, and declare His Takb□r, then they must go to ruk□‘.

The heart of ruk□‘ is that worshipers enter a state of humility and wretchedness before their Lord and observe His glory. Ruk□‘ includes glorification [tasb□h], magnification [ta‘□□m], and praise [tahm□d] of God:

سُبحانَ رَبّيَ العَظيمِ و بِحَمدهِ.

“Glory be to my Lord, the Magnificent, and praise be to Him.”

The truth of “tasb□h” is elevating God over all descriptions and definitions and the truth of “ta‘□□m” and “tahm□d” is extricating the worshiper from the confines of comparison [tashb□h] and agnosticism [ta‘□□l].74 In ruk□‘ the worshiper sees through his heart all objects as a manifestation of the names and attributes of the Divine Truth.

اين همه عكس مي و رنگ مخالف كه نمود

يك فروغ رخ ساقي است كه در جام افتاد

حسن روي تو به يك جلوه كه در آينه كرد

اين همه نقش در آينة اوهام افتاد

All these contrasting colors and images of wine that appear;

Are the reflection of the brilliance of the cupbearer's visage.

With one materialization of your beautiful countenance in the looking glass;

All these images were cast into the mirror of apprehensions.

7. Prostration [sajdah]

According to the illuminated, sajdah is the apex of ṣalāt and the ultimate position of intimacy with the Beloved. The heart and soul of sajdah is rejecting all but God and ascending from all multiplicities [kithrat] to the height of Unity. In the state of sajdah, which is the state of annihilation in God, the worshiper observes that all objects are transitory and perishable and the truth of their essence is nothing but destitution and neediness towards the Divine Oneness.

عرضه كردم دو جهان بر دل كار افتاده

به جز از عشق تو باقي همه فاني دانست

I presented both worlds unto my weary heart;

Except for your love, it regarded all as transitory.

8. Testimony [tashahud]

The essence of tashahud is return of worshipers from the state of annihilation and absolute Unity to the world of multiplicities [ʿālam al-kithrat] while the world of Unity has been unveiled to them. Thus, they testify to God's unity, and append their testimony with praise and veneration of the Divine and repudiation of polytheism. Then they bear witness to the prophethood of the Seal of the Prophets[75] (S) and focus on his status of God's servant.

9. Salaam

After returning from this spiritual journey and departing the spiritual world—that is, the place of divine prophets and angels—worshipers first say Salaam76 to the holder of the rank of Seal of the Prophets and due to his divine holiness, they specifically address the Prophet (S) by saying:

السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ اَيُّهَا النَّبيُّ وَ رَحْمَةُ اللهِ وَ بَرَكاتُه.

"Salaam to you, O Prophet and Allah's mercy and blessings upon you."

Then they center their attention on the divine angels and the rest of the prophets—who were their companions in this spiritual journey—and because the worshipers too were their companions in this spiritual journey, they include themselves in their Salaam by saying:

السَّلامُ عَلَيْنا و عَلىٰ عِبادِ اللهِ الصّالِحينَ.

"Salaam upon us and upon the righteous servants of Allah."

Finally, they address them all and say Salaam to them. By retiring from this status, the ascension of ▯al▯t ends.

1. – The main methods in scientific, philosophical, and theosophical anthropology are respectively empirical, theoretical, and intuitional. Theological anthropology is based on referral to original texts of religion. Additionally, in general, scientific anthropology mostly endeavors to answer specific and detailed questions, while in the other approaches we are faced with questions that are more fundamental.
2. – S▯rah Fu▯▯ilat (▯▯ M▯m) 41:53.
3. – S▯rah ▯ashr 59:19.
4. – See: 'All▯mah Majlis▯, Ba▯▯r al-Anw▯r, vol. 2, p. 32.
5. – S▯rah Nis▯' 4:1.
6. – For examples of these Qur'anic verses, see: S▯rah A'r▯f 7:26, 27; S▯rah Isr▯' 17:70; and S▯rah Y▯s▯n 36:60.
7. – S▯rah ▯▯d 38:71. For further examples, see: S▯rah Sajdah 32:7; and S▯rah A'r▯f 7:12. Various Qur'anic verses speak of "dirt" (such as S▯rah ▯li 'Imr▯n 3:59) or "water" (such as S▯rah Furq▯n 25:54) or similar terms (S▯rah ▯ijr 15:28, 15:33).
8. – On occasion, it is thought that religious teachings regarding the creation of the first human contradicts Charles Darwin's (1809-1882) theory of evolution through natural selection. Discussing the relationship of these two viewpoints requires an independent discussion. Here we shall suffice with three points:
a. Even though the theory of evolution, which is based upon natural selection, reveals truths regarding the evolution of various types of plants and animals, there are no consistent scientific rationales in favor of extending this theory to include humankind. In fact, with regard to the special distinctions of humans compared to advanced types of animals—such as simians—, numerous attestations repudiate this extension and render it unscientific and illegitimate.
b. The existence of fossils and other millions-of-year-old relics from humanoids cannot confirm the application of Darwin's theory to humans. This is because the extreme probability has been proposed that humanoids have existed and become extinct before the introduction of humans—who have had an entirely different and independent genesis.
c. We cannot disregard a religious standpoint that is clearly based upon Qur'anic verses that speak of the unique genesis of

Adam and humanity's link to him on account of a scientific theory that has many critics even within the biologists' society.

9. – Sūrah Mu'minūn 23:14.

10. – Sūrah Sajdah 32:9.

11. – The compound structure "روحه" (His spirit) is not a possessive compound but a "reverence compound". In this type of compound, in order to show reverence and the lofty rank of an object, the object is attributed to one of great standing and honor. Thus, the attribution of spirit to God—like similar cases such as "بيت الله" (the House of God—the holy Kaaba) or "ثار الله" (the Blood of God—attributed to Imam Hussaūn ('a))— states the reverence and greatness of the spirit among the creations of God.

12. – Many Moslem thinkers regard the spirit as incorporeal and immaterial and others believe it is a type of "subtle body" that is different in several qualities from the material body.

13. – This includes verses that term human death tawaffū "توفّى" (such as Sūrah Sajdah 32:11; Sūrah An'ām 6:61; Sūrah Naūl 16:70; etc.)

14. – Many profound matters may be discussed on the relationship of the body and soul, their qualities, the genetic antecedence of the soul over the body, and the materiality or spirituality of the ego. These discussions have been omitted for the sake of brevity.

15. – In truth, we have no direct or firsthand knowledge of the perceptions of animals. All our judgments regarding this issue are solely based on observation of various signs and effects. Based on these observations, there is no doubt that animals do not enjoy intellectual thought in the manner that humans do.

16. – Understanding good and evil and moral prerequisites and stipulations is in fact a part of humanity's unique percipience; something that does not exist in animals. Even so, we mentioned this issue because of its close rapport with the discussion at hand.

17. – Sūrah Shams 91:7–8.

18. – Sūrah ūujurūt 49:7.

19. – Sūrah Baqarah 2:30.

20. – The use of a substantive sentence, "إنّي جاعلٌ...", which indicates continuity, and also the objections of the angels regarding the immorality and bloodshed of humans upon the earth show that the topic of the debate between God and the angels involved the establishment of the human species.

21. Sūrah Baqarah 2:31–33.

22. Sūrah Aūzūb 33:72.

23. Sūrah Luqmūn 31:20.

24. – ابر و باد و مه و خورشيد و فلك در كارند
تا تو ناني به كف آري و به غفلت نخوري
همه از بهر تو سرگشته و فرمانبردار
شرط انصاف نباشد كه تو فرمان نبري

25. – Sūrah Baqarah 2:34.

26. – Sūrah Isrū' 17:70.

27. – In contrast, obtainable honor is a kind of honor that can only come about through faith and virtuous deeds. The highest ranks of this type of honor are specific to the truly pious.

28. – Sūrah Aūzūb 33:72.

29. – Sūrah ūajj 22:66.

30. – Sūrah 'Alaq 96:6.

31. – Sūrah Isrū' 17:100.

32. – Sūrah Ma'ūrij 70:18.

33. – Sūrah Isrū' 17:11

34. – Sūrah A'rūf 7:179.

35. – در حديث آمد كه خلّاق مجيد خلق عالم را سه گونه آفريد
يك گُرُه را جمله عقل و علم وجود آن فرشته است و نداند جز سجود
نيست اندر عنصرش حرص و هوا نور مطلق زنده از عشق خدا

يك گروه ديگر از دانش تهي همچو حيوان از علف در فربهي
او نبيند جز كه اصطبل و علف از شقاوت غافل است و از شرف
و آن سوم هست آدميزاد و بشر از فرشته نيمي و نيمي ز خر
نيم خر خود مايل سفلي بود نيم ديگر مايل عِلوي شود
تا كدامين غالب آيد در نبرد زين دوگانه تا كدامين بُرد نرد

36. – The existence of various involuntary actions in humans does not validate determinism and refute belief in free will and libertarianism. In fact, finding even one volitional action in humans can prove free will.

37. – It is worthy of note that various rationales have been presented in verification of determinism. Some of these rationales are philosophical and others are based on psychological and sociological provisions. By referring to the physical characteristics of the human body, various determinists have claimed that no human action is truly volitional and free of physiological determinative factors. Thus, one may speak of the various approaches to determinism; such as the philosophic approach, the sociologic approach, etc. In this discourse, we shall discuss the Kalam approach that addresses the relationship of free will with various religious beliefs regarding the attributes of God.

38. – In philosophical terms, the necessity for occurrence of a volitional action is of the same type of the necessity for occurrence of an effect whose sufficient cause is realized. In other words, when the sufficient cause for the occurrence of a volitional action is realized—including the external and internal conditions of the agent such as selection, choice, and will—its occurrence becomes necessary.

39. – For examples see: Sūrah Yūnus 10:100; and Sūrah Takwīr 81:29.

40. – In various parts of the Mathnavī-e Ma‘navī (Spiritual Couplets), Maulānā has utilized these evidences and has regarded them as proofs of free will. Some of these verses include:

a. Intuition of Free will:

Doubtless, we have free will; feeling cannot refute it.
Free will is hidden within us; when faced with a dilemma it is revealed.
Intuition shows the same as feeling does; O brother, they both are of the same tier.
(Book V)

b. Indecision:

That you ask yourself tomorrow, should I do this or that; this itself is proof of free will, O Idol!
We are caught in indecision between two things; how can this indecision be involuntary?
How can ‘should I do this or that’ happen, if one’s hands and feet are tied?
(Book V)

c. Ordering and Forbidding Others:

No one tells a stone to come; and who would seek loyalty from a piece of clod?
No one tells a stone that it has come late; or that O stick! Why have you struck me?
Orders, forbiddance, wrath, respect, and retribution; go with nothing but free will, O true of heart!
(Book V)

d. System of Reward and Punishment:

Teachers beat their pupils; would they ever punish a black stone?
Would you ever tell a stone to come; and if not, I will punish the naughty?
(Book V)

e. Regretting Evil Deeds:

Our weeping is a reason of free will; our embarrassment has become a reason for compulsion.
If there is no free will, what is this shame; what are pity, humiliation, and modesty?
If all was compulsion, who would be embarrassed; if all was injustice who would be guardian?
(Book I)

41. – Sūrah Kahf 18:29.

42. – Sūrah Anbiyā’ 21:35.

43. – Sūrah Ṣāffāt 37:24.

44. – Sūrah Āli ‘Imrān 3:163.

45. – S□rah Dh□r□y□t 51:56.

46. – ‘Ilm ul-Yaq□n, vol. 1, p. 49. Also according to Sa‘d□ :

رسد آدمي به جايي كه به جز خدا نبيند بنگر كه تا چه حد است مكان آدميت

Humans can reach the status that they see naught but God;

Behold the greatness of humanity’s position.

And Sha□kh Ma□m□d Shabastar□ said in his book Gulshan-e R□z:

به نزد آنكه جانش در تجلّيٰ است همه عالم كتاب حقْ تعاليٰ است

According to one whose whole being is infused with revelation;

The whole world is the book of Divine Truth (God).

47. – S□rah Tawbah 9:128.

48. – U□□l-e K□f□, vol. 1, p. 11.

49. ـ عقل ايماني چو شخص عادل است

پاسبان و حاكم شهر دل است

بس نكو گفت آن رسول دلنواز

ذره‌اي عقلت به از صوم و نماز

زانكه عقلت جوهر است اين دو عرض

اين دو تكميل آن شد مفترض

50. – S□rah □li ‘Imr□n 3:191.

51. – S□rah Gh□fir 40:65.

52. – S□rah A‘r□f 7:55.

53. – These verses generally begin with the term “ربّنا” (Our Lord!) and relate the substance of the supplications of prophets, saints, and the faithful [mu’min□n]. For examples, see: S□rah Baqarah 2:201, 2:250; and S□rah □li ‘Imr□n 3:8-9, 3:16.

54. – In many Hadiths, Sal□t is enumerated as one of the five pillars of Islam.

55. – The curve of the eyebrows is symbolic of God’s characteristics.

56. ـ در نمازم خم ابروي تو در ياد آمد

حالتي رفت كه محراب به فرياد آمد

57. – Comprehensive exposition of the spiritual and mystical secrets of □al□t may be found in the two books Sirr u□-□al□t (The Secrets of □al□t) and □d□b u□-□al□t (The Disciplines of the Prayer, The Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini’s Works, Intrnational Affairs Department, Publisher,1996) of the perfect mystic Imam Khomeini (r) and also Shah□d-e Th□n□’s □d□b u□-□al□t. In light of the fact that Islamic theosophy [‘irf□n] has a very technical language and contains esoteric theosophical terms, we shall endeavor to elucidate the secrets of □al□t in simple terms as much as possible.

58. – Wu□u is a type of ritual partial ablution that is a prerequisite to □al□t. [trans.]

59. – Takb□r is the name of the invocation “اللهُ اكبر” [All□hu Akbar] meaning God is the Greatest. [trans.]

60. – It has been narrated of Imam □□diq (‘a) that he asked the opinion of one of his followers about “الله اكبر” [All□hu Akbar]. The follower replied, “God is greater than all objects.” The Imam (‘a) declared, “Is there any object next to God to which He may be greater?” He then interpreted Allahu Akbar thus:

الله اكبرُ مِنْ اَنْ يُوصَفَ

“God is greater than can be described.”

(Ba□□r al-Anw□r, vol. 84, p. 257)

61. ـ من از آن دم كه وضو ساختم از چشمه عشق

چار تكبير زدم يك سره بر هر چه كه هست

62. That is, I attest that there is no god but Allah (the One God): “اَشْهَدُ اَنَّ لا اِله الّا الله”. [trans.]

63. – This means, I attest that Mu□ammad is God’s messenger: “اَشْهَدُ اَنَّ مُحَمَّداً رسولُ الله”. [trans.]

64. – The translation of which is, I attest that ‘Al□ is God’s vicegerent: “اَشْهَدُ اَنَّ علياً وليُّ الله”. [trans.] It is worthy of note that this term is not part of Adh□n or Iq□mah, even so, saying it is desirable and recommended [musta□abb].

65. – Which means, hasten towards Sal□t: “حَيَّ عَلَى الصَّلوة” [trans.]

66. – This means, hasten towards salvation: “حَيَّ عَلَى الفَلاح”. [trans.]
67. – That is, hasten towards the best of deeds: “حَيَّ عَلَىٰ خَيْرِ العَمَل”. [trans.]
68. – There is no god but Allah: “لا اله الا الله”. [trans.]
69. – Verily, Salat has commenced: “قَدْ قامَتِ الصلوٰة”.
70. – Surah Sajdah 32:16.
71. – The holy prophet (s) has stated: “The best of people is one who loves worship, embraces it, and likes it with one’s whole heart…” (Usul-e Kafi, vol. 3, p. 131)
72. – For information regarding these issues, see exegeses of the Qur’an, especially mystical exegeses such as Imam Khomeini’s interpretation of Surah Hamd.
73. – This is the direction of the Ka‘bah in Mecca towards which Muslims turn to pray in Salat. [trans.]
74. – Refer to the discussion “Understanding Divine Attributes” in section two of current chapter.
75. – According to the Qur’an (Surah Azab 33:40), prophet Muhammad (s) is the Seal of the Prophets. This means that he is the final prophet or the Seal in the line of divine prophets, which are said to number 124,000. Hence, the teachings of Islam are God’s final revelation unto humanity. [trans.]
76. – This is the Islamic salutation wishing health and peace. [trans.]

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