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The "What There Should Be" and "What There Is" System

A value is something useful to man. If something has no physical or spiritual advantage for man, it cannot be regarded as a value. There are two kinds of value:

1- Conventional values: These values are credits various peoples designate themselves. They can be categorized into two groups:

a) Values entitled as "taboo ethics." Touching the chief's food, for instance, is considered as prohibited in some tribes. Such affairs are values for these peoples. There is no doubt, however, that these values have no real basis or origin.

b) Cultural values: Each nation or ethnic group consider themselves a series of values that are rooted in their beliefs, viewpoints, artistic elements and other natural and social affairs. For example, Norooz, coinciding with the beginning of spring, is one of the values arising from Iranian cultural and social background.

2- Values based on facts: These values are related to man's nature. The stronger its connection with the human disposition, the more essential the value. The principle "People's lives should not be disturbed," for instance, is a value-based issue rooted in man's nature. There are two reasons why it is essential:

a) Disturbing people's lives leads to personal vengeance or legal punishment.

b) Disturbing people's lives causes discomfort, annoyance and tortures the conscience.

Any form of annoyance to others influences the souls of both the disturber and the disturbed. Defying values based on facts affects them. If people resist values, the values will not be defied. If someone commits suicide, for instance, he has actually confronted a fact with another real phenomenon. In suicide, it is not a matter of one credited act destroying another; in fact, a mental disorder is destroying the most original reality of all – human life.

By ignoring values rooted in his true nature, man causes disorders in his soul. If, for example, one defies justice – commits an atrocious act, in other words – he is in fact damaging his own character. A liar causes disorders in his soul and his ego when he lies, consciously or unconsciously.

The Relationship between Values and Scientific Research

As we know, values are “what there should be;” they are “obligations.” And what there should be relates to man's free will. In other words, duties, obligations and moral values are meaningful when man does them by free will. “What there is,” however, is irrelevant to man's free will. Some people think that moral ethics have nothing to do with science and philosophy, for science and philosophy are related to “what there is,” whereas moral ethics and values pertain to “what there should be.”

The value-based realities rooted in man's free will have a scientific aspect. To elaborate on this, we must consider the definition of free will. Free will consists of the supervision and dominance of the human character upon the positive and negative poles of the action with good-will goals. If such an action takes place, it will be an action done by free will.

Those who see values as non-scientific believe that the human character influences actions of free will, so we cannot discover the factors and motives that have brought about actions of will; we are thus unable to predict actions of free will by means of regulated calculations like the law of causality, and unpredictable phenomena cannot be scientific. In response to their statements, we must keep a few points in mind:

1- It is a scientific principle that if an object has arisen out of various causes and factors, studying the different possibilities can show us its cause.

The greater the distance between man and the optional action that will occur in the future, the more likely the occurrence of events and incidents that will affect it, or even prevent it. Naturally, we have to scientifically calculate all the possibilities and discover what events and incidents that may occur until the time of the action; the nearer we get to the time we intend to do it, the more we know about the factors and events that take place, so the clearer our picture of what will happen will also be.

2- Man's actions based on his free will can be scientifically studied in two different domains:

a) In the domain of the factors and motives of the action: As we know, man never does anything without a motive, and the greater the motive, the more likely for it to happen. Also, the vaster the range of man's motives, the higher the possibility of the action occurring.

b) In the domain of the human character there is also a direct relationship between the strength or weakness of the human character and his optional actions. The stronger man's character and the more awareness the individual has about the preliminaries and goals of the action, the more likely for the individual to do it. The more committed the human character is to moral values, the more accurate our

explanation and justification of the optional action will be.

3– An action of free will can also be scientifically studied after its occurrence, which itself shows that the occurrence of actions based on free will is scientific.

4– The nature of values can be identified and studied scientifically and philosophically. We can ask, for example, what is the nature of justice, sacrifice and dutifulness? Other questions may be posed about why values have arisen and what consequences they have. The results of commitment to moral values can be studied scientifically. What results high moral values leave in the occurrence of man's mental tranquility and the improvement and development of the society is a scientific issue. If we consider high human moral values as having proper human qualities that arise out of moving on the path of evolutionary preserving the human disposition, we can ask philosophically whether man being put on this path is in his nature or does it happen externally. If the answer is the latter, why has this phenomenon arisen in some human beings?

All in all, value–based realities cannot be separated from sciences. That would weaken and even insult the sciences.

The Relationship between “What There Should Be” and “What There Is”

Some Western thinkers, David Hume for instance, believe that we cannot deductively reach “what there should be” from “what there is.” In other words, they think that values and morals cannot be extracted from science. There is no relationship between “what there is” and “what there should be.”

Contrary to Hume's idea, there is harmony among “what there is” and “what there should be,” and that the latter can be deduced from the former.

Human beings have the potential to live with values, which is the best reason that proves there is harmony between “what there is” and “what there should be.” Although most people's life goes nowhere beyond purely natural life, few people do have a life based on values. In other words, they have activated the human perfections inside themselves. Man is the only being who can be addressed by responsibilities and do's and don'ts, for he has the potential to use his responsibilities.

If “what there should be” and “what there shouldn't be” cannot be extracted out of “what there is,” the whole reality of the universe will be meaningless. If we accept that the universe has a mystery and glory which makes it a sign, man's existence must be an effect of God's wisdom and will. God's wisdom says that man is full of hidden potentials, based upon which a series of do's and don'ts can be presented. Can we accept that God may give us the means for evolution but not its instructions?

Even if the Qur’an makes no direct statement that man's existence is a sign that makes him commit

himself to the do's and don'ts that help him develop and perfect himself, the meaning of the existence of divine wisdom and will inside man proves the reality that man is responsible for gaining an intelligible life, just as the universe is a sign telling us that we are responsible with regard to what is good and what is bad.

We must keep in mind, however, that attention to how harmonious and glorious the universe is does not lead to the deduction of religious duties or responsibilities. No one can say that the wisdom and glory of the universe makes us realize that we should pray in the morning. Throughout history, many peoples have presented many duties as legal, moral and religious instructions, but none have been proven by the harmony of the universe. What we mean here is that the amazing order and harmony in the universe proves is:

قطره ای کز جویباری میرود از پی انجـام کـاری میرود

(*Every drop of water passing by in a stream has an aim.*)

The conscious human being must realize from the order and harmony of the universe that he must do his own part, too.

An Analysis of the Relationship between “What There Should Be” and “What There Is”

If we consider truthfulness as a “should,” our analysis would be:

1– We should be truthful. Why? Because truthfulness brings about trust in social relationships.

Trust and reliability in social life is a must.

2– Why should we accept social life? Because various aspects of human life are only activated in social life.

3– Why is it necessary to activate the various aspects of man's existence? Because man's life flourishes when these aspects are activated.

4– What is so important about this prosperity? Because such a prosperity is hidden in man's nature, and proper life has its continuity in its own nature.

The final response cannot be met with another “why.” We cannot ask why the needs of the nature of life should be fulfilled, for the nature of something is logically unintelligible.

The issue that life naturally causes its own continuity to be necessary depends on what there is, but the

issue that effort should be made for life to continue is not dependant only upon what there is; it needs another rationale, which can be considered from two points of view:

Viewpoint 1: The desirability of the positive characteristics of life itself makes it go on. From this point of view, there is no factor beyond natural life to prove the necessity of life. This is why the desirability of life leads to hedonism and greed for power.

Viewpoint 2: The issue that effort is needed for life to continue depends on God, the creator of life. This is the theologians' point of view. They believe that the "what there should be" ordered by God is based upon man's sound reason and pure disposition.

All moral values like justice-seeking, righteousness-seeking, and moderating selfishness can be analyzed by means of these two basic principles:

Principle One: It is "what there is" that is rooted in man's natural talents. In other words, man innately has tendencies toward justice, righteousness and other moral qualities. If the talent for seeking justice, righteousness and moderating selfishness did not exist, there would never be so many outstanding, developed figures in history.

Principle Two: "What there should be" originates in "what there is." The desire for development and evolution, which innately exists in man, needs some guidelines beyond the purely natural self – "what there should be" – from divine religions to prevent man from falling into selfishness and hedonism.

There is another way for elaborating on the relationship between "what there is" and "what there should be," and that is giving moral issues a conditional form – i.e., if desired human spiritual development is the issue, justice is necessary. In other words, we can state unconditionally that justice is needed for man's spiritual development. Although such a theorem cannot prove the necessity of spiritual development, when we suppose that development is desirable and needed, the necessity of justice for development is also conveyed.

The Relationship between "What There Should Be" and "What There Is" in the Qur'an

One: Verses in the Qur'an that prove the necessity of faith and piety based upon the facts of the universe, like 2:28.

Two: Verses that prove the necessity of thought and reasoning based on witnessing and studying the signs shown in the universe, like 3:190-1.

Three: Verses in the Qur'an that present the aimed, righteousness of the universe, to help man understand the necessity of obeying God and realize what he should do. In other words, the universe cannot be right and dominated by God unless one accepts the necessity of realizing one's duties about

what to do and what to avoid, like 3:191 and 6:73.

Four: Qur'anic verses that consider recognizing signs of God as the basis of gratitude and thankfulness, a duty itself, like 25:62.

Five: Verses in the Qur'an that consider witnessing miracles performed by prophets of God – signs of "what there is" far beyond material and physical facts – as a factor causing religion and observing what God wants us to do and what God prohibits us from, such as verses 113 through 121 in The Battlements, and also verses 65 and 73 in Ta Ha.

The Relationship between Ideology and World-view

There are three theories on the relationship between ideology and world-view:

1- Ideology arises from world-view. Any kind of ideology must be based upon a specific form of world-view.

2- Ideology and world-view are not directly proportionate. In other words, ideology is not dependent upon world-view, for world-view concerns "what there is," and one cannot reach "what there should be" from "what there is."

3- If one is to study the relationship between ideology and world-view, it is necessary to discover what their goals are.

What Is Ideology?

Here, by ideology we refer to a series of acknowledged principles which are desirable enough to become one's beliefs, an original component of his mind and soul, and interpret his life 'as it should be.' It is quite obvious that commitment and responsibility in life, from a general point of view, calls for interpretation and justification of life.

What Is World-view?

Man's mind can make contact with the universe in three forms:

a) Direct scientific contact by means of contact between the senses with the world outside.

b) Receiving facts, like realizing the beauty of phenomena or how glorious or great something is in the eyes of a thinker.

c) Contact with the whole universe, which leads to philosophies.

All three are a kind of world-view, for when scientific contact with the universe is made, though it is itself

a kind of world-view, only certain components and effects of the world are revealed to man. Making contact with facts by means of reception also shows faces of the universe to man. Contact with the whole universe – absolute world-view – is impossible, for a number of general principles and concepts cannot describe and interpret all aspects of the universe. All in all, each of the above-mentioned forms of contact between man and the universe reveal a picture of the universe to man. Having seen the three basic forms of world-view, now we can proceed to the relationship between world-view and ideology.

If world-view means identifying some parts and phenomena of the universe and their interrelations – and man ignoring the general, fundamental laws and principles dominating the universe – such an incomplete, limited form of world-view cannot make a specific belief for man and guide him toward certain duties he should fulfill. In such a world-view, the human mind does nothing more than a mirror in contact with facts. It merely reflects the phenomenon in itself. Such a superficial knowledge cannot direct man to a definite ideology.

On the other hand, if world-view refers to associating all factors of internal perception with the external world rather than only associating the senses with the world, such a world-view would definitely bring man out of his indifferent, neutral side in regard to contact with the universe, and make him accept certain beliefs and perform certain actions as his duty. In this form of world-view, man is not confined to merely scientifically knowing the universe; he also considers his own perceptions about the universe, like glory or justice. Thus, we can say that overall, comprehensive world-view can lead to ideology.

Man has a variety of potentials and talents, so he can make contact with the universe from different aspects. We can, for instance, see aesthetic aspects in the universe since we possess such a sense. We use justice in our individual or social life because we have the potential to understand justice.

Another original human potential is man's questioning himself and his life. “Who am I?” he asks himself, and this takes him to the conclusion that makes him behave in a way to discover the philosophy of his life. In other words, if man's world-view is in the form of an isolated part of the universe photographing it, he will never achieve an ideology, but if he believes that, “There is a universe which I am an active part of; I am born from the parts of this universe, and gradually, with the knowledge I gain and the potentials and talents that flourish in me, I see a nihilistic world and life as equal to my own oblivion,” he will definitely come to the conclusion that he must submit to certain actions, and cannot act according to his wishes and desires any longer.

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