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Wisdom

Wisdom (Al-Hakeem): Above Doing What Should Not Be

The second meaning of wisdom is being above doing what should not be done. In this sense, it is more general than the justice we know of not oppressing and being unfair, etc. The Wise One, in other words, is the One Who does not do what is ugly.

Belief in fixing this attribute for the Creator, the most Exalted One, is based on what is rationally accepted as being good or ugly. The gist of this issue is that there are actions which reason realizes whether they are good or ugly, and it senses that one who is independent by himself is above being characterized by ugliness and by doing what should not be done.

This is the basis for judging His being characterized by wisdom and justice, that He does not oppress or deal unfairly with anyone. From here, we must discuss this issue in the light of reason and the Holy Quran.

What is Rationally Good or Ugly

Those who believe in the Justice of God say that there are actions which reason innately realizes, without seeking assistance from the Sharia, as being good which must be done or ugly above which one should rise. Had the One Who brought the Sharia commanded to do the first and prohibited the doing of the second, He would be revealing what reason understands and to which it guides. The Sharia is not supposed to reverse the issue by labeling as good what reason deems to be ugly or regards as ugly what it rules as being good.

The Asharis have said that reason is not to judge about things being good or ugly, and a thing is not characterized as being good or ugly by itself before a text from the Sharia saying so. For this reason, nothing is good except what the Shria regards as good, and nothing is ugly except what it labels as such. Injustice is ugly because the Sharia prohibits it. Justice is good because the Sharia commands its

doing. Had this been reversed and justice been made ugly while injustice is made good, it should have been as it has decreed.

Those who advocate what is rationally good or ugly divided actions, in as far as being characterized by them, into three types:

First: Actions that by themselves completely justify goodness or ugliness, and this is called self-goodness and ugliness, such as justice and injustice. Justice, due to being so, can only be good always. Whenever it is found, its doer is praised and is regarded as doing something good. Likewise, injustice, as such, can only be ugly, and whenever one who commits it is found, he is held in contempt and is labeled as being a wrongdoer. It is impossible for justice to be ugly and injustice to be good.

Second: Actions do not form a complete reason behind it either. Rather, it requires being characterized by them, so much so that had an action and its doer been separated from each other, it may either be good, such as highly respecting a friend for being as such, or ugly, such as humiliating him. But there is no objection to glorifying being held in contempt because a label fits it, such as its being the cause for oppressing a third person, or disrespect becoming laudable when the label applies to it, such as its being a cause for salvation.

The example is not confined to both of them. Truthfulness and telling lies are also the same. Truthfulness that results in harming the society is ugly, and telling lies that saves an innocent human being is good. Here, contrarily to justice and injustice, justice, as such, must not be described as being ugly, while injustice, due to being oppressive, is described as being good.

Third: One wherein there is neither cause for it by itself nor a need to be characterized by either. Rather, it follows the eventual entities and labels that apply to it, and it is like beating: It is good for disciplining but bad for hurting.

This is common in circulation among them. The desired objective behind this research is that it has been made clear that there are actions which reason comprehends, if it reviews them, regardless of the entities that affect them. They are good and their doers are praised, or they are ugly and their doers must be held in contempt. And we do not claim that every action falls within this framework.

In other words, the dispute between both groups swings between partial positive and total negative. Those who believe in the concept of Justice of God advocate the first, whereas the Asharis advocate the other.

About Applying Labels of Goodness and Ugliness

There is no doubt that what is good and what is ugly carries one meaning. The talk revolves round whether a thing is good or ugly, and it varies according to the sources. The criteria for what is good and what is ugly have been stated, and we here state some of them.

1. What agrees or disagrees with nature. The good scene, since it suits nature, is regarded as being good. The frightening scene, since nature rejects it, is regarded as being ugly. Similar to it is tasty food and soft voice, they both are good. The bitter medicine and the braying of the donkey are ugly. Goodness and ugliness in this criterion is not the subject of research and dispute. Moreover, they cannot withstand and be sustained due to the differences in nature.

2. What agrees or disagrees with personal interests and norms. One killing his enemy is something good, since it agrees with the killer's personal goals. But it is ugly for the friends and family of the killed person because it opposes their personal objectives and interests. This is with regard to personal objectives and interests.

As regarding the sort/quality field, justice safeguards the society's system and the type's interests, so it is good. Since injustice undermines order and opposes the type's interest, it is ugly. This, too, is outside the field of research between the Adlis (those who believe in the Justice of God) and the Asharis, for personal interests are not always right in describing an action as being good or ugly due to the differences in personal objectives and interests, as you have already come to know.

An action, such as killing someone, may be good according to an individual or a group while being ugly according to others. The research is about what is good or ugly by itself that does not change from some people to others when they are attributed, or from one generation to another. Rather, it is an absolutely fixed judgment for an action.

3. As regarding type interests, such as a system being kept or undermined, although they always portray an action as being good or ugly, it is not right to apply the terms of good or ugly in both of these situations. This is so because what is meant by the "self" is the same action, regardless of looking at others, obligates reason to recognize it as being good or ugly.

The matter is not the same when describing an action as being good or ugly for the quality pros and cons. These objectives, which are outside the truth of the actions, have something to do with reason rationalizing or describing. For this reason, such a matter must be outside the scope of dispute. If the Asharis admit the goodness of justice and the ugliness of injustice from this standpoint, they still cannot be regarded as being in agreement with the Adlis.

A thing that brings perfection or causes a shortcoming to one's self, such as knowledge or ignorance, the first beautifies it while the second shames it. But there is nothing wrong with judging something as being good or ugly in this sense, and it is not a point of discussion. I do not think that there is anyone on the face of earth who denies knowledge, courage and eloquence as being good, whereas ignorance, cowardice and ineloquence are an indication of a shortcoming and ugliness.

These three criteria, if we suppose they are criteria for being adorned with goodness or damned with ugliness, are outside the precincts of this research. Rather, the research is between the Adlis and others in the next fourth criterion.

4. Actions that obligate praise for one who acts upon them are regarded by people of reason as being good, and if they incur denunciation, they are regarded by them as being ugly. This is done by observing the deed itself as it is without adding anything else to it and without noticing that it contains a personal or quality benefit, so reason is independent in judging its goodness and in the need for it, or it deems it ugly and that it must be abandoned.

If you will, you may say that if actions falls within the frame of the human reason without difference among individuals, and regardless of anything else other than the action itself, reason will find it described as good and a candidate for praise, or vice versa. For example, if goodness is rewarded with goodness, it is deemed to be good, but if it is rewarded with abuse, it rules that it is ugly.

In issuing a ruling such as this, reason does not observe anything other than the topic itself without imagining its being reform or corruption. The discussion of what is good and what is ugly by itself aims only at this category.

The three earlier categories are outside the scope of this research. Also, ordinary judgment of what is good or ugly, such as lauding a soldier who comes out wearing his military uniform, while deeming a scholar coming out wearing unsuitable outfit as being ugly. These, too, are outside the scope of this research.

One may misunderstand that judging something as being good or ugly is done according to a fifth criterion which is: What is good is something which deserves rewards from Allah, whereas what is ugly deserves His punishment. But this, too, is outside the scope of this research. Brahmans, who follow no legislative code, let alone believing in reward and punishment in the Hereafter, have discussed the roots of judging something as being good or ugly. So, how can this be the criterion of the research?

Yes, it has assumed this feature based on those who want to deny what is good and what is ugly. This is done in the excuse that the reward and penalty for an action is outside the scope of reason and is inside that of a legislative code.

From the above, one can understand what it implies. Yet in order to provide more explanations in identifying the point of dispute between the Asharis and the Adlis, we would like to produce the following explanation.

Many of those who look for rational labeling of what is good and what is ugly render the goodness, justice, benevolence, ugliness of injustice and aggression, by saying that the first contains a public interest, whereas the second also contains abuse. Because of these results, a generalization has been made of recognizing the beauty of the first and the ugliness of the second for everything.

But you have already come to know that the criterion of the research is broader than that, that the matter focuses on noticing the deed itself while overlooking its consequences and outcomes, does reason realize its goodness or ugliness? Does reason praise the benevolence of a benevolent person while

denouncing rewarding a benevolent person with abuse? Does reason label as ugly the over-burdening of someone? Does reason label as good the work of a worker according to an agreement?
The discussion is on this level. It is not by looking at objectives and interests, be they individual or social.

Those who advocate rational labels of what is good and what is bad say that every rational person has the ability to make a distinction. He inwardly finds some actions as being good and others as being ugly, and these rulings stem from the essence of the rationalizing force and the exemplary human identity.

The first person who liberated the point of dispute according to the way which we have decided is the critic (Abdul-Razzaq) al-Lahiji in his works of logic. The most clear evidence of the accuracy of his research is that the goal behind submitting this issue (for discussion) is to come to know His actions, the most Praised One, and whether or not reason can explore a description of His actions, that what is good according to reason, or what is ugly, is as such according to Allah Almighty. Such an exploration cannot take place except when the criterion in labeling as good or as ugly by observing the same action as it is.

For example, there is no sense in researching what is good and what is ugly through the previous criterion of suitability or contradiction to nature, or whether it agrees or disagrees with an objective, or whether it safeguards or undermines system and society. Otherwise, the objective for which this issue was submitted, which is getting to know His actions, Praise belongs to Him, will be nil and void.

Are Rational Good and Ugly Things Common?

It may seem that some men of wisdom as well as logicians give the impression that judging something, as being good or ugly through reason is something that is commonly agreed upon according to the views of rational people, and it is called “commendable”.

Our chief mentor says the following in his *Ishaaraat* book: “As for the celebrate, they include views labeled as commendable, and we may specifically apply the term ‘common’ to them because they stand on something other than fame. These are opinions if a man who is left with his abstract mind, whim and sense, without being disciplined by accepting their issues and recognizing them. His strong thinking did not incline to judge due to many particularities. If he did not seek in their regard the human nature of mercy, timidity, pride, dignity, etc, he would not rule that his reason, whim or sense would judge according to them.

For example, we rule that robbing a man of his money is ugly, lying is ugly, so one must not do it. From this same type, there are many which people can consider. The Sharia has classified many things as being ugly, such as killing an animal (not for food or to avoid harm) due to the instinct of kindness, and most people are kind.

None of these are obligated by naive thinking. Were one created with a perfect mind but did not hear anyone disciplining him, nor does he surrender to a psychological or moral impulse, he will not issue a

ruling about any of these issues. Rather, he can ignore it and stop at a limit. He will not rule that the whole is greater than the portion."

He adds saying, "What is common knowledge is either an obligation or a reformatory disciplining, and it is that with which the divine legislations agree. As for manners and tempers, be they inductions or terms, they are either absolute or according to folks who have mastered a profession or followed a creed."[1]

Here you can see that the main mentor regards it a common issue to consider robbing someone of his money as being ugly, and that only rational men realize it. Had man been left alone to follow his reason and was not disciplined about accepting rational issues; he would not deem it as ugly.

The critic al-Tusi agrees with him when he explains the signs.

One can resign that *qiyas*, analogy, is divided into five types:

1. Evidential

2. Polemic

3. Oratorical

4. Poetic

5. Sophistical

The first among them is comprised of certain propositions the principles of which are six:

1. First Principles

2. Contemplations

3. Empirical

4. Intuitive

5. Recurrences

6. Innate Things

As for the second, I mean the dialectical syllogism, it is comprised of what is common and what is taken for granted, whether they are regarded as such by everyone or by a specific group.

Thereupon, the celebrate from among the principles of debate are contrasted by demonstrative syllogism. If rational criteria of good and ugly are among the celebrate, they are listed under the polemic syllogism and are known to be realized only on account of fame.

Had man been left alone for his abstract reason, whim and senses, without being disciplined about accepting their issues, he would not rule based on them. Denial of the criteria of rational good and ugly must be rejected and so must rational evidences in their regard, and those who advocate acceptance of reason do not adopt this.

Moreover, making them celebrate, getting them out of the demonstrative syllogism and into the dialectic syllogism nullifies all rulings and consequences that are based on advocating reason, as we explained. Based on this, judging something as being good or ugly is not evidential, what results from it cannot be used as evidence. Rather, it is regarded to be among the celebrate about which views of the men of wisdom agree. It is quite possible the men of wisdom agree against them. In that case, what is good becomes ugly and vice versa.

So, if you say that the chief mentor made the celebrate more general among the principles of debate, incorporating into them the first principles. He says at the beginning of his statement, "As for the celebrate, they include views labeled as commendable, and we may specifically apply the term 'common' to them because they stand on things other than fame." I would like to say this:

What you have stated is accurate. For him, the celebrate are more general than certitudes and others, so much so that even the first principles have two considerations: They are generally recognized by people, so they are regarded as being celebrate. In contrast to this category, there is another category for the celebrate which is: certitude. Mere reason hesitates to judge them, but most people recognize them, and they are labeled as "commendable opinions." This category may be set aside under the celebrate label.

The celebrate are said to share the meaning according to people's recognition of them, and they are of two types: certitudes and non-certitudes. But the mentor and those who follow him have regarded labeling what is good and what is ugly to be under the second category, and this requires denial of the rational categorization of what is rationally good and what is ugly as well as the rulings built on it, so consider.

What Criterion for Judging Actions as Being Good or Ugly?

If the object of dispute is what we have stated, i.e. the mind realizes an action as being good or ugly by looking at it while overlooking its consequences, one would wonder: How can reason judge goodness and ugliness, and what is the criterion for the judgment? The criterion for reason to judge is that it finds some actions as being in agreement with man's higher side and exemplary facet in human existence, and that they do not agree with each other.

If you will, you may say that he realizes that some actions vest perfection on a chosen living being, whereas some others see shortage in him, so it judges the first to be good, and that one should be adorned by it, deeming the other as being ugly and must be abandoned. If natural instinct, as we stated

about criteria, generalizes this meaning, i.e. the higher nature in man, this meaning would be incorporated into the first category.

Explanation: Men of wisdom have divided reason into theoretical and practical. The second teacher has said, “The theoretical ones are those about which man may get to know that which man may do, whereas the practical ones are those that inform us what man can do with his own freewill.”

Wise Sabzawari said this in explaining it: “Theoretical reason and the practical one can rationalize, but the theoretical is concerned about pure sciences not related to actions such as: Allah is One existent, His Attributes are the same as He is, and the like.

The practical one is concerned about sciences relevant to actions such as: ‘Relying on God is good,’ ‘Acceptance, surrender and perseverance are commendable.’ This reasoning is the one used in the science of ethics. Both methods of reasoning are not contradictory, nor do they represent hidden meanings. Rather, they are two faces for one and the same coin: articulate people.”[2]

Just as there are theoretical issues in theoretical wisdom that end at commonsense issues, analogies would otherwise have become infertile and unproductive, so is the case with practical wisdom. Unknown issues cannot be known except when they end at necessary issues; otherwise, man would not know anything about issues of practical wisdom. Just as reason innately realizes commonsense issues in theoretical wisdom, it thus realizes commonsense issues in practical wisdom innately without the need for any other imagery.

For example, belief in all theoretical issues must end at a case where antitheses are not present; they are removed, so much so that if belief in them is removed, no issue can be believed at all. It is, therefore, called the “mother issue,” such as certitude: It is the belief that the angles of a triangle equal two right angles.

This does not happen unless it is preceded by the impossibility in believing in the opposite of this issue, that is, it does not equal them. Otherwise, if the opposite can be believed, relative certitude will not take place. For this reason, the word of the men of wisdom has agreed about applying evidence to theoretical issues is done if the evidence reaches the “mother issue” referred to above.

In the light of this explanation, we say this: Just as theoretical issues in the theoretical mind are commonsense, preliminary, which it grasps, so is the case with the issues that are not clear in the practical mind. They must end at preliminary and clear issues according to reason, so as if belief in these issues is removed in the practical wisdom, there can be no belief in any of their issues.

Among the commonsense issues in the practical mind is the one about rationally fixed issues of what is clearly good and what is ugly for a host of issues, such as our saying that “Justice is good”, “Injustice is ugly”, “Rewarding goodness with goodness is good” and “Rewarding goodness with evil is ugly.”

These are preliminary issues in practical wisdom, and practical reason realizes them innately and while observing the issues themselves. In the light of believing in them, it is easy to believe what is based on them in the field of practical mind from rulings that are not commonsense, whether they are connected to manners first, or to home management second, or to urban policies third, which are discussed in the practical wisdom.

In order to bring an example for it, the ethical scholar rules that it is mandatory to honor parents, teachers and those who do us favors. This is so because honoring is an issue of rewarding goodness with goodness, something which is good by itself, while insulting them is one of the issues of rewarding goodness with ugliness, which by itself is ugly.

One who researches home management will rule that marital duties must be carried out by both sides, and that falling short of so doing is ugly. This is so because carrying them out is acting upon the marriage covenant, whereas lagging behind them violates this covenant. The first is good by itself and the second is ugly by itself.

The sociologist who looks into the rights of the ruler and government on the society rules that the taxes must be equivalent to individuals' incomes. This is so because abandoning this restriction means doing the subjects injustice, which is ugly by itself.

You can measure on this whatever researches reach you in practical wisdom, whether they are due to the individual (ethics), or to the small society (the home), or to the big society (the corps politique). Everything that is said about them and researched by researchers, since it is one of the practical mind's affairs, must be ruled as being either positive or negative, right or wrong, based on the obvious issues in the field of that mind.

Up to here, we have come to conclude that the unclear rulings must end, starting from the field of both minds (the theoretical and the practical) up to commonsense rulings that are realized without any difficulty. This is so in order to avoid the turn and the sequences on which scholars of logic and wisdom relied in the first section, that is, theoretical wisdom, and the evidence is one and applies to all.

If you come to know all of what we have stated, the talk will fall in another matter: determining the criterion for reason realizes the soundness of commonsense issues or their being false in the field of both minds. So let us say the following.

The criterion in the field of theoretical mind is the issue being in agreement with or without its formation. The mind realizes innately that the presence of two antitheses cannot take place on the outside, and that it cannot be judged that something is present while at the same time it cannot be judged that it does not exist. Such is realized without the need for an experiment or induction.

The criterion in the practical mind is realizing the agreement between the issue and its suitability for the exemplary side of man, not the animal one, or its opposition thereto.

Man has an exemplary instinct with which he is distinguished from animals. He finds some issues suitable for or contradictory to that high side, so he describes what is suitable as good and that it must be done, describing its opposite as being ugly and must be avoided. He does not realize the issues with these two descriptions only for his own person or for a particular type of humans or for all humans; rather, he realizes the goodness or ugliness for every rational existent having the freedom to choose, whether he falls under the umbrella of humanity or is outside it.

This is so because the basis for his judgment of one of these two descriptions of the same issue is as it is, without any particularity for the realizing individual. He realizes that justice is good with everyone and from everyone, that injustice is likewise ugly. He does not apply his judgment with either of them to a particular time or century.

Up to now, the two matters that play a role in rationally judging something as good or as ugly have been made clear, and either of them must not be confused with the other because the first is an introduction to the other; these are:

A. All issues in the field of reason are rendered to commonsense in order to avoid what must be avoided.

B. Clarifying that reason criterion identifies such issues as being commonsense when it comes to reason.

It has become clear that one who advocates rational goodness and ugliness for their own selves needs not prove what he adopts. Also, one advocates that antitheses do not meet, and that they are out of place. What is amazing is that the men of wisdom and the logicians have agreed that theoretical issues in the theoretical mind must end to be commonsense issues. Otherwise, the criteria would be useless, and sequence will replace deduction.

But they overlooked applying this principle to the practical mind's aspect and did not divide the practical issue into ideological and commonsense, or theoretical and necessary. How so since deduction and definitiveness in unclear issues in the field of practical mind cannot be done except when the mind arrives at issues that are clear in this field?

You have already come to know that the issues submitted in home and family environments, which are labeled home management, or the issues discussed in the world of politics and urban management, are not equally clear? Rather, they have degrees and levels (of clarity). Mind cannot reach definitiveness in all practical issues unless there are clearly commonsense issues on which unknown practical issues are based, so that definitiveness is applied to them and ambiguity is removed from them. For this reason, we do not have to expand in submitting evidences for those who advocate what is good and what is ugly, and we do not mention except few of them.

Just as they have overlooked dividing the issues in the practical wisdom into both parts, they thus

overlooked explaining what the criterion is for the mind to realize the accuracy of some issues or their being false in that field. In the statements of logicians, they explain the criterion and the standard in incomplete matters to which one who reviews books of logic can refer.

Evidences of Advocates of Rational Judgments of What is Good and What is Ugly

First Evidence: It is referred to by the critic al-Tusi when he said, "… It is due to their absence if they are legitimately fixed."[3] In other words, if we say that what is good and what is ugly are proven through the Sharia, this will necessitate their being not proven by the Sharia, too.

Explanation: If goodness and ugliness are judged by the mind, when the mind is independent in realizing that truthfulness is good while lying is ugly, there is no confusion about what the Legislator bids and forbids being good and ugly respectively. This is due to reason judging that lying is ugly, and the Legislator does not commit what is ugly, nor can it be imagined that he commits it.

But if the mind is not independent in doing so, when the Legislator commands something or prohibits it, or if he tells us that being truthful is good while telling lies is ugly, it does not befit us to be definite that he is truthful in his speech till we believe in its contexts. This is so because there is a possibility the legislator is not telling the truth in its regard, or in telling it.

Telling lies, according to the presumption, is yet to be proven to be ugly. Even if the legislator says that he does not lie, we are not sure that he is truthful even while conveying such information. So, it is mandatory, as al-Ashari should have advocated, that one cannot rule something as being good, neither according to reason nor to the Sharia.

If you may, you can say that had reason not been independent about some actions being good and others being ugly, such as telling the truth and lying, and if Allah, the most Praised One, tells us through His prophets that such an action is good or ugly, we would not have been definitive about His speech to say that there is likelihood He is not telling us the truth.

The man of virtue, al-Qawshaji al-Ashari, responded to this reasoning by saying, "We do not make bidding and forbidding as two evidences for what is good and what is ugly (respectively) so what has been said above would be stated. Rather, we judge something as being good when the action is connected to bidding and to praise, whereas ugliness is when it is connected to forbidding and denunciation."[4]

One may resign that the topic falls once in the name and in the term, so it is not right to say that what took place is connected to bidding and praise is good, and what is prohibited and denounced is ugly. Knowing this does not hinge except on hearing them from the legislator.

The other issue is that labeling what is actually good or ugly also falls with the legislator. This is not explored from mere hearing that the bidding and forbidding are relevant to something for it is possible the legislator may be sporting in bidding and forbidding. If he says that he is not sporting, this does not prove the negation of the possibility of his sporting in his actions and speech due to the probability of his being jesting or lying in his speech.

For this reason, there must be something among the rational realization the realizing of goodness and ugliness of which does not hinge on anything, and that reason will be independent in grasping it, which is: Justice is good and injustice is ugly, truthfulness is good and lying is ugly, so the mind may be independent in it, that what the legislator judged is true in his words.

It will then be fixed that what is relevant to the matter is good according to the Sharia, and what is connected to prohibition is held by the Sharia as ugly. This is the objective of the critic al-Tusi, that is, had it not been for the independence of the mind in some actions, nothing at all would have been fixed as good or ugly.

Second Evidence: It is referred to also by the critic al-Tusi when he said, "… The counteracting would have then been valid,"[5] that is, in determining what is good and what is ugly.

Explanation: When determining what is good and what is ugly, the legislator has the right to deem as good or as ugly whatever reason judges as being as such. Therefore, this is obligatory to deem benevolence as ugly and abuse as good to be by necessity false. Man's conscience judges that it is not right for a doer of good to be denounced or a doer of evil to be praised.

The Commander of the Faithful (peace with him) has said, "The doer of good and the doer of bad should not have the same status with you."[6] In this statement, the Imam aims at waking up the conscience of his governor, and he does not say it as something new about which the governor was heedless.

Third Evidence: Had goodness and ugliness been legislated, the Brahmans and atheists, who reject divinely revealed legislations, would not have judged through them. They pass a judgment based on reason. Materialists and atheists who spread in broad countries from the east of the earth to its west reject such legislation and religion from its very foundation, recognizing the goodness of some actions and the ugliness of others.

For this reason, they tempt world nations to submit deceptive concepts through their vile propaganda, such as support for reconciliation and world peace, preserving human rights, caring for the prisoners and detainees, renouncing racial discrimination, up to the list of what the human taste and reason appreciate in all circles.

They submit these concepts so they may reach through them their personal goals and interests. Had these concepts been unacceptable by humans in general, the advocates of materialism and atheism in the world would not have used them.

The conclusion is that there are actions in the goodness of which nobody doubts, whether the Sharia states their goodness or not. Also, there are actions that everyone finds as being ugly, whether their ugliness is mentioned by the Sharia or not. For this reason, if a rational person, who has never heard of divinely revealed legislations, nor does he know anything about rulings, grew up in the deserts, his mind being empty of all doctrines, is given the option to either be truthful and thus be given one dinar, or to lie and will be given a dinar, while there is no harm on him in either case, he will prefer to tell the truth over lying. Had instinct not judged truthfulness as being good and lying as being ugly, he would not have distinguished one from the other, and he would have always chosen truthfulness.

This shows that reason has the ability to judge and decide matters that are rendered to the individual and to the society, so it judges that obedience to a benevolent guardian is good and disobedience of him is ugly, that the doer of goodness and that of evil do not occupy the same status, and the like.

Fourth Evidence: Had what is good and what is ugly been judged according to hearing (about them), Allah Almighty would not have deemed anything as being ugly. Had it been so, He would not have deemed it ugly that miraculous acts are performed by liars. Judging this as being permissible closes the door of the prophet's knowledge. Any prophet who brought a miracle shortly after claiming Prophetic mission could not be believed while saying it was permissible for a miracle to be performed by a liar in his claim.

This false result is one of the most important and prominent outcomes of denying the principle. Thus did they close the door of knowing a Prophetic mission.

What is amazing is that al-Fadl ibn Rozbahan tried to respond to this evidence by saying, "A miracle is not done by liars not only because this is rationally ugly, it is due to Allah not doing things like that; it is normally impossible. So, the door of knowing the prophets will not be closed because ordinary knowledge judges it impossible to come up."[7]

One may resign that: Where did he have this knowledge from, that is, that Allah does not let a miracle be performed by a liar? Had belief hinged on bringing it about, those who belied the Prophetic mission of Noah, or those before or after him, would have been excused for having denied the prophet's mission. This is so because this habit is not fixed with them. Knowledge of it takes place when seeing a miracle being performed at the hands of the truthful person rather than those of the liars is a repeated occurrence.

It can be said that the conclusion that Allah does not permit a liar to produce a miracle must be based on a reference. If the reference is reason, the Asharis regard it as being detached. If it is due to hearing, it is presumed that the legislator may be lying in his claim. Rather, there is no hearing prior to a proof for a prophet's message.

The conclusion of the research is: One who denies what is good and what is ugly denies commonsense, and there is no need to speak to him because the dispute cuts off when it reaches necessary

introductions, and such folks dispute about them.

I wonder, if reason does not judge that there is no obligation to do what is beyond one's capacity, and that it deems it permissible that Allah, Glory to Him, prohibits His servant from doing something, creates in it a necessity then He punishes him for it, so, say: Ha! What matter is realized by reason?!

It has been said that a poet and a carpenter got together for a debate. The carpenter said, "Why do you advocate that Allah commands His servants to do what is beyond their ability?" The poet kept silent. He was asked, "Why are you silent?" He said, "I intended by debating with him to obligate him to say that He commands what is beyond one's ability; but if he adheres to it without feeling ashamed of it, what should I obligate him about?"

Thus you come to know about the weakness of what Abul-Hassan al-Ashari mentions in his *Lama* book, and here is its text:

"If someone says: 'Should Allah cause the children pain in the Hereafter?' it will be said to him, 'He, the most Exalted One, has the right to do so, and He will be fair if He does it.'" He goes on to add, "And His letting the believers suffer is not seen as an ugly deed which He does, while He permits the unbelievers to enter the Gardens of Bliss. Rather, we say that He does not do that because He has already informed us that He punishes the unbeliever, and it is not possible that He lies when He tells us something."[8]

Asharis' Evidences for Denying Rational Goodness and Ugliness

First Evidence: Allah is the Owner of everything, He does in His kingdom whatever He pleases.

In his argument, al-Ashari sought evidence saying, "The proof that everything He does He has the right to do is: He is the Owner, the Subduer Who is not owned; none is above Him; none is there to command or prohibit Him, nor is there anyone present with Him who draws drawings for Him, signing orders for Him. If all of this is as such, nothing ugly comes out of Him. If there is anything ugly, it comes out of us because we violate the limit that He drew for us; we do what we are not supposed to. Since the Creator is not a slave or one who works for someone else, nothing ugly comes of Him. If He says that telling lies is ugly because He finds it as such, it will be said to him: Yes. Had He found it to be good, it would have been good, and if He commanded it, nobody would object to Him.

"If they say that it is possible that He lies, just as you find it possible that He commands the telling of lies, it will be said to them: Not everything that is possible is liable for Him to command or that He is described by it."[9]

The resigns about the above are as follows:

Firstly, we would like to ask the Ashari mentor this question: If the most Praised One tormented in the hereafter al-Ashari's child, although a child is innocent and has committed no sin, and if the Ashari

himself sees it in the hereafter with his own eyes, will he see it as justice and as a good deed? Or will he find that particular actions, out of his own conscience, to be repugnant?

Likewise, if al-Ashari is dealt with in the same way his child was dealt with, although he is a believer, will he accept it in the depths of his soul and see it as fairness, that he is not being wronged, in the pretext that Allah, Praise belongs to Him, is the Owner of the domain and He fares with His domain as He pleases? Or would al-Ashari judge otherwise?

Secondly, there is no doubt that the most Praised One is the King of the domain, and He can do anything, as you have come to know, be it good or ugly. His ability, in general, covers anything, and there is no doubt about it. But the rational judgment says that such an action is ugly, yet it is done by someone who is wise; this is not to limit His kingdom and ability.

This is what counts in untying the knot of the Asharis who claim that the judgment of reason, its judging the actions of the most Praised One, is a sort of intrusion into the affairs of the Lord of the Worlds, but the truth is something else.

Explanation: Due to experience, or due to rational evidences, reason unveils the laws that prevail over nature. It also unveils the mathematical laws. If reason says that every pair is divided into two equal parts, is there a possibility that by doing so reason or nature should impose its own judgment? Or will it be said that nature carried that law, that reason discovered and explained it?

If this is the difference between imposing a judgment and discovering it in the natural world, let the difference be between realizing it as a good deed or as an ugly one, between any action it undertakes and that which it does not. Its imposition of a judgment on Allah, Praise belongs to Him, is an imposition that limits the expanse of His ability, will and action.

Reason here is not a judge, and it does not impose anything on Allah, Praise belongs to Him. Rather, by looking at Allah Almighty and His Attributes, which include perfection and independence, this reveals that one who has such attributes, especially wisdom, cannot do anything ugly, nor does he undermine anything that is good.

In other words, reason reveals that one who is characterized with all perfection, who is independent of anything, cannot do anything ugly. This is so because there is deterrence, he has no reason. This abstention from doing what is ugly does not mean that it is unable to do it, nor does it negate the most Exalted One being able to do it, nor does it negate his option in doing what is good and abandoning what is ugly. His doing something is by choice, and so is the case with not doing it.

This is the conclusion arrived at by those who believe in the Justice of Allah, who say that ugliness does not apply to Him. This does not mean restricting what He does by reason. Rather, because Allah is wise, He has mandated it on Himself neither to violate what is good, nor to do what is ugly. The role of reason here is only to disclose, to clarify, by looking at His attributes and wisdom.

Briefly, His actions, Praise belongs to Him, while keeping in mind that His Might is general, is not chaotic and free of everything negative or positive, nor is it restrictively imposed on Him, Praise belongs to Him, by the reason factor. Rather, it is a reality, a fact discovered by reason just as reason discovered the laws prevailing over nature and the cosmos.

Imagine that His action, Praise belongs to Him, is free of every restriction and limit in the pretext of safeguarding the Honor of Allah, Praise belongs to Him, and due to the expanse of His omnipotence. This is almost the same as false entrapment, for safeguarding His omnipotence is not the same as His actions being above any restriction and condition.

Contemplating on what we have already stated, it becomes obvious how weak the argument of all those who advocate the negation of what is rationally good or bad is. There is no harm in pointing out to some of their evidences which their scholars who succeeded Abul-Hassan al-Ashari have indicated.

Second Evidence: Had there been a need for determining what is good and what is ugly, there would have been no dispute.

They have said: Had knowledge of the goodness of what is good and the ugliness of what is ugly been necessary, there would have been no dispute about the difference between it and the knowledge that the one is half the two, but the latter is false according to conscience.

Critic al-Tusi responded saying, "Variations in sciences is possible due to variations in visions."[10]

Explanation: Necessary sciences may vary because of the variations in imagining their ends. In the logic industry, it is decided that truisms have levels. The preliminaries have a higher level than the observations, the latter have a higher level than experimental things, the latter have a higher level than intuitionism, the latter has a higher level than *traditionalia permissa*, and the latter has a higher level than instincts. The restriction in this regard is: If something cannot be believed except through imagining both its ends, it has a higher level than others, such as the preliminaries[11], and so on.

Had what the Asharis stated, with regard to consistency, become a must, what is relevant to the senses cannot be among what is positive.

Briefly, positive sciences, despite their abundance, are not on one style. Rather, they have levels and degrees. This is sensed by man if he applies his sciences and convictions. Therefore, there is no objection to differences in some necessary sciences due to certain motivations. They are on the level of imagining that judging something as being good or ugly restricts His authority, the most Praised One. For this reason, the Asharis rejected this science which is necessary to maintain the generality of His authority, that of the most Exalted One.

Third Evidence: Had goodness and ugliness been rational, they would not have changed.

Had goodness and ugliness been rational, they would not have changed, that is, what is good cannot

become ugly, and what is ugly cannot become good, and the latter is false. Telling a lie can be good, while telling the truth can cause something ugly, such as if the lie results in saving a prophet from annihilation while telling the truth can cause him to perish.

Had lying been ugly due to its own ugliness, it cannot be a must, nor can it be good if it serves the interest of protecting the blood of a prophet from the oppression of an oppressor who seeks to kill him.[12]

Al–Tusi the critic has responded by saying, "… And it is the committing of the lesser ugly thing while there is the possibility of saving someone."[13]

Its explanation is this: As ugly as telling a lie is in this picture, abandoning the saving of the prophet's life is much uglier. Thus, reason judges that the lesser ugly thing should be committed in order to avoid the committing of what is the ugliest. Yet one can get rid of telling a lie through insinuation.

Briefly, saving the prophet's life is better than the goodness of the truth, while abandoning doing it is uglier than lying. Therefore, it is better to commit the lesser ugly thing, which is lying, because it serves a great interest, rather than tell the truth.

Add to the above is that the evidence is based on lying being ugly and truthfulness being good, similarly to oppression being ugly and justice being good, is entitative; these do not change. As regarding what has already been said about the actions, in as far as goodness and ugliness are concerned, they are of various types.

Some of them are those where the action is a complete cause behind one of them. So, its goodness or ugliness is not changed by eventualities such as the goodness of benevolence and the ugliness of wrongdoing. And some of them are those in which one of them requires the doing of another. It mandates goodness as long as no other label is subjected to it, and so is the case with the aspect of ugliness.

It has already been indicated that the goodness of truthfulness and the ugliness of lying are of this type. And there are others that cannot be a cause, nor do they mandate either of them, such as beating, whether it is a penalty or (deliberate) inflicting of harm.

Up to here, we have come up with this outcome: There are actions where reason independently judges as being good or ugly, judging them with help from the Sharia. It sees their goodness and ugliness in the absolute sense in all doers, without being exclusively belonging to the Creator or to the creature. We have already indicated the criterion of its judgment, which is: the suitability or aversion of an action for or to the supreme One according to which He created man.

To say that something is rationally good or ugly takes place by saying that man is a doer enjoying the power to choose. As regarding saying that he is forced in his actions, researching them is negated due to the negation of its subject because no forced actions can be described as being good or ugly

according to reason.

Since the Asharis depict man as being a forced doer, their statement mandates the negation of rational goodness and ugliness. You will come to know how man is a selective doer, he is not forced. You will be familiar with the evidences produced by the Asharis for their compulsion claim.[14]

Goodness and Ugliness According to the Holy Quran

Contemplation on the verses of the Holy Quran provides that it takes it for granted that reason judges things as being good or ugly outside the frame of inspiration, then it commends to do what is good and prohibits the doing of what is ugly.

The most Praised One says,

"Allah commands justice, good deeds and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, injustice and rebellion: He instructs you so that you may receive admonishment." 16:90

"Say: The things that my Lord has truly forbidden are: shameful deeds, whether open or secret; sins and trespasses against truth or reason (and) the assigning of partners to Allah, something for which He has given no authority, and saying things about Allah of which you have no knowledge." 7:33

"...He allows them as lawful what is good (and pure) and prohibits them from doing what is bad (and impure)." 7:157

"When they do anything that is shameful, they say, 'We found our fathers doing so,' and 'God commanded us thus.' Say: 'No, Allah never commands what is shameful: Do you say about Allah what you do not know?'" 7:28

These verses clearly indicate that there are matters that are described as being good, shameful, repugnant, unjust as well as things that are described as commendable. They do so before the matter in their regard hinges on a command to bid or forbid them, and that man finds attribution by one of them as stemming from his own depths, just as he knows the rest of described things such as water, dust, etc.

Man's knowledge of them is not confined to the Sharia being connected to them. Rather, the role of the Sharia is to emphasize that reason realizes and commends the doing of what is good and prohibits the doing of what is ugly.

Moreover, the most Praised One uses man's conscience as a basis for His decree due to the independence of man's rational might.

The Almighty says,

"Shall We treat those who believe and do deeds of righteousness the way we treat those who do mischief on earth? Shall We treat those who guard themselves against evil the same way as those who turn aside from the right?" 38:28

The most Praised One also says,

"Shall We then treat the people of faith like the people of sin? What is the matter with you? How do you judge?" 68:35-36

The most Praised One also says,

"Is there any reward for goodness (benevolence) other than goodness?" 55:60

Contemplation on these verses leaves no room to doubt that things that are good and those that are ugly are rational matters which man realizes through innate evidence without the need for an outside proof.

Outcomes of What Reason Deems to be Good or Ugly

The issue of what reason deems as good or ugly occupies a prominent status in log researches because the most important of what this matter proves is the wisdom of the Creator, the Almighty, and that He is above doing what should not be done, thus resolving many logical and other problems. Here is the explanation for some of them.

Knowledge as a Must

Logicians, with the exception of the Asharis, have agreed about knowing Allah, Praise belongs to Him, being a must on every human being, an obligation mandated by reason. It means that reason judges the goodness of such knowledge and the ugliness of abandoning it due to such knowledge leading to thanking the One Who grants blessings, which is good, whereas abandoning it means falling into possible harm, which is ugly.

This stands if we advocate the independence of reason. Otherwise, such knowledge would not be a must, nor would it be rational, according to the supposition that such knowledge is isolated from its judgment, nor would it be according to the Sharia because such Sharia is not proven yet.

Necessity of His Actions, Praise Belongs to Him, Being Above Sporting

What this issue mandates is that His actions, Praise belongs to Him, are above foul play, that they must be associated with objectives and purposes. This issue is one of those about which those who advocate His justice and the Asharis disputed. The first group judged it to be positive and the second to be negative. Men of wisdom have their own special opinion in its regard, too. Therefore, we are setting

aside a research just for it after presenting these results.

Servants Must Bear Obligations

If His action, Praise belongs to Him, is above foul play, reason independently judges that every responsible person has to reach the goals for which he was created. This happens by commissioning these persons to do what gets them to reach perfection and turns them away from anything that prevents them from reaching such perfection, so they may not be left alone, so in the light of obligation, their spiritual energies may open.

Man's knowledge of what is good and what is ugly is not enough for him to reach perfection. There are matters that prevent him from reaching this goal, or they get him to reach them, while he is ignorant of them, and they are not known except through the path of inspiration (*wahi*) and of the Sharia.

Necessity of Sending Prophets

The issue of the need to send messengers, too, is based on this same matter. Reason, which realizes that man was not created randomly but for a purpose, also realizes that it cannot reach it except through divinely legislated guidance. So, it is independent in ruling that callers must be sent by Allah Almighty in order to guide humans.[15]

Necessity of Looking into Evidence of One Claiming to be a Prophet

There is no doubt that true prophets are sent with miracles and evidences. If someone claims ambassadorship from Allah Almighty to people, should people look into his claim and proof? Despite reason's independence in the field of ruling something to be good or ugly, there must be looking into and listening to such a claim in order to avoid a possible harm. As regarding the claim that there is no such need, this is not mandated by reason because, according to the isolated supposition, this is neither rational, nor is it supported by the Sharia, because it is yet to be proven. As a result, one who does not look into the matter is excused because he is not guided to the truth of the matter!

Knowledge of the Truth of the Claim of Prophetic Mission

If the claim put forth by the one who claims to be a prophet is linked to miracles and clear evidences, and if we say that reason is independent in the field of deeming something as being good or ugly, we will judge that he is truthful. We do so because it is ugly to grant evidences to a lying claimant since doing so misleads people. But if we isolate reason from ruling in this situation, there is no evidence that such an individual is a truthful prophet, and the Sharia is yet to judge his truthfulness.

Conclusiveness, Perpetuation of Islam's Rulings

Reason's independence in ruling what is good and what is ugly, in the sense which you have come to

know, that is, agreeability or disagreeability with high intellect, is the basis of conclusiveness and the perpetuation of Islam's rulings, their being sustained till the Judgment Day. This is so because instinct is common among all humans, and it does not change as civilizations change. The latter's change does not affect man's instinct. It does not alter its mold. Thus, what instinct sees as good or ugly becomes immortal till the Judgment Day, change and alteration never affect it.[16]

Ethics Remain Unaltered

The issue of ethics remaining unaltered in all ages and civilizations, or their change according to the latter's change, has been one of the issues submitted lately by the Westerners for discussion, and views in its regard have been expressed. Some say that their roots are fixed, some say that they change according to the changes in systems and civilizations.

But the issue is not resolved except in the light of what reason deems as being good or ugly, and this stems from the dictates of the high human nature and the fixed nature. It is then that the bases of ethics are characterized with firmness and eternity. What changes as civilizations change are the customs and traditions.

For example, honoring a benevolent person is something that reason judges as being good, and this rational judgment never changes at all. Rather, what change, as time passes by, are the ways of expressing such honoring, how it is done. So, the bases are firm, while the customs and traditions, which are nothing but outfits of bases, are the ones that change.

Wisdom During Hard Times of Trials and Tribulations

Among the famous issues in Divine wisdom is that of trials and ills. The existence of these incidents created confusions about His wisdom, even about His knowledge, the Almighty that He is! Superficially, they, on the one hand, indicate the absence of command in the universe while, on the other, they contradict His wisdom in the sense His actions are perfect. They contradict His wisdom, in the absolute sense, that is, His action is above what must not be done, on the third hand. They contradict His wisdom, in particular, that is, His justice, the most Exalted One, His upholding justice, on the fourth hand. Since it is one of the quite lengthy matters that have so much been researched and discussed, whether in the science of logic, philosophy or divine wisdom, we here dedicate the discussion of them after presenting an overall review of these conclusions.

Allah is Just, Does Not Wrong Anyone

One of the most obvious testimonies to His wisdom, the wisdom of the most Exalted One, which is fixed through rationally judging what is good and what is ugly, is His justice, that is, His upholding fairness. He does not wrong anyone, does not oppress anyone, and we will discuss this while explaining its status in the Islamic legislative system. It results in outcomes among which are the following:

Ugliness of Penalizing Without Explaining

If Allah Almighty is fair, He does not punish His servants without explaining to them what their obligations are, for the latter would be unfair, and reason judges that it is ugly, and one must rise above committing it. There is no difference between the absence of an explanation or the explanation not reaching these servants due to certain causes and factors. This basis is agreed on by fundamentalists on which they have based the originality of clearance from doubts that are not connected to overall knowledge.

Yes, the matter is based on what reason judges as being good or ugly if it is not proven from the Sharia through the Quran and the Sunnah, and it is supposed to be consulted after both latter sources.

Ugliness of Vesting Responsibility for What is Beyond Ability

One of the results of rational judgment of His justice, the Almighty that He is, is that His judgment obligates the presence of ability and might in the servant to do what He obligates him to do. Obligating and forcing them to do what is beyond their ability is unfair, it is ugly and the Wise One does not do it. Due to the importance of this research, we will also set aside an independent research after presenting these results.

Extent of Impact of Destiny on Man's Fate

One of the issues that result from His justice, the most Exalted One, is that decree and destiny bear an impact on man's fate. This issue, though fundamental in the Islamic faith, has been argued and discussed to the extent that some people were excommunicated from it and the blood of some other Muslims was shed even during Islam's early centuries.

From this issue, the *bada* or altering destiny, due to good or bad deeds, branches out. Familiarity with both of them requires detailing their researches. We, therefore, have set aside for each of them a chapter of its own in this book.

Man's Freedom of Choice

Among the issues that are based on the Almighty's justice is man's freedom of choice in his actions. Being forced to do what he does is unjust and oppressive. Since this matter, too, has been greatly discussed, and views about it have varied from one extreme to another, we have set aside a separate chapter to discuss it in this book in addition to discussing the researches that branch out of it about what is good and what is bad, guidance and misguidance, etc.

Justifying Hereafter Punishment

One of the queries that have been submitted about His justice, the most Praised One, is: What justifies the hereafter penalty? This is approached from two angles.

First: Why should there be punishment in the hereafter? Is it to cool one's outrage, or is it to satisfy one's lust for seeking revenge, while both of them would be regarded as shortcomings above which Allah Almighty rises high?

Second: The requirement of the rational canon is that the penalty should be according to the extent of the crime. Anything less than that is unfair and unjust above which Allah rises high. So, why should the unbelievers and criminals be kept in the fire of hell without an end?

We will answer these questions after we discuss the Almighty's justice.[17]

Fruits of Determining What is Rationally Good or Ugly

Objectives Justify Actions of the Most Praised One

The Asharis say that the actions of the most Praised One are not justified by objectives, that He is not obligated to do anything, while He does nothing ugly, using the following norms of arguments:

First Argument

Had the Almighty's actions been for purposes, they would be by themselves incomplete, in need of achieving those purposes in order to be complete. This is so because a doer's purpose is not good unless it is proven that doing it is better for him than otherwise, and this is the meaning of perfection.[18]

Those who believe in His Adl, justice, i.e. the "Adlis", respond by saying that the actions of the most Exalted One are justified by the criterion of meeting His servants' interests. The condition of what is perfect or what is best is irrelevant here. This is endorsed by the author of *Al-Maqasid* and he is followed by the Matridis.[19]

Explaining the answer:

Is the Objective that of the Doer or of the Deed?

Al-Ashari confused the purpose as deemed to be the best by the doer and the purpose is rendered to his deed. The complementing exists in the first, not the second. One who says that His deeds are justified by purposes, objectives, incentives and interests means the second, not the first. The objective in the first sense contradicts His being Independent in Himself and in His attributes as well as in His actions.

The objective in the second sense requires His deed getting out of being in vain and meaninglessness and out of His being, the most Praised One, toying and sporting. Combining His being Independent, needing nothing, with His being wise above toying and sporting, is saying that His actions cover interests, i.e. that they are wise, they are needed by His servants, by the command which He has set, not to His existence, to His own self, as is quite obvious.

Explaining the Purposeful Objective

The purposeful objective is one of the portions of the complete objective. It is meant according to the terms used by men of wisdom as getting the doer out of the ability to do a deed, out of the probability to the necessity, and it is present as an image, an idea, and is absent as an existence and a reality. It is the reason why the doer gets out of being a doer by force to a doer by action.

For example, the carpenter does not make a chair except for a required goal. Had it not been for imagining that goal, he would not have gotten out of being a doer by force to the field of being a doer by action. Thus, the purposeful objective has a role in achieving what is justified, in its getting out of the probability to actuality in order to move the doer in the direction of the deed, driving him to action.

We do not conceive the purposeful objective in this sense as applies to Him because He is absolutely independent when it comes to the status of His own self, to being described, to His actions. Just as He is perfect in the status of existence, perfect in the action status, He does not need anything beyond Himself to bring about something. Otherwise, had the doing of the Almighty been similar to what humans do, He would not have brought about, created, anything except for the purpose it serves. Thus, He would be incomplete in the status of action, being in need of something beyond His own self, and this contradicts His being absolutely Independent.

This is what the men of wisdom have stated, and it is undoubtedly right. The Asharis have taken advantage of it out of context, using it as a pretext to describe His actions as being without any purpose or goal. They made His actions akin to those who toy and sport. He (we seek refuge with Allah when saying this) does things without a goal, without a purpose. But seeking evidence from what the men of wisdom have stated, in order to prove what the Asharis have stated, is obviously untrue.

This is so because denying the unseen objective in this sense does not require His actions to stand behind interests and benefits for His servants whereby His command stands, even if they do not affect His ability to do, to justify. This is so because the most Praised One is a wise doer. A wise doer does not choose from among doable actions except what is suitable, and he does not do anything that is against his nature, in contradiction to it.

In other words, this is not meant that He is able to do one action rather than another, and that when He does something, He completes the objective, doing this rather than that. Instead, He, the most Praised One, can do both deeds, and He does not choose from them except what agrees with His goal and suits His wisdom.

This is the same like saying that the most Praised One is just and does not oppress. By saying so, we do not mean that His deed is perfect with regard to justice rather than injustice. Rather, we mean that He is perfectly capable of both. But His justice and wisdom, kindness and mercy, require that He chooses this rather than that while He is perfectly capable of doing both of them.

This is the truth behind saying that the actions of Allah Almighty are not justified by purposes, goals and interests despite His actions being free of interests and wisdom without complementing.

Second Argument

When the Ashari imams dealt with the logic of the Adlis in this regard, that the interests and wisdoms are not the doer's goals but those of the actions, that they are not rendered to the doer but to the servant and to the command, they submitted it for discussion, answering it as follows:

If they say, "We do not admit the link, the purpose may be rendered to someone else," the following can be said (in rebuttal): "If benefiting others and being benevolent to them is more worthy of being His actions, the most Exalted One, rather than their absence, necessitate that they should be there. The reason is: The Almighty will then create benefit from helping and being benevolent to His servants by doing what is most suitable to do and what is most fitting. If it is not better but is equivalent or preferable, it will not be right to be His objective.[20]

Responding to *Nahj al-Haqq* of the Hilli *allama*, al-Fadl ibn Rozbahan produced the same argument saying, "A doer's goal is not right for him except what is best for him, something the existence of which is better than nonexistence. This is so because if the presence of something is equal to its absence, in as far as the doer is concerned, or if its presence is preferred with regard to him, it is not an incentive to undertake the deed and to be a cause for his doing it by necessity.

Anything that becomes a goal necessitates its presence with regard to the doer and more suitable for him rather than the opposite, such is the meaning of perfection. So, the doer would achieve his perfection by doing it, and he would be imperfect without it."[21]

One would make the following resign on the above. What is meant by what is most necessary and suitable is what suits one's affairs. A wise man does not undertake anything except what suits his affair. Also, any doer other than him undertakes what suits the principles that are present in him.

So, the explanation of what is most suitable and fit is in the sense that there is an outside factor beyond the doer, one that determines his ability and freewill. It imposes on him to find what is best and what is most suitable, rather than acting according to the requirement of his perfection and wisdom. This means that He does not create except what is most suitable and what is most necessary, leaving nonsense and toying aside.

Since He, the most Praised One, combines in Him all the qualities of perfection, the most prominent of which is His being wise, He would be, according to such a description, required to find what suits Him and would abandon what is opposite. So, where does He stand with regard to the talk about completing perfection, deriving benefit, obligation and imposition? All this indicates that the logical issues were presented within a turbulent atmosphere, and that the opponent did not familiarize himself with the other side's logic.

The sum-up is that He, Praise belongs to Him, is perfect in what He does with regard to both actions: the deed that is linked to wisdom and the one that is without it. This is so due to the generality of His ability, Praise belongs to Him, to do what is beautiful and what is not, but His being wise deters Him from doing the latter, restricting His actions to the first. His being Wise deters Him from choosing the second option, restricting His actions to the first.

This holds true with regard to every deed that has two parts: one good and one ugly. For example, Allah is able to bless a believer, and He is able to torment him, too. He is perfect in His deed with regard to everyone. But nothing comes out of Him except what is good, not ugly.

Just as it cannot be said that an action is not done without serving a purpose, not being stripped of a purpose, and since blessing a believer is neither preferred nor is it equivalent to tormenting him, rather it is better and more fitting, the meaning of its being good and of its priority does not aim at rendering Him perfect, or that He derives a benefit from it. Rather, it aims at being suitable for Him, which incorporates all attributes of perfection, being above contradicting them.

So, His beauty and perfection, His being above doing what is ugly, requires His deed to be suitable for Him, the deed that is conjoint to wisdom, and to avoidance of the contrary.

Third Argument

There is a third evidence presented by the Asharis the sum up of which is that a deed's purpose is outside it. It takes place after one deed and before another. Since the most Exalted One is the doer of all things to start with, nothing is there in existence except being a deed of His, not an objective of another which does not take place without it so it would become the purpose of that deed, and that some deeds are not made as goals, one having more priority over another.[22]

He should have determined the evidence fully and said: Had some deeds been the purpose of the whole, this would end up either at a deed having no purpose, since what is sought has already been fixed, or it is not, so it becomes sequential, which is impossible.

One may have the following resign in its regard:

Nobody who casts a look at the cosmos would doubt that some things, which include relics, were created for other things. The purpose behind creating the low existents is that they serve higher ones. As for the purpose behind creating the high ones, it is to get them to reach a limit that becomes a manifestation of the attributes of their Lord and the perfection of the One Who initiated their creation.

If we cast a look at this cosmos fragmentally, by piecemeal, we will see that there are firsts, seconds, and thirds of actions. So, the most recent serves the one above it and becomes the purpose behind it, all in order to get to reach its possible perfection, which by itself is something beautiful. Creating beauty does not require a purpose other than its existence because the purpose lies in its own existence.

The above is valid if we look at the cosmos through a fragmented, piece-by-piece, method.

But if we cast a general look at the cosmos, the purpose behind the overall cosmic order is not outside the existence of the order so one would inquire about it by requiring evidence. Rather, it is a particularity that exists in it, and it is the order, in its pieces and particles, reaching possible perfection.

The anticipated perfection is a particularity that exists within the system, the order, itself and is regarded as an actual image of it. Allah, Praise belongs to Him, created the order, bringing about His absolute action, so that what He does, in part or as a whole, may reach the perfection that is attainable. The purpose is not separated from the order so one may be justified in asking about the purpose behind it, so that one may gradually reach the conclusion that something is there that has no purpose beyond it.

Since getting every possible thing to reach its perfection is a self-purpose, because it by itself is a good deed, the question is dropped about why someone did it. When He enabled every existent to reach its perfection, the question drops when the question about the good thing is raised.

If we ask about the goal behind creating and perfecting order, we would say that the purpose behind creating it is to get a thing that exists to reach its possible perfection. Then, once the question is made about the goal behind getting every possible thing to reach its possible perfection, this question would be irrelevant, out of place, because a good deed is by itself good and is liable to be done; the deed and the goal are one and the same.

Creation flows from what should be done to what can be done, and its reaching perfection is another abundance that perfects the first. The sum is abundance of the bliss of the Almighty for one who needs it. It des not deplete any of His treasures. What perfection is better and more magnificent than that? What goal is more obvious than that so another objective would be needed?

This is similar to one asking why Allah does one of the deeds that is good by itself, for the answer is hidden in the same question which is: He did it because it by itself is good, and what is good by itself does not need another objective to be done.

In order to bring the matter closer to comprehension, we would like to provide an example: If you ask a young man who exerts an effort to learn and ask him: Why do you exert such efforts in order to earn your degree? He would answer you by saying that it is for the sake of earning a scientific degree. If we repeat the question to him thus: What is the goal behind earning it?

He would answer by saying that it is to work at an industrial, scientific or administrative center. If we repeat the question to him and ask about the goal behind working there, he would say that it is to secure a means of earning a living for the family and dependents. If we ask him after all of this what the goal behind seeking prosperity and securing the means of making a living is, we will find out that the question is unnecessary because of the objectives which he has already provided and answered, that these are incidental goals for the objective which is particularly sought. If the speech reaches the latter, the

question drops.

Quran and the Wise Deeds of the Most Praised One

What is amazing about the inattention of the Asharis about texts that are quite clear in this field such as this by the most Praised One:

"... Did you think that We had created you in jest, and that you would not be brought back to Us (for account)?" **(*Qur'an, 23:115*)**

as well as these:

"We did not create the heavens, the earth and all between them merely in (idle) sport" (Qur'an, 44:38).

"We did not create heavens and the earth and all between them in vain! That is the thought of unbelievers! But woe unto the unbelievers because of the fire (of hell)!" (Qur'an, 38:27).

"I have only created jinns and men so that they may worship Me" (Qur'an, 51:56).

There are other such verses that negate idle sporting from what He does and clearly indicate that such doing is coupled with wisdom and objectiveness.

Hadith people, followed by the Asharis who are famed for sticking to literal meanings of texts, not rendering their gist to Allah, the most Praised One, nor interpreting them, have no option except to ignore the previous verses or to interpret them. They flee from doing so while attributing the same (flight) to those who differ from them.

Followers of the "men of wisdom" sympathize with the Asharis' way.

An error that is quite obvious is to say that those who follow the way of the "men of wisdom" sympathize with the beliefs of the Asharis and the depicting of both groups as saying that the actions of Allah, the most Praised One, are not justified by purposes. This is a pure error. How can this be while we have Mulla Sadra finding fault with the Asharis and saying, "Among the Negationists[23] are folks who say that the actions of Allah Almighty are empty of wisdom and interest although you already know that nature has its purposes."[24] He has also said, "Men of wisdom do not negate purpose and objective from any of His actions at all.

Rather, they deny it in His absolute deeds if the probable existence is observed as a whole unit as being a superfluous to Him, the most Exalted One. As regarding other specific and restricted actions, they proved that each of them has its own objective. How so while their books are fraught with pursuits of objectives of existents and of their benefits as any researcher in cosmetology, the sciences of compositions and ingredients, autopsy, medicine, etc. would testify?"[25]

The theory of the men of wisdom, therefore, is summarized in two matters:

1. His actions are not characterized by sporting or nonsense, and there are interests, and there is wisdom, that both necessitate His deeds that benefit His servants. It is through them that the (cosmic) system stands.

2. If the probable existence is observed by way of absolution, His actions have no purpose outside Him because what is supposed is to observe the probable existence as a whole. Had the purpose, which is outside the Self, been present, it is incorporated into the probable existence, not beyond it.

They say that the goal is something outside the Self, whereas the goal is the same Self, so it may not lack effect. This is so because the need for something outside Himself in undertaking the deed is the essence of its lacking effectiveness. But what is supposed is that the most Praised One is perfect in His effect, Independent by Himself, and in His actions from anything other than Himself.[26]

Moreover, they have a philosophical argument that is mixed with Gnostic proof. This argument aims at the purpose behind creation being His own Self, the most Praised One. Through it have they interpreted this verse:

"I have not created the jinns and mankind except so they may worship Me" (***Qur'an, 51:56***)

as well as His statement in a Qudsi *hadith* saying: "I was a hidden treasure, so I liked to be known; therefore, I brought creation into being so I may be known." Allah, Glory to Him, is the ultimate goal of all goals. If someone would like to become familiar with their proof, let him refer to their books.[27]

Afflictions, Calamities, Ills and God as Being Wise

The issue of afflictions, calamities and ills is one of the famous issues when it comes to divine wisdom, and it is relevant to the following topics:

1. If the evidence of the existence of the managing Creator is the order that prevails in the cosmos, how do you explain some unbalanced phenomena that violate it, such as earthquakes, torrential rains and floods, for they are among the best proofs that there is no such order?

2. Had the Exalted Maker been wise in what He does, precise in His actions, placing everything where it belongs, His actions being above what should not be, how do you explain these occurrences which do not agree with wisdom, whether they are interpreted as being done by the One Who does precise things or the One Whose actions are above what they should not be done?

3. If the Creator is just and equitable, how can His justice, Praise belongs to Him, coexist with these occurrences that swallow innocent lives simultaneously, damaging and destroying homes?

Thereupon, the research about calamities, afflictions and ills is linked to the afore-mentioned matters,

and we submit this issue after having provided the evidence that He is wise.

Discussing ills is not a new issue. It was uncovered by Western philosophers, including the British philosopher (David) Hume. Some of those who are not versed in Islamic philosophy, even the Greek philosophy, may have imagined him to be as such. This issue was submitted for discussion by ancient Greek philosophers as well as philosophers of later times.

Aristotle is famous for saying that probable existents, according to rational classifications, are divided at the onset of probability into five categories:

1. What is all goodness and has no evil at all

2. What has plenty of goodness and little evil

3. What has plenty of evil and little goodness

4. Where goodness and evil are equal

5. What is absolute evil where there is nothing good at all

Then they stated that the last three categories do not exist in the world. Rather, what exist are two of the five mentioned categories.[28]

Muslim philosopher Sadr ad-Din al-Shirazi (979 - 1050 A.H./1572 – 1640 A.D.) [Mulla Sadra or Sadr al-Mutaalliheen, chief of Gnostics] scientifically discussed the issue of goodness and evil, calamities and afflictions, in his valuable work titled *Al-Asfar al-Arbaa* (the Four Books) in eight chapters. They were also discussed by the philosopher Sabzawari in the philosophy section of *Sharh al-Manzuma* in a medium research.

Before them, many dignitaries had preceded them, and they were followed by another group of Muslim thinkers. We are here quoting what these critics have stated, providing our own particular analysis and critique. So, let us say the following:

The issue of evils and afflictions prompted some groups throughout history, and even nowadays, to believe that there are more creators, a trend known as dualism. They envisioned the god of goodness to be someone else other than that of evil in order to escape the said confusion, thus they were known as dualists. Since they believe that two gods are created for the one and single must God, they are in this regard Trinitarian.

The answer, anyhow, about the problem of evils is created in two facets:

First: It must be totally analyzed philosophically

Second: It must be analyzed in an educative way that bears an impact on the perfecting of the souls.

So, whoever wishes to go into detail in this research must enter through both doors, and here is the proof:

Philosophical Analysis of the Issue of Evil

The outcome of this analysis is that some people think that there are disorderly, harmful or destructive incidents stemming from their narrow limited outlook to these matters. Had they looked at these incidents within the frame of the "general cosmic order", they would have surrendered that they are all goodness, and that the issue's position would be similar to what Sabzawari the wise had said:

What appears to some as unbalanced rhyme,
In the order of all, everything does rhyme.

This is the answer in a nutshell. As for detailing it, this depends on explaining two matters:

First: The narrow Outlook to Phenomena

Describing the said phenomena as being disorderly, evils that do not fit first in the prevalent world order and second in His wisdom, the most Praised One, as a whole, and, thirdly, they do not agree with His justice and equity, stems from man's outlook to the cosmos through his own self and its interests, making the latter the axis and the criterion for evaluating these matters.

When he looks at the incidents and sees that they harm his personal interests and those of his relatives, he immediately describes them as evils and lesions. This is only because he looks at these phenomena through a particular outlook, ignoring those in the world besides himself, be they those generations that passed by or those presently living in world areas or those that will come and live in this world.

In the first outlook, these incidents manifest themselves as ills and calamities. But these incidents, at the same time and through a piercing outlook, turn into goodness and righteousness, outfitted with attires of wisdom, justice and order. In order to explain this, we would like to analyze some incidents that are regarded on the surface as ills and say the following:

One sees a torrential flood sweeping away his farm, an avalanche demolishing his home, a violent earthquake shaking its structure, but he does not see the positive results these incidents and phenomena carry in other fields of the human life.

This limited outlook of man is similar to a passerby seeing a bulldozer digging the ground or demolishing a building, causing a lot of noise, stirring dust in the air, so he immediately judges that this is harmful and bad. He does not know that all this is done in order to pave the way for building a big hospital that will receive patients, treat the injured and prepares for those who need treatment the means for such treatment and nursing.

Had he become familiar with these noble objectives, he would not have thus judged, and he would have

described the demolition as being good, that there is no harm in the noise and billowing dust.

Similar to this individual in his limited outlook is the bat that is harmed by light because it harms its vision, whereas this light enables millions of eyes to see the horizons of the cosmos, facilitating for man the ways for earning a living and leading a life. Should the bat's judgment about light as being evil be the criterion for evaluating these useful natural phenomena? No, not at all.

Second: Phenomena are Episodes in a Long Series

Looking at an isolated natural phenomenon is a deficient and lame look. This is so because events are episodes that are connected to each other in an extended chain. Whatever takes place now is linked to the depths of the past and to what will take place in the future in a chain of reasons, causes and causations.

From this onset, nobody should judge a phenomenon while overlooking its precedent and successor. Rather, the sound judgment is achieved when it is evaluated as a whole and when it is looked at wholly rather than partially. Every incident on earth or in the air is strongly linked to the incidents that precede or follow it. Even when the wind blows and plays havoc with the sheets of paper that are stacked before you is strongly linked to what happened or what will happen in world areas.

So, a critic must observe all incidents with a hue of connection and formation. It is only then that his judgment will change and his ruling will be altered. He will not describe anything as being out of the ordinary, and he will not label anything as being evil.

If you have come to know both of these matters, let us bring some examples that are relevant to them:

1. If a storm hits shores, uprooting trees, destroying huts, turning furniture upside-down, it will then be described by those who live on those shores as being evil and as an affliction. But it, at the same time, implies vital results for another area.

It, for example, gets mast ships in the breadth of the sea to move, they are still when the wind is still. Thus, it saves hundreds of those who board them from losing their lives, getting them to reach the shores of safety. So, it is described by the passengers of such ships as being good.

2. Perhaps the winds may destroy some homes, but they at the same time are regarded as an effective means for flower pollination, moving the clouds that cause the rain and scatter smokes billowing from chimneys of factories and plants. Had these smokes remained and thickened, residents of the cities around these plants would have found it difficult or impossible to breathe. And there are other good results from winds before which some bad effects minimize or completely disappear.

3. Although earthquakes cause some partial or whole losses in properties and lives, they are described as being good if we understand the reason behind them, such as some suggestions, like the lunar gravitation pulling the earth crust to it, so the seabed rises, and it causes earthquakes in various areas of

dry lands. This, at the same time, causes sea and river waters to rise and pour into surrounding lands, watering farms and valleys, bringing life back to them and a great deal of goodness.

Other useful benefits accrue from earthquakes with which one who examines these fields becomes familiar. So, while taking note of both of these matters, is there room for a hasty judgment that these incidents cause evils and calamities without any benefit?

Man's limited knowledge is the one that prompts him to issue such odd judgments on these incidents. Had he familiarized himself with his little knowledge compared to the knowledge with which he is not familiar, he would have retracted and repeated the recitation of this verse:

"Lord! You have not created (all) this for nothing! Glory to You!" (Qur'an, 3:191).

And he would have admitted the truth of this statement by the Almighty:

"Only little knowledge is communicated to you (O mankind!)" (Qur'an, 17:85)

and this other statement by the most Glorified One:

"They know only the outer (things) in the life of this world" (Qur'an, 30:7).

For this reason, we find the subjective scientists who were not dazzled by the scientific achievements, nor were they beguiled by the progress that took place to them, admitting the limitation of human knowledge, warning against passing a hasty judgment on things. Why not, while here is Professor William Kroksh, who discovered matter's radiation and invented many chemical experiment equipment, saying, "Among all qualities that assisted me in my psychological researches and paved for me the way to make natural discoveries, when those discoveries were sometimes unexpected, is my deeply rooted conviction of my ignorance."[29]

And there are other weighty statements by senior thinkers and great philosophers and those who are interested in analyzing natural phenomena. You find them all admitting their ignorance and inability to familiarize themselves with the secrets of nature. The great mind in the world of mankind, the main mentor, says, "My knowledge reached the limit that I came to know that I am not knowledgeable."

Another Philosophical Analysis of Evils

You have come to know the previous philosophical analysis, and there is another philosophical analysis for the problem of afflictions and calamities that may be more precise, and it is summed up as follows.

Evil is a relative matter that does not have an existence by itself. Rather it manifests itself with one when some events are compared with each other, and here is its explanation:

Those who advocate dualism say that Allah, Glory to Him, is all goodness. So, how did He create

poisonous scorpions and lethal snakes as well as wild beasts? They ignored the fact that to describe these phenomena as being evil is relative. As it is, a scorpion is not evil. Rather, it is described as such if it is compared to man who is hurt by its sting.

So, evil has no reality on the page of existence. Rather, it is an extractive matter to which the souls end when they compare. Without such a comparison, evil would not have had a concept, a reality. Here is an explanation for this answer:

Adjectives are of two types: Some of them have a reality similar to the thing by which they are described, such as someone being in existence, or each meter equals one hundred centimeters, etc. to describe someone as existing and to say that the meter is as such, are two fixed facts for things that exist, whether the mind contemplated on them or not. Had there been only a single human on the face of earth or one meter, both descriptions are fixed for them.

There are those that have no reality because man shifts to such a description or, better put, the mind extracts it through comparing, such as what is big and what is small, etc. Bigness is not a reality for what it is applied, it is realized through comparing it with what is smaller.

For example, if you come to know that adjectives are of two types, you have to analyze the concept of evil in the light of such a statement and say this: The scorpion being in existence and it has poison is a fact. As for its being evil, this is not part of its existence. Rather, it describes the scorpion's poison when compared with man who is harmed by it or who loses his life because of it. Otherwise, it is regarded as perfection for the scorpion the survival of which depends on it. If it is as such, it will be easy for you to resolve the evil complex from its various aspects.

As regarding the aspect of *Tawhid* when it comes to the Creator, that is, there is no Creator in existence other than Allah, Praise belongs to Him, who is all goodness, One Whom evil cannot reach, so how could He create existents characterized by evil? The answer is that the creature is the essence of these things that have no true attributes. Rather, they are described as evil which is not a reality but is in need for a cause. Actually, it is a relative matter to which one directs his attention when he makes a comparison.

It is to this meaning that statements by ancient philosophers have referred when they said the following:

1. Evil is nihilistic, not an existing matter in need for a justification.

2. Evil is not as such by itself but is incidental.

3. If you review all things in existence in this world that are labeled by people as being evil, you will not find them to be evil by themselves. Rather, they are incidentally evil, essentially good.

The same applies to abhorred manners: They complement beastly and brutish psyches and are not evils in the eyes of wrathful and carnal forces. Evil are these lowly manners compared to the weak psyches

that are incapable of contain their forces and check them against going to extremes or to do away with things rather than directing them towards the path of obedience which guarantees lasting happiness.

So is the case with pains, ailments, distresses and worries: from the standpoint of their being realizations, due to their existence or to resulting from the affecting factor, are luxurious good things, yet they are ills compared to what is attached to them.

From the aspect of His being described, the most Praised One, as being wise and as perfecting his deeds and actions, there is nothing in the creation of these incidents and existents that contradicts this wisdom. He, all Praise is due to Him, created scorpions, snakes, wild animals and beasts in the best of creation, giving them a measure of life that suffices them:

"He (it is) Who gave everything He created its form and nature and further gave it guidance" (Qur'an, 20:50).

These incidents and existents are described as being evil, and this seems to be contrary to wisdom when it comes to comparison; it is an external mental matter.

Till now, we have come up with this result: There are two factors that prompted man to imagine that evil is a certain external thing. Finding it is regarded as being contrary to wisdom and justice, it is a rebellion against orders. These two factors are:

1. The attitude towards things from the perspective of egotism and the ignoring of all other existents.

2. The notion that evil has an external certitude similar to that to which it is attributed while one is being unaware of its being a nihilistic thing towards which the mind directs its attention when a comparison is made.

It is time to look for an educative analysis of evils that facilitates the belief in the fact that these evils are not created as educative external things that contradict wisdom and justice.

Educative Analysis of the Evils Issue

These incidents have important educative effects once in the material life of humans, and once on removing conceit and unawareness from minds and consciences. For the sake of these benefits, creating them is sound, whether we say that evil exists by itself, as those who oppose say, or it exists incidentally, as we have proven.

Calamities: A method to Release Energies

Trials and tribulations are the best means for releasing energies, for the sciences to advance and human life to be elevated. Scholars of civilization state that most civilizations did not flourish except in atmospheres of wars, disputes and competitions when people resorted to invent defensive means while

facing attacking foes or to repair the damage and destruction wrought by wars.

During such conditions, capabilities move to rejoin what is disjointed, complete what is incomplete and prepare what is required. The common axiom says, “Necessity is the mother of invention.”

In a clear statement, if man is not exposed to problems in his life, his energies will remain frozen, motionless, neither growing nor opening. Instead, such talents and the release of energies from potential to actuality is all pawned to man falling into the path of calamities and hardships.

Yes, we do not claim that all major results are found in catastrophes, but we do claim that their occurrence prepares suitable grounds for man to get out of laziness. For this reason, we find the parents who keep their children away from difficulties and hardships do not push into the society except children who shake under any blowing wind just like a fresh plant whenever a breeze blows.

As for those who raise their children in life’s atmospheres that are surrounded with problems and calamities, push into the society children who are firmer than mountains when the storm blasts.

Imam Ali bin Abu Talib (as) has said, “The tree in the wild is stronger in stem, pleasing magnificent things have thinner skins, Bedouin plants make a stronger firewood, and their fire is slower in dying out.”30

It is to this fact that the most Praised One points out when He says,

“… It may be that you dislike something while Allah brings about a great deal of good out of it” (***Qur’an, 4:19***),

“So, truly, with every difficulty, there is relief: Truly with every difficulty, there is relief” (***Qur’an, 94:5-6***)

and

“Therefore, when you are free (***from your immediate task***), ***still labor hard, and turn*** (***all***) ***your attention to your Lord”*** (***Qur’an, 94:7-8***).

That is, expose yourself to exhaustion and fatigue by laboring, endeavoring and exerting effort after you complete your adoration, as if victory and affliction are inseparable allies and brothers.

Afflictions and Calamities are Warning Bells

Enjoying material talents, immerse in pleasures and desires necessitate a great deal of unawareness of moral values. The more one is immersed in pleasures and blessings, the more distant he becomes from moral aspects. This is a fact that everyone realizes in his life and in the lives of others, and he finds it in the pages of history. So, one must abandon this heedlessness when shaken and awakened by a warning bell that reminds him, awakens his nature and gets him out of his inattention.

There is nothing more useful in this field than some incidents that interrupt the luxurious way of living with some disturbances so one may realize his inability, abandon his conceit and allay his oppression. We find in the Holy Quran clear statements about the link between oppression and the sense of independence. The most Exalted and Great One says,

"Man transgresses all bounds in that he looks upon himself as being self-sufficient" (***Qur'an, 6-7***).

For this reason, the Holy Quran justifies some calamities and tribulations as descending in order to remind one, to take him back to Allah. The most Praised One says,

"Whenever We sent a Prophet to a town, We took up its people in suffering and adversity, in order for them to learn humility" (***Qur'an, 7:94***).

He also says,

"We punished the people of Pharaoh with years (***of drought***) ***and shortness of crops*** (***so***) ***that they might receive admonition"*** (***Qur'an, 7:130***).

Thus, afflictions and calamities become a cause for awakening man, for admonishing him, similarly to a physician slapping the face of a tranquilized patient in order to wake him up. Without that slap, the patient would perish.

We have come up with this result: Moral perfection is pawned by trials and tribulations. Likewise, mental openness is pawned by afflictions and calamities.

An aware individual uses them as means to abandon conceit just as he uses them as a ladder for ascending the steps of scientific perfection, and he may not derive any benefit from them, so he regards them as afflictions and catastrophes in life.

Afflictions Cause a Return to Righteousness

There is a goal behind the cosmos, and there is also a goal behind man's creation. The goal behind the creation of man is to reach perfection and arrive at whatever he can reach. The goal behind sending prophets and holy books is only to achieve this sublime objective.

Since the transgressions and sins are the greatest causes that distance one from the goal behind his creation, obstructing the march of his perfection, afflictions and calamities serve as the best means to familiarize a transgressor with the results of his extreme tyranny and transgression so he may return to the truth and take a step back to the middle path. It is to this gist that the most Praised One points out saying,

"Mischief has appeared on land and in sea because of (***the mischief***) ***which the hands of men***

have committed so that (Allah) may grant them a taste of some of (the results of) their deeds, so they may turn back (from evil)" (Qur'an, 30:41).

In another verse, the most Praised One says,

"If people of the towns had only believed (in) and feared Allah, We would certainly have released to them (all kinds of) blessings from the heavens and earth, but they rejected (the truth), and We brought them to account for their misdeeds" (Qur'an, 7:96).

Afflictions are a Cause for Realizing and Appreciating Blessings

If life keeps one single style, this mandates that life will not manifest itself as being enjoyable, lovely, contrarily to the case if it alternates between what is bitter and what is sweet, what is beautiful and what is ugly. Safety's true value cannot be realized except when it is lost. Health cannot be appreciated except when one is sick. Ease cannot be appreciated except when affliction befalls, nor do we realize the sweetness of life except when we taste its bitterness.

Life's beauty and the value of nature stem from diversity and the shift from one status to another, one condition to another. For this reason, we sense how the Creator of nature placed valleys beside mountains, thorns beside roses, bitter fruits beside sweet ones, saline water beside sweet water, up to the end of manifestations of variations as well as opposites that vest on nature magnificence and beauty, perfection and greatness.

These are the educative impacts of calamities and afflictions. They suffice for their taking place, justifying their happening in the human life.

Artificial Calamities of Tyrannical Systems

There are calamities that an ignorant person attributes to the Creator of the cosmos. The truth of the matter is that they are of his own making, the result of his own ways. Actually, the tyrannical systems are the ones that caused those calamities and brought those catastrophes into being. Had there been systems based on divine values, humans would not have been exposed to such calamities.

The unjust distribution of wealth has been the cause for wealth being accumulated with the few and its departure from many. It has been a cause for the first group enjoying all means of prevention and protection from diseases, incidents and deprivations of the second group. These artificial calamities are outside the framework of this research. They do not wake up the intellect, nor do they purify the souls. Instead, they make grounds suitable for uprisings and revolutions.

Up to here, we have come up with this result: The phenomena that are unbalanced, according to the superficial outlook, are actually balanced compared to the overall system. They have social and educative impacts that are indispensable to human life. So, they are not regarded as contradicting the

prevailing systems, nor do they contradict the wisdom of the Creator, nor to His justice and fairness, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him.

Allah is Just and Does Not Oppress

As you have come to know, the requirements of rational judgment of something, as being good or bad is that reason, as it is, realizes this thing, that is, whether it is good or bad. One of these descriptions is fixed for a thing, as it is, without the interference of a circumstance or restriction, without the intervention of a special realization faculty.

Therefore, as it deems something as being good or bad, reason becomes aware of a general reality that is equal with all those who realize, who do anything, without distinction between what can be done or what should be. Justice is good, its doer is lauded by everyone, whereas injustice is ugly, its doer is looked down on by everyone.

On this basis, how can the Praised Almighty, the One Who realizes an action and its description, I mean the doer of an action being lauded or held in contempt, regardless of who this doer is, do anything which He deems as being too lowly above which one must rise?

Thereupon, Allah, the most Praised One, is just because injustice is ugly and one must rise above it. An ugly deed is never done by the Wise One. Justice is good and one must be adorned by it. Hence, being characterized with justice is one of the matters that are relevant to His wisdom, above doing what should not be done.

If you will, you can say that man realizes that doing what is equitable is anyone's perfection, whereas committing inequity is anyone's shortcoming. According to what reason judges, it also is the same with the most Praised One. How can He permit the doing of what is the antithesis of perfection, what brings about shortcomings?[31]

Avoiding Confusion

It may be said that something regarded by man as being good or bad does not mean it is so with Allah, Praise belongs to Him; so, how can it be found out that one does not abandon his obligation, nor does he commit what is ugly?

The answer is clear: The gist of the former principle is that man realizes the goodness of justice and the ugliness of injustice. This applies to anyone who has realization, who senses things, and to everyone who is rational, wise, without distinction among circumstances and factors.

This is similar to realizing that four means a couple of pairs. Everyone’s reason realizes that they are pairs without any particular possibility (to the contrary). The situation is not akin to man’s probable judgment of what the most High One should do. Rather, it is akin to discovering a general, necessary

and commonsense principle sensed by all those who have realization without making a distinction between their Creator and what they create. This matter is not confined to this principle. Rather, all general principles in theoretical wisdom are like that.

Based on the above, it is proven that the most Praised One is above anything that is ugly, that He is characterized by all perfection when it comes to doing anything. It is, then, proven that due to His wisdom, He does not commit what makes no sense. Therefore, He is just, He does not commit injustice, oppression or aggression.

Justice in the Holy Quran

Sacred verses have one after the other focused on the most Praised One doing what is fair. Some of them are:

"There is no god but He: It is witnessed by Allah, His angels and those endowed with knowledge, standing firm on justice." (***Qur'an, 3:18***)

Just as He has testified to His justice, He has defined the goal behind sending prophets. So they may uphold justice among people.

The most Praised One has also said,

"We sent Our Messengers with clear Signs and sent down with them the Book and the balance (***of right and wrong***) ***so that men may stand for justice"*** (***Qur'an, 21:47***).

He has also stated that justice is the main basis in holding His servants to account on the Judgment Day. The most Praised One says,

"We shall set up scales of justice on the Day of Judgment, so that not a soul will be dealt with unjustly in the least" (***Qur'an, 21:47***).

These and other verses contain guidance to what reason realizes from its own depth, that is, justice is the perfection of every living existent that realizes and has the power to choose, that the actions of Allah Almighty in this life and in the hereafter have to thus be characterized, and so must His ambassadors.

Justice in Islamic Legislation

This status is enjoyed by justice. Without it, His promise and warning would not have been trusted, as you have come to know. Many Islamic beliefs would have fallen apart. It is the one that made Him, the most Praised One that He is, define His rulings and describe His legislations as being just, that He does not legislate anything unless it fully agrees with justice, *adl*; He is the *Adl*.

The most Praised One says,

***"We do not place a burden on any soul greater than it can bear: Before Us is a record which clearly shows the truth: They will never be wronged"* (*Qur'an, 23:62*).**

The first portion of this verse sheds light on His justice, the most Praised One that He is, among His servants as He legislates His rulings. The second portion highlights His justice on the Day when awards are distributed.

Justice in Narratives of Ahl al-Bayt Imams (as)

Imam Ali, peace with him, and his offspring are famous for being just. It is him do the Mutazilites cite, so much so that it is said, "*Tawhid* and *Adl* (Unity and Justice of God) are Alawis (related to Imam Ali), whereas anthropomorphism and fatalism are Umayyad." Here we provide you with some of the legacy of members of Ahl al-Bayt, peace with them:

1. Ali, peace with him, was asked about *Tawhid* and *Adl*, so he said, "*Tawhid* means that you should not have any doubts about Him, while Adl means you should not accuse Him (of whatever does not suit Him)."[32] It was already presupposed that the most Praised One is just, so a meaning for His justice was sought.

Ibn Abul-Hadid has said, "Both of these foundations are cornerstones of the science of logic, the slogan of our Mutazilite fellows who rejected the old meanings which al-Ashari and his fellows had fixed, and it is due to their deeming the Creator, Praise is due to Him, as being above doing anything ugly."

The meaning of his phrase "you should not have any doubts about Him" is: You should not think that He has a body or an image or that He is in a particular place or filling all directions, as some people have claimed, nor should you conceive Him as being a light or a force penetrating the whole world, as some have said, nor should you regard Him as the product of a casual incident that takes place or happens somewhere, nor is He accidental, as the Christians have said, or that meanings and causes can explain Him. If any of these whims is entertained, the entertainer will have violated *Tawhid*.

As for the other foundation, you must not "accuse Him," i.e. you must not charge Him of having forced you to do what is ugly and that He would then punish you for it. He is above any of this. And do not charge Him of enabling liars to perform miracles through which they mislead people. Do not charge Him of having commissioned you to do what is beyond your ability or charge Him of any justice-related issue which our fellows have detailed in their books, such as compensation for pain, for this is not an option, or for rewarding for good deeds, for this is a must. He is truthful to His promise and to His warning; there is no way around it.

The whole matter is that the way our fellows have conceived justice and the Unity of the Creator are both derived from statements made by the Commander of the Faithful, peace with him. This is one of the areas where our fellows have made specific statements. Statements of this type that the Imam (as) has made are numerous.[33]

2. As-Saduq has quoted Imam as-Sadiq, peace with him, as saying that a man said this to him: "The foundation of the creed is built on *Tawhid* and *Adl*. The knowledge relevant to this foundation is abundant, but a wise person cannot avoid learning it; so, please state something which is easy to comprehend, something which can be memorized." The Imam, peace with him, said, "As regarding *Tawhid*, it means you do not permit yourself to attribute to your God what can be attributed to you. As for *Adl*, you must not attribute to your Creator anything about which He would blame you."[34]

3. Imam Ali, peace with him, has said, "And I further testify that He is just, truly just, and His judgment is final."[35]

4. He, peace with him, has also said, "He is the One Who is truthful to what He promises, Who rises above dealing wrongfully with His servants, Who is equitable with regard to His creatures, just when He judges them."[36]

5. He, peace of the Almighty with him, has also said, "He is the One Who is so clement, He forgives; He is so just in His judgment."[37]

6. He, peace with him, has also said, "Lord! Include me in Your forgiveness, not in Your justice."[38]

There are other such cherished statements by the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt (as) some of which we will quote for you when we discuss fate and destiny and when we research fatalism and free choice.

Who Correctly Justifies a Servant's Penalty?

Divine texts have supported each other with regard to the punishment of criminals and denunciation of oppressors. The discussion falls into two categories:

First: What is the purpose behind the punishment? Is it to satisfy one's urge for revenge? The most Praised One has said,

"... If anyone is killed wrongfully, We have given his heir authority (to demand qisas, retribution, or to forgive): But do not let him exceed the bounds in the matter of taking life away, for he is helped (by the Divine Law)" (Qur'an, 17:33).

But this purpose does not suit the most Praised One because He is greater than having such a motive. It would have required Him to be sentimental. Should it be for admonishing others? But this applies in the temporal abode, not in the abode of rewards (or penalties). The most Praised One says,

"The woman and the man who is guilty of adultery or fornication, flog each with a hundred lashes; do not let compassion move you in their case, in a matter prescribed by Allah, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day, and let some believers witness their punishment" (Qur'an, 24:2).

So, when He says, "… Let some believers witness their punishment", this proves that the purpose behind whipping the adulterer and adulteress is to admonish others, or it is one of such objectives.

Second: One of the established rational norms of conduct is that the punishment must equal the crime in its method and extent. But this equation is negated when it comes to penalties in the hereafter. Some criminals remain in the fire forever although the period of their transgression was much shorter than that of their penalty.

The most Praised One has said,

"But those who reject faith and belie Our signs shall be the companions of the Fire; there shall they dwell (forever)" (Qur'an, 2:29).

He has also said,

"Allah has promised the hypocrites, men and women, and the rejecters of faith, the fire of Hell: They shall dwell in it: It suffices them: God's curse and an enduring punishment is (in store) for them" (Qur'an, 9:68).

Al-Mufid has said, "The Imamites are of the consensus that the warning about eternity in the fire of hell is particularly addressed to the unbelievers in particular rather than to those who commit sins and who have knowledge about Allah, the most Exalted One, those who surrender to His obligations from among the ones who observe the prayers, etc."[39]

In his *Aqaid* book, al-Saduq says, "It is our belief that only those who commit apostasy and who associate partners with Allah will remain in the fire of hell forever. As for the sinners from among those who believe in *Tawhid*, they will get out of it through mercy that will come to their rescue."[40]

As regarding the answer for the first question, we would like to say: Asking about the purpose behind the punishment, whether it is for satisfying one's desire for revenge, or for providing admonishment for those other than the punished person, this covers the penalties that are legislated through law making and legislating. Punishing in this field is to meet two goals: to seek revenge, or to teach a moral lesson.

But if the punishment is the result of acting on both following viewpoints, the question becomes out of place because there is an existing link between the existence of the criminal and of the punishment that involves his presence in the life to come. It is then that the question about why the punishment takes place is out of place. Rather, the question is directed at the possibility of separating one from the other, at putting something up and another down, such as suitable penalties.

The external link between man and penalty is viewed in two ways:

First: Each of the criminal or righteous action of man in the world of nature creates in the soul an aptitude that suits it because of repeating that particular action, practicing it. These psychological

aptitudes are not separated from man's existence. Rather, they form his very existence, the depth of his essence. A righteous or a sinning person is resurrected with these aptitudes that he accumulated in this short life through his obedience or disobedience of the Almighty, and each aptitude has its particular impact from which it is not separated.

You may say that every soul, with the aptitudes that surround it, creates the images that suit it: either Paradise where there is spirit and fragrance, or hell and its flames and torment. Thereupon, either reward or punishment, which is created for the soul, maintains it in a way that is incapable of abandoning such creating.

Thus, a man of righteousness, in whose soul the righteous aptitudes became firm in this life, never ceases thinking about what is right, and his soul never settles or calms down except through such thinking. His antithesis is a sinner in whose soul malicious aptitudes became deeply rooted by way of the satanic actions that he does in this short life. He never ceases thinking about evil and lowly matters. Even if he tries to distance himself from thinking about what suits his soul, he will not be able to do so.

It becomes obvious from reading what *allama* Tabatabai writes that the rewards and penalties of the hereafter are among the realities which one gains through his either righteous or vicious actions, and they both are present in this temporal life. But the veils act as a barrier between him and what he has already prepared for himself: either Paradise or the Fire.

He has said, "What is clear from the verses (of the Holy Quran) is that there is for man in this life what is beyond it: another life where he will live either happily or miserably, a life that has beginnings and roots. In it will he live, and with it he will be familiar. He will see it for sure when causes come to an end, when barriers are removed."

He goes on to say, "Actions prepare by themselves, or by their requirements and impacts, matters that are sought or not sought, that is, goodness or evilness. It is the one with which one will become familiar when the veils are removed."[41]

What he states will become clear in many verses that he stated in his book.

In the light of what we have indicated, one who approaches the new life does so with either good or vile aptitudes. This life has requirements that necessitate it, whether he likes it or not. These requirements are manifested in the shape of either blessings or condemnations for either group.

It is then that the question about the purpose behind tormenting drops. This is similar to one who drinks poison, so he is killed by it, or one who drinks medicine, so he is healed by it. The question here about the purpose behind killing or healing makes no sense.

Second: What is determined in place is that man's actions have two forms: one in this life and another in the life to come. Man's action manifests itself in every circumstance as it suits it. Performing the

prayers has its own form in this life, its movements and pronouncements, but it also has another form in the life hereafter.

Fast, too, has a special presence in this circumstance expressed by abstention from whatever breaks it, and it has another presence in the higher world expressed as protection from the Fire. Such is the case with all actions, be they good or bad. This is what the Book of the most Exalted One tells us:

"Those who unjustly eat up the property of orphans eat up a Fire into their own bodies: They will soon be enduring a blazing Fire!" (***Qur'an, 4:10***).

The most Praised One has also said,

"Those who covetously withhold the gifts which Allah has given them of His grace must not think that it is good for them: Nay, it will be the worst for them: Soon the things they covetously withheld shall be tied to their necks like a twisted collar on the Judgment Day" (***Qur'an, 3:180***).

He, Praise belongs to Him, has also said,

"On the Day when heat will be produced out of that (***wealth***) ***in the Fire of Hell, and their foreheads, flanks and backs branded with it,*** [***it will be said to them:***] ***'This is the*** (***treasure***) ***you hoarded up for yourselves: Then taste the*** (***treasures***) ***you hoarded!'"*** (***Qur'an, 9:35***).

There are other verses that prove that the same actions will be present on the Judgment Day but in a hereafter form. This shows that there is a reality for man's actions that shall be manifested in another form in the life to come.

These actions stick to his presence and never part with him. If the deed of everyone is regarded as one required for his existence, for the intricacies of his essence, the question about why the torment drops, the question will be directed towards whether the separation is possible.

The difference between the two is obvious: In the first, the soul of the righteous or impious individual creates his reward or punishment, Paradise or Hell, according to the aptitudes which it had acquired in this life so as the one who has this aptitude cannot quieten himself and be calm except by doing what suits it. In the second, work will manifest itself in the hereafter without the soul having any role in that life in manifesting these deeds as they appear. Rather, it is one of the requirements of the presence of the individual who is lodged for judgment.

So, man is not resurrected alone. Rather, he is resurrected with whatever attaches to himself, to his existence. Whatever accompanies him becomes part of him and is never separated from him. Briefly, the reward connection of man in the first category is productive: The soul is productive; it generates the good or the bad outcome. As regarding the second, it is one of the requirements of man's presence and complications but without production.

The most Exalted One has said,

"We have fastened every man's fate to his own neck: On the Day of Judgment We shall bring a scroll out for him which he will see spread open" (***Qur'an, 17:13***).

Perhaps if you look at the verses that talk about the presence of the same deed in the hereafter, and if you add to them "the possibility that the hereafter form of these actions is among the requirements of man's goodness or evilness," it will be easy for you to answer the question about why there is punishment. The most Praised One has said,

"... On the Day when every soul will be confronted with all the good it has done and all the evil it has done" (***Qur'an, 3:30***),

"They will find all that they did, placed before them, and your Lord will not treat a single one of them unjustly" (***Qur'an, 18:49***),

and

"Each soul will then come to know what it has put forth" (***Qur'an, 81:14***).

The most Praised One tells us about Luqman who said,

""O son!" (***said Luqman,***) ***"If there may be the weight of a mustard-seed, and if it were*** (***hidden***) ***in a rock, or*** (***anywhere***) ***in the heavens or on earth, Allah will bring it forth"*** (***Qur'an, 31:16***).

So, what will be present on the Day of Rewards are the same deeds described as actions personified, their realization in the form that suits those circumstances.

Perhaps what is indicated in the verses and traditions, that is, the act of righteousness is the tilling for the Hereafter, or the absolute labeling of deeds, is also a hint to this answer. The same deed, be it an act of obedience or disobedience (of the Almighty), is like a seed which man sows in his worldly life. This seed grows, perfects itself and becomes a harvest for him in the hereafter which he reaps as he had sowed it. The most Praised One has said,

"To anyone who desires the tilth of the hereafter, We grant an increase in his tilth, and to any who desires the tilth of this world, We grant him some of it, but he has neither share nor lot in the hereafter" (***Qur'an, 42:20***).

The Commander of the Faithful, peace with him, has said, "A good deed is harvested in the hereafter."[42]

All of this shows that the reward link with man is one of cause and causation.

Man, in his existence, is a cause for his reward either through his creating, bringing about, or his being a planter in this life of that which he shall reap in the hereafter. There is no separation between him and

his tilth. If the link is as such, i.e. of a cause and causation, there will be no room to raise such a question.

Yes, a legislator who is familiar with the Quran and Sunnah ought not restrict bliss and wrath to these two categories, denying a separate Paradise or torment also from man's existence and whatever he does. Obviously, for each of Paradise and the Fire there is a separate presence to which one renders his deeds.

Despite all of this, there is no objection to tormenting or blessing through one of the past meanings. Since the confusion is rational, suffices it to be submitted from the two ways that we have stated above.

As regarding our answer to the second question, we would like to say the following:

What has already been stated about the rational way of a crime fitting its punishment, in extent and in method, is connected to the resulting penalties. But if the penalty is the impact of an action, we do not see it fitting its extent and method:

A driver who for one second is inattentive may bear psychological and financial losses that will last for the rest of his life. One who hides thorns under the ground, or who plants roses, will reap thorns or roses as long as he lives. The deed was instantaneous, whereas its outcome is lasting. So, the equation between the effort and its fruit is not maintained here.

If man's endeavor in this life is a seed the fruit of which he will harvest in the hereafter, there is no objection to the result being lasting while the labor is instantaneous or short-lived. This by itself suffices to remove the confusion. The most Praised One has already acquainted him with the hereafter result of his actions in this life, and that his short-lived deeds will bring about a lengthy or perpetual sigh, that his deed in this life will produce for him in the hereafter either thorns that will hurt him or roses that will perfume him. He has done his deed with his knowledge and free choice. Had there been blame, it should be directed at him. The most Praised One has told us this about Satan:

"And when the matter is decided, Satan will say: 'It was Allah Who gave you a promise of the truth: I, too, promised you, but I failed in my promise to you. I had no authority over you except to call you and you listened to me: So, do not reproach me but reproach your own souls. I cannot listen to your cries, nor can you listen to mine. I reject your former act in associating me with Allah. There must be a grievous penalty for the wrongdoers'" (***Qur'an, 14:22***).

The previous verses regard the hereafter rewards as man's tilth, and they support this viewpoint.

Yet it is possible that remaining forever in the penalty is relevant to whether there is no room for (Divine) mercy, when it is not possible for an outpour (of His forgiveness). The Almighty has said,

"Surely those who seek gain in evil and are engulfed in their sins are the companions of the Fire: They shall dwell in it forever" (***Qur'an, 2:81***).

Perhaps the phrase "…engulfed (or immersed) in their sins means their sins overwhelm them in a way which necessitates the disappearance of any ability or readiness for mercy to descend on them, for them to get out of the realm of His wrath, indignation."[43]

Whatever it may be, it appears that what we have stated is accurate if you keenly consider the past answer for the first question which is: The reward may be created for the soul, or it may always accompany man; likewise, the rational way is the same as is quite obvious.

Mandating Beyond One's Tolerance

A sound conscience and commonsense rule that one must not be ordered to do beyond his ability. If the one thus ordering is a human being who already knows that the individual whom he orders is unable to perform what he is ordering him to do, serious willpower is not sparked within him, between himself and his conscience, with his soul. For this reason, ordering the doing of what is intolerable renders the same order impossible.

But if the One Who is issuing the order is Allah, the most Praised One, the matter in this case is obvious from two standpoints:

First: Commanding what is unbearable is rationally ugly. It is impossible to be attributed to the most Praised One due to His wisdom. He never requires His servant to do what he is incapable or unable to do, such as requiring a terminally ill person to fly to the sky, or getting a camel to go through a needle's hole.

There is no difference between the same order being possible but is beyond the frame of the ability of the ordered individual, such as requiring the latter to fly in the sky, or the same order being impossible by itself without a distinction between one individual and another, such as requiring one to get a large body in a small one without the small one being enlarged or the big one being reduced in size.

Second: Quranic verses clearly indicate that the most Praised One does not require man to do anything beyond his ability:

"Allah does not place a burden on any soul greater than it can bear" (***Qur'an, 2:286***).

The most Exalted One has also said,

"Your Lord is never unjust (***in the least***) ***to His servants"*** (***Qur'an, 41:46***),

and

"Your Lord will never treat a single one of them unjustly" (***Qur'an, 18:49***).

Injustice is causing harm without a justification. What injustice is there greater than that? Allah Almighty

is greatly above being as such.

This is the summary of what has been stated. Scholars of *usool* (principles of the faith) and others have simplified it in their own books through their own craftsmanship.

With all these glaring proofs, we see the Asharis treading a different path, permitting the ordering of what is unbearable. They thus demonstrated that the Islamic creed opposes conscience, sound reason and nature. It is regrettable that the Orientalists derived the tenets of Islam from Ashari logicians, so they describe them as being contrary to reason and nature because the Asharis permit the commanding of what is unbearable.

What is important is to analyze the verses that they have cited as their evidences:

Asharis' Proofs for Commanding What is Unbearable

Instead of referring to reason in this field, the Asharis have cited verses which they imagine as proving their viewpoint although they are distant from what they adopt in this regard. Here are these verses with their own using them as evidence, as well as our analysis of them:

The first is this verse:

"In no way will they frustrate (His design) on earth, nor do they have protectors besides Allah! Their penalty will be doubled! They lost the power to hear, and they did not see!" **(*Qur'an, 11:20*).**

The reason for saying that this is evidence is that they were commanded to listen to the truth, and they were commissioned to act upon it although "They lost the power to hear, and they did not see". This proves that mandating what is beyond one's ability is permissible. It is proven by the token that anyone who does not accept the truth and who does not listen to it by way of accepting it will not be able to do so.

One may resign thus: The evidence here is very weak. Its weakness appears from interpreting the verse's statements, one by one.

a. When the Almighty says, "In no way will they frustrate (His design) on earth," He means they cannot frustrate Allah Almighty in their worldly life, that they came out of the realm of adoration. So, their ability (to do so) did not surpass that of Allah Almighty.

b. His saying, "…nor do they have protectors besides Allah" means even if they take for masters their own idols, although they are not in reality masters, they have no masters besides Allah.

c. His saying, "Their penalty will be doubled" means they will be punished twice as a result for their misguidance, injustice and evil deeds.

d. His saying, "They lost the power to hear, and they did not see" is an explanatory statement. It

means they did not disbelieve, nor did they disobey Allah's command because their will supersedes Allah's will, nor is it because they have masters other than Allah, but because they were unable to hear or see His Signs, so they would believe in them.

But their inability does not mean that they are primarily incapacitated. Rather, it means that they deprived themselves of these blessings on account of the sins that they committed. So, the sins became a way for their having hearts that did not comprehend, eyes with which they could not see, ears with which they could not hear, so much so that they became like animals or even more so.

The most Praised One has said,

"They have hearts with which they do not understand, eyes with which they do not see, and ears with which they do not hear. They are like cattle! Nay, they are more misguided, for they are heedless (***of warning***)***"*** (***Qur'an, 7:179***).

Briefly, there is a difference between their inability at the start of the obligation and their inability to believe, to list and to see the Signs. The inability is due to their going to extremes in sinning and erring, to the sins enshrouding their hearts, eyes, visions and hearing. The verse was revealed about the second field and the first topic. Texts of verses and traditions have supported each other regarding the fact that disobedience and oppression make hearts blind and hearing deaf. The most Praised One has said,

"When they deviated, Allah then let their hearts deviate" (***Qur'an, 61:5***).

Narrating to us about the criminals, the most Praised One has quoted them as saying,

"They will also say, 'Had we only listened or used our intelligence, we would not have been among the companions of the blazing Fire.' They will then admit their sins, but (***forgiveness***) ***will be far from the fellows of the blazing Fire"*** (***Qur'an, 67:10–11***).

The statement that is known to scholars of logic and of wisdom is that willful avoidance, which does not negate free choice, is derived from these verses and from commonsense.

The second verse is this:

"And He taught Adam the nature of all things; then He placed them before the angels and said, "Tell Me the nature of these (***things***) ***if you are right." They said, "Glory to You: We have no knowledge except what You have taught us: In truth, You are perfect in knowledge and wisdom"*** (***Qur'an, 2:31–32***).

The similarity is this: The most Praised One commanded them to pronounce the names although they were not familiar with them.

Here are our resigns about the above: The command in the statement "Tell Me the nature of these (things)" was done for the purpose of proving their inability, not to require them to actually do it in reality. It is similar to this verse of the most Praised One:

"And if you are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to Our servant, produce a Sura such as this, and call on your witnesses or helpers (***if there are any***) ***besides Allah, if your*** (***doubts***) ***are true"*** (***Qur'an, 2:23***).

Explanation: The command formula carries one meaning: driving towards a thing. But the goals vary according to situations. Once the goal behind a command is to seriously direct the attention of the adult individual to a certain act. This is the true command the doer of which is rewarded, while one who disobeys it is punished, and it has to meet the criterion of the adult person being able to do it. The other is that the goal would be other matters, so it is not labeled as the "serious command", similarly to the incapacitating implied in the previous verse and the subjecting in the next:

"Be you apes, despised and rejected" (***Qur'an, 2:65***).

There are other goals that prompt a speaker to express his goals in the form of a command. This is clear for anyone who is familiar with the speech of men of wisdom.

The third verse of the most Exalted One is:

"On the Day when the shin will be laid bare, they will be summoned to bow in adoration, but they surely will not be able to do so; their eyes will be cast down, ignominy will cover them, seeing that they had been summoned previously to bow in adoration, while they were safe (***and they refused***)***"*** (***Qur'an, 42-43***).

The indication of evidence: If it is alright to command them in the hereafter to do what is beyond their ability, the same is alright in the life of this world.

One may resign the following about the above: The call to prostrate in that circumstance is not serious and does not lie behind a reality. Rather, the purpose behind resurrection is to let the polytheists, who were able to prostrate in the life of this world and who did not, sigh a sigh of regret. The verse tells us that when they were safe, they refused to obey and surrender. After the veil had been removed from their eyes and they saw the torment, they attempted to obey and prostrate, but how could they do that in the hereafter? Here is the explanation of the verse's statements one by one:

a. His statement saying "… On the Day when the shin will be laid bare" is indicative of the matter becoming very serious because when one wants to cross tumultuous waters, he bares his legs then wades the torrent. This imagery is used in order to explain the seriousness of the matter although there is no water, shin/leg or baring to do. It is like a miser being described as having a "paralyzed hand" although the talk is neither about a hand nor about paralysis.

b. His statement saying "… They will be summoned to bow in adoration" does not imply a request or a serious command. Rather, it is to intensify their sigh for their having abandoned prostrations in the life of this world despite their physical fitness for it. It is like a teacher who is examining his student whom he knows would fail the exam: "Study, review and stay awake during the nights" in order to create a sigh in his heart although there is really no room for any of these matters.

c. His statement saying "… But they surely will not be able to do so" is due to depriving them of safety as a result of their criminal worldly deeds. Or it may be due to the aptitude of arrogance which rests deeply in their innermost—on the Day when innermost thoughts become manifest—or due to His will, the most Praised One, being linked to deeds confined to this world while the outcomes and rewards are confined to the hereafter.

The Commander of the Faithful (peace with him) has said, "This day is a course, tomorrow is the race; those who win (the race) will be lodged in Paradise, while the wrongdoers will be in Hell. So, is there anyone who repents his sin before his demise? Is there anyone who labors for his own benefit before the Day of his misery? You surely are living days of labor behind which there is a term that is already set."[44]

Perhaps the first of these three viewpoints is closer to the meaning of the verse due to its end saying: "… They had been summoned previously to bow in adoration while they were safe", apparently they now are not safe because the circumstance is different.

d. His statement saying, "… Their eyes will be cast down, ignominy will cover them" clearly indicates that they will on that Day cast their eyes down, being covered with ignominy.

e. His statement saying, "… They had been summoned previously to bow in adoration, while they were safe" means when they were in the life of this world and were called on to prostrate, they refused although they were safe and their bodies were healthy. And when they will be called on to prostrate in the hereafter, they will not be able to do so. The goal behind this call is to intensify their sigh and regret having wasted their lives while they were safe and healthy.

On the whole, the verse clearly says that the call to prostrate in the circumstance will not be serious but for other goals where ability is not preconditioned.

The fourth verse is this:

"You can never be fair and just to women, even if it is your ardent desire, but do not turn completely away (***from a woman***) ***so as to leave her hanging*** (***in the air***)***. If you come to a friendly understanding and practice self-restraint, Allah is oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful"*** (***Qur'an, 4:129***)***.***

They reason saying that it indicates that the most Praised One commands justice when He says,

"… But if you fear that you will not be able to deal justly (***with them***)***, then*** (***marry***) ***only one"***

(***Qur'an, 4:3***).

Nevertheless, He tells us that justice cannot be established (if one marries more than one wife).

One can resign that the most Praised One has commanded one who marries more than one wife, as the above verse indicates, to be just and fair. At the same time, He tells us in the same verse that those who marry more than one wife cannot be just. Also at the same time, He has prohibited total attachment to the one who is loved the most from among them while turning away from the others in a way that leaves the latter hanging out in a status which is neither marriage nor divorce.

If you contemplate on the statements in both verses, you will clearly see that justice, which He has enjoined, is not the same justice which He says a married man cannot shoulder.

What can be done is what anyone who marries more than wife can. Justice with regard to clothing, food, housing and other rights of the wife which the husband carries out with his faculties under his command, not with his desires and hidden wishes over which he has no control.

As regarding what is beyond one's ability, it is equality in treatment, sharing a smile and companionship, two things which one does not own, nor can he choose or control.

Up to here, it becomes clear that requiring what is beyond one's ability, whether one can do it or not, is something which reason rejects and nature denies. People of wisdom do not recognize it in their social life. Clear Quranic verses deny it.

As regarding the evidence produced by the Ashari mentor, it really contains no proof. It is simply interpreting these verses according to his own advance personal opinion. When he chose the servant's inability to affect his actions, that in all his general and particular portions belongs to Allah, the most Praised One. The servant has no role to play save being the doer of a deed, that the creation comes from Allah, Praise belongs to Him, compared to the willpower of the servant. He builds it on two matters:

First: It is possible to commission the doing of what is unbearable.

Second: Ability is relevant to actions.

As for the first, if a servant of the Almighty does not have the ability to play a role in the same deed, it makes no difference whether the commissioning is doable or not, and you have already come to know the fallacy of this argument.

As for the second, he thus concluded, due to his misconceptions, that the presence of ability and capability prior to the deed may not be combined with advocating that creating and bringing into being are not done by Him, the most Praised One. He (the Ashari), therefore, advocated the ability as taking precedence, and that it must be compared with the presence of actions. This is what we have discussed under a separate heading in our next research.

The important problem in the arguments of the Asharis, the folks of the hadith and the Hanbalis, is their rejection of reason, their exclusion of it in the fields where a judgment needs to be made. One who excludes reason and its essence cannot be expected to produce views other than these.

Pre-Actions Ability

Do both ability and capability in man precede action, or do they accompany it?

Those who advocate the principle of Justice of God are in favor of the first, whereas the Asharis support the second. What reveals what is right is to provide detail, and perhaps this is what everyone seeks.

To explain, capability is released, and it means one of two matters:

First: The soundness of doing or not doing an action. You may say, the doer being what he is; so, if he wills, he does that action, and if he does not, he will not do it. If capability is meant to be as such, there is no doubt that it precedes the deed instinctively and consciously. One who sits is capable of standing. One who is silent is capable of speaking during the time when he is silent. But the meaning is in the collective sense.

Second: That with which an action becomes necessary when all factors on which the deed's existence depends are available, when the complete cause that is not separated from the causation is present. Capability in this sense is relevant to the deed. It does not precede it time-wise even if it is ahead of it in its level.

In all truth, the issue is very simple, and the doubts raised about it, especially what is stated by the Ashari mentor in his Al-Lama (book), is akin to sophistry.[45] Similarly is the case with Nizam ad-Din al-Qawshaji in Sharh al-Tajrid.[46] The details which we have stated are decisive in this research. Its gist is clear from the writings of Fakhr ad-Din ar-Razi as transmitted by al-Sayyid al-Jurjani in Sharh al-Mawaqif.[47]

Thus, it seems that the proofs set up by the Mutazilites about capability preceding the actions provide resigns about this issue, and the matter does not need such a detailed explanation. But what should be researched is to show the incentive that prompted al-Ashari mentor to choose that doctrine (comparing capability with actions) although precedence and comparison, as related to the contents of the Quran and Sunnah, are equal. So, the topic is determining the reason for one to opt to advocate making such a comparison, even focusing on it.

It is strongly possible that the incentive is his talk about the issue of the creation of the servants' actions, that they are created for Allah, not for the servants, neither originally nor thereafter. Even the capability that takes place to the servant, when a deed happens, does not bear an impact on bringing him into being, but it is compared to him.

So, what suits this doctrine is to deny the afore-mentioned capability over the deed and to be satisfied with that with which it is compared. It is as if the mentor imagined that the capability that precedes the actions competes with the power of Allah Almighty. So, for this reason, he found in himself a spiritual motive to prove the fallacy of such precedence and to proof the comparison.

Yes, the comparison can be advocated and the precedence is denied. This is not confined to the Ashari mentor and to his students. Rather, some Mutazilites have agreed with them such as al-Najjar, Muhammad ibn Isa, Ibn al-Rawandi and others.[48]

Everyone is of the consensus that the power of Allah Almighty precedes actions. This is known according to our *usool* because the power in those other than the most Praised One is the same as ability and capability. And in what should be done, in as far as the most Praised One is concerned, is that what He does and what is needed is the same. His presence is self-sustaining and so is each of His attributes. Each does not have power on its own, capability or readiness (independently of Him).

Mulla Sadra wrote extensively in this regard in his books, removing some confusion, rebutting the saying that His ability and actions are timeless.[49]

Capability in Traditions by the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt (as)

Narratives from the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt (as) have supported each other regarding capability-preceding actions. Here are some narratives reported in this regard for you:

1. Al-Saduq has quoted Hisham ibn Salim quoting Abu Abdullah (Imam al-Sadiq, peace with him) as saying, “Allah has never imposed anything on His servants to do or not to do something before making it possible for them to do it. Then He commanded them and prohibited them. So, no servant does or abstains from doing something except being in advance capable of doing so prior to being commanded or prohibited, before he does or does not, before he gives or withholds."[50]

2. It has also been reported that Abu Busayr quotes Imam Abu Abdullah (as) as saying in the company of people who were debating verbs and intonations, “Capability precedes actions. Allah, the most Exalted, the most Great, never commanded His servant to withhold anything or to release it if such servant is unable to do it.”[51]

3. It is also narrated from Sulayman ibn Khalid saying that he heard Imam Abu Abdullah (as) as saying, "A servant of Allah does not withhold or release anything except if he is already able to do so."[52]

4. It is also narrated from Muhammad ibn Abu Omayr quoting those who cited our fellows quoting Imam Abu Abdullah (as) as saying, "A servant of Allah does not do anything except what He enables him to do. He may be able but inactive. He can never be active without being able."[53] There are many other narratives that deal with the subject of such capability in the *Tawhid* book to which you may refer.

It is interesting that the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt (as) produced proofs for capability preceding actions such

as this verse:

"... Pilgrimage to this place [Ka`ba] is a duty which men owe God, those who can afford the journey" (Qur'an, 3:97).

Hisham ibn al-Hakam asked Imam as-Sadiq (as) about the meaning of the afore-cited verse. The Imam (as) said, "It refers to one who is healthy of body, not being held back (from performing the pilgrimage) by any obligation, who has rations and a camel to carry him."54

Abu Busayr has also said that he heard Imam Abu Abdullah, peace with him, as saying, "One who has the opportunity to perform the pilgrimage even if it may be on a donkey the ears and tail of which are cut off and who refuses is counted among those who are capable of performing the pilgrimage."55

1. Al-Ishaaraat wal Tanbihaat, Vol. 1, pp. 219-220. As regarding his reference to "terms", he means things known by everyone, such as our saying: "The knowledge of opposites is one and the same." Knowledge of Zaid being the father of Amr equals knowledge of Amr being the son of Zaid. Or, if you talk about a profession, "Sequence is impossible," which is common in debates. Or you may talk about a creed and say, "The God is One, usury is prohibitive," etc.
2. Commentaries of wise Sabzawari on Sharh al-Manzouma, p. 310.
3. Kashf al-Murad, p. 186.
4. Al-Qawshaji, Sharh al-Tajreed, p. 442.
5. Kashf al-Murad, p. 186.
6. Nahjul-Balagha, Book 53.
7. Dalaail al-Sidq, Vol. 1, p. 369.
8. Al-Ashari, Al-Lama, p. 116.
9. Ibid., p. 117.
10. Kashf al-Murad, p. 186.
11. The restriction point is that the preliminary issues may either be imagined in both their ends with a sufficient rate in judgment and absolution, or it may not. The first probability covers first matters. The second may either depend on means other than outer and inner senses, or it may not. The first may either be the means that is never absent from the mind when imagining the ends or it may not be so. The first covers instinctive things, and these are called issues the measures of which are with them. The second may either apply the senses, which is the propping intellect moving from principles to requirements, or it may not be used in them. The first is identified by the senses. As for the second, if the judgment in it takes place by a group of people telling about it, it will be up to reason to imagine that they were all in cohort to lie, so it is among matters that are consecutively reported. If it is not so, and if it takes place due to many experiments, it is experimental, and the limits of each are already known.
12. Al-Amidi, Al-Ihkam, Vol. 1, p. 121.
13. Kashf al-Murad, p. 187.
14. Refer to p. 329 of Sharh Tajrid al-Itiqad by the virtuous al-Qawshaji, where they say that man is forced in his actions. We will provide you with a detailed discussion in al-Ashari's compulsion [theory] when we discuss divine justice in a subject titled "Divine action and man's deeds."
15. We will discuss in detail the necessity for sending prophets when we discuss general Prophetic mission.
16. We will discuss Islam's conclusiveness in the researches relevant to Prophetic mission.
17. There is a host of questions about the most Exalted One's wisdom and justice which our mentor, may his shade prolong, answered in his encyclopedia titled Allah: Creator of the Cosmos; so, refer to pp. 97 – 99 and pp. 269 – 281 of it.
18. Al-Mawaqif, p. 231.
19. Isharat al-Maram, p. 54.
20. Al-Mawaqif, p. 333. Sharh al-Mawaqif, Vol. 8, p. 204.

21. Dalail Sidq, Vol. 1, p. 233.
22. Al-Mawaqif, p. 322. Sharh al-Mawaqif, Vol. 8, p. 204.
23. The Negationists المعطلة are Mutazilis المعتزلة who do not believe in resurrection and in the return of souls to bodies.
24. Al-Asfar, Vol. 2, p. 280.
25. Ibid., Vol. 7, p. 84.
26. Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 263.
27. Ibid.
28. Al-Asfar, Vol. 7, p. 68.
29. Muhammad Farid Wajdi, Ala Atlal al-Madhhab al-Maddi, Vol. 1, p. 136.
30. Nahjul-Balagha, sermon 45.
31. The aspect of the most Exalted One not doing what is ugly may be determined by the fact that one does such an ugly thing either because he needs to or he relishes it or due to his own ignorance. All of these do not apply to the most Praised One: The first is discarded due to His absolute independence. The second is due to wisdom dictating its opposite. As for the third, it is due to His absolute knowledge. This evidence is based on the fact that doing what is inequitable is already proven to be unfit for Him: He is perfect in what He does. He does not need anything beyond Himself. This is endorsed by the allama on pp. 187-88 of his work Sharh al-Tajrid and by the man of virtue, al-Miqdad, on p. 260 of Sharh Nahj al-Mustarshidin and to other books dealing with logic.
32. Nahjul-Balagha, Axioms Section, No. 470.
33. Al-Tawhid, in a chapter about the meaning of Tawhid and Adl, first hadith, p. 96.
34. Ibid., p. 91.
35. Nahjul-Balagha, sermon 214.
36. Ibid., sermon 185.
37. Ibid., sermon 191.
38. Ibid., sermon 227.
39. al-Mufid, Awaail al-Maqalat, p. 14.
40. al-Saduq, Aqaid, p. 90, old edition having an appendix containing explanations in its 11th chapter.
41. Tabatabai, Al-Mizan, Vol. 1, pp. 91-93.
42. Nahjul-Balagha, sermon 22 (Abdoh edition).
43. Tabatabai, Al-Mizan, Vol. 12, p. 86.
44. Nahjul-Balagha, sermon 28.
45. Refer to Al-Lam, pp. 93-94.
46. Sharh al-Maqasid, Vol. 1, p. 240; al-Qawshaji, Sharh al-Tajrid, p. 392.
47. Sharh al-Mawaqif, Vol. 6, p. 154. The mentor, may he be safeguarded, has stated all the rational proofs produced by the Asharis in his book titled Al-Milal wal Nihal; so, refer to Vo. 2, pp. 172-193.
48. Sharh al-Mawaqif, Vol. 6, p. 92.
49. Al-Asfar al-Arba`a, Vol. 6, p. 312.
50. Al-Saduq, At-Tawhid, a chapter on capability, hadith 19, p. 352.
51. Ibid., hadith 21, p. 352.
52. Ibid., hadith 20, p. 352.
53. Ibid., hadith 13, p. 350.
54. Al-Saduq, Tawhid, hadith 14, p. 350.
55. Ibid., hadith 11, p. 350.

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