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Doubt... Certainty

S I apologize, Dad, if sometimes my frankness is considered impolite.

F Not at all. I really urge you to be frank, particularly in such discussions. Don't feel embarrassed or uneasy so that we can discuss ideological subjects freely in order to reach solid views which have immunity against deviation. Views which are held just to please others will not survive against uncertainties and desires.

S Thanks a lot Dad. I really feel comfortable with this warm, friendly atmosphere although this atmosphere is not new to me. You've always treated me like a friend in addition to being my father.

F Having a strong friendship with teens is a necessity. Being an unapproachable father or not being easy to get along with can do nothing but to grow the seeds of separation and distance. This distance might lead teenagers to look for an alternative relationship to fill in this gap. In some situations a bad fellow with evil thoughts might come across the son's way and take him away from home. Then that friend will follow an alternative road to mould the son's character; the father often notices the problem when it's too late.

S God bless you Dad, for treating me with such a friendly spirit.

F So now, in this friendly atmosphere, I urge you to be as frank as possible and to discuss all the religious matters that you have doubts about, even objections or denial. Feel free. You know son, keeping doubts and uncertainties unsolved in your mind along with shyness and fear from the narrow—minded will have bad effects on you. In the future, you might encounter someone who would answer your doubts with erroneous answers which may result in pushing you away from religion. Then you may not find the right person to consult and to resolve the problem. Hence, God forbid, you'll be in Satan's domain of vices which will divert your way to God.

S Glory to God. It seems that you know what's on in my mind. I've been suffering from some doubts about different aspects of religion for sometime and I wanted to discuss them with you, but I couldn't. I won't hide it that I tried to approach several people seeking for answers and then finally found a

clergyman, representative of a religious institution who was in his eighties. When I asked him a question, he pointed to his ear. I repeated my question louder ,but he couldn't understand my question and I couldn't grasp his reply; it seemed that he's living in another era talking about some prehistoric things that I couldn't understand. Afterwards I realized that he only answered with yes or no, forbidden or not forbidden. As far as I'm concerned my question required more than a short answer with yes or no, I was not granted much attention. When I looked around, I didn't see anyone close to my age. I couldn't comprehend what was going on around me, except the discussion of some businessmen compromising some religious dues to be levied as if Prophet Mohammad was sent to be a levy collector, not a guide for people! Then I heard that this money was intended to be spent on the affairs of the religion about which I came enquiring but found no answers

F Wait a minute, son. You can't talk like this. Choose your path calmly and follow those who turned to God without repentance. Don't be hateful to such people; they are helpful in their regions; they have done a lot to their people. So it's not fair to compare the old style services to the current needs.

S But Dad, can you believe that the Prophet was only answering enquiries?! Were his relations and responsibilities restricted to merchants only? Had he ignored the youth?

F No! Never! He answered all enquiries about ideologies, ethics or rules. He was advising and preaching without seeing it as degrading or having any drawbacks. Generally speaking, all prophets paid attention to youth who constituted the forefront of the believers in bearing heavenly duties.

Didn't you read that: "But none believed in Moses except some children of his people, because of the fear of Pharaoh and his chiefs, lest they should persecute them" This offspring was the youth who were enthusiastic and sacrificed sincerely. That was what the Cave Companions (Seven Sleepers of Ephesus) did and as you know they were not old people, but they were young "We relate to thee their story in truth: they were youth who believed in their Lord, and We advanced them in guidance."

S We need a clergyman to meet people and join them, pray with them and deliver lectures. A clergyman who answers questions directly and solves people's problems, follows up with them in different parts of the world, follows the world's events and understands their impact on people. We need a clergyman who makes appropriate decisions and doesn't feel content with publishing few hard–to– understand books which require interpretation where an educated person or a university student won't be able to understand. We need someone to write for the ordinary public. Religion concerns all people and is sent as guidance for all.

God sent a Prophet who is merciful to the world, to talk with people in accordance with their level of understanding in order to grasp what he says. He was responsible for demonstrating skilful and clear preaching. It wasn't only preaching but also the prophet made sure that people understood what he had said and sometimes he asked, "*Have I delivered what should be delivered?*"

F Quite right, son. As stated in the Quran: we didn't dispatch a prophet unless he is able to communicate in his people's language.

S Will we see the day when all barriers between the clergymen and the nation, particularly the youth, are removed and it becomes possible to communicate with them through the Internet and enquire about religion issues?

F They find it far away, but we think that it's not. When this happens, you can ask any question and express your doubts without any problem. The Prophet and his descendents taught us that there is no shame in tackling religious issues, as they say: "Ask, because asking is the key to knowledge." Our religion is the religion of logic and intellect, so why should we fear teen's questions? Don't we have rational responses? Ask any question you wish, son. Ask about everything; don't keep any doubt concealed in your heart about religion.

S Well, my first question is why did you say in our last meeting that my prayer is unacceptable?

F Because you said: you prayed because I ordered you to pray. Then all your prayers were performed only to obey me; therefore, they lacked the correct intention and were invalid. If you had prayed for the sake of God not for me, then it would have been correct.

S But I prayed as obedience to God and you both.

F Am I a partner to God?

S No.

F Let me clarify this: it is a must that a Muslim obeys God only, not anyone else other than God unless:

First, he urges other to obey God.

Second, his command doesn't contradict God's commands.

By looking at the verse: "Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle", you deduce that obeying the Prophet is the same as accomplishing God's commands. So if we comply with the Prophet's orders, then we are obeying God. God said: "He who obeys the Apostle, obeys Allah."

S When you ordered me to pray, my obedience to you was a result of the first rule. That's obeying the One, who's commanding to obey God.

F Hence, it's obedience to God and not to me.

S Dad, would you please give me a clear idea about obeying others. When it is considered acceptable and when it is considered as polytheism?

F The criterion, son, is quite easy. You can find it by yourself. Man is aware of himself. Apply it on yourself. Whenever you face anything, ask yourself whether it's allowed by God. If it is against God's commands, then it's considered sin and disobedience.

S Quite clear.

F And if what you're doing isn't against God's content, ask yourself: if it was going to upset God, would you do it? If so, then it would be forbidden

S So I have to be always aware of God's existence in my conscience, and work hard to please Him. I have to remember this as a criterion for all my actions.

F And to think of everything in order to carry out what God approves and to abandon which He disapproves.

S Wonderful.

F Therefore, if your prayers were performed to please me and if I had asked you to quit, you would have done so, then this kind of prayer would not be only unacceptable, but also it would be a kind of polytheism.

S A kind of polytheism?!

F Yes, because you were seeking my content not God's.

Your intention was obeying me not God.

S Hence I must think carefully and thoroughly about my actions to keep them away from polytheism.

F That's right son, polytheism penetrates the human soul quietly and destroys it as vinegar does with honey.

S I've read that polytheism penetrates slower than a black ant crawling on a soft rock in a dark night.

F Yes, that is the way polytheism follows. In addition, it may penetrate while performing our duties without feeling it. Haven't you heard of the tradition (Hadith), which says: "Those, who lend their ears to a speaker, will obey him; if the speaker speaks about God, they will obey God, and if he speaks about Satan, they will obey Satan"?

S O God! How many followers of Satan are out there?

F And they don't even know it!

S How can a person purify his/her actions from hidden polytheism?

F He should free his/her heart from love of wealth and life desires, and abandon all materialistic matters then save pleasures until the hereafter. One should disregard all except God's satisfaction. This means loosening his tight relations with offspring, wives, relatives, wealth and home and establishing a firm relation with the One Who grants us offspring, wives, relatives, wealth and home.

It is He Who gives and takes away and gives again. So if human beings turn away from the universe to the source of it, direct their wishes and love to the creator instead of the creatures and do not think of the livelihood and wealth but of the provider of the livelihood and wealth, it is then when a human being can become a divine person, who honestly speaks to God saying: "Thanks are due to You for purifying my heart from polytheism."

S What's greater than such a rank and who is more fortunate than the one who reaches this position!

F Haven't you heard what Imam Ali once said: "O God!

Those who lost you, found nothing, and those who found you, lost nothing."

S Tell me more, Dad.

F A person devoted to God describes the joy of leaving all life joys and turning towards God by saying: "Where are the kings and their offspring to feel this joy?" Another one said: "We are in a joy, that if kings hear about, they will fight us with swords to grasp."

S I, indeed, experienced the joy of supplication to God, especially during overnight prayer, while people are sleeping and no sounds except the voice of a humble servant addressing God, looking at the sky with the twinkling stars. It seems as if those stars are glorifying God and the servant saying: "the Most Holy, the Most Divine..."or as if they are just witnesses in the conscience court. They witness that there is no god but God, no creator but God, and no provider but God. Humans join these creatures to inspire the following holy verse: "Whatever beings there are in the heavens and the earth do prostrate themselves before Allah."

So one feels the integration with all these creatures in their humble joyful, long prostration and when he raises his head and looks around, he sees all those who have fallen into deep sleep, feeling sorry for those who have missed this opportunity! How unfortunate they are.

F Calling God at midnight is a training course and a condensed lesson in knowing Him. It's a cup full of love to God and it is joy that only fortunate ones can get. So congratulations son, on your closeness to God.

S But Dad, how can I be close to God when I still have some enquiries which you have encouraged me to ask you about?

F O son! Your interest in exposing and pursuing those doubts and questions proofs your seriousness

about your religion and your ideology.

S Dad, you're encouraging me and making me feel relaxed.

I will start with a simple question?

F Go ahead.

S You said that the conscientious reasoning or innately proof is the main guide that leads us to prove God's existence.

F That's right, I said so.

S Is this the sole reason and proof of God's presence and existence?

F No, but this is an easy-to-reach, available, and ready-to- use reason when it is needed. But it's not the only reason. It is just like the mother's breast for a baby; he turns to it whenever he feels hungry .The number of evidences of God's existence equals to the number of His creatures' breath, and the number of stones and sand.

S The comparison of conscience reasoning to a mother's breast for a baby is a nice one. I remember my younger brother on his first day of his life when he was crying and seeking mother's breast and he didn't calm down until Mom nursed him; it seemed as if he already knew this; it was just then that he calmed down and felt contented with what he was given. I asked myself that day: who taught this weak creature who had just come to the world where to get food from?

F He was directed to his need by instinct. Instinct relates a human to his natural needs, and this doesn't require having knowledge as you noticed with this newly born baby. The same thing applies to God's existence innate reasoning. Human beings instinctively feel the need to God and search for Him like a baby seeking his mother's breast. Once he/she gets it, he feels content and comfortable. There is no rational proof in innate reasoning of God's existence as you cannot find out the reason why a baby seeks his mother's breast. It's just the instinctive feeling of the need to God that everyone has in moments of human weakness when he detaches himself from all the materialistic concerns and turn truly to God without being able to give you any theoretical justification or ideological analysis to his action.

S So why don't all people believe in God? Isn't it true that nature exists in all human beings? Isn't it true that nature never dies?

F But it can be impaired temporarily.

S Yes, sometimes it is impaired, but it does exist, so why many or most people don't believe in God, while this is a tangible reality and we see it in many verses: "Yet most people are disbelievers,

although you may be keen to guide."

F Good question. I'm very glad that you're asking such questions to build your faith on a firm, doubtless basis in a sound environment far away from imitating the parents and intimidating ideology. Listen to the answer now:

The verse said: "Yet most people are disbelievers, although you may be keen to guide."

This verse and the other similar verses talk about a general concept of faith and its different parts which cover wide areas such as believing in God, Prophets, the hereafter and commitment to God's obedience. True believers who have this sense of belief are minority. However, believing in God's existence is a common belief which prevails in all areas and times. You know that believing in God is privilege to human societies throughout history.

From a scientific point of view, when something is associated with humanity at all times and places then it is considered an integral part of human lives not just a phenomenon. If it was a phenomenon, it would disappear at times and reappear in different places at different times. As you see, believing in God was in the past and present and will continue into the future. Thus, belief in God is associated with human instincts and it can not be considered an abnormal case in history. This means that believing in God is something like "Allah's handiwork according to the pattern on which He has made mankind: no change (let there be) in the work (wrought) by Allah: that is the standard Religion: but most among mankind understand not."

S So why doesn't this minority believe in God?

F Because their nature is corrupted .Haven't you seen how a baby's taste turns unpleasant when he gets sick; he would turn away from his mother's breast? Natural instincts can be corrupted in this way and hence one abandons worshipping God. Like the baby who goes back to his mother's breast after getting better, so is the instinct. It turns back to God after remedy.

F And this remedy could be a shock or inevitable danger one cannot deal with.

F Well-done! This remedy helps even the most perverted people and those who are farthest from God. Imagine a person who did not only perform all acts of polytheism, but also claimed to be god. Pharaoh once said: "I'm your greatest god." The nature of such a person, when faced with death, awakened and only then he manifested his faith when he said: "At length, when overwhelmed with the flood, he said: "I believe that there is no god except Him Whom the Children of Israel believe in."

So you see the one who claimed to be god returned to his nature when facing serious crisis, so it is very natural for those who are less corrupted with infidelity and polytheism to do the same.

S Thanks for this lesson Dad, but I have another question.

F Go ahead.

S You said: faith is associated with human beings' nature, and the evidence is that people at all times and places believe in God.

F Yes.

S But we see paganism spreading throughout history. How do you explain this?

F This is construed through the action of your baby brother when he is hungry.

S What? My infant brother! How? I can understand monotheism through my baby brother, but how can paganism be construed?

F Have you ever seen him sucking his finger instead of his mother's breast?

S Oh! Yes... yes. He searches for the source of food, and if he mistakes it or cannot find it; he sucks his finger as an alternative.

F Just like paganisms, the innate nature mistakenly finds the wrong alternative. This mistake happens because of some external reasons, such as the unavailability of the mother for her baby who is driven to suck his finger. As you know, after a while the baby refuses the alternative (finger) when hunger bites him and sucking his finger won't provide him with milk. Similarly, an idolater may also leave his/her idol when he/she faces a serious situation which forces the innate nature to reappear once again when idols fail tosatisfy the innate demands of reuniting with a real god– that is God.

S Thank God and thank you Dad. Please let me summarize what I've understood from our talk. The innate reasoning is the natural feeling that everyone has as a guide to God. This type of proof is a spiritual, instinctive attractiveness, not a rational, intellectual proof. It is the ultimate, unseen power to which humans resort when they are helpless. This instinctive attractiveness to God diminishes as a result of committing sins and corruption repeatedly. But it's restored soon when people face overwhelming crisis. Thus, nature guides people and brings them back to God.

F This is a great summary. Do you have another question, or shall I add another one?

S Please go ahead.

F There was an ideology which appeared in the twentieth century. It appeared and lasted for about eighty years, but finally collapsed because of its failure to appeal to human nature. This phenomenon, particularly during its failure, is strongly related to our subject.

S What is it, Dad?

F It is the Leninist- Marxist ideology or Communism, which appeared in the early twentieth century and

ruled half of the Eastern World. Around one third of the whole world's population yielded to that Power. It had dominated for about three quarters of the last century and it was supported by huge political, economical and military power. Threats and inducements were intensively used to spread atheism. But what was the result?

The result was a complete crash and clear failure to all the tremendous efforts which lasted for all that long time and involved two generations who were dominated and raised on communism. Atheism could not survive, and people did not accept the deviating communist ideology. Despite of all those efforts, people retained their relation with God. Now, atheists are minority and believers are the overwhelming majority in the world. That proofs that faith is inherent in human's nature and is not acquired through nurture and society.

S If faith had been acquired, it would have vanished as a result of the new ideological education practiced by communists for three quarters of the last century and didn't spare any aspect of religion without being destroyed. Communism was injecting atheistic thoughts in schools, streets, radio, television, stadiums, military camps and wherever there is a mouth to speak, an ear to listen and an eye to see. Despite all that, faith in God remained unshaken and atheism was defeated. "*That is because Allah - He is the Reality; and those beside Him whom they invoke,- they are but vain Falsehood*"

F "The Almighty God is true." Well-done son.

S "Allah is He, than Whom there is no other god; - the Sovereign, the Holy One, the Source of Peace (and Perfection), the Guardian of Faith, the Preserver of safety."

F Thank God for leading us to this way, which we couldn't otherwise find without His mercy. OK son go to bed now, good night!

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