

THE ULTIMATE END OF THE ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

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ALL HEAVENLY MESSAGES have placed a special emphasis on people's education in order to properly develop their natural potentials and bestow on them happiness both here and in the Hereafter. Islam is the final and greatest of all divine messages. Hence, its profound interest in the upbringing of mankind:

"O' You who believe guard yourselves and your families against a fire whose fuel is men and stones, and over which are angels stern and strong who disobey not Allah in what He commands them and do what they are commanded." (Quran, 66:6)

In the aforementioned verse, Allah the Glorious commands believers to properly educate themselves and their families, so that they could constitute the best possible human society. The Islamic teaching has neither been exclusively religious nor material. It has accommodated both the religious and the worldly affairs, since it has to prepare people for success in this world and in the hereafter. The holy Quran refers to this point, as:

"And seek by means of what Allah has given you the future abode and do not neglect your portion of this world."

The Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.) stated:

"The best of you are not those who neglected the worldly affairs for the Hereafter or the affairs of the Hereafter for the worldly. It is surely they who take from both."

So the ultimate end of the philosophy of Islamic education is two-fold. One is the achievement in this world and the other is for the hereafter by purifying one's self. End of philosophy of education in this world is the command over science and technology, while hereafter is through purifying oneself to open a passage towards heaven. Each of the factors involved is discussed here in detail.

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SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

ISLAM HAS ACCEDED to science and its creative capability of developing, maturing and achieving the social prosperity. It has also believed that any society that rejects science is reactionary and it may retard its own progress and prosperity in life. The Prophet said, "My nation's expiry occurs when they disdain knowledge."

Since its earliest stages, Islam declared war against ignorance and indolence. It has adopted positively the advocacy to knowledge and the florescence of the conceptual horizons. It has considered it as an essential element of forming the social, as well as, the individual lives and the motive behind the cultural, economical and social renaissance of the nation. Islam has regarded the seeking of knowledge as one of the precepts and the most significant elements of constructing the society and designing the civilisation.

The West claimed that Islam combats conceptions and eradicates the freedom of opinions and interdicts the seeking of knowledge. Pierre Lute refutes this opinion. He says, "We, the European, look at Islam as the religion of the conceptual gloom that events from enlightenment. We also suppose that Islam calls to extremity and poses many obstacles in the path of progression." First, this proves the Western people's ultimate ignorance of the Prophet's instructions. It is also regarded as an ignorance of the historical witnesses. Since its early centuries, Islam went on developing and proceeding in variant fields. We can realise the prompt elevation that the first caliphs did to Islam."

We have not seen any accusable, weaker and cheaper than the previous. A look to the factuality of this great religion will easily prove the falsity of such an accusation. Islam has cited the seeking of knowledge on the top of its precepts and projects. It has also alluded at the big differences between the educated and the ignorant and established amounts of professions and knowledge as the criteria of people's variance and preference. According to Hazrat Ali, "People are evaluated according to what they master."

Human-self is the origin and source of all actions, deeds, sayings, virtues and vices. If he is reformed, one's success in both worlds is assured. But if it becomes contaminated will turn into a source of

vices and will bring a catastrophe for this as well as the next world. If, he started walking on the righteous path might even surpass God's most favorite angels; but if showed indifference towards the "jewel-of-humanity" (*Gowhar-e-Insaniyat*) and selected the animalistic way of life would become even lower than them, falling into the darkest valleys of ignorance.

Religion and science have always been considered twin sisters by Islam and today at a time when science has taken great strides, they still continue to be associated. Furthermore, certain scientific data are used for a better understanding of the Quranic text. In a century where, for many, scientific truth has dealt a deathblow to religious belief, it is precisely the discoveries of science that, in an objective examination of the Islamic revelation, have highlighted the supernatural character of various aspects of the revelation.

After a study, which lasted ten years, the famous French physician Maurice Bucaille addressed the French Academy of Medicine in 1976 and expressed the complete agreement to the Quran with the established findings of modern science. He presented his study of the Quran concerning physiology and reproduction. His reason for doing that was: "our knowledge of these disciplines is such that it is impossible to explain how a text produced at the time of the Quran could have contained ideas that have only been discovered in modern times."

Decades later a noted embryologist Keith L. Moore and expert in his field upon being presented with the statements made in the Quran regarding the stages of the formation of the embryo from the mixing of the male and female gametes up to the embryo's full development remarked:

"It has been a pleasure for me to help clarify statements in the Quran about Human Development. It is clear to me that these statements must have come to Muhammad from God or Allah because almost all of this knowledge was not discovered until many centuries later."

Professor Moore presented his findings to scientists at several conferences. Several Canadian periodicals published many of Moore's statements and in addition he presented three television programmes in which he highlighted the compatibility of modern science with what has been revealed in the Quran more than 1400

years ago. Consequently, he was asked: “Does this mean that you believe that the Quran is the word of God?” to which he replied, “I find no difficulty in accepting this.”

In fact Professor Moore was so amazed at the accuracy of the descriptions and the terminology used for the various stages of the development of the embryo that he modified his own textbook on the subject. He incorporated all the relevant Quranic passages and authentic statements of the Prophet Muhammad into his book, *The Developing Human: Clinically Oriented Embryology With Islamic Additions*, which was published by W. B. Saunders in 1987 and was a standard university textbook in the United States. The book now contains passages of the Quran and the Hadith (verified statements of the Prophet Muhammad) for every stage of development and Professor Moore has also adopted the classification used in the above two sources.

Consider also the statement of Tejatet Tejasen (*Professor at the Department of Anatomy, Faculty of Medicine, Chiang-Mei University, Thailand*) after his study on the passages of Quran in dealing with embryology:

“From my studies and what I have learnt at this conference I believe that everything that has been recorded in the Quran 1400 years ago must be true. That can be proved the scientific way.”

The statement of E. Marshal Johnson (*Professor and Chairman, Dept. of Anatomy, Daniel Bough Institute, Thomas Jefferson University, Philadelphia, USA*) is also important to consider:

“The Quran describes not only the development of external form but emphasises also the internal stages—the stages inside the embryo of its creation and development, emphasising major events recognised by contemporary science If I was to transpose myself into that era, knowing what I do today and describing things, I could not describe the things that were described... I see no evidence to refute the concept that this individual Muhammad had to be developing this information from some place. . . . so I see nothing in conflict with the concept that divine intervention was involved”

Upon being presented with hadiths (verified statements of the Prophet Muhammad) concerning dominant and recessive characteristics, Joe Leigh Simpson (*Professor of Obstetrics and*

Gynecology, Northwestern University Medical School, Chicago, Illinois, USA) said:

“... these Hadeeths could not have been obtained on the basis of the scientific knowledge that was available at the time of the ‘writer’ It follows that not only is there no conflict between genetics and religion (Islam) but in fact religion (Islam) may guide science by adding revelation to some of the traditional scientific approaches There exist statements in the Quran shown centuries later to be valid which support knowledge in the Quran having been derived from God.”

According to T. V. N. Persaud (*Professor and Head, Dept. of Anatomy, Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, University of Manitoba, Canada*):

“Muhammad was a very ordinary man, he couldn’t read, didn’t know how to write, in fact he was an illiterate were talking about 1400 years ago, you have some illiterate person making profound statements that are amazingly accurate, of a scientific nature I personally can’t see how this could be mere chance, there are too many accuracies and like Dr. Moore I have no difficulty in my mind reconciling that this is a divine inspiration or revelation which lead him to these statements.”

These are just a number of quotes from the “Scientific Community” regarding the nature and the origins of the Quran. In fact the Quran and Hadith do not just talk about embryology but hundreds of other phenomenon including the earth and sun being round, spinning around their own axis and following their own orbits, the origin and formation of the universe, the two types of seas between which is a barrier, the role of mountains in stabilising the earths crust, the formation of milk in cows, the cause of sexual diseases, the location of pain receptors within the body, the expansion of the universe, the precise nature of the water cycle, the change in atmospheric pressure at high altitudes, the gender of the bee which is responsible for producing honey (female), the stars consuming themselves via the combustion of their gases and this being the source of their light and many more.

Explaining all these statements by chance alone is something, which has been resorted to, surprisingly by those deemed to be possessors of intellect and erudition. However this is not tenable, as the following demonstration will show. When one guesses regarding

nature of something (in an accurate and precise manner that is), there exist two possibilities: right or wrong. If one guesses another possibility, then there is only one chance in four of being correct, both times. If one make a third guess then you have one chance in eight of being correct all three times and so on.

The chances of correctly describing, lets say, ten phenomena are 1 in 1024. Another point to bear in mind is that the greater the number of things you describe, the chance of being wrong increases and thus the risk you are taking of being discredited gets bigger and bigger. The Quran and the *sunnah* (an authentic saying of the Prophet) make statements on literally hundreds of phenomena and at the same time openly calls the scientific community to verify them. If one from the scientific community was to make hundreds of new claims regarding his particular field and was then to call all his fellow specialists to prove him wrong he would know without doubt that he is standing on an undermined sand cliff, which is ready to crumble with him. How then for the one who makes statements about the specialties of others?

One will be surprised to learn that such a scientific approach has been commanded in the Quran with the objective of ascertaining its truthfulness. "Do they not carefully consider (investigate) the Quran or are there locks upon their hearts." (Quran, 47:24) "Do they not carefully analyse the Quran. If it had been from other than Allah then surely they would have found many discrepancies therein." (Quran, 4:82)

So religious (that is Islamic) beliefs are not based upon blind acceptance as many have generalised to all religions and thus falsely attributed to the Quran and Islam. This has been the experience of Europe in the past 3-400 years in which scientific advancement and its findings were seen as heretical, its proponents ridiculed and often exiled and tortured. Islam has never had that experience.

It is true that people's academic capabilities differ and thus some will be unable to ascertain the truth of it and therefore may accept it blindly. But again they have the opportunity to ask the people of knowledge, those who are in a position to make such a judgement, like those quoted above. It is from the principles of wisdom and justice that when you don't know you don't make a judgement yourself but rather consult one who is in a position to do so. In fact this is something Allah has also commanded: "So ask the People of

Knowledge if you do not know (Quran, 21:7). He also said: "And those who have been given Knowledge know that which has been revealed to you from your Lord is the Truth." (Quran, 34:6)

This is a clear proof of the lack of the dependence upon dogma, superstition and personal experience and an indication of the obligation to research, ascertain and to verify in a scientific manner the credibility of religious (Islamic) belief. Fortunately there are those who have done exactly that like Keith Moore and his scientific colleagues but there are others who have invented lies and slanders in order to discredit the Quran and the Prophet. However when these lies and slanders are put to the test scientifically they fail miserably and their irrationality and bias becomes evident. Some of the common claims are that Muhammad was possessed or was an eloquent poet or was a magician or was one who was brainwashed or was a soothsayer. In fact all of these have been denied and rebutted in the Quran itself in numerous places and numerous times. It is even stranger that these were the very same claims made by the people who belied the Prophet during his lifetime and they are the only ones that are resorted to today. What a great advancement!

"Nay! We hurl the Truth against falsehood and it does smash its brains and thus it perishes. And woe be to you for what you describe (with your tongues)." (Quran, 21:18)

PIETY:

THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR FOR PURIFICATION

IN THE ISLAMIC SCHOOL, piety has been assigned the most important position and the pious believers are regarded as the most distinguished and respectable persons in an Islamic Society. The phrase piety in the Quranic verses and narrations has been repeated quite frequently. The Holy Quran considers piety as the sole criteria for appraising the value and worth of individuals and said: "Lo! the noblest of you, in the sight of God-Almighty is the best in conduct." (Quran, 49: 13)

The piety has been introduced as the best provisions for the Hereafter, and greatest means for achieving salvation. The Holy Quran said: "For such of them as do right and ward off (evil), there is great reward." (Quran, 3: 172) And says, "Then whosoever refrainth from evil and amendeth -there shall no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve." (Quran, 7:35) "And vie one with

another for forgiveness from your Lord, and for a Paradise as wide as are the Heavens and the earth, prepared for those who ward off (evil)." (Quran, 3:133) And said: "Lo! Those who kept their duty dwell in gardens and delight, happy because of what their Lord hath given them." (Quran, 52:17-18)

The Holy Prophet once said: "There is a characteristic that whoever acquires it will have the world and Hereafter in his control. He was asked: 'Oh Prophet of God! What is that characteristic?' The Prophet (S) replied: "Piety! Whoever desires to become the dearest person should become pious, and then he recited the following verse: "And who so ever keepth his duty to God, He will appoint a way out for him. And will provide for him from (a quarter) whence he hath no expectation." (Bihar al-Anwar, vol 70, p-285)

In some of the traditions, piety has been introduced as the most important factor for self-perfection and purification as well as the most effective medicine for curing the psychic diseases.

PIETY:

OBJECTIVE BEHIND THE DIVINE COMMANDS

IN ISLAM, the piety has been introduced as a genuine moral virtue and the real aim for explanation of (Divine) Commandments.

Following are some of the examples God-Almighty said in Holy Quran:

"Oh mankind! Worship your Lord, who hath created you and those before you, so that you may ward off (evil)." (Quran, 2:21)

And:

"O you believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, even as it was prescribed for those before you, that ye may ward off (evil)." (Quran, 2:183)

And:

"Their flesh and their blood reach not God, but the devotion from you reacheth him." (Quran, 22:37)

And:

"So make provisions for yourself (Hereafter); for the best provision is to ward off evil." (Quran, 2:197)

Therefore, it could be seen that the aim behind explaining some of these commandments or worships is actually to encourage people to acquire piety by performing those particular acts of worships. Piety in Islam have been attached so much importance that it has

been introduced as the sole criteria for the acceptance of other deeds, so much so that the deed without piety shall be worthless and will not be accepted. The Holy Quran said: "God accepteth only from those who ward off evil." (Quran, 5:27) The Holy Prophet said to Abu Dhar:

"Try your best to acquire piety, because, nothing accompanied by piety shall be regarded smaller, and how come a thing accepted by God-Almighty, could be regarded smaller? Because, the Holy Qur'an said: God accepts only from pious ones."

God-Almighty said in the Holy Quran: "But if ye persevere and ward off (evil), then that of the steadfast heart of things." (Quran, 3:186)

Therefore, as could be seen that piety in Holy Quran and other Islamic traditions has been mentioned as a genuine moral, virtue, best provisions for the Hereafter, important medicine for curing the heart's disease, and greatest means for attaining spiritual purification and self-refinement. In emphasizing its importance, it is sufficient to say that it has been mentioned as the real aim behind explanation of all Divine Commandments and Regulations.

TAQWA

Often it is thought that *taqwa* means piety and abstinence and so implies a negative attitude. In other words, it is maintained that the greater the amount of abstinence, withdrawal, and self-denial, the more perfect is one's *taqwa*. According to this interpretation, *taqwa* is a concept divorced from active life; secondly it is a negative attitude; thirdly, it means that the more severely this negative attitude is exercised, the greater one's *taqwa* would be. Accordingly, the sanctimonious professors of *taqwa*, in order to avoid its being tainted and to protect it from any blemish, withdraw from the bustle of life, keeping themselves away from involvement in any matter or affair of the world.

Undeniably, abstinence and caution exercised with discretion is an essential principle of wholesome living. For, in order to lead a healthy life, man is forced to negate and affirm, deny and posit, renounce and accept, avoid and welcome different things. It is through denial and negation that the positive in life can be realized. It is through renunciation and avoidance that concentration is given to action.

The principle of *tawhid* contained in the dictum *la ilaha illa Allah* [there is not God but Allah] is at the same time a negation as well as an affirmation. Without negation of everything other than God it is not possible to arrive at *tawhid*. That is why rebellion and surrender, *kufr* (unbelief, rejection) and *iman* (belief), go together. That is: every surrender requires a rebellion and every *iman* calls for a denial and *kufr* and every affirmation implies a negation. The Quran says, "So whoever disbelieves in taught and believes in God, has laid hold of the most firm bond . . ." (Quran, 2:256)

However, firstly, every denial, negation, rejection and rebellion operates between the limits of two opposites: the negation of one thing implies movement towards its opposite; the rejection of the one marks the beginning of the acceptance of the other. Accordingly, every healthy denial and rejection has both a direction and a goal and is confined to a definite limit. Therefore, a blind practice and purposeless attitude, which has neither direction, nor a goal, nor is confined within any limits, is neither defensible nor of any spiritual worth.

Secondly, the meaning of *taqwa* is not synonymous with that of 'abstinence', even in its logically accepted sense discussed above. *Taqwa*, on the other hand, is a spiritual faculty, which appears as a result of continued exercise and practice. The healthy and rational forms of abstinence are, firstly, the preparatory causes for the emergence of that spiritual faculty; secondly, they are also its effects and outcome.

This faculty strengthens and vitalises the soul, giving it a kind of immunity. A person who is devoid of this faculty, if he wants to keep himself free from sins; it is unavoidable for him to keep away from the causes of sin. Since society is never without these causes, inevitably he has to go into seclusion and isolate himself. It follows from this argument that one should either remain pious by isolating himself from one's environment, or he should enter society and bid farewell to *taqwa*. Moreover, according to this logic, the more isolated and secluded a person's life is and the more he abstains from mixing with other people, the greater is his piety and *taqwa* in the eyes of the common people.

However, if the faculty of *taqwa* is cultivated inside a person's soul, it is no longer necessary for him to seclude himself from his

environment. He can keep himself clean and uncorrupted without severing his relations with society.

The former kinds of persons are like those who take refuge in mountains for fear of some plague or epidemic. The second kind resembles those who acquire immunity and resistance through vaccination and so do not deem it necessary to leave the city and avoid contact with their townsfolk. On the other hand, they hasten to the aid of the suffering and the sick in order to save them. Sa'di is alluding to the first kind of pious in the '*Gulistan*':

Saw I a sage in the mountains,
Happy in a cave, far from the world's tide.
Said I, "Why not to the city return,
And lighten your heart of this burden?"
He said, "The city abounds in tempting beauties,
And even elephants slip where mud is thick."

Taqwa is a spiritual faculty acquired through exercise and assiduity, which on its emergence produces certain characteristic effects, one of which is the ability to abstain from sins with ease.

"I guarantee the truth of my words and I am responsible for what I say. If similar events and experiences of the past serve as a lesson for a person, then *taqwa* prevents him from plunging recklessly into doubts.

Beware that sins are like unruly horses whose reins have been taken away and which plunge with their riders into hell-fire. But *taqwa* is like a trained steed whose reins are in the hands of its rider and enters with its rider into the Paradise." [Extracts from the last Sermon of the Prophet Mohammad]

In this sermon, the Prophet Mohammad described *taqwa* as a spiritual condition which results in control and command over oneself. It explains that the result of subjugation to desires and lusts and being devoid of *taqwa* degrades one's personality making it vulnerable to the cravings of the carnal self. In such a state, man is like a helpless rider without any power and control, whom his mount takes wherever it desires. The essence of *taqwa* lies in possessing a spiritual personality endowed with will power and possessing mastery over the domain of one's self. A man with *taqwa* is like an expert horseman riding a well-trained horse and who with complete mastery and control drives his tractable steed in the direction of his choice.

Certainly the *taqwa* of God assists His *awliya* (friends) in abstaining from unlawful deeds and instills His fear into their hearts. As a result, their nights are passed in wakefulness and their days in thirst (on account of fasting).

Taqwa is something that automatically leads to abstention from unlawful actions and to the fear of God, which are its necessary after-effects. Therefore, according to this view, *taqwa* is neither abstinence nor fear of God. It is rather a sacred spiritual faculty of which these two are only consequences: For indeed, today *taqwa* is a shield and a safeguard, and tomorrow (i.e. in the Hereafter) it shall be the path to Paradise.

FAITH:

FOUNDATION OF SPIRITUAL PERFECTION

FAITH AND ENLIGHTENMENT are the bases for self perfection and journeying toward God, the Almighty. Before starting this journey a wayfarer must decide about his final destination, must know where is he going and which path he must select, otherwise he would get lost and would never reach to his final destination. Faith in God induces courage for movement, search and endeavor as well as clearly demarcates his path and final destination. Those who lack faith are helpless to walk upon the straight path of perfection.

The Holy Quran said: "And Lo! those who believe not in the Hereafter are indeed astray from the path." (Quran, 23: 74) And: "Nay, but those who disbelieve in the Hereafter are in torment and for error." (Quran, 34:8)

If a person who does not believe in the existence of God and the hereafter become absolutely cut off from the world of perfection and his activities are limited to follow his material and animalistic requirements. Therefore, his arms and objectives for movement could not be any thing else other than material world.

He is not journeying on the straight path of perfection and therefore, can never attain God's Nearness .The direction of his movement is world and therefore, continuously gets farther away from the straight path of human exaltation. Even if an unbeliever performs a righteous deed it would not become a means for his self-perfection; because, he has not done it with the intention for God and nearness to Him (*Taqarrub*), so that it becomes beneficial for him, rather has done it for the sake of this world and, therefore, will see

the result in this world but nothing will be left for him in the Hereafter. Accordingly:

“A similitude of those who disbelieve in their Lord: their works are ashes which the wind bloweth hard upon a stormy day. They have no control of aught that they have earned. That is the extreme failure.” (Quran, 14:18)

Anyway, faith is the foundation of deeds and bestows upon them merit. If, a believer’s soul gets intermingled with faith (*Iman*) and the Phrase of Monotheism (*Kalma-e-Towheed*) would become illuminated and would ascend towards God-Almighty. Of course, righteous deeds too help him in this ascent. The Holy Quran said:

“Whoso desireth power (should know that) all power belongeth to God-Almighty. Unto Him good words ascend and the pious deed doth He exalt.” (Quran, 35:10)

The righteous deeds carry a human soul upward enabling him to attain the exalted position of God’s nearness and providing him a sacred and beautiful existence subjected to his possessed with the faith (*Iman*). An unbeliever’s soul is dark and does not have the decency of possessing God’s Nearness and delightful existence. The Holy Quran said:

“Whosoever doth right, whether male or female and is a believer, him verily we shall quicken with good life.” (16:97)

Therefore, a wayfarer from the very beginning must strive and endeavor to strengthen his faith because the stronger and superior will be his faith the higher will be his ascent and rank. According to the Quran:

“God-Almighty will exalt those who believe among you, and those who have knowledge, to high ranks, God is informed of what you do.” (58:11)

NOURISHMENT OF MORAL VIRTUES

ONE OF THE WAYS for gradual nourishment and perfection of self, spiritual migration and attaining God’s nearness is to excel in moral virtues deeply rooted within human primordial nature. Good moral ethics are values, which are incorporated within human celestial spirit and with their gradual nourishment the humanness of a human being attains perfection until finally ascending towards the exalted sublime position of God’s nearness. The Holy Essence of the Lord of the World is the fountainhead of all perfection, since, a

human being also belongs to the upper heavens, through his pure, upright and uncontaminated nature recognises the human perfection which are in proportion to Heavenly Kingdom, naturally feels attracted towards them.

It is because of these considerations that all human beings at all times, regarding appreciation of good moral virtues namely: justice, sacrifice, righteousness, trust, benevolence, bravery, patience and perseverance, knowledge, defence of deprived, gratitude, generosity, loyalty, reliance (upon God), hospitality, pardon and forgiveness, politeness and social service, etc. are in agreement. Accordingly,

“And a soul and Him who perfected it, and inspired it (with conscience of) what is wrong for it and (what is) right for it. He is indeed successful who causes it to grow. And he is indeed a failure who stunts it.” (Quran, 91: 7-10)

Moral virtues when repeated plant themselves firmly within human-self and like a habit becomes a part of human nature. It influences the self-building, what to become and how to become of a human being. It is because of these considerations that special attention has been paid towards moral ethics in Islam and they constitute a great portion of Islamic commands. There are hundreds and thousands of traditions, which deal with ethics. Majority of Quranic verses consist of ethical commands and majority of the Quranic stories pursue moral objectives so much so that it could rightly be called as a book of moral guidance.

In principle, one of the great aims of the Divine prophets had been self-purification and nourishment of moral excellence. The Prophet of Islam too had clearly announced the objective behind his prophetic mission as perfection and nourishment of moral ethics and said: “I have been appointed as prophet of God for the completion and perfection of moral ethics.” (*Al-Mustadrak*, vol 2 p282) Also, said:

“I recommend to you the importance of good moral conduct because, I have been appointed by God-Almighty to accomplish this very aim.”

(*Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 69, p-375)

NEARNESS TO GOD

IT SHOULD BE understood that human movement is a real one and is not a figurative thing. This movement is related to his Celestial Spirit and not to his body. Also, this movement takes place within his

inner essence and is not an external phenomenon. In this movement his precious jewel of human essence moves and becomes metamorphosed. Therefore, the axis of human movement is also a real axis and is not something metaphorical, but the axis of movement is not separate from the mover's essence, rather the mover moves within his inner essence carrying the axis of movement along with him.

Now the question arises that every movement carries some goals. Therefore, the human beings in the world are moving towards which objective and what is going to be their eventual fate? The traditions and Quranic verses reveal that the ultimate objective or goal destined for human beings is God's Nearness, but all human beings do not travel on the straight path and do not attain the exalted position of God's-Nearness. The Holy Quran says

“And ye will be three kinds: (First) those on the right hand; what of those on the right hand? And those on the left hand, what of those on the left hand? And the foremost in the race, the foremost in the race: Those are they who will be brought nigh, in gardens of delight.” (56: 7-12)

The people on the right hand side are the ones who have received eternal salvation, the people on the left are the ones who have received adversity and the people foremost in the race are the ones who distinguished themselves in their journeying on the straight path and attained the exalted position of God's nearness. This verse clearly indicates that the objective or goal behind human movement must be God's nearness.

According to these verses of the Quran:

“Thus, if he is of those brought nigh. Then breath of life, and plenty and a Garden of delight. And if he is of those on the right hand, {then the greeting} “Peace be unto thee” from those on the right hand. But if he is of the rejecters, the erring. Then the welcome will be boiling water and roasting at Hell fire.” (Quran, 56:88-94)

Further:

“It is not so (as understood by unbelievers), Nay but the record of the righteous is in Illiyin. Ah, what will convey unto thee what Illiyin is! A written record. Attested by those who are brought near (unto their Lord).” (83:18-21)

From the above verse it may be concluded that the exalted position of God's Nearness and attainment of absolute perfection is the ultimate goal of people's journeying and movement. Therefore, God's favorite servants are the most distinguished group among the people who have been bestowed eternal bliss. And,

“. . . remember when the angels said: O Mary! Lo! God-Almighty giveth thee glad tidings of a word from him, Son of Mary, illustrious in the world and the Hereafter, and one of those brought near (unto God-Almighty).
(Quran, 3: 45)

It can be inferred from the traditions and Quranic verses that distinguished and deserving God's servants who have surpassed others in belief, faith, and righteous deeds shall be blessed with the most privileged and exalted position of God's Countenance, and in accordance to the interpretation of some verses has been also named "the Place of Nearness to the Most Magnificent King" (*Malik Muqtadar*). Also, the martyrs will be assigned this special position. To quote:

"Think not of those who are slain in the way of God-Almighty, as dead. Nay, they are living with their Lord they have provision." (Quran, 3:169)

Therefore, the ultimate human perfection and the final destination of the wayfarers is Nearness of God-Almighty.

MEANINGS OF NEARNESS TO GOD

NOW LET US SEE what is meant by God's Nearness? And how could it be imagined that a person may reach closer to God-Almighty. The nearness means being close and could be defined as follows:

i. Nearness Relative to Place. The two entities, which are closer physically, are called near to each other.

ii. Nearness Relative to Time. When two things are closer to each other relative to time are called near to each other.

Of course, it is evident that nearness of (God's) servants with Him could not belong to the above mentioned two categories, because, God-Almighty is beyond the limits of time and place, rather He is the creator of them, therefore, it is not possible for any thing to have nearness with Him relative to time and place.

iii. Metaphorical Nearness. Sometimes it is said that Mr. X is very close and intimate with Mr. Y, which means that Mr. Y Respects, likes, and accepts Mr. X's recommendations and

suggestions. This sort of nearness is called metaphorical, figurative, and ceremonial but is not real.

Could this kind of nearness be possible between a servant and God? Of course, it is true God loves His deserving servants and accepts their prayers but still this kind of nearness could not be possible between a servant and God, because as was pointed out earlier, that this has been proved by the logical sciences and Quranic verses, and traditions also support that the wayfarer, his direction, and straight path all are real things and are not figurative and ceremonial. Likewise, return towards God which has been so much emphasised in plenty of Quranic verses and traditions is a real thing and cannot be metaphorical or figurative.

For example, God said in the Holy Quran: "O Thou soul at peace! Return unto thy Lord, content in his good pleasure." (Quran, 89:27-28)

And, "Whoso doth right, it is for his soul, and whoso doth wrong, it is against it. And afterward unto your Lord ye will be brought back." (Quran, 45:15)

And, "Who say, when a misfortune striketh them: Lo! We are God's and Lo! unto Him we are returning." (Quran 2:156)

Anyway, return to God-Almighty, straight path, way of God and attaining self-perfection are real things and are not metaphorical. A human being's movement is conscious and optional act whose result will become manifested after his death. Since the very beginning of Human existence this movement begins and continues until death. The nearness to God is real thing and God's decent servants really become closer to Him and impious and sinner indeed take distance from God. Therefore, let us see what is meant by nearness to God-Almighty. God's nearness is not comparable to other types of nearness, rather it is a special kind of nearness which might be called nearness relative to perfection or relative to the rank of exaltedness of that particular existence. In order to further clarify let us refer to the following preface.

The books of wisdom and Islamic philosophy have confirmed that existence is real and consists of various rank and degrees. It may be compared to the analogy of illumination, which consists of various degrees of lights varying from low to very high. The lowest degree of a lighting lamp could be one watt, which is also

illumination till the lamp with infinite brightness, which is nothing other than illumination. In between the lowest and highest limits of illumination there exists various intermediate degrees of light differing relative to extreme limits in proportion to their weakness and strength.

Existence too consists of various ranks and positions differing in proportion to their weakness and strength. The lowest degree being the existence of nature and matter till the highest rank of existence the essence of God which from the point of view of perfection is infinite and absolute. In between these two extremities there also exists intermediate degrees of existence varying in proportion to their weakness and strength. It becomes clear that as much as an existence is stronger and holder of higher rank, in perfection would be closer relative to the most supreme existence and the source of absolute perfection, the essence of God, and opposite to that the weaker an existence would be, the farther it will be relative to the Essence of Self Existent (*Wajib al-Wajoud*).

Now in the light of above explanation the meaning of nearness of servants to God and distance from Him could be imagined. As for as the celestial spirit is concerned, a human being is an abstract reality, which from the point of view of manifestation is related to matter, and because of that is capable to grow, becoming perfect until attaining the ultimate degree of his existence. From the beginning of his movement until arriving at the final destination he is not more than one person and one reality, but as much as he achieves perfection and ascension in his journeying within his essence, in the same proportion becomes nearer to the source of all creation, the absolute and infinite perfection—the Holy Essence of God.

A human being through belief and righteous deeds can make his existence complete and perfect so that he could attain God's Nearness, thus, being able to utilize divine blessings and favors to his maximum advantage and therefore, making his own essence a source of further benevolence and goodness.

SOUNDNESS OF HEART

THE PHRASE heart carries special importance and has been used extensively in the Holy Quran and narrations. But what is meant with this phrase is not the pine-shaped physical-heart located in the

left side of the chest, which support the animal life system by continuously pumping fresh blood into various parts of the body. Because, the Holy Quran relates things to heart which are not comparable with this pine-shaped heart.

For instance:

i. Reasoning and Comprehension. The Holy Quran says:

“Have they not traveled in the land and have they hearts wherewith to feel and ears wherewith to hear.” (22:46)

ii. Un-comprehending and Reasoning. Accordingly,

“Having hearts wherewith they understand not, and having eyes wherewith they see not.” (Quran, 7:179)

And “. . . their hearts are sealed, so that they apprehend not.” (Quran, 9:87)

iii. Faith. In this context, the Quran elaborates:

“These are they into whose hearts He has impressed faith and strengthened them with a spirit from Him.” (Quran, 58:22)

iv. Blasphemy and Disbelief. Accordingly,

“And as for those who believe not in the Hereafter there hearts refuse to know, for they are proud.” (Quran, 16:22)

And,

“Such are they whose hearts and ears and eyes God hath sealed. And such are the heedless.” (Quran, 16:108)

v. Dissension. God said in the Holy Quran.

“The Hypocrites fear lest a surah should be revealed concerning them, proclaiming what is in their hearts.” (Quran, 9: 64)

vi. To Receive Guidance. Allah says:

“And whosoever believeth in God, He guideth his heart. And God is knower of all things.” (Quran, 4:11)

And,

“Most surely there is a reminder in this for him who has a heart or he gives ear and is a witness.” (50: 37)

vii. Negligence. According to Quran:

“And obey not him whose heart we have made heedless of Our Remembrance, who followeth his own lust.” (Quran, 18:28)

viii. Certainty and Tranquility. Accordingly:

“Verily in the remembrance of God do hearts find rest.” (Quran, 13:28)

And,

“He it is who sent down peace of reassurance into the hearts of the believers that they might add faith unto their faith.” (Quran, 48:4)

ix. Anxiety and Conflict. God says:

“They alone ask leave of thee who believe not in God and the Last Day, and whose hearts feel doubt, so in their doubt they waver.” (Quran, 9:45)

x. Blessing and Kindness. God has said:

“And places compassion and mercy in the hearts of those who followed him.” (Quran, 57:27)

And,

“He it is who supporteth thee with His Help and with the believers. And (as for the believers) hath attuned their hearts.” (Quran, 8: 62-63)

xi. Hot-temper and Cruelty. Accordingly:

“If thou hadst been stern and fierce of heart they would have dispersed from round about thee.” (Quran, 3:159)

Therefore, heart in the Holy Quran has been assigned the most important privileged position, and various psychic tasks have been related to it. Such as faith, blasphemy, hypocrisy, reasoning, understanding, not understanding, acceptance of truth, rejection of truth, guidance, deviation, sin, intention, purification, corruption, benevolence, aggravation, love, invocation, negligence, fear, anger, doubt, conflict, mercy, cruelty, regret, assurance, arrogance, jealousy, rebellion, offense, and other similar acts. Since the pine shaped piece of flesh called heart could not be the origin of these effects, instead these effects are the consequences of human self and spirit. Therefore, it could be said: What is meant of heart is the same “Celestial Jewel”, which controls the degree of human-ness within a human being: the heart possesses such exalted position in the Holy Quran that it is mentioned when the topic of revelation that is communication between God and men is discussed. God-Almighty said to Holy Prophet (S):

“Which is the true spirit hath brought down, upon the heart, that thou mayest be (one) of the warners.” (Quran, 26:193-194)

And,

“Say (O Muhammad, to mankind) who is enemy to Gabriel! For he it is who hath revealed (this scripture) to thy heart by God’s leave.” (Quran, 2:97)

The heart’s position is so eminent that it sees the revealing angel and hears his voice. Accordingly:

“And He revealed unto His slave (Prophet Muhammad) that which he revealed. The Heart lied not (in seeing the angel) what it saw.” (Quran, 53:10-11)

THE RIGHTEOUS DEEDS

IT MAY BE derived from the Holy Quran that after the belief (*Iman*) the righteous deeds play the most important role in attaining self-perfection, God’s Nearness, higher human ranks, and pure delightful life of the Next World. According to the Quran:

“Whosoever doth right, whether male or female, and is a believer, him verily We shall quicken with good life and We shall pay them a recompense in proportion to the best of what they used to do.” (Quran, 16: 97)

And,

“But whoso cometh unto Him a believer, having done good works, for such are the high stations.” (Quran, 20:75)

And,

“... whoever hopeth for the meeting with his lord, let him to righteous deeds and make none share of the worship due unto his lord.” (Quran, 18:110)

And,

“Whoso desireth power should know that) all power belongeth to God. Unto Him good words ascend, and the pious deed doth He exalt.” (Quran, 35:10)

The Glorious God in this verse explains that all power, prestige, and wealth belong to Him and the sacred word that is the clean and pure soul of a Monotheist (*Muahid*) and righteous belief in Monotheism (*Towheed*) will ascend towards God and this will be made possible through the righteous deeds.

The righteous deeds performed with pure intention and sincerity affect the doer’s self, thus nourishing him for attaining perfection. The Holy Quran clearly explains that the pure and charming life of the Hereafter and attainment of the most sublime spiritual position of God’s Nearness and Countenance is possible only through the combination of belief and righteous deeds. The Holy Quran has emphasized the importance of righteous deeds a lot and regards it as the only means for achieving eternal

salvation and prosperity. The value and worth of righteous deeds depends upon their being compatible with religious law and revelations.

Because the Creator of the men as well as of the world, who is familiar with the special creation of human beings, knows his path of perfection and salvation and therefore, accordingly has revealed it to the Holy Prophet (S) through the revelations so that he may present it to the people for their utilization. Allah has said in the Holy Quran:

“O you who believe, obey God and the messenger while he calleth you to that which quickeneth you.” (8:24)

The righteous deeds are the deeds that have been defined by religious law (*shariah*) as mandatory (*wajib*) or recommended (*mustahab*) deeds, and a wayfarer through their performance may undertake his spiritual migration leading him towards God's Nearness. This is the only way and all other ways are deviated and misleading and will never take a wayfarer to his final destination. A wayfarer must be absolutely obedient to religious law and for his mystical journey should not follow any other path except the religious path and should avoid strictly engaging into invocations and incantations that do not have any authenticity in religious law.

Because, not only they do not take a wayfarer towards his destination instead, carry him farther apart from his destination since deviation from religious law is innovation and sin. To start with, a wayfarer should try his best to perform all religious obligatory obligations correctly in accordance with regulations, because, their renunciation will not result in attainment of higher spiritual positions, however seriously he may endeavour in performing recommended deeds and engaging into invocations and incantations.

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