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Islam Advocates Justice

According to the Islamic outlook, the whole world is a reality based on equity and justice. The heavens and the earth have been set up on this very basis. Everything in the world is calculated and planned.

"He has raised the heaven and has set up a standard for everything". (Surah al-Rahman, 55:7).

Everything in the cosmos is moving forward towards its goal. There is nothing disorderly and haphazard. From the order found in a living cell and the heart of an atom to the accurate system of the body of a living being, to the precise balance found between the planets of the solar system as well as the galaxies and to the marvelous laws governing the entire world, which are being discovered and put to use by science, everything indicates that there exists a calculated system and organization.

On the basis of what Imam Ali (P) has said, justice means putting everything in its place. In contrast, injustice means putting a thing out of its due place.

Any deviation from the general rules and relations governing the world, will cause confusion and disorder, and will disturb the balance maintained by the firm natural laws.

Everything has to move in its own orbit and advance towards its evolution.

Balance and order are the inevitable laws governing nature. The natural phenomena are not free to choose what kind of mutual relationship they should have or whether they should or should not maintain a balance. Even the reaction produced by some sort of disturbance in nature is meant to restore equilibrium and to remove the hurdles in the way of evolution. This reaction also follows an inevitable course already prescribed. In fact even any disturbance in the natural order has its own special method and procedure when order in a wider sense is disturbed, nature itself produces some correctives from within or without.

The penetration of the germs or viruses of a disease into human body causes cramps and pain, but the reaction caused by white globules or outside medicines fights the germs and viruses and at last restores the health and general equilibrium of the body. This is an example of the compulsory law of the combat of evil.

Justice of will or willed justice

While exercising his will, man is particularly required to be just. As out of all factors governing man's actions that of his will and his power of choice plays the basic role, its comparison with the role of other factors and compulsory norms, has given rise to one of the biggest philosophical questions which, it is not wrong to say, relates to one of the oldest and the most sensitive human ideas. What is interesting is that one's views in this respect have a direct effect on his efforts, on his actions and on his performance with regard to improving the lot of himself and of society.

The question of predestination and free will posed much controversy among the Muslims like other peoples, and gave rise to a great deal of philosophical and scholastic debate.

Some people in view of those verses which declare that honor and dishonor and guidance and misguidance are in the hand of Allah, have come to the conclusion that man has no volition, and is just a tool in the Hand of Allah having no will of his own at all. On this theory they have based another principle: They assert that their belief in the Oneness of Allah and His absolute authority, requires them to believe that all the phenomena of the world, including the deeds and conduct of man, come within the purview of Allah's will only and that there exists no will besides His will. The doing of anything by anyone else independently is inconsistent with the concentration of will in the person of Allah.

This view was encouraged by the opportunist governments of the time, for it stopped every criticism of their actions. The people could not raise their voice against their rulers even when they saw the abundance of wealth, pomp and show at the court and found themselves in utter poverty and misery, for they were made to believe that everything was in the Hand of Allah who gave honor and wealth to whomever He pleased and awarded misery and humiliation to whomever He willed. People had to bear with every injustice and inequity, because that was the will of Allah.

This position was similar to that which prevailed in the Sasanid empire where common people had to live with the privations of the class in which they were born, because it was not possible for them to shift from one class to another. Hence they had to bear the misery of their class while the upper classes lived a life of luxury.

Similarly among the Hindus, the untouchables suffered extreme legal and social handicaps. They could not even imagine to get rid of their despicable condition.

In Islam there is no question of classes, social groups or racial and tribal grades. All people have been created alike and irrespective of their parentage stand in one row.

But by raising the question that the fate of the people and their social conditions are predestined and giving a special interpretation to it, the rulers of those days could silence the people and suppress their voice. That is why the Ash'arite doctrine which tended towards predestination virtually became the official one. The Mu'tazilites who believed in a sort of free will lost favor with the court and were subjected to pressure and threats.

Another group of Muslims in view of those verses of the Qur'an, which indicate that man is a free agent, came to believe that man has complete volition and he himself decides his fate. These people cited the advent of the Prophets and their promises and warnings as well as the questions of legal responsibility, the future life and the existence of Paradise and Hell as a proof of the authenticity of their doctrine.

They raised the question that in case the deeds of man were regarded as the works of Allah, then sins, atrocities and corruption would also have to be regarded as Divine acts, though we know that Allah is far above anything evil. To counter this argument the Ash'arites put forward their doctrine of *tanzih* meaning that Allah being free from all defects, no evil could be ascribed to Him.

Doctrine of Justice

This is the real Shi'ah doctrine based on the moderate views of Islam.

Imam Jafar al Sadiq (P) has said:

"There is no predestination nor absolute human discretion. The truth lies between the two extremes".

To understand this view fully, careful attention should be paid to the following points:

(1) We believe in the Unity of Allah in all its dimensions and acknowledge His absolute authority.

Everything in the world is subject to His will. His dominion includes the entire heavens and the earth.

(2) His command in the form of established norms governs nature and man as well as all causes, factors and natural relationships in the world.

(3) The conduct of man is a phenomenon caused by many factors including man's will, which is also a

norm established by Allah. In other words, it is the will of Allah that man should make his own decisions.

As man's free will is also an outcome of the command of Allah; therefore Allah alone is the Sovereign Lord of the whole universe including man.

(4) It is evident that man's free will does not amount to absolute freedom. It has many limitations; natural, environmental, hereditary, innate etc. Therefore man does not enjoy absolute discretion especially in view of the following:

(5) The existence of revelation and Divine message, the religious laws and commandments and lastly the belief in the Hereafter and practical recompense, place limitations on him. The legal and doctrinal restrictions affect the free choice of man.

(6) It is man himself who by the misuse of his choice brings about evils and vices. If there exists any unrighteousness and corruption in society, that is the result of man's own actions and is not the creation of Allah's will, for He is far above any vice and evil.

It may be asked why Allah created those people who make mischief? Was it not better that He would have created only those who could do no wrong and would have been all good and virtuous?

The answer is that had He created such people, they would have had no will or power. Man is a free being. He sometimes does what is good and sometimes what is bad. Some individuals go to the right direction and some go astray. That is the characteristic of freedom. Hence the question should be put this way:

Was it better to create man as a being having no will and choice or to create him as a free being having the power to choose and decide, as he is?

The answer is obvious. A free and conscious being is better.

Now as you have chosen this answer, you will have to accept its consequences also, which are a world mixed of virtue and vice, justice and injustice, truth and falsehood, freedom and subjugation, conflict and clashes, and a man ready to play a free and conscious role in it.

(7) But here a question arises: the Qur'an says: "

Say: O 'Allah Owner of Sovereignty! You bestow sovereignty on whomever You will and You withdraw sovereignty from whomever You will. You exalt whomever You will and You abase whomever You will. In Your Hand is all that is good". (Surah Ale Imran, 3: 26).

Again the Qur'an says: "*You who guide aright and it is You who lead astray*". There are many other similar verses mentioned in the Qur'an.

Now if people are free and masters of their own destiny, how is it that honor and dishonor is not in their own hands?

The answer is that all phenomena of the world follow certain norms and rules. These norms also have been framed and established by Allah.

Honor and dishonor, wealth and poverty, success and failure, guidance and misguidance, life and death, power and a lack of it and all other things are phenomena, and as such they cannot be haphazard and accidental. They are all governed by certain laws, rules and norms. No individual or nation is exalted without any reason. Economic progress does not come about without any cause. Defeat in a clash, or for that matter victory must have some reason. As we have said previously, these norms and rules should be discovered, and one should follow the right direction by properly using the knowledge of them.

No doubt it is Allah who exalts, but He exalts those who know how to better their position and strive for that. Allah enabled the Muslims to conquer Mecca and granted them victory. But that happened only in the eighth year after hegira after a long struggle of years of blood-shed, during which the Muslims underwent so many tribulation, had to employ all their forces and take all sorts of appropriate measures. In other words they utilized all the natural laws and norms necessary to gain a victory till it was granted by Allah.

No doubt it is Allah who produces the ears of wheat. But still wheat grows only in the farm of an industrious cultivator, who takes all the steps necessary for its growth and protects it from the pests.

Justice and the Hereafter

Divine justice will particularly reveal itself in the Hereafter. Justice in retribution and in recompense, justice in the classification of the deeds, and the ranking and grading of men, the demonstration of their qualities and characters and all that is deduced from the Qur'an in respect of the Hereafter – all these things show that justice has a special connection with the Hereafter.

The deeds of man are the product of his own free-will, and he is held responsible for them and for his good or bad future. Through the preachings of the Prophets and his own intellectual faculty and intuition he is expected to know the value of his deeds and their positive or negative effects.

As such when a man performs a deed consciously and intentionally, makes efforts to give a right or wrong direction to his inner qualities or does anything to benefit or harm himself or society, full justice demands that: he should receive a precise and proportionate recompense for his deeds; he should be graded exactly according to his actions, so that he should not be wronged (Vide Surah, al-Ahqaf, 46:19), he should be repaid in full for whatever efforts he has made (Vide Surah Ale Imran, 3:25) and a complete record of all his actions and deeds be maintained so that even what he has forgotten should not be missed.

The Qur'an says:

"Allah will tell them of what they did. He has kept an account of it, while they have forgotten it". (Surah al-Mujadilah, 58:6).

This record includes even the slightest thing performed in any form and under any circumstances.

The Qur'an, in the course of Luqman's exhortations to his son, says:

"My dear son! Even if your deeds be so small that it can be compared to a mustard seed, which is hidden in a rock or in the heavens or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth. Indeed Allah is Subtle, Aware". (Surah Luqman, 31:17).

There is such a proportion and harmony between a deed and its recompense that it may be said that the very deed will present itself in the Hereafter.

"On that Day everyone will find himself confronted with whatever good and evil he has done" : (SurahAle Imran, 3:30).

Everyone himself is responsible for his own deeds, not anyone else, who has played no role in their performance.

"No one shall bear the burden of someone else". (Surah al-Fatir, 35:18). "Whoever does what is right, he does that to his own advantage and whoever does what is wrong, he does that to his own person ". (Surah Fussilat, 41:46).

In that Court of Justice family position, social influence, wealth or any party or group affiliation will avail nothing.

"The day when wealth and sons will be of no use ". (Surah al-Shu'ara, 26:88). "The wrong-doers shall have no friend nor any intercessor who will be heard". (Surahal-Mu'min, 40:18).

"Believers spend (in charity) a part of what we have provided you with before that day comes when

there will be no bargaining, no friendship and no intercession". (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:254).

"When the Trumpet is on that day there will be no kinship". (Surah al-Mu'minun, 3:101).

In fact in the Hereafter only his faith, good deeds and spirituality will benefit man, who will be called to a very detailed account and will be judged rightly and justly on the basis of his own dossier containing every detail of all that he did. The Judge will be Allah, who is just, All knowing, absolutely independent and far above any partiality or opportunism. He is not at all prone to any threat or temptation. (Vide Surah al-Nur, 24:24 and Surah Yasin, 36:65).

The Hereafter

The Hereafter is a world where one will enjoy the fruits of his efforts in this world on a very wide scale and where his qualities and his conduct will become absolutely clear.

In that world pleasures and success and similarly miseries and afflictions are pure and absolute. In contrast, in this world everything is relative and mixed.

Man's complete and pure success in all the dimensions of his life presents itself in Paradise where all his desires, hopes and aspirations are fulfilled and he prospers physically, spiritually, materially and mentally. Similarly his failure in all fields reveals itself in Hell.

The following few verses throw ample light on the vastness of enjoyment in Paradise:

"Hasten and seek the forgiveness of your Lord and the Paradise as vast as the heavens and the earth ". (Surah al-Hadid, 57:21).

"As for those who will be happy (that day) they will be in Paradise, –where they will abide so long as the heavens and the earth last unless your Lord pleases otherwise. This shall be an everlasting reward". (Surah Hud, 11:108).

"There you shall have all you desire and there you shall have all for which you pray ". (Surah Fussilat, 41:31).

"Therein they shall find everything which may satisfy the hearts and delight the eyes ". (Surah al-Zukhruf, 43:71).

These verses show that Paradise is vast beyond imagination. From the point of view of time, it is everlasting. Whatever one can desire is available there without any limitation or restriction. It is more than ideal.

Its blessings and pleasures are both material and physical as well as spiritual and mental. In the Surah al-Saffat, verse 41 and thereafter, a mention has been made of fruits, gardens, couches and delicious cups. In the verse 49 of the same Surah, in the Surah al-Rahman, verses 64 – 71 and in the Surah al-Waqi'ah, verse 36 the existence of houries, beauty, vivacity, freshness, cheerfulness and friendly atmosphere in Paradise have been described. In some other verses its pleasant climate, rivers, green and blooming trees, magnificent and lovely palaces, perfumed and sweet air etc. have been mentioned. On the whole, Paradise contains pleasures and material achievements at such a high level that it is beyond imagination.

On the other hand there are some other verses which emphasize spiritual and sentimental dimensions and describe high human tendencies:

"Such are the people who will be honoured in Paradise". (Surah al-Ma'arij, 70:35).

"They are guided to gentle speech ". (Surah al-Hajj, 22:24).

"There they shall dwell forever. What a wonderful abode and dwelling place". (Surah al-Furqan, 25:76).

"We shall remove whatever rancour there may be in their hearts and make them as brethren reclining on couches facing one another". (Surah al-Hijr, 15:47).

"Allah will receive them while they will be beaming with joy ". (Surah Dahr, 76:11).

Such verses show that in Paradise there exist joy and happiness, comfort and cheerfulness. Its dwellers are far away from any fear, restlessness, rancour and foul language and they never face any discomfort or anxiety.

It is evident that as in Paradise there is everlasting bliss, and every one can have all that he may desire, there can be no clash of interests and hence there can be no feeling of jealousy, no anticipation of danger and no desire to wreak vengeance.

In every case all needs are met and all desires are fulfilled. As a result a man who enjoys his life in all its dimensions, fully feels the truth of human life.

At the same time evolutionary progress and advancement towards perfection continue. Allah Himself

says that He multiplies (things) for whomever He pleases. Especially those who have developed their thinking and their intellectual faculties in a fruitful manner, shall make further progress in their life of Paradise.

Above all what we have mentioned, the greatest achievement of a dweller of Paradise is the attainment of Allah's pleasure, which is the supreme success for a sublime soul.

"What is more, Allah shall be pleased with them. That is the supreme triumph". (Surah al-Tawbah, 9:72).

A dweller of Paradise finds that Allah, the essence of every perfection and virtue and the absolute truth to whom the motion and evolution of the entire world ends, is well pleased with him. He feels that he has obtained all that he could aspire for, and finds that there is no distance between himself and Him, who is the source of all that is good and beneficial, in whom all hopes are centered and to seek whose pleasure every effort should be made. He has a feeling that he has succeeded in attaining proximity to Allah.

The effect of believing in the Hereafter on making the life balanced

Consequent upon what we have so far read about man, his future, the inevitable results of his deeds and efforts and his reappearance in the Hereafter in all dimensions of his existence, we come to the conclusion that a true belief in the Hereafter should make man more careful and vigilant about making himself and giving shape to his efforts.

When one is sure that any sort of perversion in meeting his desires and the commitment of any excess by him, will be detrimental to his interests and will cause only harm to him, and knows that his appearance in the Hereafter with an imbalanced and defective personality will culminate in nothing but his ruin and his going to Hell, he will make every effort to develop his existence in all dimensions.

We have seen that Paradise is the manifestation of a perfect and all-inclusive human life. Islam aims 2,t man's leading such an ideal life in this world also within its limitations.

It wants a healthy body as well as a healthy soul. It aims at the provision of food, clothing, shelter and other physical comforts as well as at the healthy spiritual development.

A man having belief in the Hereafter tries to improve this worldly life in every respect and pays attention to his education, research, health, work, industry and all round progress. At the same time he believes in justice, brotherhood, freedom, human rights, sincerity, law and order, clear thinking, reasonableness,

philanthropy, good will and spirituality. The correct belief in the Hereafter makes a man balanced, versatile and industrious.

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