

Life, Rising Up

1- Human life is an immensely glorious phenomenon. Some people, however, have taken it for granted, considering it as a normal thing available to everyone. Those who have tried to interpret life materialistically and regard the source of life as unknown or arising from alien creatures from outer space, are incapable of seeing the supreme values of life.

2- Life is virtually respectable, and seeks its own activity and preservation under any circumstances. Man will never feel reluctant toward life unless mental disorder darkens his picture of life.

3- To discover the aim of life, man must step much higher than his unconscious, fatalistic nature. If man limits life to a purely natural one – feelings, actions and desires arising from animal instincts and reproduction – he will never find an elevated aim for his life. If man is to find the true meaning of life, he should go far beyond his natural life.

4- Life has two dimensions: physical and spiritual. Since the material aspect of human life is the grounds for man's mental and spiritual activity, any disorder in his physical aspect will affect the other, too. The mental and spiritual aspect of human life are essentially important, but should be activated by means of proper development and flourishing further.

5- Human life cannot be discovered without activating the spiritual dimension of life. As a general rule, when man drowns in some phenomenon, since he cannot control it, not only will he never understand it deeply, the phenomenon will be unable to show its true self, too. If man's life flourishes, his starting point and destination in life will also reveal themselves.

6- If the spiritual dimension is not activated, man's life will pass with baseless games, attractions and mockery. Sometimes man deceives himself with limited knowledge, and sometimes his natural instincts influence his reasoning and wisdom, making him move along the negative path of life, interpreting life with the pleasure he gets out of satisfying his natural instincts.

The selfishness and hedonism caused by man's indulging in his instincts makes him misinterpreting his life, and struggling along the wrong path for a whole lifetime. If man's spiritual aspect is activated, his

tools of discovery will no longer be affected by desires and pleasures, but logically flourish, for the spiritual aspect of life casts a kind of light upon all of man's knowledge, preventing any deceit. Without activating the spiritual aspect of life, life loses its true form, and man will drown in the superficial prolific of life.

7- Human life has no value without the activation of the spiritual aspect. Respect toward man's nature is not possible unless the spiritual aspect of life is activated, and that happens only when all humans are considered as equal. As we read in the Holy Qur'an:

من قتل نفسا بغير نفس أو فساد في الارض فكانما قتل الناس جميعا و من
أحيها فكانما أحيا الناس جميعا

“Whoso slays a soul not to retaliate for a slain soul, nor for corruption done in the land, shall be as if he had slain mankind altogether; and whoso gives life to a soul, shall be as if he had given life to mankind altogether.”(5:32)

When man becomes so evil that he insults God by killing another human being – and insulting the creator of the whole universe is in fact equal to insulting the whole universe itself, too, which man himself is also the most valuable and glorious part of – killing one human being is equal to killing all of mankind, and giving life to a human being is equivalent to giving all of humanity life. This is why the human disposition of a human being who has a deep understanding of truth is so heavily respected.

Throughout history, the human nature and disposition has been paid respect for various reasons, each of which calls for study and criticism. Some of them are:

- a) Throughout history, all outstanding figures have generally advocated respect for the human disposition, and the public, influenced by them, have imitated them in doing so.
- b) Crude, primitive emotions and feelings have also led to support for respecting the human disposition. However, this motive has no strong basis, so it cannot be regarded as a stable factor. It fades when cruelty and filth is done by man, or man's selfishness overflows.
- c) The third reason is religion, for all religions see respect for the human disposition as their highest item of anthropological agenda. In divine religions, respect for the human disposition is based on God's will, which has created man's life as glorious and precious.
- d) Deep feeling for the human disposition; recognizing and receiving man's disposition in the general harmony of the universe. Such a feeling is in fact the supreme religious feeling mentioned above. Of course, man's reaching this great and profound feeling – which regards each human being as a fundamental component of the general harmony of the universe – calls for development and perfection.

e) Some regard scientific, industrial and artistic advances and human cultures as the motive for respecting the human disposition, whereas such issues can only prove the greatness and importance of human potentials, not the necessity of respecting the human disposition. During the last few centuries, science has made a great deal of progress, but respect for the human disposition has waned.

f) Humanists also support the value of man, referring to the decree of wisdom and reason on the necessity of supporting mankind. Depending on reason and wisdom – theoretical wisdom and reason, at that, which does not concern supreme human values and principles – respect and value for the human disposition cannot be gained. Reason-based humanism, which has become hugely popular these days, has still not been successful in bringing human beings together in friendship and affection, or creating respect and love between them. The only motive that can make value and respect for the human disposition a reality is a religious one.

8- Concepts like character, ego, spirit and soul will only exist when the spiritual dimension of man's life is activated. Drowning in selfishness and hedonism destroys the harmony in man's management of his life, inhibiting his character, ego and spirit – which are vital for the evolution of man's life – from flourishing. When man feels hedonism is all he needs, he will not seek spirit or character anymore.

The Factors that Can Elevate Man's Evolutionary Life

The human soul has the potential for development and perfection; in order to achieve them, we must figure out what factors or methods can lead man to an evolutionary life. Here, we will provide 21 principles for it:

1- Man's natural self cannot be the leader of man's soul. If the human soul drowns in selfishness – in other words, if it is degraded down to its “natural self” – it will be unable to evolve. The natural self (ego) manages the initial, compulsory life; it never undertakes activating supreme levels and aspects. Let us quote from Jalal-addin Muhammad Molawi (Rumi) from *Divan-e-shams*:

برگشاده سوی بالا، بالها زده اندر زمین چنگالها

خواجه می گرید که ماند از قافله خنده ها دارد از این ماندن خرش

(The soul has spread its wings, heading for the heavens, but the body clings to the earth – this world – with its claws. The wealthy man weeps, for he has fallen behind his group; his donkey is laughing at this.)

2- God helps man with his spiritual evolution. As Imam Ali has said:

عبادالله ان من احب عبادالله اليه عبدا اعانه الله على نفسه

“O servants of God! God's most precious servants are those God has helped to crush their lusts and desires.”

God, of course helps man know and elevate his soul when man himself wants it. As Jalal-addin Muhammad Molawi says:

چون چنين خواهى، خدا خواهد چنين حق برآرد آرزوى متقين

(When you want it, God will do it: God grants what the pious ask for.)

The potential and grounds for the will and enthusiasm to do good deeds is hidden inside man; the best reason to prove it is the great, glorious group of developed righteousness-seeking humans that have existed throughout history.

If such a will and progress toward development and perfection does not flourish, several inhibiting factors can be named, which we can generally categorize into two groups:

- a) Man's hallucinations and inductions to himself, implying that it is too difficult for him to gain mystic knowledge and elevate his soul.
- b) External factors also sometimes inhibit man. Unsuitable social circumstances, the lack of constructive education and many others factors are what man must overcome and do his best to move toward development and perfection; he should not shrug off developing himself.

3- The most important form of justice is justice toward oneself, which is not possible without harnessing one's desires. Self-preservation is the most significant factor that makes life go on. When the human disposition is released from all laws or human principles, it will fall into its natural path.

Any activity aiming to preserve the natural self is destructive to man. If man proceeds toward elevating his soul – in other words, if he defies his desires and lusts – he has taken the first step toward making justice a reality. If man cannot do justice with regard to his own forces and potentials and save himself from drowning in lusts and desires, how can he ever provide others with justice?

4- One must not attempt to fulfill others' wishes and desires to the extent that one's own soul becomes corrupt. When governing people requires convincing them, and convincing them must be done by

satisfying their desires and lusts, the result will be nothing but the corruption of the soul of the ruler and his helpers.

One who is sensitive about the improvement and refinement of his own soul, will never be ready to corrupt it in order to fulfill others' wishes; rather, the shining rays of his brilliant, good-deeded soul can cast light on others, too.

5- Make use of yourself for yourself. As Imam Ali says:

فاخذ امرؤ من نفسه لنفسه

“Developed man makes use of himself to his own benefit.”

خویش را تسلیم کن، بردار مزد وانگه از خود بی ز خود چیزی بدزد

چون به هر میلی که دل خواهی سپرد از تو چیزی در نهان خواهند برد

(Make me true, and take any reward you like from me; but if you give your soul to anyone you wish, they will steal your inside from you secretly.)

Jalal-addin Muhammad Molawi

Man possesses potentials and talents that blossom on contact with the world outside. Some people make use of their potentials in order to achieve their natural goals; still others use them to gain human goals – these people make positive use of themselves. They activate their positive potentials, and enjoy perfection and development.

6- If you do not know yourself, you are doomed. Let us quote from Imam Ali:

هلک امرؤ لم يعرف قدره

“If man does not recognize his own value and potential, he is doomed.”

We cannot make use of ourselves without knowing ourselves. Man cannot activate his talents and

potentials if he does not discover them and know about them.

7- Nobody will pay any attention to one who pays no attention to his/her own self. If man does not care about himself, and does not activate his talents and potentials, he should never expect others to care about him, either.

As Imam Ali has said about this essential principle of evolutionary life:

و اعلموا انه من لم يعن على نفسه حتى يكون له منها واعظ و زاجر لم يكن له
من غيرها لا زاجر و لا واعظ

“Lo and behold, he who does not care to be his own internal advisor and conscience, nothing and nobody else will do that for him.”

No one, not even God's prophets, can guide man toward perfection and development unless man himself attempts to progress. Man must have the will to construct and develop himself if he is to move toward evolutionary life.

8- If you know yourself, you will know your God. As the Holy Prophet of Islam Muhammad has said:

من عرف نفسه فقد عرف ربه

“If you discover yourself, you have in fact discovered your Lord.”

Thus, if the human “self” – the human” soul”, in fact – is comprehensively known and discovered, the greatest step toward knowing God has been taken, for:

- a) One of the aspects of the “self” is a monotheist nature which puts man in contact with God.
- b) The human self can gain complete knowledge of the universe, and see the divine light shining on the universe.
- c) Knowledge of the unity of the human disposition, with all its diverse qualities, is a sign of the conceptual multiplicity of God's qualities.
- d) Abstracting the human soul – the human self – from material aspects and the dominance of such abstraction on the body without making physical contact with it.
- e) All the activities of the human disposition without subtracting anything from it or analyzing it.

f) Creating works of art or mathematical operations is a sign of how God works.

g) The imaginations formed in the human mind are examples of creating facts with no physical background about them whatsoever.

9– Always calculate and balance yourself. Self-calculation and self-balance is a fundamental principle on the path to elevating evolutionary life. Some may think that in these days of machine-like life and people's hectic lifestyles, no one has the time to do self-calculations, whereas they would take serious steps toward doing so if educational systems and social leaders made them understand the crucial importance of having an original character. If man analyzes and calculates his own nature and character, life will have a different meaning to him; social leaders and those responsible for education must realize how necessary this is.

10– In evolutionary life, you must not degrade the value and glory of your own self by submitting to profanity and being prolific. Let us quote from Imam Ali:

و اكرم نفسك عن كل دنية و ان ساقتك الى الرغائب فانك لن تعترض بما
تبذل من نفسك عوضا

“Consider your nature, your disposition, as too great to be traded with lowly, decadent affairs, even though your nature may encourage you toward them, for they are quite attractive and satisfying. But you will lose far more than you gain if you fall for them.”

Giving in to lowly affairs and decadence is the greatest barrier on the path to development and perfection. Not all means can guide one to the aim of life. Man should not sell the elixir of his existence for a meager price. If the human ego is lost, nothing can ever replace it. The value of the “self” is higher than anything else. Countless human beings have sacrificed themselves for meager desires and lusts, thinking that they have gained something.

11– One of the most significant effects of evolutionary life is adjusting oneself with regard to others. The correct criterion for the relationship between human beings is a crucially important issue. Here, by relationships between human beings we do not refer merely to social life, for the main factor that makes social life is not making any disturbances in life and providing the grounds for people's talents and potentials to be harmonized and put to better use in order to make social life a reality.

The criterion necessary for the relationship between human beings on the path toward evolutionary intelligible life is far beyond the rules and criteria in social life. That criterion is nothing but the human ego – a purified human ego, of course, that moves on the path toward development and perfection.

12– Supreme effort is the strongest force of evolutionary life. As Imam Ali has said,

قدر الرجل على قدر همته

“A man's value and merit lies in his effort and endeavor.”

Extreme effort has some conditions:

- a) Supreme aim and dissatisfaction about what the society imposes upon man.
- b) Stepping beyond the waves of mortal desires and evaluating natural pleasures, which keep man busy and prevent him from development and elevation.
- c) Logically interpreting the concepts of “possibility” and “impossible.” Some people who have enough power and will to accomplish things mistake the possible with the impossible; they imagine what they aim for is beyond their abilities.
- d) Will power has a crucial role in making supreme effort fruitful, for man will accomplish nothing without will power.

With supreme effort, man will achieve:

- Patience: Supreme effort gives man firmness and tranquility against the negative consequences of pleasures and sorrow.
- Revealing the secrets of the soul: Pleasures and sorrows deprive man of the secrets in his soul. With supreme effort, man can put up a resistance against them.
- Social constructivism: Only human beings of supreme effort can construct the society.
- Freedom: Supreme effort can set man free.
- The highest level of freedom increases the heart's capacity for gaining goodwill and perfection.

13- One of the signs of entering evolutionary life is clearing the soul of all hatred and frustrations. If we hate another person intensely, to the extent that hatred fills our souls and affects our other mental activities, it will be a horrendous grudge. Grudges make man lose his ability to see things righteously. Man ignores human values and will continue until he destroys the one he hates.

14- You cannot proceed on the path of evolutionary life unless you stop expecting rewards for your good deeds. If man's relationship with others becomes a form of trade, he will never make it to the path of evolutionary life. Some people never seem willing to give anything unless they gain something in return. Trade and reward and punishment are phenomena necessary to the natural ego, but man must step beyond them if he is to achieve development and evolution.

15– Feeling that your purely natural life is insufficient can make you start moving on the path of evolutionary life. If man does not feel eager to become perfect, if he does not suffer from his shortcomings, he will never make any progress on the path to evolutionary life. Alas, many people do not feel the need for reaching perfection, so they take no action toward eliminating their shortcomings.

16– In an evolutionary life, rewards and punishments are based upon intentions. Intention consists of decision and objective action, the merit of which depends on one hand upon the value of man's effort in deciding to do so, and on the other hand upon man's mental motive. If man's decision is based on a negative motive, his character will deteriorate a positive motive will, in contrast, boost his personality. This is why we can say that reward and punishment – rise or fall – depends on our intentions.

17– The basic factor in man's evolutionary life is the fact that God watches man's every single word, action and even what goes on deep inside him. If man believes that God is aware of his every move – internally or externally – he will avoid evil. Such a man will not avoid wrongdoing for fear of social punishment, but rather due to his shame toward his creator. Belief that God is at all times observing every aspect of human life can elevate man's evolutionary life, for man now knows that God wishes the best for him, and has provided him with intelligible ways to get there, and the tools he needs to do so; obeying what God wants man to do is the path to perfection.

18– Man's evolutionary life cannot be elevated without activating the human intellect, which in turn cannot serve man without spiritual purification. If intelligence enjoys the advice and directions of a pure conscience and sound nature and disposition, it can guide man toward progress and perfection, for intelligence alone is unable to provide man with evolutionary advance. It should be accompanied with self-purification in order to remove all the inhibiting factors on its path.

19– The human ego requires natural flourish and expansion in order to proceed on the path of evolutionary life.

If the perfection-seeking human soul starts its climb toward supernatural progress without any chances for relaxation or rest, and constantly cuts its ego off from all its natural characteristics, forcing them to obey its furiously accelerating development, the ego will undoubtedly suffer, losing the management of its body, which serves as its steed. Thus, moderate dealing with the ego is necessary for elevation toward evolutionary life.

20– In evolutionary life, man's progress should be forward-looking at all times. Sometimes imitating one's predecessors' beliefs and traditions prevents man from logical activity and progress. This is why we must state that on his path toward evolutionary life, man must analyze the culture that dominates his society, and remove any sedimentary elements in it. Imitations are steel dams inhibiting man's advance toward evolution.

There are two kinds of future man must have in mind on the path to evolutionary life:

- a) The future of this worldly life, for which thoughts and intelligence are a crucial necessity.
- b) The future of man's other life, which if man ignores or defies, interpreting his worldly life will also become impossible.

21- Those who are the most obedient of God also have the best intentions about their own selves. As Imam Ali has said,

عبادالله ان انصح الناس لنفسه اطوعهم لربه و ان اغشهم لنفسه اعصاهم لربه

“O servants of God, those people who are the most obedient are the kindest to themselves, and those who defy God are betraying themselves the worst of all.”

Man, in contact with God, sees Him supervising and dominating his ego. Such a feeling makes man believe that he is always in the realm of God, so he will not fall astray from God's path.

Intelligible Life, the Fundamental Domain

Human life can be divided into two kinds, **purely natural life** and **intelligible life**. In the former, which is a somewhat animal-like life, people are engaged in a battle for survival. Their sole aim is to fulfill their natural desires, and since their life is totally engulfed by worldly needs, the positive aspects of humanity are entirely forgotten. Man's infatuation with purely natural ways of life has greatly influenced the history of mankind. Let us take a look at some of its effects:

- 1- Stupefaction replacing consciousness
- 2- The destruction of positive forms of love
- 3- Conflicts between power and righteousness
- 4- Self-bestrangedness
- 5- Selfishness and stubbornness
- 6- Misjudging the human character
- 7- Human relationships based on personal benefit
- 8- Various philosophizations tending to vouch for human corruptions
- 9- Considering oneself as the goal and others as one's means to achieve it

- 10- Ruining the environment
- 11- Man's conflict with his own self
- 12- The destruction of man's highest emotions and unity
- 13- The waning of human affection and sympathy
- 14- Sacrificing the goal for its means
- 15- Aimless deconstructing and weakening original cultures
- 16- Losing one's aim in life and falling into nihilism
- 17- Uncertainty and anxiety about one's future
- 18- Self-alienation
- 19- The aimlessness and uselessness of the arts
- 20- Increasing suicide
- 21- Social maladjustment
- 22- Pitiful incompetence in explaining absolutes and relativities

The Definition of Intelligible Life

A conscious life which guides the compulsory and pseudo-compulsory forces and activities of man's natural life in the path toward evolutionary goals by means of more freedom of choice; thus, the human character is gradually developed and guided toward the highest end of life – playing a role in the whole harmony of the universe dependent upon divine greatness.

Let us take a closer look at some of the most important aspects of this definition:

- A 'Conscious Life': Living an intelligible life, man is quite conscious of his life. His character is independent, and everything he does arises from his original personality, not imitating of others. In an intelligible life, man is totally aware of the principles and values of life, and follows them.
- 'Guiding the compulsory and pseudo-compulsory forces and activities of man's natural life toward evolutionary goals by means of more freedom of choice': moving on the path of intelligible life, man is well aware of the fatalistic, compulsory causes and factors surrounding him, and tries to make the most of his freedom. For instance, if he wins a better position, he does not allow the factors around him that may lead to pride or arrogance make him fall astray from his progress toward perfection and commitment to great human values. In an intelligible life, man achieves the highest level of free will, and

the more he makes use of his freedom in his will, the greater his intelligible life will be.

We should not neglect the critical role of environmental factors and social leaders in making intelligible life possible. In unsuitable social conditions, freedom of will – and subsequently intelligible life – will have no chance to flourish. Therefore, leaders of societies should encourage proper human virtues and values.

- 'Towards evolutionary goals': In an intelligible life, all of man's actions, words, even his mental activities aim for perfection. He never feels that he has finally become perfect; he is constantly trying to raise himself to greater levels of perfection.
- 'Gradually developing the human character'. All of man's positive potentials and talents flourish in an intelligible life, and he finds a life of happiness and prosperity. His naive, childish feelings fade away, and his petty interests are replaced by greater, more valuable ones. In an intelligible life, the human character uses internal and external realities correctly, for every aspect of his life is undergoing evolutionary metamorphosis.
- 'Being guided towards the highest end of life': Man cannot achieve the highest aims of life by drowning in the compulsory and pseudo-compulsory tendencies of his natural self. If he wants to accomplish the greatest ends in life, his actions must be logical and conscientious, and he should be determined enough to make use of the mental activities needed to interpret the highest aims of life.

The Role of Wisdom in an intelligible Life

Wisdom in an intelligible life is not confined to theoretical wisdom – although theoretical wisdom too is a necessary tool in an intelligible life – for anything useful to man's life cannot be ignored in an intelligible life. Both theoretical wisdom and practical wisdom – man's alert, active, motivating conscience – are employed in an intelligible life to elevate and develop the human character. They harmoniously provide the grounds for elevation to the level of perfect wisdom, which is of great mystic significance.

Here we must criticize schools of thought such as rationalism for overemphasizing the role of wisdom, and considering it dominant over man's life without any divine interference at all. Many rationalists ignore the fact that if man's opportunist, ambitious nature is guided toward divine aspects, it will move on the path to an intelligible life, where man can step out of his “self-orientated” nature and be attracted by his “real ego” to an intelligible life – and this is the only way man can abandon war, bloodshed, atrocity and all other evil, and change “the history of purely natural life” into “the history of mankind”.

The Feasibility of an intelligible Life

Some people believe that man is generally incapable of achieving an intelligible life, and only an exceptional few have been able to leave “purely natural life” for a “intelligible life”. In other words, most

people are drowned in their “purely natural life”.

We must first say that man does possess the capacity for accepting an intelligible life, for when he feels a passion for something, he will aim for it, and bear any inconvenience he has to in order to achieve it. Those who love fame or wealth undergo a great deal of trouble, pain and insults in order to achieve success in acquiring them.

Second, when man moves on the path of an intelligible life, he feels that he is approaching something not impossible, but a truly original life, which he will find highly valuable.

Also, though the number of those who have developed themselves into an intelligible life is low, they are not totally exceptional people, for when man moves on the path of intelligible life, he feels that all of the necessary elements for perfection exist in him, and are in no conflict with his innate natural self.

Social leaders should try to help their people realize what a conscious life feels like. If leaders of societies make their people understand how necessary a life of consciousness is, they will never protest. If human beings become aware of the glory of justice, honesty and wisdom existing in actions and words and the glorious sense of duty and love for peers, they will easily accept it. By reinforcing and developing man's positive potentials, he can be made aware of the importance of understanding and adopting the necessity of endeavor toward an intelligible life.

This is the same mind that can so delicately gather wealth, fame and defeat his rivals by means of brilliant ideas, and high intelligence throughout his purely natural life; surely, can it not understand that its wisdom and intellect can be employed toward higher goals, such as serving his peers, justice and upholding the right? Can it not realize that it is able to seriously calculate the mysteries of the universe, not merely act like on a stage?

When discussing the feasibility of intelligible life we must keep in mind that the human character can be developed, “built up.” Man can improve himself through calculations made in his intelligence and conscience. The important point is identifying the way to explore reaching intelligible life, and that is not impossible. If man steps beyond his “purely natural life,” he can enter “intelligible life,” where he will undergo eleven changes:

- his raw feelings change into elevated emotions;
- his scattered brainwaves turn into “specific thoughts about a certain topic;”
- his raw kindness becomes “intelligible affection;”
- his high expectations change into “motivating hopes;”
- his nominal likes and interests become perfection–creating ones;

- being content with worthless concepts of goodness and perfection give way to effort toward discovering the real truth about them;
- pure imitation and passiveness will disappear, and be replaced by original, direct thought and truth-finding;
- fractional, theoretical chess games in the mind will be replaced by harmony between sound wisdom and realistic conscience;
- elevated freedom will replace desires;
- seeing oneself as exceptional as and higher than others will change into understanding the highest human unity and equality among humans as being the means or the end.
- Being content with the milestones of life in this world as man's main goal is replaced by always considering oneself as still on the way.

A Closer Look at the Aspects of Intelligible Life

When man moves toward intelligible life, every aspect of his life will undergo dramatic change. Let us take a closer look at some of them:

1– The human character in intelligible life: According to the following three principles, the human character is virtually valuable:

- a) Man is a being who has various talents and is ready to step up to higher stages of perfection and greatness. Throughout history we see human beings who ascended to the pinnacles of humanity, showing the most brilliant human ideals.
- b) Despite all the diversity people have in race, appearance or secondary qualities, they still have the same universal harmony. In other words, they can move along the ultimate path of life.
- c) In spite of ethnical, social and other differences people have, they feel a kind of value-based unity regarding each other if they are in a well-balanced mental state. Such a feeling is deeply rooted in man's soul, and many of the heroic acts he has shown throughout history depict the unity men have in their common principles and values.

We cannot accept the three above-mentioned principles without believing in intelligible life. In other words, proving the value of human character is a result of accepting intelligible life. This cannot be done unless the “natural self” is overcome. Having stepped beyond his natural self, man can accept the existence of others, understand his basic relationship with them, and regard the human character as valuable.

On the path of intelligible life, man sees great human beings from a vaster, more elevated horizon, as if they are mirrors reflecting divine beauty and glory. Those who obey natural life, on the other hand, are considered worthless, even if they are socially outstanding.

2- Ethics in an intelligible life: In order to understand how important ethics is in intelligible life, we should compare it with ethics in a purely natural life:

a) In purely natural life, ethics consists of accepting principles confirmed by the society, and the reason for obeying them is merely to avoid interference between individuals. But ethics in an intelligible life means considering oneself as part of the whole of human life, which has – as the Qur'an states – divinity breathed in it, and accepting the principle that all human beings come from the same origin. In such a system of moral ethics, man does not wish for others what he would not wish for himself. He does not blindly follow a set of socially established norms.

b) The favorable ethics in natural life consists of following emotional desires and whims, whether they are to the benefit of other human beings or not. Thus, each person does as he/she may please, whereas in intelligible life man's emotions are elevated to harmony with fixed human principles. In intelligible life, human emotions are based on justice considering other human beings as valuable.

c) The basis of moral ethics in purely natural life is accepting and obeying rules arising from choosing a lifestyle decreed by the social trends. In such ethics, great human moral virtues are ignored, and the only thing that matters is what is desirable in social life; in intelligible life, on the other hand, principles such as free conscience representing goodness, perfection, and motivating human beings toward that are of significance.

d) In natural life, ethics serves as to enforce social laws and prevent crimes in the society. In intelligible life, however, it is not the servant of man's rights in a natural life or a reducer of crime – although if correctly used, it will have such results, too. The aim of ethics in intelligible life is to activate man's greatest potentials and elevate the members of the society.

3- Law in intelligible life: The purpose of the law is basically to enforce social order and mutual coexistence among members of the society. In intelligible life, it not only does so, but also emphasizes on the rights of human lives. If social laws pay sufficient attention to advancing evolutionary morals and true human love for having a free character, "the natural history of life" would become "the human history." Human laws can never be effective unless man's natural self is well-balanced and all human beings move on the path of intelligible life.

Intelligible life insists on having rights for human lives alongside the rights of purely natural life. It makes people realize each other's advantages and spiritual greatness, and enables them to use such qualities; this is what changes a normal living being into Abuzar Ghafari, a wanderer into Owais Qarni, a petty poet into Hakim Sanaee, and a criminal into Fuzayl Ayaz.

4- Social relationships in intelligible life: Human relationships in intelligible life is based upon humanity, not seeking advantage of one another. In purely natural life, however, man only considers his own benefit, and his relationships with others are only to serve that purpose. In intelligible life, the way a teacher behaves with his students goes way beyond his salary. The teacher relates to not only their senses and thoughts, but indeed to their souls. In intelligible life, therefore, careful attention to the highest aim of life is what makes the link among people and provides human unity.

5- Science in intelligible life: It is vital for man to gain knowledge. Intelligible life and purely natural life agree on this. The difference is whether science makes man's natural self inflate, or control it. In a purely natural life, man may fall into infatuation for science, and consider nature only superficially; in intelligible life, however, man makes use of science as a means to advance toward his evolutionary goals; wisdom and free conscience control human desires, and all of man's physical and spiritual activities are guided by God. Here, man sees science as a divine ray of light –shining on human societies by means of the human senses, brain, nature and laboratories.

6- Ideology in intelligible life: Merely seeing the world outside and the world inside – just “taking photos of it, in fact – is quite different from observing and gaining knowledge about the universe by means of precision tools and determining where man stands as the knower. Man is not a living being who merely reflects the facts about the world inside himself like a big mirror, without any awareness of his own role in discovering them. Man has the capability to know everything about the universe and his knowledge of the world is by no means limited to mere photographic observation.

Such mental effort, dominant knowledge and observation leads to a vital result, and that is the fact that there is an extremely high philosophy and wisdom guiding the universe toward a very elevated destination by means of certain laws; every particle in the universe, when considered in relation to other particles, confirms that

قطره‌های کز جویباری میرود از پی انجام کاری میرود

(There is a cause behind even a drop of water going by in a stream.)

The ideological principles understood and accepted by means of these basics undoubtedly enter man's deepest levels of psyche, and influence and explain his life. Such a life, accounted for according to the highest destination of the universe is called an intelligible life.

7- Arts in an Intelligible Life: When an artist steps into intelligible life, he does not want art for the sake of art itself anymore; he wants art for the sake of humanity in an intelligible life. Here, the artist pictures facts as they are and as they should be by means of his finely elevated emotions. In an intelligible life, the artist pays careful attention to the aim of life, and attempts to use his art to guide the fatalistic

activities of man's natural life toward freedom and development. When a work of art is created, motivated by the cause of making intelligible life come true, it is not only an appealing work relieving man's fatigue of natural life, but also a wave of intelligible life itself, "reinforcing this kind of life in other members of the society and letting them get a taste of it, too." Art in an intelligible life aims to develop man's awareness, freedom and perfection, not his animal-like wishes and natural desires.

8- Politics in an Intelligible Life: Politics is managing people's lives on the path to achieving the highest of physical and spiritual goals. Throughout history, politicians drowned in purely natural life have degraded the life of human beings down to "things." Machiavelli has written the most possibly logical account based on purely natural life. He did not even for a moment consider intelligible life and the prospect of making it a reality in human societies. Instead of taking man's immense range of potentials into consideration, Machiavelli expressed his own internal thoughts. He believed that managing the purely natural life of people arises from "self-love." In an intelligible life, however, politics has a goal, and a starting point and a path. The goal of politics in an intelligible life is creating factors of awareness and adjusting the fatalistic forces and activities of natural life by providing the development of freedom. The starting point is relief from self-love, and the path is continual searching by the human character in an effort to reach the highest aim of life.

9- Economy in an Intelligible Life: As far as a purely natural life is concerned, self-love confirms man's freedom in claiming dominance and absolute possession of all creatures. In a purely natural life, man considers all natural and man-made blessings and facilities as his own, and thinks his possession of them is unlimited; in an intelligible life, however, man believes that since all human beings have the right to live, the results of human mental and physical endeavor must serve to safeguard and preserve the whole of human life, and be present in the total rhythm of the universe. Such a human being considers goods at the service of life, not life at their service. Man's wishes and desires are harnessed in order to achieve social coexistence in an intelligible life, and economy is also considered to be a factor serving to guarantee man's survival, not inflating his natural self. In brief, man should let others also be provided with the financial blessings he has, and attempt to make their life more comfortable; he should not selfishly want everything for himself, and trample all values and morals in his commercial activities.

10- Education in an Intelligible Life: In an intelligible life, education includes reinforcing and enhancing the factors that influence cognition and understanding the original facts about life, and motivating the children in a society to gradually move from purely natural life to an intelligible life. The primary duty of education in an intelligible life is to dramatically change the mental and spiritual system of the learner by teaching him/her the basic principles of education, so that the learner considers them as vitally necessary as food and water are essential to his/her survival. In an intelligible life, moral virtues like honesty and justice are necessary to man's nature, and the educators and teachers of the society should try to activate human virtues.

If education is anything other than what we mentioned above – i.e, if the facts taught as the basics of

education are regarded as not a part of the human nature or virtues – not only will the learners be deprived of progress toward development and perfection, but also be influenced by external factors.

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