



ISLAMIC  
SEMINARY  
PUBLICATIONS



HE

HIS MESSENGER AND HIS MESSAGE

جَعَلَ اللَّهُ كَعْبَةَ الْبَيْتِ الْحَرَامِ قِيَامًا لِلنَّاسِ

HE  
HIS MESSENGER  
AND  
HIS MESSAGE

By  
AYATULLAH BAQIR AL-SADR

ISLAMIC SEMINARY PUBLICATIONS  
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## HE, HIS MESSENGER AND HIS MESSAGE

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An alert mind today notices a change in the intellectual life of man. Science and Technology despite their wondrous achievements seems to have reached a precipice. Material needs together with the burning desire for power and supremacy have led man towards an apparent bankruptcy of the world's resources. In this desperate situation one is forced to pause and reassess the potential dangers threatening mankind as a whole. The scientist is, therefore, seeking a universally acceptable solution, and rightly so; thinking of the First Cause, the Omniscient and the Omnipotent in terms of cosmic consciousness.

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A list of addresses appears in the closing pages of this book. Readers are most welcome to write and obtain publications front any of these centres.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## ISLAMIC SEMINARY PUBLICATIONS

Dear Reader.

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

This book is an Islamic Seminary publication. Its publications are designed to cater for the spiritual needs of the age with a particular emphasis on grooming Muslim mind and thinking. Utmost efforts have been made by the Seminary to put forth in its publications what is really authoritative and authentic in Islam.

You are requested to kindly go through this book in the spirit in which it is intended. You are also requested to communicate to us your free comments on our publication, which will be highly appreciated.

Propagating the message of Islam is a task which calls for the co-operation of all. The Seminary invites you to join it in this task complying cordially with the verse of the holy Qur'an: "*Say: I give you but one admonition, that you stand for Allah's sake jointly and singly.*" (34:46)

May Allah bless you!

Yours in Islam,  
Publication Secretary.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ayatullah Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr was born on Zi-qa'adah 25, 1353 A.H. He belonged to a family which has been the cradle of learning for about a century now and has rendered yeoman's services to Islam and the Muslims in Iraq, Iran and Lebanon. Al-Sayyid Muhammad Sadr of this family rose against the British colonialism and took part in the twentieth century Revolution in Iraq. Sayyid Sadrud-din Sadr of Qum and Sayyid Musa Sadr of Lebanon are also well-known for their religious and political activities. One of the Ayatullah's ancestors, Sayyid Abd al-Husayn Sharf al-Din took part in the War of Independence of Jabl al-Aamul against France.

Ayatullah Muhammad Baqir lost his father when he was only four years of age and he was then brought up by his mother and elder brother Ismail al-Sadr. From his very childhood he showed signs of extra-ordinary intelligence and aptitude for learning. When he was only ten years of age he spoke on doctrinal matters and Islamic history with such a confidence as if he had spent decades in mastering these subjects. When he was eleven years old he wrote a book on logic and also began delivering lectures on this subject.

In 1365 A.H. he settled in Najaf al-Ashraf and began studying as well as teaching the principles of Islamic jurisprudence and other branches of Islamic learning. He possessed such an extra-ordinary acumen that he could fully comprehend the lessons of the level of his own studies without the help of his teacher. Eventually he was elevated to the position of 'Mujtahid' whereafter he himself began imparting instruction in 'Ijtihad' and also began writing books. He has written 26 books on various subjects including Fundamental of Jurisprudence, Jurisprudence, Economics, Philosophy; Inductive Logic, Social Problems and Public Administration. Some of these books have been translated into Persian, English, Urdu and Turkish and every one of them is a masterpiece in its own line.

The Ayatullah enjoyed great respect in the Muslim world right from

Morocco to Indonesia. He was one of the greatest champions of Islamic form of Government. The Baathist Government of Iraq was in funk on this account. It therefore, interned him in Najaf in the middle of 1979 and transferred him to Baghdad jail on April 3, 1980 where he was martyred on the night of April 9, 1980. May Allah bless the sacred soul of the Ayatullah.



## FOREWORD

The greatness of men is measured by what they present to society of new ideas, new knowledge and correct methods and what they uncover of the hidden aspects of knowledge for the benefit of scholars and those interested among the cultured.

Aristotle, Plato, Ibn Sina, al-Farabi, al-Razi and the like from among the intellectual giants and the leaders of creativity and discovery, ultimately penetrated the curtain of Nature, after careful examination and meticulousness and discovered prominent new facts to which no one had previously reached. They were among the builders of the imposing edifice of knowledge and culture and were among the vanguard of the thinkers and the distinguished, and outstanding individuals in the history of man.

Powerful intellects shine forth in every period, spreading light, enlightenment and good in the society and leading it to progress and development.

Among the magnificent personalities is the brilliant Islamic thinker, our beloved and exalted Mujtahid Ayatullah Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr who has written in different branches of knowledge and has touched on a great multitude of subjects. Rare indeed is the individuals who are familiar with all these fields of knowledge and various schools of thought.

He has written on Islamic Law and on the Principles of Jurisprudence with such depth that he has become an accepted authority for the Muslim Scholars. He has also written on Philosophy, Western as well as Eastern, refuted the views and techniques of many thinkers and proved them to be invalid by clear proofs. Then again he has examined the economic theories of Capitalism as well as Socialism and has demolished their precepts and fundamentals. And he has written on Induction and its influence and role in the Natural Sciences together with the scientific methods which prove the existence of the Creator of the universe, beginning therein from mathematical investigations.

A number of Muslims urged him to publish his juristic verdicts and he responded to their requests and named the book *al-Fatawa al-Waziha*. They also urged him to write briefly on the Fundamentals of Islam and so he produced a small introduction which was published in the Second Edition of *al-Fatawa al-Waziha*. Both the book itself, and the introduction were given an unequalled response.

We were of the opinion that educated people needed to know their Lord on the basis of mathematical steps and calculations and we became aware that this matter was amply treated in this 'Introduction'. We, therefore, sought the permission of His Eminence to publish this Introduction separately and to present it to the society in an elegant form. His Eminence readily accorded permission in this behalf for the promotion of knowledge and the advancement of Islam.

Thus it is that we have been able to present this book, small in size but vast in content, to the contemporary youths and the rising generation who have unfortunately been influenced by Western thoughts and culture. We earnestly pray that they may realise their error and return to the Right Path, the path of truth, guidance and light.

Sheikh Yusuf Ali Nafsi.

**PREFACE**

**BY**

**THE AUTHOR**



هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَىٰ الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ

*It is He who has sent His Messenger with the Message (guidance and the religion of truth) to make it prevail over every other religion. (al-Qur'an, 9:33).*

Certain eminent scholars as well as a large number of our pupils and other Muslims have asked us to emulate the example of our learned predecessors in respect of a question of ever-growing importance. It was the practice of the scholars in the past to add to their practical treatises an introduction, sometimes brief and sometimes elaborate, dealing with the arguments proving the existence of the Creator or describing the fundamentals of religion. A practical treatise is an independent explanation and interpretation by a jurist of the Islamic Law with which Allah in His Infinite mercy sent the last Prophet as a “blessing unto all the worlds”. The explanation of law is founded on the acceptance of the fundamental doctrines. The faith in Allah, His messenger and the message sent with him form the basis and the vindication of the contents of any practical treatise.

Realizing the pressing need of such an introduction and in the hope of earning the pleasure of Allah, the Almighty, we decided to respond to this request. But we were faced with a problem in regard to the style of the introduction. Should we make it as simple and intelligible to the average reader as the text of *al-Fatawa al-Waziba*, the main book? We observed that there was a basic difference between the proposed introduction and the verdicts (*al-Fatawa*) contained in the book, for the latter merely presented the decrees and the results of juristic deductions, without any arguments having been added to them or any controversy raised. But as far as the proposed introduction was concerned, the mere statement of facts could not suffice. In it arguments and reasoning were a must, for in regard to the fundamentals of religion, Islam demanded complete conviction. Moreover, the introduction aimed at establishing the truth of the fundamental principles of religion, which was not possible without giving arguments and proofs. Anyhow, proof has degrees. A

proof of any degree, even the simplest one could be considered enough, for an open-minded person of clear conscience is convinced of the existence of the All-Wise Creator by an argument as simple as adduced by the Qur'an when it says:

أَمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ أَمْ هُمْ الْخَالِقُونَ

*Have they been created out. of naught or are they themselves the creators?*  
(Sura al-Tur, verse 35).

However, modern thinking during the past two centuries has blurred the human mind and conscience so much that in order to satisfy those who are conversant with it and its methodology of investigation, it has become necessary to go deeply into the questions involved and to fill up the gaps which could safely be left formerly to be filled automatically because of the open-mindedness and clearness of conscience. We, therefore, had two alternatives. First we could write only for those who still have an open mind and a clear conscience and have not been influenced by the techniques of modern thinking. In this case we could be content with simple arguments and could use a diction clear enough to be intelligible to most of the readers of the book. Alternatively we could write for those who have been influenced by modern philosophy or have been educated within its framework and have to some extent come to know its stand in regard to theology. In our opinion the second course was more appropriate, and so we acted accordingly.

Anyhow, we have tried that on the whole the arguments advanced by us should be clear to the average college educated readers as well as to those who have received their education in religious institutions. We have, as far as possible, avoided the unfamiliar terms and mathematical language, and abstained from raising complicated questions. At the same time we have made an effort to be fair to those readers also who would like to go deeper. For their benefit we have briefly hinted at more subtle points and then asked them to refer for further elucidation to our other books, such as "The Logical Bases of Inductive Reasoning". At the same time we have provided food for thought as well as convincing arguments for the average reader also. For example, the first step of the scientific proof of the

existence of the Creator advanced by us should by itself be enough for the readers in general.

We propose to talk first of the Sender of the Message, then of the Messenger and finally of the Message.

المَرْسِيَّةُ



Praise be to the Lord, whom eyes cannot envisage, senses cannot comprehend, and space cannot enclose, and whose Glory and Might nothing in nature can screen or hide. Coming into existence of the universe and the very age of universe is the clear proof and evidence of His pre-Existence and Eternity.

The very existence of things is an evidence that He is Creator and that He existed before them. The inability of all forms of creation to exist by themselves and to provide for themselves.

All these facts prove that He is One but His Unity is not a mathematical quality, that He is Eternal, having no beginning and no end, that His Being and Existence is not in need of any support or help from His creatures, that minds accept His Existence but not with the help of sight and senses; that His creatures bear witness to His being without coming in contact with Him and that imagination and comprehension cannot surround Him but can realise His Omnific Existence. He is Great but not because of dimension, that is His Greatness is not a bodily greatness; He is great because of His Might, Glory and Sway.

What wonders of creation has Almighty Allah exhibited in His creature; be they living organisms or inanimate matter, bodies having movements of their own or those which cannot move on their own accord, they have all been originated and shaped in the most wonderful ways. The Grand Architect of the universe has displayed clear, obvious and tangible signs of Elegance and Grace in every design of creation and greatness and Glory of His Power in every form and system that He gave existence to.

Look at nature and what it consists of, Oh! what a display of wisdom, philosophy, science, and art; and what a manifestation of power and might it is. It has made great scientists, wise philosophers and skilful artists - in short great minds and great intellects - wonder at its grandeur, admire its greatness, bow before its sublimeness and accept one Sole and Supreme intellect; One Creator behind all this.

An extract from Peak of Eloquence:  
An English translation of Imam Ali's Nahjul Balagha.



## FAITH IN ALLAH

Man has had faith in Allah since the remotest time. He worshipped Him, showed devotion to Him and felt closely linked to Him long before reaching any stage of abstract philosophical thought or developing an understanding of the methods of argumentations.

This faith was not the outcome of class conflict. It was neither a mechanism devised by the oppressors to facilitate their oppressive designs nor a strategem invented by the oppressed to seek relief from their suffering. It preceded all such contradictions and conflicts in human history.

Nor was it a product of fear and dismay caused by the catastrophies and inclemencies of Nature. Had it been so, the most religious people in history would have been the most fearful and the most dismayed. But we know that the torch-bearers of religion have always been the persons with the strongest will and character.

The faith of man represents his natural instinct to have contact with his Creator and his firm consciousness of his relationship to his Lord and His universe.

It was later that man began to indulge in philosophy. From the things surrounding him in the universe he derived general concepts such as existence and non-existence, necessity, possibility and impossibility, unity and plurality, complexity, and elementariness, part and whole, precedence and succession, cause and effect, and applied them in the field of argumentation in a way that strengthened his innate faith in Allah. He thus employed philosophical methods to justify his faith.

When experimentation appeared on the scene of scientific investigation as a means of acquiring knowledge, the thinkers realized that general concepts alone were not enough to discover the laws of Nature and to know the secrets of the universe. They came to the conclusion that it was scientific perception and observation that formed the real basis of

the inquiry into these laws and secrets. This perceptual trend was generally useful in the development and expansion of human knowledge of the universe.

The new trend emphasized that observation and experimentation were two of the instruments which have to be employed by human intellect and reason to unravel the mysteries of the nature of the universe and its general functioning. Hence, instead of a Greek thinker, like Aristotle, sitting in his closed and quiet room, and thinking over the nature of the relationship between a body moving in space and the force causing it to move, and drawing the conclusion that a moving body stops immediately on the cessation of the impelling force, Galileo began to carry out his experiments and to make observations on moving bodies to be able to derive a relationship of a different kind, namely, that a body once acted upon by a force imparting movement to it, would continue to move even after the cessation of that force until it is acted upon by another force stopping it.

This perceptual trend means an encouragement of the investigators to probe into the problems of Nature and discover the laws of the universal phenomena at two stages.

The first stage is that of perception and experimentation, and the collection of the data obtained through them. The second is the intellectual stage or the stage of arranging the data and drawing conclusions with a view to arriving at an acceptable general interpretation.

The perceptual trend as a scientific reality and as practised by the scientists did not mean dispensing with reason. No scientist can ever discover any secret of the universe or any law of nature through perception and experimentation except in conjunction with reason, for at the first stage he collects the results of his observations and experiments and at the second stage he weighs and compares them using his reason until he arrives at a conclusion. We are not aware of any scientific discovery which utilised only the first stage and dispensed with the

second, or did not pass through both of these stages. The first stages deals with perceptible things and the second stage with the conclusions and results which are perceived by reason and not by direct observation.

For example take the case of the law of gravitation. Newton could not directly perceive the force of attraction between two bodies nor could he perceive that it is inversely proportional to the square of the distance between their centres and directly proportional to the product of their masses. He observed only that a stone falls to the ground if dropped, that the moon revolves round the earth and that the planets revolve round the sun. He began to think over these phenomena together and continued his general efforts to find out an explanation for them all. In this respect he sought help from the theories of Galileo in regard to the uniform acceleration of bodies, falling to the ground and moving on inclined surfaces. He was benefitted by the laws of Kepler dealing with the motion of the planets, one of which says that the square of the period of revolution of every planet round the sun is proportional to the cube of its distance from it.

In the light of all this he discovered the law of gravitation and postulated that the force of attraction between any two bodies depends on the size of their masses and the distance between them.

This perceptual and experimental trend in the inquiry into the system of the universe should have presented a new and convincing basis for faith in Allah, because through it were discovered various facets of harmony and indications of wisdom which point to the existence of the Creator. But the natural scientists were not concerned with bringing this aspect into the limelight, because according to the prevalent classification of the problems and propositions of human knowledge it continued to be a philosophical question. Soon philosophical and logical attitudes developed in the field of philosophy but outside of the scope of science and attempts were made to philosophize this perceptual trend. It was declared that sense-perception was the only means of human knowledge and where sense-perception ended human knowledge also ends. Man thus has no means affirming anything which cannot be observed and experimented upon in one way or another.

Thus the perceptual and experimental trend was used to thwart the idea of faith in Allah. It was asserted that so long as Allah was not a perceptible being and it was not possible to see or perceive Him, His existence could not be affirmed. This assertion was not made by the scientists who utilized the experimental trend successfully, but was made by a group of philosophers who having logical and philosophical tendencies wrongly interpreted the perceptual trend. These extremist tendencies gradually fell into self-contradiction.

From a philosophical angle these very tendencies were compelled to the denial of the existence of an objective reality, viz. the existence of the universe in which we live actually, for our sense-perception makes things known to us as we perceive them, and not as they actually are. When we perceive a thing, we may become sure of its existence in our perception, but there is no way to prove its prior objective and independent existence outside our consciousness. When we see the moon, we can only be sure that we saw it at a particular moment, but it cannot be proved that it really exists or that it existed before we saw it. A squint-eyed person sees many things which do not actually exist and he can be sure that he saw them, but cannot be sure that they actually exist.

Thus the philosophical version of the perceptual trend gives a final blow to the very idea of sense-perception as a means of gaining knowledge, and the entire perceptual knowledge become a mere phenomenon without having any existence independent of our consciousness and understanding.

From a logical angle, this tendency in its latest manifestation has become tantamount to saying that a statement, the veracity or falsehood of which cannot be ascertained by sense-perception and experimentation, is devoid of meaning just like alphabetical letters uttered at random. Only that statement is meaningful whose veracity or otherwise can be ascertained by perception and experimentation. If sense-perception confirms its agreement with objective reality it is true, and if it confirms the opposite, it is false. The sentence 'It rains during winter (in Iraq)' is a meaningful and true sentence. The sentence, 'it rains during summer

(in Iraq)' is also a meaningful sentence, but false. But if you say that something invisible and imperceptible descends on the Night of Glory (*Laylatul Qadr*),<sup>1</sup> this sentence is meaningless to say nothing of its being true or false, because its varacity cannot be ascertained by sense-perception and experimentation. It is as meaningless as to say that Divad (a meaningless word) descends on the Night of Glory. Both the sentences have no meaning. On this basis, to say that Allah exists, is equivalent to saying that Divad exists, both of the being meaningless statements, for the existence of Allah cannot be ascertained by sense-perception and experimentation.

This logical tendency is also faced with a self-contradiction, for it asserts that a statement which is not verifiable is meaningless. But this general rule itself is a statement which is not verifiable by sense-perception and experimentation, and as such should be devoid of meaning according to its own assertion. Thus this logical tendency claims that every statement which cannot be verified by sense-perception or experimentation is meaningless. This claim is expressed as a general rule. But every general rule is outside the scope of sense-perception, for only particular and limited phenomena come within its purview. Thus this tendency besides being self-contradictory, counters all general scientific laws through which the scientists explain the phenomena of the universe. Evidently no generality can be perceived directly. It is just derived from the particular and limited phenomena which are perceived.<sup>2</sup>

Fortunately science in the course of its continuous development did not care for such extremist tendencies. It continued its function of discovering the universe, beginning its efforts with observation and experimentation and then going beyond the narrow limits imposed by the above mentioned philosophical and logical tendencies, to strive, using reason, to systematically arrange the phenomena, place them within the framework of general laws and ascertain their mutual relationships.

1 This night comes every year during the Holy Month of Ramazan, probably it is the twenty-third.

2 The reader may consult our book *The Logical Bases of Inductive Reasoning* (Arabic) p. 489, for an elucidation and criticism of the stand of Logical Positivism.

The philosophical and logical influence of these extremist tendencies dwindled in the course of time even at the level of the materialistic schools of philosophy. The modern materialistic philosophy, as represented mainly by the dialectical materialists, rejects such tendencies outright. It gives itself the right of going beyond the scope of the sense-perception and experimentation with which a scientist begins his investigation and even of going beyond the second stage at which he ends his inquiry in order to compare the various scientific data, give them a general theoretical interpretation and determine what possible relationships they can have.

Thus dialectical materialism which is the contemporary heir of materialistic thinking in the course of history is itself, from the view-point of the extremist tendencies regarding sense-perception, a believer in the imperceptible, for it gives a comprehensive explanation of the universe within a dialectic framework.

This means that both materialism and theology agree on the point of going beyond the scope of sense-perception, the adherence to which is advocated by the extreme materialistic tendencies. Both of them admit that knowledge has two stages, the first being that of collecting the data provided by perception and experimentation and the second being that of interpreting it theoretically and rationally. The difference between materialism and theology concerns the nature of the rational interpretation deduced at the second stage from the variety of data collected earlier. Materialism imposes an interpretation which denies the existence of an All-Wise Creator, whereas theology believes that the interpretation of the scientific data cannot be convincing unless it includes the acknowledgment of the existence of an All-Wise Creator.

We will present below two types of arguments to prove the existence of the All-Wise Creator. Both comprise of the data provided by perception and experimentation, their rational arrangement and the inference that the universe has an All-Wise Creator.

We call the first type of arguments the scientific or inductive proof and the second type the philosophical proof.

We propose to begin with the scientific proof. But before doing that, let us explain what we mean by scientific proof.

The scientific proof is that based on perception and experimentation. It follows the methodology of inductive reasoning based on the calculation of possibilities.

Accordingly the methodology we intend to follow to prove scientifically the existence the All-Wise, Creator, will be that of inductive reasoning.

It may be borne in mind that the methodology of a proof is different from the proof itself. If you reason that the sun is larger than the moon, because the scientists say so, the methodology here is the taking of the statements of the scientists as a proof of reality. If you say that so and so will die soon, because you have seen in a dream that he has died, your methodology here is your assumption that dreams are a proof of reality. If you argue that the earth acts like a huge double magnet, having a positive and a negative pole, because a magnetic needle suspended in a horizontal position always inclines with one end pointing north and the other pointing south, the methodology is the use of experimentation as proof.

The correctness of every proof basically depends on the correctness of the methodology on which it is based.

## **SCIENTIFIC ARGUMENT TO PROVE THE EXISTENCE OF ALLAH**

We have already mentioned that the scientific proof of the existence of the All-Wise Creator follows the methodology of inductive reasoning based on the calculation of possibilities. Before we consider this proof, let us explain and elucidate its methodology so that we may know how far it can be relied upon in the discovery of facts.

There are complicated formulae of the methodology of inductive reasoning based on the calculation of the possibilities. The total and exact evaluation of this methodology can be carried out only through

a complete analytical study of the logical bases of Induction and of the Theory of Probability<sup>3</sup> but at present we are keen to avoid any intricate formulae or any analysis difficult to comprehend.

Hence we propose to do two things:

1. To define the methodology we intend to follow and to elucidate its steps briefly and in a simplified manner.
2. To evaluate this methodology and to determine the extent to which it can be relied upon. But we have no intention to resort to its logical analysis and to discover its logical mathematical bases, because in that case we will have to introduce complicated matters and subtle and intricate ideas into our discussion. To prove the existence of the Creator we will adopt a methodology which, in the light of its other practical applications, is generally known to the average person. We will show that the methodology by which the existence of the Creator is proved, is the same which we confidently rely on in the course of arguments in our normal daily life as well as in scientific research and inquiry.

The following examples will show adequately that the methodology employed in proving the existence of the All-Wise Creator is the same as is usually employed by us in proving facts of daily life and scientific truths. Hence so long as we depend on it with confidence in proving other facts, we must of necessity, rely on it equally in proving the existence of Allah, who is the ultimate source of all the facts of reality.

In your ordinary life when you receive a letter by post, you come to know that it is from your brother merely by reading it.

When you find a physician successful in the treatment of most cases of illness, you trust him and consider him to be a skilful physician. If you take penicillin injections in 10 different cases of illness and in every case immediately develop specific symptoms of similar nature, you draw the conclusion that you are allergic to penicillin.

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<sup>3</sup> We have discussed this theory in our book *The Logical Bases of Inductive Reasoning*. See p. 333-410.



In all these and similar cases you are actually employing inductive reasoning based on the calculation of possibilities.

When a certain astronomer observed certain specific characteristics common to all the planets in the solar system, he concluded in the light of his observations that these planets were parts of the sun and had separated from it. He also proved the existence of Neptune, a member of the solar system, by recording the orbits of the planets before it was discovered by observation. In the light of certain specific phenomena he argued the existence of the electron even before the invention of the atomic microscope. In all such cases the scientist in reality employs the methodology of inductive reasoning based on the calculation of possibilities.

This same methodology is used to prove the existence of the All-Wise Creator as we shall see clearly during the examination of that proof.

## **A. DEFINITION OF THE METHODOLOGY AND ITS STEPS**

The methodology of inductive reasoning based on the calculation of possibilities can be summarized for the sake of simplicity and clarification in the five steps given below:

- a. We encounter a number of phenomena through perception and experimentation.
- b. We, after observation and collection of data, move to the stage of interpretation, wherein it is desired to find a sound hypothesis to explain and justify all the phenomena. By 'sound hypothesis' we mean that if it should be true, it would imply or conform to all those phenomena present in actual fact.
- c. We observe that if this hypothesis is not true, then the existence of all those phenomena together is very unlikely, i.e. assuming the incorrectness of the hypothesis, the ratio of the possibility of the existence of all the phenomena simultaneously to that of the

non-existence of all of them or at least one of them is extremely small, like one in a hundred or one in a thousand.

- d. We deduce from the above that the hypothesis is true and the proof of its correctness is the existence of the phenomena observed at the first step.
- e. The degree of the confirmation of the truth of the hypothesis proposed in the second step is inversely proportional to the ratio of the possibility of the existence of all the phenomena together, to that of their non-existence (or at least the non-existence of one of them), in case hypothesis is assumed to be incorrect. The smaller this ratio is, the greater is the degree of confirmation, which reaches, in many normal cases, that of complete certainty of the correctness of the hypothesis.<sup>4</sup>

In fact there are precise standards and rules for assessing possibility on the basis of this Theory of Probability. In ordinary circumstances man, by nature, applies these standards and rules almost exactly. Hence we propose to rely on this natural way of assessing the possibility and do not think it necessary to enter into the complicated details of the logical and mathematical bases of this assessment.

These same are the steps which we normally take in every case of inductive reasoning based on the calculation of possibilities, whether it is a case of ordinary life, or of scientific research, or of providing the existence of the All-Wise Creator.

## **B. EVALUATION OF METHODOLOGY**

Let us now evaluate this methodology through its application to concrete examples as promised earlier.

We shall first begin with the examples from ordinary life. We have just

<sup>4</sup> In accordance with the second step of Inductive Reasoning. See *The Logical Bases of Inductive Reasoning*, pp. 335—410. For further details refer to the same book, pp. 146-247.

said that when you receive a letter by post and read it, you immediately come to know that it is from your brother and not from someone else desiring to correspond with you. On such an occasion you carry out inductive reasoning based on the calculation of possibility. Although this proposition (that the letter is from your brother) may appear to you very clear and simple, and it is the same in reality you have arrived at it using inductive reasoning according to the methodology described above.

At the first step you meet with a number of phenomena such as the letter bears a name which corresponds exactly with that of your brother; all alphabetical letters have been written in the style of his writing, the arrangement of the words and the punctuation marks is the same as followed by him, the style of expression with all its good and weak points is his; there are the same spelling mistakes which are usually committed by him; the information contained in the letter is that which he has; the opinions expressed in it are his, and the letter asks you to do certain things which are in complete harmony with his requirements. These are the phenomena.

At the second step you ask yourself whether the letter has been really sent to you by your brother or it is from someone else bearing the same name? Here you will find that you have a sound hypothesis to explain and justify all the phenomena. The hypothesis is that the letter is really from your brother. If it is so, it would naturally explain all the data observed by you at the first step.

At the third step you ask yourself what are the chances of the presence of all the phenomena observed by you; if it is presumed that the letter is not from your brother, but is from someone else, such chance would require a large number of presumptions. You will have to presume that there is another person having the same name as your brother, having the same handwriting, the same style, the same way of expression, the same level of education, who has similar needs and similar information and whose circumstances resemble those of your brother. The possibility of the existence of such a large number of coincidences simulatenously is very meagre. As the number of coincidences necessary to be presumed increases, the possibility of their existence diminishes.

The logical basis of inductive reasoning tells us how to measure possibility and explains how and why it dwindles as the number of the supposed coincidences increases. But we need not go into all these details, because, for the average reader, they are complicated and difficult to understand. Fortunately the dwindling of possibility does not depend on these details, just as the falling of a person from a height to the ground does not depend on his understanding the force of gravity and knowing the scientific equation of the law of gravitation. You need nothing to realize that the possibility of the existence of a person resembling your brother in every way and in all the details is very remote. A bank is in no need of mastering the logical basis of inductive reasoning to know that the degree of possibility of all its customers withdrawing their deposits at one and the same time is extremely small, whereas the possibility of the withdrawal by one or two is not so.

At the fourth step you think that, as in the case of assuming that the letter is not from your brother, there is very little possibility of the presence of all the above mentioned phenomena, it is highly probable, because of the existence of all these phenomena in reality, that it is from your brother.

At the fifth step you correlate the probability you established at the fourth step to the effect that the letter was from your brother, with the slightness of the possibility of the presence of all the phenomena in the letter in case it was from someone else, as you established at the third step. The correlation between these two steps shows that the degree of that probability is in inverse proportion to the slightness of this possibility. The less is the slightness of this possibility, the greater and more convincing is the degree of that probability. Therefore, if there are no counter indications showing that the letter is not from your brother, you will be, after taking these five steps, fully convinced that it is actually from your brother.

This was an example from the daily life, of every man.

Let us take another example of this methodology from its use by the scientists to argue and prove a scientific theory.

Let us take the example of the theory of the origin of the planets, which states that the nine planets were originally a part of the sun and separated from it as hot gaseous pieces millions of years ago. Generally speaking, the scientists are unanimous as to the basic theory of their origin, though they differ as to the cause of their separation from the sun.

The argument in support of the theory consists of the following steps:

At the first step the scientists observed a number of phenomena by means of preception and experimentation. Some of the observations made by them are as under:

1. The movement of the earth round the sun is in harmony with that of the sun on its own axis, both the movements being from the west to the east.
2. The earth revolves on its axis in the same direction as the sun on its axis, i.e. from the west to the east.
3. The earth revolves round the sun in an orbit parallel to the equator of the sun, in a way that the sun represents a pole and the earth a point on the sphere.
4. Almost all the elements of which the earth is composed, are found in the sun.
5. Quantitatively there is an agreement between the percentage of the various elements existing in the sun and those existing in the earth. Hydrogen predominates in both of them.
6. There is a harmony between the speed at which the earth revolves round the sun and on its own axis and the speed at which the sun rotates on its axis.
7. As estimated by science there is harmony between the ages of the earth and the sun.

8. The inside of the earth is hot. This proves that at the beginning of its evolution the earth was very hot.

These are some of the phenomena observed by the scientists by means of perception and experimentation at the first step.

At the second step the scientists enunciated a hypothesis which could explain all the phenomena observed at the first step i.e. if it is confirmed to be true, it would imply and justify the simultaneous existence of all these phenomena. According to this hypothesis the earth was a part of the sun which subsequently separated from it for one reason or another. On the basis of this proposition it is possible to explain the origin of all the phenomena mentioned above.

The first phenomenon shows that the earth moves round the sun in harmony with the movement of the sun on its axis, both the movements being from the west to the east. This agreement in movement becomes clear if the above hypothesis is accepted as correct, for according to the law of continuity, a part separated from a revolving body, but remaining attached to it by a thread or otherwise, continues to move in the same direction as the main body.

The second phenomenon shows that the rotation of the earth on its axis is in accord with that of the sun on its axis, both of them moving from the west to the east. This also can be explained on the basis of the above mentioned hypothesis, for the law of continuity again demands that a body separated from another rotating from the west to the east should continue to move in the same direction.

The same is the case with the third phenomenon.

The fourth and the fifth phenomena, which state that the earth and the sun are composed of the same elements in similar proportions, can also be understood clearly on the basis that the earth was a part of the sun, since the elements of a part should be the as those of the whole.

The sixth phenomenon, namely the accord between the speeds of the revolution of the earth round the sun, its revolution on its own axis and the revolution of the sun on its axis, can also be explained on the basis of the theory that the earth has separated from the sun, as this would mean that its two rotational movements have originated from the movement of the sun. This fully explains the harmony and the reason therefor.

As for the seventh phenomenon, namely the harmony between the age of the earth and that of the sun, it can evidently be explained on the basis of the separation of the earth from the sun. The same is true of the eighth phenomenon, which indicates that at the beginning of its evolution the earth was very hot. The hypothesis of its separation from the sun implies that.

At the third step it is observed that in case the hypothesis of the separation of the earth from the sun is not accepted to be true, the possibility of the simultaneous existence of all the above mentioned phenomena is very remote, for in that case they would form a collection of coincidences having no understandable connection between them. The possibility of the existence of all of them on the assumption of the incorrectness of the above mentioned theory, is very slight, as it would require a large number of propositions to explain them.

In regard to the accord between the movement of the earth round the sun and the movement of the sun on its axis both the movements being from the west to the east, we will have to assume that the earth was originally at a great distance from the sun. It was either an independent body or was a part of some other sun and separated from it. It came close to the sun subsequently. We will also have to suppose that when this free earth entered its present orbit round the sun, it did so at a point to the west of the sun, and since then it is revolving from west to east, i.e. in the same direction in which the sun moves on its axis. Had it entered its orbit at a point to the east of the sun, it would have been revolving from the east to the west.

In regard to the accord between the rotation of the earth on its axis and

that of the sun on its axis, both of them being from the west to the east, we will have to suppose, for example, that another sun from which the earth was presumably separated, was also moving from the west to the east.

In regard to the revolution of the earth round the sun in an orbit parallel to the equator of the latter, we will have to presume, for example, that the other sun from which the earth was separated, was situated at a point perpendicular to the equator of our sun.

In regard to the agreement of the earth and the sun in the matter of the elements of which they are composed and their proportions, we must presume that the earth or the other sun from which the earth separated, comprised of the same elements as our sun and in similar proportions.

In regard to the accord between the speed of the revolution of the earth round the sun and on its own axis, and the speed of the rotation of the sun on its axis, we will have to presume, for example, that the other sun from which the earth separated, exploded in such a way that it gave to the earth a speed proportionate to that of our sun.

In regard to the accord between the age of the earth and that of the sun and in regard to the heat of the earth at the beginning of its evolution, we will have to presume, for example, that the age of the other sun from which the earth separated was the same as that of our sun and that at the time of the separation a great amount of heat was generated.

Thus we observe that to explain all those phenomena, in case of the incorrectness of the hypothesis of separation, it is necessary to presume a large number of coincidences, the possibility of the occurrence of which is very slight, whereas the separation hypothesis alone is enough to explain and correlate all the phenomena.

At the fourth step we opine that so long as the presence of all these phenomena observed about the earth is most unlikely in case it is presumed that the earth was not separated from our sun, its actual separation from the sun is most probable in view of the actual presence of these phenomena.



At the fifth step the probability of the separation hypothesis as established at the fourth step, is correlated with the slightness of the possibility of the presence of all the phenomena without its being accepted that the earth has separated from this sun, as established at the third step. The correlation between these two steps means that the lesser the possibility explained at the third step, the greater the probability established at the fourth.

On this basis we prove the theory of the separation of the earth and the sun, and by this methodology the scientists gained complete conviction of that.

## **C. HOW TO APPLY THIS METHODOLOGY TO PROVE THE CREATOR**

After learning the general methodology of inductive reasoning based on the calculation of possibilities and after evaluating it through its practical applications, we now propose to apply it to the argument to prove the existence of the All-Wise Creator. For this purpose again we will follow the self-same steps.

### **THE FIRST STEP**

We observe a general harmony between a huge number of systematically arranged phenomena on the one hand and the needs of man as a living being and the amenities of life required by him on the other, to the extent the replacement of any of these phenomena will mean the extinction of human life on the earth or at least its being crippled.

We give below a number of such phenomena as examples:

The earth receives from the sun a specific quantity of heat which makes it warm enough for the evolution of life and satisfies the needs of living beings for heat. This heat is neither too much, nor too little. It has been scientifically observed that the distance between the earth and the sun is in total accord with the quantity of heat required for life on the earth. Had the distance been double of what it now is, there would not have been

enough heat to make life possible. If it had been half of what it is, the level of heat would have multiplied so much as to make life impossible.

We observe that the crust of the earth and the oceans hold in the form of compounds, the major part of oxygen which constitutes 80 percent (by weight) of all water in the world. In spite of the fact that oxygen is, chemically, extremely active and despite its chemical combination (with other elements), still a limited portion of it remains free forming a part of air, which is an essential pre-requisite of life. Living beings, man and animal, need oxygen for respiration. Had the entire quantity of oxygen been retained in the form of compounds, life could not have existed.

It has been observed that the percentage of free oxygen is in full accord with what is required by man and what is necessary for the facilitation of his practical life. Air is composed of 21 percent oxygen. Had the percentage been greater, there would have been the risk of extensive and continuous fires in the environment. Had the percentage been smaller, life would have become impossible or very difficult and enough fire for facilitating the requirements of life would not have been available.

We also observe a natural phenomena which is continuously being repeated millions of times, and results in the maintenance of a specific quantity of oxygen. Man and most of the animals, when they inhale air, extract the oxygen which is received by the blood and distributed in all parts of the body. This oxygen is used for burning food and in this process carbon dioxide is formed and passed into the lungs wherefrom it is exhaled. Thus man and other animals continuously produce this gas, which is essential to plant life. The plants in their turn take in carbon dioxide and expel pure oxygen.

The maintenance of the continuous supply of the required quantity of oxygen has been made possible by this exchange between animals and plants. Otherwise life would have become impossible with the exhaustion of the supply of this essential element. This exchange is the outcome of thousands of natural phenomena which have combined to produce this arrangement which fully suits the requirements of life.

We observe that nitrogen is a heavy and almost inert gas, but on being mixed with oxygen it becomes rarefied to the degree required for its utilisation. We also observe that the quantities of free oxygen and free nitrogen found in the air, are fully balanced in the sense that the quantity of the first is enough to rarefy the second. Had the quantity of oxygen been more or that of nitrogen less, the required process of rarefaction would not have occurred.

We observe that the quantity of air in the atmosphere surrounding the earth is limited. It may not exceed one millionth of the mass of the earth, but it exactly suits the conduct of human life on the earth. Had the quantity of air been more than what it is or less than what it is, life would have been impossible or very difficult. More air would have meant greater atmospheric pressure, which might have become unbearable. Less air would have allowed the meteors appearing daily to penetrate the atmosphere and destroy life on the earth easily.

We observe that the crust of the earth absorbs limited quantities of oxygen and carbon dioxide, but it cannot absorb the entire quantity. It would have done that, had it been of greater thickness, and in that case human, animal and plant life would have been destroyed.

We observe that there is a specific distance between the earth and the moon, and this distance exactly suits the conduct of practical human life on the earth. Had the moon been at a relatively shorter distance from us, it would have caused such forceful tides that they would have pulled away the mountains from their locations.

We observe the existence of a large number of instincts in various kinds of living beings. Even though the instinct itself is an imperceptible concept and cannot be observed directly, but the behavioural pattern caused by it is not imperceptible and forms a phenomenon which is fully observable scientifically. These behavioural patterns, produced by thousands of instincts which man has come to know in the course of his ordinary life or of scientific investigation, continuously suit the requirements of the promotion and protection of life. Some of these

patterns reach a high degree of complexity and perfection. When we divide them into units, we find that every behavioural unit is in complete harmony with these requirements of life.

The physiological constitution of man represents millions of natural and physiological phenomena. Each of them in its formation, physiological role and coherence with the other phenomena is always in complete harmony with the requirements of the promotion and protection of life. Let us, for instance, take that set of phenomena which are closely knit together to facilitate the function of the faculty of sight and perception of objects. The lens of eye focuses image of an object on the retina which consists of nine layers, the most posterior of which contains millions of rods and cones arranged in a way especially adapted for performing the function of seeing through their mutual interconnections and relationship with the lens. But at this stage an inverted image is formed. Anyhow, this is a temporary phase and we see things upside down because vision is not complete yet. The image is transmitted by millions of nerve fibres to the optic centre of brain where it takes its natural shape and then the process of vision is completed. Thus there is complete harmony with the requirements of the promotion of life.

We find that even such natural phenomena as beauty, splendour and sweet fragrances are found where they are in accord with and contribute to the requirement of the promotion of life. It has been observed that the flowers, the pollination of which is left to insects, are provided with beautiful and bright colours and enchanting fragrance to attract the insects and to facilitate the process of pollination. In contrast, the flowers, the pollen of which is scattered by air normally lack such tempting elements.

The phenomenon of sex on the whole and the complete harmony between the physiological constitution of male and female in human beings, animals and plants in such a way as to guarantee the interaction and perpetuation of life, is another universal manifestation of the accord between Nature and the requirements of the promotion of life. As the Qur'an says: *“And if you would count Allah's favours, you would not be*

*able to number them. Surely Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”* (Sura al-Nahl 16:18)

#### THE SECOND STEP

We find that this continuous accord between the natural phenomena and the requirements of guaranteeing and promoting of life in millions of cases can in each case be explained through one hypothesis, viz. the assumption that there is an All-Wise Creator of this universe, who has willed to furnish the earth with the necessary elements of life and all the facilities required in this connection. This hypothesis explains all the cases of accord and harmony.

#### THE THIRD STEP

We ask ourselves how far there is a possibility of all that accord between the phenomena of Nature and the requirements of the promotion of life, without deliberate plan and purpose, if the hypothesis of the All-Wise Creator were not actually true. Obviously such a possibility would mean the presumption of a huge number of coincidences. If in the foregoing example the possibility of the letter you received by post, being from some person other than your brother but resembling him in all particulars, was very remote because according to the calculation of possibilities there could be very little chance of resemblance in so many particulars, then what do you think of the possibility of earth and all that it contains being the work of unpurposeful matter though it resembles that of an All-Wise Creator and Planner in millions and millions of details!

#### THE FOURTH STEP

We deem the hypothesis propounded at the second step probable beyond doubt, i.e. we admit that there is an All-Wise Creator.

#### THE FIFTH STEP

We correlate this probability with the slightness of the possibility established at the third step. As we already know the more numerous the coincidences to be presumed, the more remote is the possibility. So naturally in this case the possibility is so remote that it cannot suffice to prove any scientific law. As the number of coincidences having to be

presumed here is greater than that in any other similar case, the possibility mentioned at the third step should be negligible. Thus we arrive at the definite conclusion that this universe has an All-Wise Creator as indicated by the presence of harmony and planning in it.

Now there remain two problems to be resolved:

1. It is observed that in accordance with the methodology of inductive reasoning the possible alternative to the hypothesis of the All-Wise Creator is that every phenomenon in harmony with the requirements of life is the outcome of blind compulsions inherent in matter in the sense that all these phenomena are automatic because of the nature of matter, its inner contradictions and its self-activity. Inductive reasoning serves to give preference to the hypothesis of the All-Wise Creator over its possible alternative because that hypothesis implies only one presumption, namely the existence of an All-Wise Creator, whereas its possible alternative has to presuppose the existence of as many of blind compulsions in matter as the number of the phenomena in question. Hence the possibility of the alternative will mean the possibility of the coincidence of a huge number of events, which is so meagre as to be non-existent. Anyhow, this reasoning would carry weight only if the hypothesis of the All-Wise Creator does not imply the coincidence of a large number of events. But it appears that it also does, because we have to presume that the All-Wise creator, whose existence explains all the phenomena of the universe, possesses as many powers and abilities and as many kinds of knowledge as the number of the phenomena. Thus the number of presumptions implied by this hypothesis is the same as that implied by its alternative. Where, then, are the grounds for preference?

The answer is that the basis of the preference of the All-Wise Creator hypothesis is that the cases of blind compulsion in matter are not correlative and the presumption of the existence of any of them is to be regarded as neutral in relation to the existence or non-existence of any other. This, in the language of the calculation of possibilities means that all the phenomena are separate and independent events and their possibilities are also independent. But the various kinds of power

and knowledge required in the case of an All-Wise Creator, are not independent of each other, because the knowledge and power required for bringing about one phenomenon is the same as is required for bringing about any other. Hence the presumption of some of these powers and knowledge is not neutral in relation to the presumption of some others. Not only that, the presumption of anyone of them implies the presumption of others and makes their existence probable to a great degree. In the language of the calculation of possibilities, it may be said that the possibilities of these kinds of power and knowledge are conditional. In other words, if we presume the existence of some of them then the existence of others becomes very probable even to the extent of certainty in many cases.

If we want to estimate the possibility of the aggregate of all kinds of powers and knowledge and that of the aggregate cases of blind compulsion, we must follow the rule of multiplication as prescribed in the theory of the calculation of possibility and must multiply the value of the possibility of every member in the aggregate by that of every other member in it. As we know, multiplication leads to the dwindling of the possibility. But the fewer the number of the factors to be multiplied, the less is the dwindling. It has been proved mathematically that in the case of conditional possibilities we must multiply the value of the possibility of one member with that of another, presuming the existence of the first. That in most cases leads to certainty or almost certainty. Hence this multiplication does not result in the dwindling of the possibility or if it does, it does to a very slight degree only. In contrast, in the case of independent possibilities, each possibility being neutral to others, this multiplication leads to a colossal decrease in the value. It is on this basis that preference is given to one presumption over another.<sup>5</sup>

2. The other problem arises from the determination of the value of the prior possibility of a proposition to be proved by inductive reasoning. To clarify that, a comparison is being made between the application of inductive reasoning to proving the existence of the Creator and its

<sup>5</sup> For the elucidation of the rule of multiplication in regard to the conditional and independent possibilities please refer to our book. *The Logical Bases of Inductive Reasoning*. pp. 153-154.

application in the preceding example to prove that the letter which you received by post was from your brother.

In connection with this example it may be said that the quickness with which an individual comes to believe that a certain letter was sent by his brother, is influenced by the degree of the possibility of this proposition prior to his opening the letter and reading it.

This possibility is called the prior possibility of a proposition. Supposing, for example, that prior to his opening the letter the possibility of its having been sent by his brother was to the extent of fifty percent or more, then he will quickly be convinced on the basis of the five steps of inductive reasoning that the letter is from his brother. On the other hand, if there was no prior possibility to a significant degree that he would receive a letter from his brother, for example, if he was under the impression that his brother was already dead he would not so quickly come to the conclusion that it was from his brother, unless he gets some definite indications to that effect. As such, let us see how we can measure the prior possibility of the existence of the Creator?

In fact the proposition of the existence of the All-Wise Creator is not merely possible, but certain, having been confirmed by human nature and intuition. However, if we assume that it is only a possible proposition and want to prove it by inductive reasoning, we can do so by estimating the value of its prior probability in the following way:

If we take each phenomenon under discussion separately, we find that it can be explained by one of the two possible hypotheses: either by presuming that there is an All-Wise Creator or by presuming that there is a blind compulsion inherent in matter. So long as we have two alternatives and there exists no prior justification to give preference to one of them over the other, we must divide the figure of certainty between them equally, allotting a value of fifty percent to each of them. As the possibilities in favour of All-Wise Creator hypothesis are correlative and conditional, their multiplication will lead to an ever-increasing overall possibility, whereas the probabilities in favour of the blind compulsion



hypothesis being independent and unconditional, their multiplication will lead to an ever-decreasing overall possibility.

After a deep and careful examination of the question we are of the view that the reason why the scientific argument of the existence of the Creator has not met with general acceptance by the Western thinkers and is disavowed by the philosophers like Russell, is that they have not been able to overcome the above mentioned two problems, the method of resolving which we have shown.<sup>6</sup>

In connection with the signs of harmony, order and planning in the universe, the Qur'an says: "*We shall soon show them Our signs in the universe and in their own selves, until it becomes quite clear to them that it is truth. Is it not enough that your Lord is a witness over all things?*" (Sura al-Fussilat 41:53).

*"Verily in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day; and the ships that sail on the sea with that which profits men, and the water that Allah sends down from the sky, then gives life therewith to the earth after its death and spreads in it all kinds of animals, and in the veering of the winds and the clouds made subservient between heaven and earth, there are surely signs for people who understand."* (Sura al-Baqara 2:164)

*"Then look again. Can you see any disorder? Then repeat your look twice. Your look will return to you in futility, while it is fatigued."* (Sura al-Mulk 67:3-4).

## THE PHILOSOPHICAL PROOF

Before entering into the discussion of the philosophical proof of the existence of the Creator, we must know what is a philosophical proof, how is it distinguished from a scientific one and how many kinds of proof there are altogether.

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<sup>6</sup> For further elaboration of how to apply the methodology of Inductive Reasoning to prove the existence of the Creator, and how to resolve these two problems, the reader may consult our book *The Logical Bases of Inductive Reasoning*, pp 441-451.

There are three kinds of proof: mathematical, scientific and philosophical.

The mathematical proof is that which is used in the field of pure mathematics and formal logic, and is always based on the fundamental principle of non-contradiction, according to which “A is A and cannot be non-A”. Every proof based on this principle and the conclusions derived therefrom, is called a mathematical proof and enjoys the confidence of all.

The scientific proof is that which is used in the realm of natural sciences. In addition to the fundamentals of mathematical reasoning, it depends also on the data which can be proved by sense-perception or by scientific induction.

The philosophical proof, used to prove objective facts in the external world depends on intellectual data (not requiring observation and experimentation) as well as on the fundamentals of mathematical reasoning.

But this does not necessarily mean that philosophical reasoning does not rely on perceptual or inductive data. It only means that it does not confine itself to them, but in addition thereto, or quite independently thereof, it relies on other intellectual data within the framework of reasoning to prove a proposition.

As such the philosophical proof differs from the scientific proof in as much as it deals with intellectual data also which are outside the scope of the fundamentals of mathematical reasoning.

On the basis of the above conception of philosophical reasoning we are confronted with the following question: Is it possible to rely on intellectual data, i.e. on the ideas which are inspired by reason, independent of observation, experimentation and scientific induction?

The answer to this question is in the affirmative. A part of our knowledge enjoying universal reliability consists of such principles as

that of non-contradiction on which the entire pure mathematics is based. It is a principle in which we believe on a rational basis and not on the basis of observations and experiments in the field of inductive reasoning.

This is evidenced by the fact that the degree of our reliance on this principle is not influenced by the number of observations and experiments conforming to it. Let us take a clear case of the arithmetical application of this principle. Our belief in the correctness of the simple arithmetical equation,  $2+2=4$  is so firmly established that its acceptance is not further augmented by the observation of any additional evidence. Nor only that, but we are never willing to listen to any contradictory piece of evidence and will never believe if it is said that  $2+2$  may in exceptional circumstances be equal to 5 or 3. It means that our belief in this truth is not dependent on observation and experimentation, otherwise it would have been influenced thereby positively or negatively.

If we are completely sure in our belief in this truth in spite of its being independent of observation and experimentation then it is but natural to accept that it is possible to rely, in certain cases, on the data based on reason on which philosophical reasoning rests.

In other words, to deny philosophical proof merely on the ground that it relies on the data based on reason and not related to experimentation and induction, means the denial of mathematical reasoning also, because that rests wholly on the principle of non-contradiction, the belief in which is not related to experimentation and induction.<sup>7</sup>

### **(1) A specimen of Philosophical Proof of the Creator**

This proof is based on the following three premises:

a. The axiom that event has a cause from which it derives its existence. Man perceives this truth instinctively and it is also substantiated by scientific induction.

b. The statement saying whenever there exist varying degrees of a

<sup>7</sup> For further elaboration of the point and an understanding and critical evaluation of the stand of experimental and positive logic thereon, a reference may be made to our book, *The Logical Bases of Inductive Reasoning*, pp. 480-500.

thing, some of them being superior and more perfect than others, it is not possible that a less perfect degree with lower content may be the cause of the existence of a more perfect and higher degree. Heat, knowledge and light all have many degrees, some of them more perfect and stronger than others. But the emanation of a higher degree of heat from a lower degree of it is not possible. Nor can one acquire a perfect knowledge of medicine, philosophy or religion etc from a person having a limited knowledge of it or none at all. Nor can a faint light produce a higher degree of light. Every higher degree represents a quantitative and qualitative increase, and no increase can be conferred by that which does not possess it. So you cannot finance a project with money other than the balance available with you.

- c. Matter in the course of its continuous evolution takes various forms according to the degree of its development and range of concentration. A molecule of water having no life and sensation represents one form of matter. Protoplasm represents a higher form of it. The unicellular microscopic organism (amoeba) represents a still more developed form. Man, the rational and percipient living being represents the highest form of existence in the universe.

Concerning the different forms of existence the following question arises: Is the difference between these various forms merely a quantitative difference of the number of atoms and elements and the mechanical relationships between them, or a qualitative difference representing the various degrees of existence and stages of development and evolution? In other words, is the difference between clay and man, made from clay, only numerical or is it a difference between two degrees of existence and two stages of development and evolution like the difference between a faint light and a strong light?

Man by nature believes that these forms are various degrees of existence and stages of evolution. So life is a higher degree of the existence of matter, and itself has different degrees. Whenever life acquires a new content, it assumes a higher degree. That is why the life of a percipient and rational being is richer and higher than that of plants.

But the materialistic thinking has been opposing this view for the past more than one century. It believes in the mechanical interpretation of the universe, which says that the external world consists of small particles of similar nature, which are affected by simple forces like attraction and repulsion working within general rules. The function of these forces is confined to the moving of these particles from one place to another. As the result of this attraction and repulsion, some particles combine together and some others are separated. And thus matter acquires various forms.

On this basis Mechanical Materialism has confined the idea of evolution to the movement of bodies and particles from one place to another in space and has explained the different forms of matter by holding that they are the various ways of the combination and division of the particles without anything new emerging through evolution, for neither does matter grow with regard to its existence nor does it make any progress with regard to its evolution. It only combines and divides in different ways just like a piece of dough which can be given different shapes and forms, but will always remain what it is and will not become anything new.

This hypothesis was inspired by the development of the science of Mechanics, the first of the natural sciences to start scientific investigation with complete freedom. It was encouraged by the success achieved by this science in discovering the laws of mechanical motion and explaining on their basis, the familiar movements of ordinary bodies as well as those of the stars in space.

But the continuous development of science and the extension of the methods of scientific investigation to other diverse fields proved the falsity of this hypothesis and its inability, on the one hand, to explain mechanically all spatial movements, and on the other hand to include all forms of matter under the principle of mechanical motion of bodies and particles from one place to another. Science has since confirmed what man had innately perceived, that the diversity of the forms of matter is not due to mere spatial motion, but is due to many kinds of qualitative

development. It has proved through scientific experiments that no numerical combination of particles represents life, sensation or thinking. This position brings us face to face with a conception totally different from that suggested by Mechanical Materialism. We find that life, sensation and thinking represent a real process of growth in matter and a qualitative development in the levels of its existence irrespective of the fact whether the content of this qualitative development is material but of a higher degree or something non-material.

Now we have these three premises:

1. Every event has a cause.
2. A lower degree of a thing cannot be the cause of that which is of a higher degree.
3. There are various levels and qualitatively diverse forms of existence in the universe.

In the light of these three premises we know that we find in the qualitative forms of development a real growth i.e. evolution in the existence of matter and a qualitative increase in it. Therefore we have a right to ask wherefrom this increase has come and how this new addition has appeared, since every incident must have a cause.

There are two possible answers to this question.

The first is that the increase has come out of matter itself. In the course of its evolution, matter, which has no life, no feeling and no thinking originated life, feeling and thinking. In other words, a lower form of the existence of matter is the cause of a higher form, richer in content.

This answer is contrary to the second premise mentioned above which stipulates that a form of existence of a lower degree cannot be the cause of a form of a higher degree and richer in content. To presume that dead matter not pulsating with life, can bestow life, feeling and thinking on itself or on some other matter is tantamount to saying that a person who

does not know philosophy can teach it, that a faint degree of light can emit a strong degree of it like that of the sun, or that a poor man having no money can finance the projects requiring large amounts of capital.

The second answer to the question is that the increase found in matter in the course of its development has come from a source enjoying all that this increase represents such as life, feeling and thinking. This source is Allah — the Almighty, the Lord and Sustainer of the universe. The growth of matter is but the fostering and breeding exercised by the Lord and Sustainer of the universe in His Wisdom, Planning and Sustainment. The Qur'an says: "*We created man from an extract of clay; then We made it into a sperm-cell put in a safe place, then We turned it into a clot of blood, then We fashioned the clot a lump, then We fashioned the lump into bones, then clothed the bones with flesh and then caused it to grow into another creation. So Blessed be Allah, the best of the creators.*" (Sura al-Mu'minun, 23:12—14).

This is the only answer which is in complete harmony with the above mentioned three premises and which gives a reasonable explanation of the process of growth and evolution of the different forms of existence in the arena of this spacious universe. The Qur'an, addressing unblemished human nature and reason, has hinted at this reasoning in a number of verses.

*"Have you seen that which you cultivate? Do you create it or are We the Creator?"* (Sura al-Waqiah, 56:58-59)

*"And among His signs is that He created you from clay, then you became men dispersed in the land."* (Sura al-Rum, 30:20)

*"Have you seen that which you cultivate? Is it you who foster it or are We the Fosterer?"* (Sura al-Waqiah, 56:63-64).

*"Have you seen the fire which you strike out? Was it you who made the tree thereof to grow, or are We the grower?"* (Sura al-Waqiah, 56:71-72).

## (2) Standpoint of Materialism

Let us now briefly describe the standpoint of materialism *vis-à-vis* this argument.

Mechanical Materialism is not embarrassed in facing this argument. It, as we know, interprets life, sensation and thinking as forms of the combination and division of bodies and particles and nothing more. According to it nothing new appears in the course of development except the movement of certain parts as determined by mechanical forces.

But modern materialism which believes in the qualitative development of matter, finds itself embarrassed by this argument. To reconcile its materialistic desire not to go beyond matter with the above-mentioned second premise, it has chosen a queer method to explain the development of matter. According to this view matter itself is the source of the entire process of qualitative development, but not like a poor man financing capital-intensive projects in contravention of the second premise mentioned above. This development is accomplished on the basis that all forms and contents of development exist in matter from the very beginning. Accordingly, a chick exists in the egg and steam exists in water. And so on.

As for the question how the same matter can at one and the same time be an egg and a chick or water and steam dialectic materialism says that it is a question of contradiction which is the general law of Nature. Everything nurtures its antithesis or opposite within itself, and a constant conflict between the two (thesis and antithesis) goes on, resulting in the emergence of the synthesis, which represents a change in matter, just as the egg bursts at a particular moment and from within it a chick emerges. In this way matter continues to evolve, for the synthesis, which emerges through the conflict of thesis and antithesis, represents the future or a step forward.

We would like to make the following comments on this theory:

What exactly does modern materialism mean by asserting that a thing



contains its antithesis or opposite? Which of the following meanings is intended?

1. Does it mean that the egg and the chick are contradictories or opposites and that the egg makes the chick and bestows life on it? In other words does it mean that a non-living thing gives birth to a living thing and creates life? Such a presumption, being exactly like that of a poor person financing capital-intensive projects, is contradictory to one of the axioms mentioned above.
2. Or does it mean that the egg does not make a chick, but only brings out what was hidden in it, for everything has its own antithesis or contradictory concealed within it? In this case an egg will be an egg and a chick at one and the same time like a picture which appears to be different from different angles.

If it is admitted that an egg was always a chick also, evidently there is no question of any developmental or evolutionary process when it actually becomes a chick, for what has now come into existence, and existed from the very beginning. This is like a person taking out money from his pocket. By doing so, he does not become richer, for what is now in his hand, was previously in his pocket. A real process of growth and development should produce something new, and hence we must admit that an egg is neither a fowl nor a chick. It is only a potential fowl in the sense that it is capable of becoming one. In this respect an egg is definitely distinct from a piece of stone which can never become a fowl whereas an egg can under fixed conditions and circumstances. Anyhow, mere potentiality does not mean actuality, and the mere possibility of an egg becoming a chick is not enough to explain its actual occurrence.

Further, if the forms of matter were an outcome of its inner contradictions, the variety of these forms has to be explained on the basis of a variety of its inner contradictions. Thus the inner contradictions of an egg should naturally be distinct from those of water, so that the first set of contradictions should produce a chick and the second one steam. This presumption appears to be plausible when we

talk of those forms of matter which are at a later stage of development. But it is still difficult to explain the variety at the level of the elementary particles constituting the basic units of the universe, such as protons, neutrons, electrons, anti-protons, anti-electrons and photons. Has each of these particles assumed its special form on the basis of its inner contradictions? Did the proton exist within its basic matter and then emerge consequent to motion and conflict as a chick emerges out of an egg?

In the case of this presumption, how can we justify the variety of the forms of these particles because the logic of inner contradiction, requires that they should differ in their constitution, but we know that modern science tends to believe in the unity of the constitution of matter, and say that the inner content of matter is identical and the various forms of elementary particles are on mutually exchangeable conditions. That is why a proton can transform into a neutron and vice versa. In other words not only an atom but also a particle can change its form while its content remains the same. That means that the content is the same in everything, though the forms vary. Then how can we suppose that their divergent forms are the outcome of different inner contradictions?

The example of the egg and chick is itself useful to elucidate this contention. To produce various forms out of their presumed inner contradictions, eggs must be heterogenous in their inner composition. We see that the egg of a hen and that of another bird produce two different forms, i.e. a hen and a different bird. But if the two eggs are of the same kind, like two eggs of a hen, it is not possible to presume that their inner contradictions can produce two different forms.

Thus we observe that the explanation of the various forms of matter on the basis of their contradictions by modern materialism, and the tendency of modern science to affirm the unity of the internal composition of matter proceed in two different directions.

3. Or does modern materialism mean that an egg is composed of two independent opposites or contradictories each having its

separate existence, one of them being represented by the sperm planted therein through fertilization, and the other by all other stuff that the egg contains, the opposites have merged together because of a struggle inside the shell and that it is through this conflict that the sperm emerges victorious and the egg is transformed into a chick?

This type of struggle between opposites is not unfamiliar in human life. Its ordinary and philosophical conception is very old. But why should the inter action of the sperm and other natural contents of the egg be called contradiction? Why should the interaction of seed, soil and air be named contradiction? Why should the interaction of a foetus in its mother's womb and the food which it procures be called contradiction? It is merely a matter of designation and is not better than saying that one things fuses with the other or becomes one with it.

Suppose we call this process contradiction. Still the problem is not solved as long as we admit that the interaction of two opposites leads to a greater result, to a process of growth and to a new thing which exceeds the numerical total of the two opposites. What is the source of this increase? Has it come from the two opposites locked in conflict both of which have disappeared together to produce it? But we know according to premise No. 2 that a thing which itself disappears cannot produce an increase.

Are you aware of any instance in Nature in which contradiction and conflict between opposites has been cause of a real growth? How can one opposite contribute to the growth of its opposite through struggle with it? Struggle means resistance and rejection which reduce the power of the other side to move and grow instead of helping it. We all know that the exposure of a swimmer to counter waves greatly hinders his movement instead of helping him to advance.

If we admit that struggle between the two opposites, in whatever sense it may have, is the basis of the growth of an egg and its development into a chick, then where is the growth produced by the struggle between opposites in the case of the conversion of water into gas and its reconversion into water again.

Nature constantly reveals opposites the fusion of which causes their mutual destruction instead of any development or evolution. The proton which is the fundamental particle in the nucleus of an atom carrying a positive charge has as its opposite, the negative, anti-proton. Similarly the electron, which has a negative charge and moves in the orbit of the atom has as its opposite, the positive, anti-electron. When any of these particles meets its opposite, an atomic destruction occurs and with it, matter is annihilated. A huge amount of energy is released there-by and dispersed in space.

From all this we come to the conclusion that the motion of matter, without outside provision and help, cannot cause any real growth nor any development to a higher form and a level of greater concentration. Hence for the growth of matter and its rise to higher levels like those of life, perception and thinking there must be a Sustainer having all these characteristics to be able to bestow them on matter. The role of matter in this process of growth is confined to suitability, preparation and potentiality. It is the same role as that of a brilliant child capable of receiving education from his tutor.

## **ATTRIBUTES OF ALLAH**

When we believe that Allah, the Almighty is the Creator, Sustainer and Organizer of the universe in accordance with His own planning and wisdom, it naturally follows that we should ascertain His attributes by looking at His creation and evaluate His characteristics by studying the indications and pervading it, exactly as we evaluate an engineer on the basis of the quality of his products, an author in the light of the knowledge which his book contains and the personality of a teacher by the good qualities which he has imparted to those trained by him.

In this way we can have some idea of the knowledge, wisdom, life, power and the faculties of vision and hearing possessed by the Great Creator. The precision and originality of the system of the universe reveals His knowledge and wisdom; the huge amount of energy found in it indicates His power and supremacy; the variety of life and the degrees of

intellectual, and sense-perception in various forms show that He Himself enjoys life and perception; and the uniformity of design and building in the planning of this universe and the close co-ordination existing between its various aspects point towards His unity and the unity of the knowledge from which this huge universe has emanated.

### **(1) His Justice and Uprightness**

We all, through our natural intuitive consciousness, believe in the general values of conduct which affirm that justice is right and good and injustice is wrong and evil. He who is just in his behaviour, deserves respect and recompense and he who is unjust and cruel deserves the opposite thereof. On the whole, these values, accepted inductively and intuitively, are the basis of human behaviour unless they are hampered by ignorance and selfish interests. For example, anyone having a choice between speaking truth and telling a lie will normally prefer the truth; and a person having a choice between honesty and dishonesty will choose honesty, unless there is a personal motives and selfish interest which may impel him to deviate from the normal course.

It means that every body by nature behaves honestly and with justice and integrity, and does not like to deceive or betray others unless he is led to doing so by some personal need or interest. This principle fully applies to the All-Wise Creator also, who fully encompasses these values, which we know through our intuitive reason, because it is He who has bestowed this reason on us. He being supreme and Omnipotent is never in need of any deviations or evasions. Hence, we believe that Allah is just and never does injustice to anybody.

### **(2) Recompense and Retribution are Essential**

The values we uphold, call on us, as we have learnt, to cultivate the qualities of justice, integrity, honesty, truthfulness and faithfulness and to censure the qualities which are contrary to these virtue. Not only that but they also demand a suitable requital in each case. Every sensible person knows that an oppressor and a traitor deserve punishment and a just and honest person, who makes sacrifice for the sake of justice and honesty, deserves encouragement and recompense. Because of these

values everyone of us feels in himself an urge to punish the deviating transgressor and to appreciate the upright and just. Nothing prevents the implementation of this urge except one's personal bias or his inability to take a suitable stand.

So long we believe that Allah is just and upright in His conduct, is able to reward and punish as the case may be, and nothing can prevent His implementing the values which demand a just reward for good conduct and suitable punishment for evil conduct, naturally we come to the conclusion that He will certainly recompense the virtuous and avenge the excess of the oppressors on behalf of the oppressed.

Anyhow, we observe that in most cases recompense and retribution, despite being within the competence of Allah are not realized during the present life on the earth. This proves, in the light of the previous facts, that a day is bound to come when the unknown worker who was not able to reap the fruits of his sacrifice for a great cause, and the oppressor who escaped quick punishment and continued to live on the blood and ruin of the oppressed, will both receive their just due. That will be the Day of Judgment which will embody all the values laid down for conduct and without which these values can have no meaning.

\* \* \* \* \*

الرَّسُولُ

HIS  
MESSENGER

In every period of human civilisation and in every country He sent His Prophets amongst human beings. They carried His messages and acting as connecting link between Allah and man; this continued till through our Holy Prophet Muhammad (P), this course of educating human mind was brought to its final stage. Our Prophet is the last Messenger of Allah, he finalized the education and as much as possible warned human beings of the effects of ignoring Allah.

Our Prophet came of very illustrious and noble ancestors and of a family which has left a history of excellent qualities and sublime characteristics, as well as high moral standards. It was a family which claimed as its members several great Prophets. Thus his lineage was the best, his descent the noblest and his family the most learned.

He was born in the Holy City of Allah, was brought in eminently pious surroundings, had immediate ancestors solemnly exalted in their character and none shall be able to surpass the glory, honour, nobility and eminence of his descendants i.e. Lady Fatima and twelve Imams (Peace and benediction be upon them).

He was the leader of pious people, and the source of intelligence and advice to those who sought guidance towards Allah and religion, a lamp illuminating the way to truth and justice, a star brightening the path of faith and knowledge and a luminary which lighted the Dark Ages of man.

Moderation in life was his disposition and character; his Sunnah was a well-laid-out path towards nobility and piety, his sermons and discourses were always so explicit as to make the difference between right and wrong quite distinct and clear, and his decisions were always based upon justice and equity.

Allah the Almighty had sent him as His Messenger at a time when the world for long had been without a Prophet, when the people had erred from the true path, and were driving fast towards ignorance, stupidity and folly.

Allah, in appointing him as His Messenger, has been Kind and Merciful to you. Follow the path thus lighted for you by Him, it will lead you to the Eternal House of His Blessings and Peace.

An extract from Peak of Eloquence:  
An English translation of Imam Ali's Nahjul Balagha.



## GENERAL FEATURES OF PROPHEHOOD

Everything in this vast universe has its own divinely ordained law which governs it and determines the extent to which it can develop. The seed is governed by its own law under which it can be transformed into a tree in specific conditions. The human sperm has its own law under which it grows and develops to become a human being. Everything from the sun to a proton and from a planet revolving in a solar orbit to an electron revolving in a nuclear orbit, moves according to a plan and develops according to its own specific potentialities.

This is the divinely ordained comprehensive arrangement which under the rules of scientific induction has extended to all parts and all phenomena of the universe.

Probably the most important phenomenon in the universe is human volition. Man is master of his will. He is a purposive being that is, he works to achieve a definite purpose. He digs the ground to extract water. He cooks not to be able to have delicious food. He experiments on a natural phenomenon to discover its law. In contrast, purely natural things work according to predecreed objectives and not with a view to support or achieve any purpose. The lung, the stomach and the nerves, while performing their physiological functions, work purposefully. But that purpose has not been set by themselves during their specific natural and physiological activity. It has been decreed by their All-Knowing Maker. Man being a purposive being, sets his objects consciously and works for them. This implies that in his practical actions he does not follow any rigid law of Nature, as drop of rain does in its fixed course determined by the law of gravity. Otherwise he would not be purposive, i.e. able to work according to his own objectives. To be purposive, man has to be free in conduct to be able to act in accordance with the objectives originating within himself. The relationship between his objectives and his practical actions constitutes the law that governs the phenomenon of man's volition. Man does not set his objects haphazardly. He sets them as required by his objective circumstances. But these circumstances do not move him directly as the wind moves the leaves of

a tree, for this would destroy his role as a purposive being. The objective circumstances only stimulate and motivate him through influencing his perception of the advantage of a certain practical stand. Man is moved only when he realizes that a certain action is really to his advantage. Advantages are of two kinds:

1. Short range advantages, the benefits of which usually accrue to the individual who acted to achieve an objective; and
2. Long range advantages, the benefits of which accrue to society. Often the interests and advantages of the individual clash with those of society.

On the one hand, we observe that man is mostly motivated to work for an advantage not because of its positive value, but only to the extent it secures his personal benefit. On the other hand, we find that for the stability and success of life in the long run it is essential to create such objective conditions as may ensure that man works in conformity with social interests. On this basis man is faced with a contradiction between what the promotion of life and its stability entail in objective conduct and his concern for collective advantages and between his tendency to attach importance only to his immediate personal benefits.

In these circumstances it was natural that a way should be found to remove this contradiction and to create necessary objective conditions to impel man to work in conformity with the interests of society.

Prophethood being a divine phenomenon in the life of man is the law which has laid down a formula for resolving this contradiction by converting the interests of society and other higher interests into the long-term interests of the individual. He has been told that death is not the end of his career and that he will be shifted to the arena of justice and requital where all human beings will be assembled to see their deeds. "*He who does good of an atom's weight, will see it then, and he who does ill of an atom's weight, will see it.*" (Sura al-Zilzal, 99:7-8). Thus the interests of society become, in the long run, the interests of the individual himself.

This formula consists of a theory and a particular type of practical training on its basis. The theory is the belief in the Hereafter and the Day of Resurrection, and the practical training based on this theory is a process of divine leadership. This leadership cannot be but divine, for it relies on the belief in the Hereafter which is unseen, and cannot exist without divine revelation. That is the institution of Prophethood.

Prophethood and the Hereafter are the two sides of the same formula which is the only way of resolving the contradiction pervading human life. It constitutes the basic pre-requisite of the development of the phenomenon of volition and its being harnessed in the sendee of the real human interests.

## **HOW TO PROVE THE PROPHETHOOD OF THE GREATEST PROPHET MUHAMMAD**

As the existence of the All-Wise Creator has been proved by inductive argument and the methods of scientific reasoning, similarly the prophethood of Muhammad bin Abdullah (May peace and benediction be upon him and his infallible progeny) can also be proved with similar arguments and the same methods which we employ in proving various truths in our ordinary as well as scientific life. Let us begin with a few examples. If one receives a letter from one of his relatives, who is a child studying in a primary school in the countryside and finds that the letter has been written in up-to-date language with condensed and eloquent expression and masterly skill in arranging ideas and presenting them in a striking style, he will naturally either come to the conclusion that the letter had been dictated to the boy by some well-educated and well-informed person who was skilled in the language, or will think of something else of this very sort.

If we analyse his reasoning and conclusion, we find that he has taken the following steps:

1. He saw that the letter was from a rustic boy studying in a primary school.

2. He saw that the letter is characterised by an eloquent style and a good deal of technical skill and superior ability in arranging ideas.
3. He saw that induction in similar circumstances would prove that a boy with the description given at the first step, cannot compose a letter with the description given at the second step.
4. He drew the conclusion that the letter was the work of somebody else and the boy could somehow or other benefit from it and reproduce it in his letter.

Let us take a scientific example of the same idea — the argument by which the scientists proved the existence of electron. A certain scientist was studying a particular type of rays which he had generated inside a closed tube. When he set a horse-shoe magnet to the middle of the tube, he observed that the rays inclined towards the positive magnetic pole and were deflected from the negative one. He repeated the experiment under varied conditions till he became sure that those rays were attracted by magnetism and it was the positive magnetic pole which attracted them. As this scientist knew through his investigation and study that other rays such as those of ordinary light were not affected by magnetism and that a magnet attracts bodies and not rays, he was able to perceive that the attraction of the rays on which he was experimenting towards the positive magnetic pole could not be explained on the basis of the available knowledge. Thus he discovered an additional factor or a new fact, namely that those rays comprised of tiny negative bodies which were found in all kinds of matter as the rays were produced from various kinds of matter. These particles were named electrons.

The gist of the argument in both the above example is that if a particular phenomenon is observed under tangible factors and conditions inductively known not to lead to that particular phenomenon in similar circumstances, that shows the existence of another factor not yet considered but which has to be presumed in order to explain that phenomenon.

In other words, if the result is bigger than what could be expected in similar circumstances on the basis of experience and observations, then besides the tangible factors and conditions, there must be some hidden factor also.

This principle applies fully to the prophethood of the greatest prophet, Muhammad (pbuh) and the message which he proclaimed to the world in the name of heaven on the basis of the following steps:

1. The person who proclaimed His message to the world in the name of Heaven, belonged to the Arabian Peninsula, at that time one of the most backward parts of the world culturally, intellectually, socially, politically and economically. To be exact, he belonged to that part of Arabia which is called Hejaz and which never passed through any of the ancient civilizations which had developed centuries before in certain other parts of the peninsula. It did not figure in any social and developmental experiment and was not to any considerable extent influenced by the culture of the time although that itself was generally very primitive. Its literature and poetry did not reflect much of the intellectual and cultural ideas of the outside world. From a religious point of view there was complete chaos. Polytheism and idolatry were rampant. Socially it was disintegrated. Tribal kinship played the basic role in most of its spheres of activity and consequently led to contradictions, in terms of tribal raids and cheap hostilities. The birth-place of this prophet never knew any form of authority except that which tribal loyalty dictated.

The resultant forces and economic conditions of that part of the world were in no way better than those prevailing in most other regions of the world at that time.

Even reading and writing, the simplest forms of culture were rare attainments in that society which was on the whole illiterate. The Qur'an says: *"He it is who raised among the illiterates a Messenger from among themselves, who recites to them His revelations and purifies them and teaches them the Book and Wisdom though they were before in manifest error."* (Sura al-Jum'ah, 62:2)

The Prophet himself represented the normal state in this respect. Before the beginning of his mission he did not know how to read and write. He was not formally or informally educated. *“And you did not recite before it any book, nor did you transcribe one with your right hand. Then could the liars have doubted?”* (Sura al-Ankaboot, 29:48). This Qur’anic passage is the clear indication of the level of the Prophet’s education before the beginning of his mission. It is a decisive piece of evidence which must be accepted even by those who do not believe in the divine origin of the Qur’an, for it is a clear statement made by the Prophet before his people and those who were fully aware of his life history. Nobody criticised or denied what he claimed. We observe that the Prophet even before the beginning of his mission never took part in declamation and versification, the only cultural activities prevalent among his people. The only distinction which he had was his adherence to the moral values of honesty, integrity, truthfulness and chastity. He lived for forty years among his people and the people around him did not feel that he was in any way, other than in excellent moral character, distinct from them. We have no evidence of his practical efforts or earnest inclinations towards the great revolutionary programme with which, at the age of forty, he suddenly appeared before the world. *“Say: If Allah had so willed, I would not have recited it to you, nor would lie have made it known to you. I have lived among you a lifetime before it. Do you still not understand?”* (Sura Yunus, 10:16).

The Prophet was born at Mecca and he stayed there through-out the period preceding his mission. He never went outside the Arabian peninsula except on two short journeys one of which he undertook accompanied by his uncle Abu Talib when he was only about 12 years old and the other with Khadijah’s merchandise when he was about 25 years old.

As he did not learn reading and writing, he could not have read any Jewish or Christian religious texts, nor did any known thing therefrom reach him through his environment. Mecca being idolatrous in its ideas and habits, his environment did not provide a suitable atmosphere for the percolation of Jewish or Christian thought to him. Revealed religion

had not entered his life in any form, as even the Hanifs who rejected idol worship, from among the Meccan Arabs, were not influenced by Judaism or Christianity. The literary heritage left by Quss ibn Sa'idah and others does not portray any Jewish and Christian ideas.

Had the Prophet made any effort to acquire information about Jewish and Christian ideas, that would not have gone unnoticed, for such an attempt was bound to attract attention in a simple society, having no contact with the sources of such ideas and largely biased against them, and was bound to leave its effects on many subsequent motivations and relations therein.

2. The message proclaimed to the world by the Prophet and embodied in the holy Qur'an and the Islamic Law is characterised by many distinguishing features:

It put forth a unique divine culture, describing Allah, the Almighty, His attributes, His knowledge, His power, the nature of the relationships between Him and man, the role of the Prophets in the guidance of humanity, the oneness of their message, their distinctive value and ideals, the treatment of the Prophets by Allah, the constant struggle between truth and falsehood and between justice and injustice, the permanently close link of the heavenly messages to the oppressed and persecuted and their constant opposition to those having unlawful advantages and distinctions. This divine culture was not only higher than the intellectual and religious position of an idolatrous society immersed in idol-worship but was also higher than all the other religious cultures known to the world at that time. Any comparison would clearly show that this culture had come to rectify the mistakes of other cultures, to set aright their deviations and to restore them to the course of nature and unblemished intellect.

All this was accomplished at the hands of an unlettered man living in a semi-isolated idolatrous society having almost no contact with the culture of the time and the existing religious books. He apparently could not be expected to develop a new culture or rectify the mistakes of the older ones.

He put forth new values and concepts about life, man, work and social relations and gave them a concrete shape in the form of a code of laws and regulations, which are considered, even by those who do not accept them as divinely ordained, to be the most magnificent and impressive ones human history has ever known. A man from a tribal society suddenly appeared on the stage of the world and of history and proclaimed the unity of humanity as a whole. He belonged to an environment which had consecrated distinction and discrimination on the basis of race, descent and social standing. But he worked to demolish all the barriers and declared that all men were equal like the teeth of a comb. *“Surely the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah is the best in conduct.”* (Sura al-Hujurat, 49:13).

He worked to translate this declaration into reality. He raised the status of the women who used to be buried alive and brought them on par with man in humanity and dignity.

In a desert which was concerned only with its limited interests, with the removal of hunger and with the mutual rivalry of its sons for honour and glory, a son of the same desert appeared to lead it to bear the greatest burden, and to unify it in the struggle for liberating the world and emancipating the oppressed everywhere from the despotism of the Caesars and the Khosraoes.

A man brought up in the atmosphere of all-pervading political and economic vacuum, rife with the contradictions of usury, hoarding and exploitation, suddenly appeared to fill that vacuum and turn that hollow society into a compact one having its own system of government and its own laws of social and economic relations. He condemned usury, hoarding and exploitation and proposed the redistribution of wealth in a way that it may not again be concentrated in the hands of the rich. He proclaimed the principles of collective responsibility and social security, which were proclaimed by human social experience only hundreds of years later.

All these great changes were completed within a period, comparatively short for such a social revolution.



The Qur'an in many of its passages has talked about the divine mission, the history of the prophets and their peoples and the events concerning them with such details as was totally unknown to the idolatrous and illiterate society in which the Prophet lived. The Christian and the Jewish scholars more than once challenged the Prophet and asked him to give details about the history of their religious heritage. He accepted their challenge bravely and the Qur'an revealed what they requested whereas the Prophet personally had no tangible means of acquiring information about those details.

*“And you (Muhammad) were not on the western side (of at-Tur, that is, the Mount Sinai) when We expounded unto Moses the commandment, and you were not among those present. But We brought forth generations, and their lives dragged on for them. And you were not a dweller in Madian, reciting unto them Our revelations, but We kept sending (messengers to them). And you were not beside the Mount when We did call; but (the knowledge of it is) a mercy from your Lord that you may warn a folk unto whom no warner came before you, so that they may give heed.”* (Sura al-Qasas, 28:44-46).

An observer may be astonished to find that the stories narrated in the Qur'an cannot be mere transcriptions from the Old and the New Testaments, even if we presume that the ideas contained in them were widely known in those circles of society in which the Prophet appeared. Transcription plays only a negative role, representing give and take, whereas the role played by the Qur'an in presenting the stories, is positive, for it corrects the stories, rectified their deviations and removes from them all later accretions as these went against the nature of the Unity of Godhead, against enlightened intellect and against uncorrupted religious views.

The striking eloquence of the Qur'an, the magnificance of its expressions and the novelty of its style are such that even those who do not believe in its divinity, regard it as the dividing line between the two stages of the history of Arabic literature and the foundation of an extraordinary change in the Arabic language and its modes of expression.

The Arabs to whom the Prophet recited the Qur'an felt that it was absolutely unlike anything they had composed in style of exposition and rhetoric and unlike the ways of expression that they had developed and mastered. So much so, that one of them, Walid bin Mughirah, said, when he had listened to the Qur'an, "By God! I have listened to a speech that is not the speech of man, nor the speech of the Jinn. It definitely has sweet savour and grace. Its higher portions are fruitful and beneficial and its lower portions are bountiful. It surpasses everything and is itself unsurpassed. It demolishes whatever is below it."

They realized that the Qur'an was strikingly moving and hence they did not allow themselves to listen to it, being afraid of its superior capacity to change people. This proves the striking distinction of the Qur'anic expression and its not being a continuation or development of what they had composed.

They were unable to accept the repeated and increasing challenges of the Holy Prophet to produce the like of it. He first announced their collective inability to produce the like of the whole Qur'an.

*"Say: verily, though mankind and the Jinn should assemble to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof, though they were helpers of one another."* (Sura Bani Israel, 17:88).

Then the Prophet declared that with their collective effort they could not produce 10 surahs like those of the Qur'an.

*"Or they say: He had invented it. Say: Then bring ten surahs the like thereof, invented, and call on everyone you can beside Allah, if you are thoughtful."* (Sura Hud, 11:13).

Again the Prophet declared that they could not produce anything to match even one surah of the holy Qur'an.

*"And if you are in doubt concerning that which we revealed unto our slave (the Prophet), then produce a surah of the like thereof, and call your witnesses beside Allah if you are truthful."* (Sura al-Baqarah, 2:23).

The Prophet threw out this challenge and repeated it, to a society which was known for eloquence, which had mastered the art of declamation as none other had done, which was accustomed to nothing as to the facing of challenges and eulogising their glories and which was bent on nothing as on extinguishing the light of the new Divine Message and wiping it out. Yet this society, in spite of all this, did not wish to test itself and did not attempt to bring forth anything to compare with the Qur'an, convinced as it was, that the Qur'anic literature was above their linguistic and literary abilities. The curious thing is that the person who brought this literary masterpiece, so new to them, was one, who had lived for forty years among them and was not known to have participated in any literary contest or to have distinguished himself in any of the arts of speech.

The above are a few of the characteristics of the Message which the Holy Prophet announced to the world.

Now comes the turn of the third step. Let us affirm on the basis of a scientific study of social history that this Message with those characteristics which we have seen at the second step is totally out of proportion with the circumstances and factors which we reviewed at the first step. Though social history has witnessed many cases of an outstanding individual arising and leading his society forward, yet in this particular case the position is quite different due to the presence of many distinctive features.

First, we find a huge transition and an all-round development in all spheres and a revolutionary change for the better in the values and concepts relating to all walks of life, and not a mere step forward. At the hands of the Prophet a tribal society directly leapt forward to the belief in one universal society, and an idolatrous society advanced to pure monotheism which corrected the other monotheistic religions and removed from them the later accretions of superstitions and myths. That hollow society was transformed into a compact one, having a pioneering role in the introduction of a culture which enlightened the whole world.

Secondly, any comprehensive development in a society if it is produced

by tangible conditions and factors, cannot be sudden, extemporaneous and unrelated to preparatory stages and preceding currents. Normally a society gradually grows and expands intellectually and spiritually, and then a competent leadership emerges to lead it and to work for its further development on the basis of what has already been achieved.

A comparative study of the history of the evolutionary process in various societies shows that in the first instance sporadic seeds of intellectual development appear in the soil of society and subsequently they combine together to form an intellectual current the main features of which are determined gradually. Out of this current a leadership emerges on the scene as a show-window of the ideas contradictory to those officially prevalent in society. Through the ensuing conflict the current continues to grow till the new ideas ultimately triumph.

But in contrast we find that Muhammad (pbuh) in the history of the new dispensation was not a link of a chain, nor did he represent a part of a current. The values and concepts propagated by him had no seeds or stocks lying in wait in the soil of the society in which he grew up. The current formed by the earliest Muslims was produced by the leader himself and his message. It was not generated by the climate already prevailing. That is why we find that the difference in the results obtained by the Prophet and by any of his followers was not that of degree like that between different seeds in the same current. It was fundamental and unbounded. This proves beyond doubt that Muhammad (pbuh) was not a part of the current but the new current was a part of him.

Thirdly, history proves that if the intellectual, doctrinal and social leadership of a new current is concentrated in one central figure, that must have the power, culture and knowledge proportionate to his task. Besides, a central figure must acquire the requisite qualities in a normal manner known in human life and come to leadership with their gradual application. But we find that Muhammad (pbuh), who did not know even how to read and write and had no knowledge of contemporary culture and of the ancient religions, assumed the intellectual, doctrinal and social leadership of his people, though his life-history had not prepared him

culturally for such a task and he had not passed through any preparatory stages for this sudden leadership.

In the light of this we ultimately come to the fourth step where we meet with the sole reasonable and acceptable explanation, namely the presumption of the existence of an additional factor behind the tangible circumstances and factors. That additional factor is that of revelation, the factor of prophethood, which represents the Divine intervention in earthly affairs. The Qur'an says: *"And thus We did reveal to you a spirit of Our command. You knew not what the Book was, nor what the faith. But We have made it (the Qur'an) a light whereby We guide whom We will of Our bondmen. And indeed! You guide them unto a right path."* (Sura al-Shura, 42:52).

## **ROLE OF EFFECTIVE FACTORS**

The explanation of the Prophet's mission on the basis of a revelation and Divine help instead of tangible factors and conditions does not mean the annulment of latter. They are still effective according to the universal and social norms, but their effectiveness is confined to the course of events and the factors accruing from them, helping or hindering the success of the mission. Being a Divine reality, the mission was above the material conditions and circumstances, but after it was transformed into a continuous action to bring about change, it became possible to link it to the prevailing circumstances and the surrounding environment and feelings.

If it is said, for example, that the consciousness of disintegration and loss induced the Arab, who found himself emboyming his gods and his highest ideals in pieces of stone or in pieces of sweet-meat and then breaking the former in a moment of rage and devouring the latter in a moment of hunger, to look forward to a new message; Or if it is said that the consciousness of the labourer and the under-privileged in Arab society, of the injustice and oppression perpetrated by the money-lenders and exploiters impelled the former to support the new movement for hoisting the banner of justice and eradicating usury; Or

if it is said that the tribal feelings, both local and national, such as the rivalry between the various clans of the Quraish, the invulnerability of the Prophet and his safety from enemies due to his belonging to a certain clan, and the conflict between North Arabia and South Arabia, played an important role in the life of the mission; Or if it is said that the declining world conditions and the critical circumstances through which the two big powers of that period, namely the Roman and the Persian Empires, were passing on the scene of international affairs pre-occupied them and prevented them from taking quick action to abort the new movement in the Arabian Peninsula, it is all reasonable and can be accepted, but the things of this sort can explain the course of events and not mission itself.

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الرسالة

HIS  
MESSAGE

Praised be Allah who revealed Divine Laws through Islam. For its followers He made its code easy to understand and gave its principles a position so exalted and so noble that their eminence overcomes all contentions and objections. He destined Islam to be a harbinger of eternal peace and a heaven of unfailing security for those who enter its fold. Its doctrines provide logical and well-founded arguments for those who want to defend truth and justice. Its precepts contain the best protection for piety and virtue. It is a havenly beacon unto seekers for light and a great source of enlightenment for intellectual persons. Who pays due attention to it will find great wisdom in its teachings, and its careful examination will prove it to be a very bright manifestation of the goodness of virtue. Islam furnishes most educative patterns and instances to those who want to discern between right and wrong, who are willing to accept its timely admonitions of the consequences of evil and falsehood. It brings salvation to its testifiers, great moral strength to its believers, perpetual peace and comfort to its faithful followers and considerable power of resistance against sin and vice to those who patiently bear sufferings in life.

Islam is the brightest path and the clearest highway to salvation. Its illustrious principles excel in glory and nobleness, its ways are distinct and perfect and its brilliant precepts bring enlightenment to those who live in the darkest ignorance of truth. Its teachings are so exhaustive that they extend over and surpass the teachings of older religions. It is a religion whose followers compete with and try to surpass each other in goodness and virtue. Confirmation of truth and justice are its ways, enlightenment of humanity is its chief object, to expect and to face death boldly and nobly is one of the main items of its teachings. This world is the place where Islam wants to prepare you for high positions in Hereafter, therefore, the Day of Reckoning will be the day when its true followers will surpass others and Heaven will be their reward.

An extract from Peak of Eloquence:  
An English translation of Imam Ali's Nahjul Balagha.



# ISLAM

By the message we mean Islam, the religion of Allah with which He sent Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as “a mercy unto all the worlds.”

The foremost aim of Islam is to link man to his Lord and to the Hereafter. It has first linked man to the One True God, whose existence human nature itself indicates. To put an end to all forms of belief in false gods, it has placed so much emphasis on the unity of (Allah) the True God that the maxim, “there is no god but Allah” has become its main slogan.

Prophethood being the sole direct link between the Creator and the creation, its testimony to the unity of God, the Creator and its connection with the One True God are a strong enough basis to prove *Tawhid* or Unity of Godhead.

Islam links man with the Hereafter so that the sole formula capable of resolving contradiction may be perfected. The Hereafter is also an essential requirement of Divine justice as stated earlier.

The message of Islam has features which distinguish it from all heavenly messages. Its exalted characteristics make it a unique event in history.

We mention below some of these features and exalted characteristics briefly.

1. This message has remained safe and unaltered in the text of the Qur’an without being exposed to any alterations or corruptions whereas the previous heavenly books have been altered and stripped of much of their contents. Allah says: “*Surely We have revealed the Book and We are its Protector.*” (Sura al-Hijr, 15:9).

The preservation of its doctrinal and legislative contents has enabled this message to continue its educative role. A message stripped of its contents as the result of alteration and loss is not fit to be a connecting link between man and his Lord, because for the materialization of this

connection mere nominal affiliation to the message is not enough. For this purpose one has to mould one's life according to the contents of the message and to embody it in one's thought and conduct. Hence the preservation of the message of Islam in its original form, through the preservation of the Qur'an, was an essential condition of its ability to continue the pursuance of its objectives.

2. The fact that the Qur'an has remained unaltered in letter and in spirit, means that one of the most important means of proving the prophethood of Muhammad (pbuh) is still intact. As we have already stated, it is the Qur'an and the fundamental teachings of Islam contained in it which constitute an inductive proof of Prophethood of Muhammad (pbuh) and this proof will continue to exist so long as the Qur'an exists. In this respect the case of the Prophethood of Muhammad (pbuh) is different from that of the other Prophethoods the proof which is linked to certain specific events such as the curing of the blind and the lepers. Such events take place momentarily and are witnessed only by contemporaries. With the passage of time and the lapse of centuries all evidence is lost and in many cases it becomes impossible to obtain a decisive confirmation even through research and investigation. Allah does not require people to believe in a prophethood, the confirmation of the proof of which is not possible, nor does He require them to find out means of proving it, for He does not ask anyone to do what is beyond him. Today we believe in the ancient Prophets and their miracles only on the authority of the Qur'an.
3. As we know, the passage of time has not diminished the value of the basic proof of the Message of Islam. On the other hand, the development of human knowledge and the trend of the study of the universe, scientifically and experimentally, have given new dimensions to it. The Qur'an already had the same trend. It linked the proof of the All-Wise Creator to the study of the universe and going deep into its phenomena. It drew attention to the advantages of such a study. Modern man today finds in this book, revealed hundreds of years ago to an unlettered man living in an illiterate society,

clear hints to modern scientific discoveries. When the role of air in pollination was discovered, a British orientalist and Professor of Arabic at Oxford remarked that the Arab cameleers knew that the winds pollinate the trees and fruits hundreds of years before that was discovered by science. The Qur'an refers to this truth when it says: "*And We sent the winds fertilizing.*" (Sura al-Hijr, 15:22).

4. This Message which pervades all aspects of life has been able to strike a balance between them, to unify their bases and to integrate the masjid and the university, the factory and the field within one perfect framework. The spiritual and the temporal lives of man are no longer split into water-tight compartments.
5. This was the only heavenly Message which was put into practice by the Prophet who brought it. He achieved dazzling success in its implementation and was able to transform the principles proclaimed by it into the realities of daily life.
6. With its implementation this Message entered the arena of history and contributed to the making of a nation which upheld it and was guided by it. This Message being Divine, representing a heavenly bestowal upon the earth and transcending the logic of tangible factors and influences, resulted in the linking of the history of this nation to an invisible factor and an unobservable basis not subject to the materialistic calculations. Hence it is wrong to try to understand Islamic history solely within the framework of perceptible factors and influences or to regard it as an outcome of the material conditions or the development of the forces of production. The materialistic interpretation of history does not apply to a nation whose very existence is founded on the basis of a Heavenly message, and its history cannot be understood unless due consideration is given to this message as a Divine reality.
7. This message not only contributed to the building of the Muslim nation, but also became an effective world force, influencing the course of history. The unbiased European scholars do admit

that it was the impact of the culture of Islam which awakened the slumbering European nations and pointed out the way to them.

8. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), who brought this message, differed from all the Prophets who preceded him by describing his message as the last Divine dissertation and with this he announced his Prophethood to be the last one. The idea of the last Prophethood has two implications: one positive and the other negative. The negative implication is that no new prophet will appear on the scene. The positive one indicates the continuity of the last Prophethood and its extension with the march of time. Subsequent events have proved and will continue to prove the veracity of these implications. No new prophet has appeared during the past fourteen centuries since the rise of Islam. But that does not mean that Prophethood has ceased to play its role as a basis of human culture. The final Prophethood brought a message which is the heir of all previous messages in the history of Prophethood, and it contains all the permanent values included in those prophethoods and messages, but not the temporary values. As such it is the controlling message and has the capacity of meeting all the present and future requirements in the light of the factors development and modernisation.

*“And we have revealed the Qur’an to you with truth confirming what is before it of the Scripture, and a guardian over it.”* (Sura al-Ma’eda, 5:48).

9. Divine Wisdom which brought Prophethood to an end with Muhammad (pbuh), so decreed that he should be followed by his vicegerents who would carry out the task of leadership (Imamate) and succession (Caliphate) after the termination of Prophethood. These are the Twelve Imams, whose number was textually fixed by the Messenger of Allah in a number of authentic Hadith which are unanimously accepted by Muslims.

The first is the Commander of the Faithful, Ali ibn Abi Talib, after him Hassan and then Husayn. After Husayn, there are nine of his descendants in the following order: Ali ibn Husayn al-Sajjad; then Muhammad ibn

Ali al-Baqir; then Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq; then Musa ibn Ja'far al-Kazim; then Ali ibn Musa al-Reza; then Muhammad ibn Ali al-Jawad; then Ali ibn Muhammad al-Hadi; then Ilassan ibn Ali al-Askari; then Muhammad ibn Hasan al-Mahdi. (May peace and benediction be upon all of them).

10. During the occultation of the Twelfth Imam, Islam has directed the people to consult to the *Mujtahids* and has opened the door of *Ijtihad* i.e. the sincere striving to deduce the laws of the *Shari'ah* from the *Qur'an* and the *Sunnah*.<sup>1</sup>

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1 Our book *al-Fatawa al-Waziha* is an explanation, on the basis of *Ijtihad*, of the *Shari'ah* of Islam which the hast Prophet (pbuh) brought. We began writing this brief work on the Fundamentals of Islam on 27<sup>th</sup> Zul-Hijjah, 1396 A.H. and completed it on 10<sup>th</sup> Muharram al-Haram 1397 A.H. We have completed writing the last line; and agomy is wringing our heart and tearing our soul, as today is the day of A shura, the anniversary of the martyrdom of the everlasting Hero of Islam, Imam Husayn ibn Ali (pbuh), who sacrificed his precious life on this very date to uphold the cause of Allah, His Messenger and His Message. He himself and all his dear ones faced death with unparalleled courage, in support of this message to set an example of fighting for the oppressed and alleviating the suffering of the persecuted. He was killed by the oppressors along with his sons and companions who constituted the cream of humanity forever and everywhere. The oppressors wanted to deprive the people of their will and to strangulate their revolutionary spirit and the consciousness of their existence. The Doyen of the martyrs moved their conscience with his blood, their will with his firm stand and their feelings with his tragedy.

Therefore to you, O Husayn, Aba Abdillah we dedicate the blessings of this Introduction. With your pure blood you have perpetuated these lofty and imposing intellectual structures of Islam and it is through your rousing voice that the Message has reached us unadulterated and perfumed with the fragrance of the blood of the martyrs - your blood and chat of your virtuous descendants ever living in the annals of history.

العِبَادَات



The first and foremost is to have complete faith in Allah and His Prophet. The second is to exert oneself in the service of Allah to the best of one's capacity, because such endeavours are the sublime heights of the glory of Islam. Thirdly the repetition and belief in the creed (Kalimah) because they are the basic concepts of the religion of Islam. Fourthly to continue offering daily prayers, because this worship is the soul of religion. Fifthly payment of zakat because it is obligatory. The sixth is fasting during the month of Ramazan, because it saves one from the Wrath of Allah. The seventh is the pilgrimage to the House of Allah during the days of Hajj and at other times (Umra), because journeys on these occasions reduce poverty and cleanse the soul of sin. The eighth is to pity one's poor relations and to help them in their financial distress, because these charities affect an increase in the wealth of people. The ninth is the charity and help extended to each and every needy or poor and deformed or crippled person. These charities when given secretly wash away one's sins and when given openly they prevent accidental or horrible death; and lastly to be kind, sympathetic and solicitous to the creatures of Allah, because this habit prevents one from falling into calamities, abjections and disgraces.

O people! Try your best to praise Allah and to speak more and more of Him because this is the best discourse. Create an intense desire in your mind for the Paradise which is promised to the pious. Follow the mode of life and character of your Prophet, because it is the best way of leading a good life. Adhere to his traditions and implicitly obey his teachings because they are the best guide to a noble life. Read the Holy Qur'an carefully because it is the most sublime of all the Holy Books. Try to understand and to study it diligently because it is the best food for thought, enlighten your mind with its teachings because its divine light is the best cure for diseased mentality, and read it with sincerely good intention because it contains very useful and instructive episodes from the history of man.

Remember that if even a highly educated man acts against his knowledge and convictions he behaves like an illiterate and uneducated person having a confused mind, like one who does not want to come out of the comatose condition of ignorance. On the Day of Reckoning such a person will not be able to justify his attitude, will sadly repent his folly and will have to face severe rebuke.

An extract from Peak of Eloquence:  
An English translation of Imam Ali's Nahjul Balagha.

## APPENDIX

### WORSHIP - A CONSTANT HUMAN NEED

The acts of worship play an important role in Islam. Rules governing them form an important part of Islamic Law and devotional behaviour forms a tangible phenomenon in the daily life of a pious Muslim.

The system of the acts of worship in Islamic Law represents one of its constant aspects, not affected much by the general way of life and the conditions of civic development, whereas certain other aspects of Islamic Law, such as the system of civil transactions and contracts, are flexible and their application and implementation are influenced by the conditions of civic life. In the electronics and space age a man offers prayers, keeps fast and performs pilgrimage in the same way as he used to do during the age of hand-mill.

No doubt there may be variations in the civic side of the preparation for an act of worship. One may go for pilgrimage by air instead of travelling along with a caravan of camels. Similarly one may cover his body during prayers with machine-made clothes instead of hand-spun ones. But the general formula and the legal method are still the same. The necessity of performing the acts of worship is not affected by the expansion of human control over nature, and the change in the modes of living.

This means that prayers, fasting, pilgrimage and zakat were not prescribed by Islam as temporary measures, nor were they legal formulae, limited by the conditions of the first century of the Islamic era. These acts of worship are equally incumbent upon the man who operates machinery with atomic energy as they were on the man who used to till the land with his hand-plough.

This shows that the system of devotional acts meets a constant need in the life of man. This need is innate in him and remains constant in spite of continuous development in his life. Here the following questions arise:



Is there really a need which has remained constant in human life since the Divine law began to play its educative role? Is it possible to say that devotional acts continue to play a positive role in life?

It appears at first glance that the presumption of such a constant need is not reasonable and does not apply to the reality of human life. When we compare the present-day man with one of the past, we find that the way of life and human problems are continuously moving away from the conditions of tribal society with its limited aspirations and interests, in which the last Divine system appeared. The continuous departure from the old way of life necessitates a basic change in all human needs, interests and requirements. Consequently the way to deal with human needs must also undergo a change. In these circumstances how can devotional acts with their own system of rigid rules play a positive role over such a long period, during which the mode and the means of life have undergone a tremendous change? If such devotional acts as prayers, ablution, ritual bathing and fasting were useful at a certain stage of the life of the bedouin and contributed to refining his character, accustoming him to keep his body clean and saving him from excess in eating and drinking; these acts are no longer necessary because the nature of the present civic and social life helps the modern man to realize these intended objectives. These acts of devotion are not as necessary today as they were at one time. They no longer have any part to play in building human culture or solving cultural problems.

But this notion is wrong. The development of the implements and appliances and the replacement of the hand-drawn plough by the steam or electricity-propelled machines necessitate a change only in the relationship between man and nature, and influence the material forms of this relationship. For example, agriculture represent the relationship between the soil and the cultivator. Hence its form and substance change consequent to the development of agricultural appliances. As far as the acts of devotion are concerned, they do not represent a relationship between man and nature, and as such are not affected by the factor of material development. They represent the relationship between man and his Lord, and also play a role in guiding the relations between man and

man. In respect of both kinds of these relations, man has needs which have remained constant all through history, irrespective of the fact whether he lived in the age of the wick-lamp or of electric light. In Islam the system of the acts of devotion is the permanent remedy for the constant problems and needs which are not of a transitional nature and are faced by man continuously in building up his individual, social and cultural character. This is a dynamic system and a pre-requisite to the success in cultural efforts. To elucidate the point further, we mention here certain human problems which are permanent and in resolving which the acts of devotion play an important role. These problems are:

1. A need to be affiliated to the Absolute.
2. A need to be objective in intentions and to transcend self-interests.
3. A need of the inner consciousness of responsibility.

Here is the detail of these points:

#### **1. A NEED TO BE AFFILIATED TO THE ABSOLUTE**

The acts of devotion are a practical demonstration of man's being affiliated with his Lord, and hence they are as important in human life as this affiliation itself. In this connection the following two questions are relevant:

- a. As far as the progress of civilization is concerned, what does man gain through his affiliation to his Lord? If there is any gain, does it have a permanent value or only a transient one related to the problems and needs of a particular stage?
- b. What is the role and importance of the acts of devotion in establishing and strengthening man's affiliation to Allah?

#### **(A) Two Ends of the Problem of Affiliation**

An observer while looking into the history of the different periods of civilization, may find that though the problem has many divergent forms, yet if we examine it deeply, we find that it has two ends or poles which have been constant throughout history. One end of the problem is non-affiliation which represents the negative side and the other end which represents its positive side is the excess in affiliation by turning the

relative truths into the Absolute. The first aspect is known as atheism and apostasy and the second as pantheism and idolatry. Islam fights against every form of both atheism and polytheism.

The basic point is that both of them hamper the movement of man towards continuous, creative and sound development. An atheist is a man lost in the wilderness. He has no definite goal. Not being affiliated to an Absolute, he cannot determine his position in the universe, nor can he in his arduous journey seek help from a super-being. His moves are haphazard, for he is influenced by the factors surrounding him, but cannot influence them. All solid and original contributions made in the course of great human journey has been due to man's affiliation to and his communion with an Absolute.

Anyhow, the affiliation to an Absolute itself sometimes present a difficulty. It gives rise to the problem of excess in affiliation. This is a problem with which man has always been confronted. He builds up his devotion to an issue to obtain power to move and to continue his march forward. But this devotion is fossilized gradually and is removed from the relative circumstances in which it was proper. The human mind draws from it an Absolute and responds to its demands to an unlimited degree. In religious terms we may say that he turns it into a god and worships it instead of regarding it as a need to be satisfied. When anything relative is turned into an absolute and is deified, it causes obstruction to the movement of man, freezes his faculties of development and originality, and hampers his natural role in evolution. The Qur'an says: "*Do not associate another god with Allah; otherwise you will be sitting censured and disappointed.*" (Sura Bani Israel, 17:22).

This is a truth which applies to all man-made deities throughout history, whether he made them during the stage of idolatrous worship or during the subsequent stages. From the tribe to science we find a series of deities, the deification of which has hampered man's proper development.

The bedouin was devoted to his tribe, because the special conditions of his life demanded that. But he exceeded the limit and turned the tribe

into an Absolute to the extent that he could see nothing except from the narrow tribal angle. This his allegiance to his tribe became an obstruction to his progress.

Modern man owes allegiance to science because it has opened the way for him to control nature. But he too has exceeded the limit and has turned science into an Absolute. He has been so much enamoured with it that he has begun to worship it. He refuses to believe in any values and truths which cannot be measured in metres or cannot be seen through a microscope.

Anything limited or relative converted into an Absolute at any stage, is bound to shackle the mind and restrict mental growth.

The belief in an Absolute is essential for human development. But the Absolute must be a real one, capable of embracing all aspects of human development and guiding it all along. For this purpose all false gods that obstruct progress must be cleared out of the way. This is how the whole problem can be solved.

### **(B) Belief in Allah is the solution**

This solution offered to man on earth, by the heavenly law, is represented by a dogma, namely the faith in Allah, the Absolute to whom man can link his progress without facing any contradiction at any stage. Thus the faith in Allah deals with the negative side of the problem. It rejects atheism and non-affiliation. It puts man in a responsible position and makes him vicegerent of Allah on the earth. His vicegerency implies that he is responsible to Allah, and will be requited for his deeds. All his moves are to be along the prescribed course in a responsible and purposive manner.

Faith in Allah treats the positive side of the problem also, namely the problem of excess in affiliation, which obstructs human progress.

This side of the problem originates from turning the limited and relative into an Absolute during a process of mental sublimation. The

idea of the Absolute set forth by the faith in Allah is not a product of human imagination at any particular stage and hence it is not an outcome of the limited needs of any individual or group which may use it as weapon to ensure the safeguarding of his or its unlawful interests. It includes all the high ideals of man, the vicegerent on earth, such as intelligence, knowledge, power, might and independence. The way to Him is unlimited. The journey towards Him requires a non-stop, though relatively gradual advance. *“O man, verily you are striving toward your Lord, a hard striving until you meet Him.”* (Sura al-Inshiqaq, 84:6). Such a move results in the acquisition of the qualities of intelligence, knowledge, power, justice etc., derived from the attributes of the Absolute. The journey towards the Absolute, who is All-Knowing, All-Powerful and All-Just, means a constant struggle against every form of ignorance, weakness, injustice and poverty.

So long as these are the objects of the journey, it must not deteriorate into the consecration of the objects which are nothing more than tools. It should mean a fight for the realization of human dignity and high ideals. The Quran says:

*“And whosoever strives, strives for himself, for Allah is altogether independent of His creatures.”* (Sura al-Ankabut, 29:6) Again it says: *“Whosoever strays, strays to its hurt.”* (Sura al-Zumar, 39:41)

On the contrary, the imaginary absolutes and false gods are incapable of ensuring all aspirations concerning human advancement. They being the products of human imagination, human needs or human oppression, are organically linked to weakness and injustice. Hence they cannot be expected to bless the constant struggle against these evils.

The affiliation to Allah, the Almighty in His capacity of being the Absolute who embraces all the aspirations concerning human advancement, also means the total rejection of all imaginary absolutes, waging a war against them and making a constant struggle against all forms of idolatry and false absolutes which block his way and falsify his goal. The Qur'an says:

*“As for those who disbelieve, their deeds are as mirage in a desert. The thirsty*

*one supposes it to be water, till he comes unto it, finds it naught, and finds in the place thereof Allah.”* (Sura al-Noor, 24:39).

*“Are diverse lords better, or Allah the One, the Almighty?”* (Sura Yusuf, 23:39)

*“Those whom you worship beside Him are but names which you have named, you and your fathers. Allah has revealed no sanction for them.”* (Sura Yusuf, 12:40).

*“Such is Allah, your Lord; His is the Sovereignty; and those unto whom you pray instead of Him own not so much as the white spot on a date stone.”* (Sura al-Fatir, 35:13).

We see that the main heavenly motto, “There is no god but Allah” has tied the human journey towards the genuine Absolute to the rejection of false absolutes. The history of actual life confirms that the acknowledgement of Allah and the rejection of false gods are closely linked together and are the two sides of the same truth which is indispensable at every stage of the journey. Only this truth is capable of removing all the obstacles of the way.

### **(C) Practical Expression**

Just as man is born with all the potentialities of the experience he goes through on the stage of life and with the seeds of his success in that experience, similarly he is born bound by nature to the Absolute. As we have already observed, it is his affiliation to the Absolute, on which his cultural success depends. There is no human experience more extensive and wider in significance than that of faith. No stage of human history has been without this phenomenon. Its forms and the degrees of its consciousness might have varied during different periods; yet its persistence since the earliest times clearly proves that the tendency to look for the Absolute beyond the limits within which man lives, is a natural human instinct.

But the mere existence of the instinct of faith is not enough. Like any

other instinct or natural tendency, it also can either be developed through its proper use or checked and made ineffective. The germs of mercy and compassion exist in human nature. But they are stangled and die out as the result of one's negative behaviour; and develop and grow through the practice of sympathy for the oppressed and the poor.

Hence in order to instil the faith in Allah firmly and to strengthen the natural tendency of looking for the invisible Absolute, it was necessary that the consciousness of this instinct be guided and the way to satisfy this urge be determined by prescribing a particular mode of conduct, conformable with basic human feelings.

Without proper guidance the religious consciousness is likely to deviate from its right course as has already happened at various stages of history, and without the prescription of a practical mode of conduct it may wither and lose force and effect.

Only the religion that has set out the theme, "There is no god, but Allah," which incorporates both affirmation and negation, can be the true guide.

The acts of worship and devotion, being the practical application of the instinct of faith, deepen that consciousness and help in its growth and inculcation in human life.

We observe that sensible acts of worship, being a practical demonstration of man's link to the Absolute, combine affirmation and negation together. Through it man constantly lays stress upon his link to the Almighty Allah to the total rejection of all false absolutes. When he begins his prayers and says: "Allah is the Greatest", he stresses this rejection. He stresses this rejection in the course of every prayer when he evaluates the Prophet to be Allah's slave and messenger. He again stresses this rejection when, while fasting, he challenges his passions and abstains from lawful things and necessities of life.

In the field of practical application these acts of worship were successfully employed by the Prophet and the virtuous Imams following

him for the purpose of educating and reforming several generations of Muslims. Their prayers installed in the minds of the Muslims the falsity and insignificance of all the forces of evil, and consequent to their efforts all the absolutes created by the limited human imagination withered away. The Muslims trained by the Prophet and the Imams refused to bow before any Caesar.

In light of this we can see that worship is a constant need in the life of man. It is essential for his cultural progress. He cannot march forward without seeking the help of an absolute and no absolute can help him all along the journey except the Almighty Allah. Other false absolutes inevitably obstruct his progress in one way or another. Communion with the genuine Absolute cannot exist without its continuous practical expression in the form of worship. Hence worship is a firm need.

## **2. OBJECTIVITY OF PURPOSE**

At every stage of human culture and during every period of human life, people have many interests, the realization of which requires some degree of effort and exertion. Irrespective of their nature and the diversity of the methods of their realization during various ages and periods, these interests can be divided into two categories; namely those the gains and material returns of which accrue to the individual on whose efforts their realization depends; and those the gains of which accrue to someone other than the direct worker or they accrue to the community or group to which the worker belongs.

The second category concerns those objectives also which requires prolonged combined efforts.

A man is motivated to work for the realization of the first kind of interests mostly by his individual motives. He has an incentive only so long as he can reap the fruits of his efforts.

But individual motives are not enough to persuade a man to exert himself for the realization of the second kind of interests which do not exclusively concern him, as in most cases he has to undergo greater exertion and



make more efforts than the value of the advantages which may accrue to him personally. Hence he has to be trained in the objectivity of purpose and in looking beyond self-interests. In other words, he has to be trained to work for others for the sake of an objective, bigger than himself and his material interests. This training is as necessary for the man of the space and electronics age as it was necessary for the man who used to fight with a sword and used to travel on the back of a camel. Both of them have higher objectives and face situations, requiring self-denial and work for others. One often has to sow seeds, the fruits of which he may not see. Hence everybody has to be trained to devote a part of his efforts to the interests not exclusively his, and to work selflessly for others.

The acts of worship play a big role in this essential training, for they are the deeds which are performed purely for the sake of Allah. They are not acceptable if undertaken for personal consideration or if they aim at individual glory or social applause. In such cases they are forbidden. A worshipper must perform an act of worship only in the way of Allah and with the sole purpose of pleasing Him. He must do so with devotion, integrity, sincerity and a sense of responsibility.

“For the sake of Allah” is an abstract expression meaning, in the service of humanity. To perform a deed for the sake of Allah means to perform it for the sake of His creatures. Allah is Self-sustaining. He does not in any way depend upon anyone else. He is limitless. He is neither especially related to any group nor inclined to any side. From a practical point of view, His way is the way of entire humanity. To do a thing for the sake of Allah and in the way of Allah means to do it for the sake of the people and for the good of all the people.

When the term ‘for the sake of Allah’ is used in Islam, it may be taken to mean exactly in the way of the people. One of the categories to which Zakat money is to be allocated according to the Islamic law, is ‘for the sake of Allah’. It means for the benefit of mankind. Similarly Islam has urged the Muslims to fight in the way of Allah. Here ‘in the way of Allah’ means for the cause of the oppressed. The Qur’an says:

*“How should you not fight for the cause of Allah and of the feeble among men and of the women and children.”* (Sura al-Nisa, 4:75).

We know that the acts of worship demand efforts of various kinds. For example, Prayer require physical effort. fasting involves psychological effort and Zakat entails financial effort. Jihad means self-sacrifice or taking the risk of life.

This clearly shows how deep and extensive is the spiritual and psychological training which one receives through various acts of worship. They provide training in the objectivity of purpose, in magnanimity and in working for higher objectives in various fields of human effort.

Thus there is a vast difference between a man who is trained in making efforts for the sake of Allah without expecting any immediate reward, and a man who always evaluates his works on the basis of the gains which may accrue to him. A person who understands only the language of figures and market-rates will in all probability be a trader even in his social activities also, irrespective of their nature.

The training which is provided by Islam lays emphasis on the objectivity of purpose. It always links the value of a deed to motives and not to its results. The value of a deed in Islam is not judged by the results and the gains which it produces. It is judged by the purity of its motives and the objectivity of its purpose.

If a person succeeds in discovering a medicine which cures a dangerous disease and saves the life of millions of patients, his discovery will not be judged in the eyes of Allah by the size of the results achieved and the number of the persons cured. It will only be judged by the feelings and sentiments which led that person to exert himself to make the discovery. If he made efforts only to obtain a patent and thus earn millions, then his discovery is a pure commercial dealing, for the logic of personal motives which has induced him to discover a medicine to cure a dangerous disease, may equally well persuade him to discover means of destruction if he could find a market for them. His work will be considered to be noble and eminent only if it was in the way of Allah and His creatures, and his motives went beyond his self-interest. The more sublime the intentions are the more valuable they will be.

### 3. INNER CONSCIOUSNESS OF RESPONSIBILITY

In whichever period of its history we observe society, we will find it following a definite system of life and a fixed method of distribution of rights and obligations among people. Its stability and the realization of its intended goals depends on what guarantees are available with society for ensuring the adherence of the individual to that particular system.

This truth applies to the future as well as to the past, for it has been one of the established facts of the cultural development of man all along.

The guarantees to ensure the implementations of a system may be objective, such as the punishment prescribed by a society for the transgressors, or they may be personal, consisting of the individual's inner consciousness of his responsibility towards his social commitments and the rights and obligations imposed on him by society.

Though objective guarantees play an important role in controlling the individual behaviour, yet in many cases they alone are not enough, and hence need to be supplemented by a personal guarantee emanating from the inner consciousness of responsibility. The objective control of the individual, howsoever elaborate, normally cannot encompass everything and nor can it cater to all needs.

The inner consciousness of responsibility can become a living fact only if it is accompanied by a belief in the constant vigilance by an omniscient being knowing everything in the heavens and the earth. It is also to be remembered that mere belief is of no use unless it is put into practice so that it may grow and get confirmed.

The consciousness of the omniscient being's vigilance is created as the result of Man's link to the All-Powerful and All-Knowing Absolute. It is this link which paves the way for the development of an inner feeling of responsibility.

The practical training which develops this inner consciousness is received through the regular performance of the acts of worship. These

acts cannot be controlled from outside. Their performance depends on one's own willingness. No external measures or objective control can succeed in imposing it. The question of the imposition of devotional acts is outside the scope of any legal action. The only possible control is that which emanates from one's own link to the Omniscient Absolute, and the only possible guarantee is one's own inner consciousness of responsibility. This means that a man who performs acts of worship regularly, executes a duty different in nature from any other duty or social project. When a person contracts a dealing and fulfils its conditions, or borrows money from someone else and then returns it; he performs a duty, the execution of which is watched over by society and while performing such a duty he has to take into account the social relations in case he defaults. But the acts of worship are a duty which is performed as the result of the inner feelings of responsibility only. Their psychological import is known only to Allah. Through continuous devotional practice this inner feeling grows and becomes a second nature. That is how a worthy citizen comes into being. A good citizen is he who adheres to his duty because of his inner feeling of responsibility and not because of the fear of social censure, from which it is possible to escape in many cases. One can conceal one's failure. One can explain it deceptively. One can protect himself from social reactions in more than one way. Hence the inner feeling is the real guarantee.

We observe that in most cases it is preferable to perform secretly and not openly, the acts of devotion which are not obligatory but are only desirable. Further, there are several devotional acts, such as fasting, which by their nature are performed secretly. Fasting means abstinence from certain acts and there is no way to verify that. There are certain other acts for which an atmosphere of secrecy has been chosen. Night prayers (*Salat-ul-Layl*) are performed after midnight. All this has been contemplated to augment the mysterious aspect of the acts of worship and to link them more firmly to the inner consciousness of responsibility. Thus the acts of worship provide a guarantee of the adherence of the individual to his rights and obligations.

## GENERAL FEATURES OF THE ACTS OF WORSHIP

If we take a comprehensive view of the acts of worship and make a comparative study of them we can arrive at certain general features common to all of them. We mention below some of these features:

### 1. MYSTERIOUSNESS OF THE DETAILS

We already know that worship on the whole plays an important role in human life. It represents a constant and firm need in the cultural journey of man.

If we analyse the details of each act of worship, we can in most cases discover their wisdom in the light of the progress of modern knowledge, which has been able to discover the philosophy of the acts prescribed by Islam.

The compatibility of the Islamic rules with the modern discoveries is a clear proof of the divinity of the Islamic law.

Nevertheless in many cases we come across certain points which appear to be mysterious. One cannot comprehend their philosophy and cannot explain them in material and tangible terms. For example, it is not possible to explain why the *Salat-ul-Maghrib* (ritual prayer offered after sunset) has three rakats whereas the *Salat-uz-Zuhr* (midday prayer) has four. Why does every rakaat have one *rukoo* (bow) not two, and two *sajdahs* (prostrations), not one? Many questions of this sort can be raised.

We can call this aspect of the acts of worship which cannot be explained, the mysterious side of them. We meet with it in one way or other in most acts of worship prescribed by Islam. This kind of mystery can be considered to be a feature common to almost all of them.

It is organically linked to the acts of worship and the role they are supposed to play. As we know their role is to stress faith in the Absolute and to establish a practical link to Him firmly. The larger the element of submission and resignation in worship, the more effective it will be in strengthening this link.

Should the advantages of all the details of a deed being performed by the worshipper be evident in all their dimensions, the element of submission is bound to become weak, and to be replaced by that of self-interest. In that case the deed will be a useful act, but not an act of worship.

Just as to inculcate the spirit of obedience and discipline in them, the words of command are addressed to the soldiers during their training and they are asked to obey them without argument, similarly to establish and develop the consciousness of his link to his Lord, man is expected to practise the acts of worship without questioning their mysterious aspects. Total submission requires the existence of some mysteriousness and any attempt to question or explain this side of the acts of worship will mean stripping them of their true nature as a practical expression of the sentiments of submission and resignation, and measuring them like any other act by the standards of worldly gains.

We observe that mysteriousness is almost absent in the case of those devotional acts which represent any big social interest, conflicting with the personal interest of the worshipper. This is the case with *Jihad* which meets a big social need but is in conflict with man's desire to save his life. It is also the case with *Zakat*, which also meets a big social need, but is in conflict with the instinct of not sparing one's money and wealth. The philosophy of *Jihad* and *Zakat* is fully intelligible. Their advantages are obvious. Still they do not lack the element of submission and resignation, because they involve sacrifice of life and property. Further, such acts as *Jihad* and *Zakat* aim at not only the gain of the individual but also the realization of those social interests which they guarantee. Thus we observe that the mysterious aspect is prominent only in these devotional acts which are more concerned with the training of the individual such as prayer and fasting.

## **2. COMPREHENSIVENESS OF WORSHIP**

When we look at the devotional acts prescribed by Islam, we find that they encompass all aspects of life. They are not confined to certain rituals. They are not limited to the acts embodying the glorification of the Almighty such as bowing, prostration, liturgy and prayer. They include all

the sectors of human activity. *Jihad*, a social activity, is an act of worship. *Zakat* a social and financial activity, is an act of worship. Fasting, a system of regulating nutrition, is an act of worship. Ablution and ceremonial bathing are two ways of cleaning the body. This comprehensiveness indicates a general tendency of the Islamic training which aims at linking all human activities to Allah, the Almighty, and turns every healthy effort in any field into an act of worship. In order to provide a firm basis for this tendency, acts of worship have been distributed among various fields of human activity with a view to train man to give the colour of the masjid to the place of his work, whether it is a farm, a factory, a shop or an office. So long as he works for Allah, whatever good deed he performs is an act of worship.

In this respect Islam differs from two other religious tendencies: One of them being that of separating worship from life and the other of limiting life to a narrow field of worship as is done by the monks and the mystics.

The first tendency which separates worship from life, limits the former to the places especially meant for this purpose and demands that to discharge the right of God and to adore Him, one should go to those places. After leaving them one is free to look after his affairs in other fields of life and to forget about worship. This duality destroys the spirit of devotion and curbs its constructive role of enabling man to look beyond his narrow personal interests in various fields. Allah has not enjoined His worship to glorify Himself. He is in no need of doing that. He does not want man merely to bow his head to Him. He has enjoined His worship to enable man to look beyond his self and play an active role in developing himself. This purpose can be achieved only if the spirit of worship is extended gradually to other activities of life also. Its extension, as we have learnt, means the extension of the objectivity of purpose, inner consciousness of responsibility in behaviour, ability to look beyond one's self and man's harmony with the universe surrounding him.

That is why Islam has extended the acts of worship to all fields of life, and has called for the observation of a devotional spirit in every healthy activity. According to Islam, the difference between a masjid, that is the

house of Allah, and the house of man is not one of construction or theme. A masjid deserves to be called the house of Allah only because it is the place where man practically ignores his self-interest and keeps in view of goal, higher than the logic of limited material benefits. Hence this place should extend and cover the entire stage of human life. Any place where man works for the benefit of humanity and to please his Lord, bears the spirit of the masjid.

The second tendency which restricts man to the narrow framework of worship, has attempted to confine man to the masjid instead of extending the concept of the masjid to the entire field of good work by a man.

According to this tendency, there exists an inner contradiction between the soul and the body and neither of them can develop except at the cost of the other. If man wants to develop spiritually, he must deprive his body of good things, contract his existence on the stage of life and fight continuously against his desires and aspirations so that he may gain victory over them through renunciation and ritualism.

Islam rejects this tendency. It wants the acts of worship for the sake of life. Hence life cannot be forfeited for the sake of worship. On the contrary it wants the spirit of worship to pervade all human activities, but it does not want man to get confined within the four walls of a place of worship, nor does it restrain him from taking part in any lawful activity. For a virtuous man a masjid is the rehearsal-ground of his daily conduct and not an impediment to him to his activities.

The Holy Prophet of Islam said to Abu Zarr: "If you can eat and drink for the sake of Allah, you should do so."

Thus worship is a means of promoting the purpose of life. Its success in the religious and instructive sense is measured by its extension to the various fields of life.

### **3. TANGIBLE SIDE OF WORSHIP**

Human intellect is neither mere feeling nor mere abstract thinking.



It is a mixture of perception and reasoning. If worship is required to play its role in a way that it may harmonize with the personality of the worshipper, who should respond to it fully it ought to include both perceptual and abstractly intellectual aspects. Only then can the worshipper be in communion with the Absolute with his total existence.

The intention and the psychological content of worship represent its intellectual side. They bind the worshipper to the Absolute. These are other features of worship which represent its perceptual side. The *Qiblah* (direction of the Ka'bah) toward which every person while offering prayers has to face, the Ka'bah itself to which the pilgrims proceed and which they circumambulate, the mounts of Safa and Marwah between which they walk and run, the *Jamrah-tul-'Aqabah*, which they pelt with pebbles, and the masjid a place especially chosen for performing *i'tikaf* (devotional seclusion) in the course of which a person devotes his whole time to worship, are all perceptual features with which acts of worship have been associated. Prayers cannot be offered without have been associated. Prayers cannot be offered without facing the *Qiblah*, nor can circumambulation (*tawaf*) be made of any place other than the Ka'bah. These rules have been contemplated to satisfy the perceptive sense of the worshipper. This is the moderate tendency in regard to the system of worship which conforms to human nature and mentality.

There are two other tendencies also. One of them, so to say, extremely intellectualizes man, and deals with him as a mere idea. It censures every form of perceptible embodiment in the field of worship. According to it, so long as the Perfect Absolute is not limited by time and space and cannot be represented by any picture or statue, His worship should be limited to meditation which is the only way to communicate with the Absolute Truth.

This tendency is not approved by Islam. No doubt Islam attaches importance to the contemplative side. A tradition (hadith) says that meditation of one hour is better than a year-long worship. Still mere meditation, howsoever deep it may be cannot fill the heart of the

worshipper. It cannot bind him in his entire existence to the Absolute Truth. Man is not a mere idea.

That is why Islam has formulated worship on a basis which is both intellectual and perceptual. When a man starts his prayers by saying: *Allah-o-Akbar* (Allah is the Greatest) he mentally devotes himself to his Lord and declares Him to be free from any limitation and likeness. At the same time he turns toward the Ka'bah most attentively, regarding it as a divine emblem, so that he may engage himself in worship both logically and sentimentally. abstractly and intentionally.

The other tendency goes too far in the perceptual direction. It turns the sign into a reality and worships the symbol instead of what it stands for. Thus the worshipper plunges himself into anthropomorphism and idolatry in one way or other. This tendency kills the spirit of worship finally and puts it out of action as a means of linking man and his cultural journey to the Absolute. It links him to the fake absolutes. Thus the false worship becomes a barrier between him and his Lord instead of being a connecting link between them.

Islam has censured this tendency because it condemns every form of idolatry. Islam is an inconclastic religion. It does not acknowledge false gods. It refuses to recognize any limited thing to be a symbol or embodiment of the True Absolute. But it makes a distinction between the concept of idol which it has destroyed and that of the *Qiblah* which it has introduced. This concept only means that Divine grace has been lent to a particular spot and so it has been associated with prayers, to satisfy the perceptual side of the worshipper. In fact idolatry is but a perverted attempt to satisfy this very side. Islam has been able to rectify the perversion and devise a sound method for reconciling the worship of the Absolute having no limit and no likeness, with the need of man having the faculties of perception as well as intellect to worship Allah with both the faculties.

#### **4. SOCIAL SIDE OF WORSHIP**

Worship basically represents man's relation with his Lord and adds to it

the elements of continuity and stability. But Islam has shaped it in a way that in most cases it has become a means of forging man's relation with his other brethren. That is what we mean by the social side of worship.

There are several acts of worship which by their very nature require assemblage and the establishment of social relations between the participants in that act.

For example, *Jihad* requires the fighters who worship Allah by fighting, to establish the same relations among themselves as normally exist between the various units of a fighting army.

There are other acts of worship which by their nature do not require assemblage but still with a view to combine man's relation with his Lord and his relation with other men, they have been linked to some form of it in one way or other.

To turn them from individual to collective worship, the congregation has been prescribed in the case of obligatory prayers. Thus arrangement has been made for inspiring unity among the community and establishing firm spiritual contacts, through the unification of the religious worship.

A particular time and place has been fixed for the performance of *Hajj*. All pilgrims have to perform it simultaneously and thus it becomes a big social occasion also.

Even Fasting, which by nature is an individual act, has been linked to *Eid-ul-Fitr*, which is the social side of this obligatory duty. On this occasion all those who kept Fast, celebrate their victory over their passions.

Besides establishing man's relation with his Lord, *Zakat* establishes his relation with the poor to whom he pays it or with the philanthropic projects in which he invests it.

Thus we observe that in most cases in one single act of worship the

question of social relations, besides the relation of the worshipper with his Lord, enters in one way or other. This position makes it clear that the system of worship has a social role in the life of man, and it can be successful only when it becomes an active force, capable of guiding his social relations on correct lines.

The social side of worship becomes most prominent when an emblem is offered, which on the social plane becomes the spiritual symbol of the unity of the community and its distinct existence. The *Qiblah* or the Ka'bah is such an emblem associated with worship and prayer. It has not only a religious but also a social dimension as a symbol of the unity and coherence of the Muslims. That is why they faced a great uproar when the new *Qiblah* was fixed. The Holy Qur'an says:

*“The foolish of the people will say what has turned them from the Qiblah which they previously observed? Say: Unto Allah belong the East and the West. He guides whom He will unto a straight path.”* (Sura al-Baqara, 2:142).

*“We appointed the Qiblah which you formerly observed only so that We might know him who follows the Messenger from him who turns on his heels.”* (Sura al-Baqara, 2:143).

These ‘the foolish of the people’ as the Qur'an has called them, knew the social significance of this commandment and realized that it was a manifestation of that personality of the Muslim nation which has made it the ‘*ummatan wasata*’ (the middle nation i.e. not inclined to either extreme).

There are the general features of the acts of worship as prescribed by Islam.

In addition to its general features and the broad outlines of the role of worship in human life as discussed by us, each act of worship has its own detailed characteristics which benefit the worshipper and promote human progress generally. For lack of space we do not propose to go into the details of these benefits and advantages for the present. We have asked some of our pupils to undertake this job and fill up the gap.

May Allah help us, and may He not deprive us from the honour of being His worshippers. May He in His infinite mercy overlook our mistakes. His mercy extends to everything.

*“Why should I not worship Him who created me. And to Him you will be returned.” (Sura Yasin, 36:22)*

Jumadi al-Ula 2, 1396

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“Have you fully realized what Islam is?  
It is indeed a religion founded on truth.

It is such a fountain-head of learning  
that several streams of wisdom  
and knowledge flow from it.

It is such a lamp  
that several lamps will be lighted from it.

It is a lofty beacon  
illuminating the path of Allah.

It is such a set of principles and beliefs  
that will satisfy every seeker of truth and  
reality.

Know you all!  
that Allāh has made Islam the most  
sublime path

for the attainment of His supreme pleasure  
and the highest standard of His obedience.

He has favoured it with  
noble precepts

exalted principles  
undeniable wisdom

undoubtable arguments  
and unchallengeable supremacy.

It is upto you to maintain the eminence  
and dignity granted to it by the Lord,

to follow it sincerely,

to do justice to its articles of faith and belief,

to obey implicitly its tenets and orders

and to give it the proper place in your lives.”

Imam ‘Alī (Peace be on him)