

Creed- Creed and Quran Inimitability- lesson (04-36): Elements of Mandate; Introduction

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of Creations, and Peace and blessings be upon our prophet Muhammad, the faithful and the honest.

Oh, Allah, we know nothing but what You teach us. You are the All- Knower, the Wise. Oh Allah, teach us what is good for us, and benefit us from what You taught us, and increase our knowledge. Show us the righteous things as righteous and help us to do them, and show us the bad things as bad and help us to keep away from them.

O Allah our Lord, lead us out from the depths of darkness and illusion, unto the lights of erudition and knowledge, and from the muddy shallows of lusts unto the heavens of Your Vicinity.

Revision of previous lectures:

Dear brothers, let us begin our fourth lesson on aqidah and miracles. In the previous lesson we talked about worship in its wider meaning. We said it is voluntary obedience, mixed with the love of the heart, based on the certitude of knowledge, leading to eternal happiness. We also talked about how worship goes along with Man in all the affairs of his life, all his circumstances and thereabouts, in his action and repose.

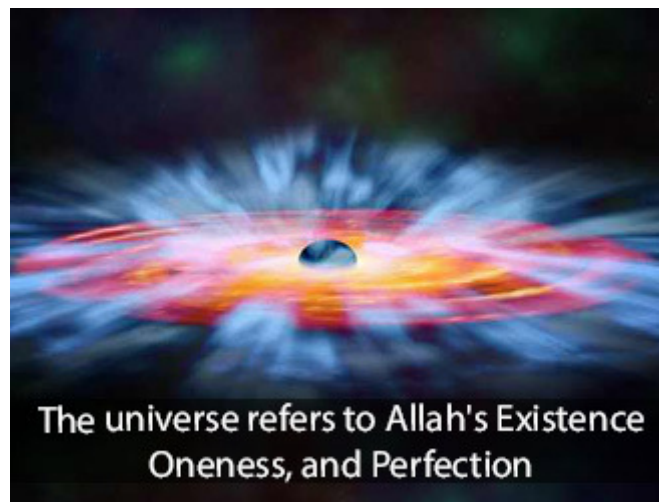
And I told you that there exist acts of worship such as salat (prayer), fasting, and hajj (pilgrimage) and transactional worship such as honesty, loyalty, and chastity. We also talked about identity worship, when the act of worship differs from person to person. Thus, the rich, the man of knowledge, the ruler, or the woman, each one of them has their own acts of worship. Furthermore, we talked about circumstantial worship, when you have a visitor, a relative, a sick person, a son about to sit for an exam. And finally we talked about political worship, in which our acts of worship differ according to the steps taken by another party. So, when they want to

impoverish us, then our acts of worship should be to extract our own natural resources, prepare lands for cultivation, and establish projects in order to be self-sufficient, free of all need for those who incur Allah's displeasure. I also mentioned that political, circumstantial and identity worship are but a detailed method which ranges from marital affairs to international ones.

Elements and fundamentals of Mandate:

Let us move to another topic. When Allah asked us to worship Him he gave us the elements of the Mandate. What are those elements? With what should I worship Him? I stated in a previous meeting: We get to know Allah by means of the Universe we are within, and worship Him by following His Way. We will carry on this topic in many lectures to come. In this one I will summarize all the elements of the Mandate, and later on we shall study their details.

The first element - The Universe:



The thing everybody on this earth agrees upon is this Universe, and for all of them the sun is the sun, the moon is the moon, the day is the day, and the same goes for the mountains, lakes, seas, rivers, fish, birds, plants, inanimate objects, minerals, and creatures.

This Universe is the first fundamental which bespeaks Allah's existence, His Perfection and Oneness. It is a silent Qur'an any man can read, whether Arab or not. There is, thus, a general agreement on the Universe, from which everybody benefits. Hence, it is the greatest fundamental of faith. The Universe denotes Allah because it contains wisdom clearly pointing to the All-Wise; it contains mercy pointing to Most Merciful; it contains organization pointing to the Organizer; it contains creatures pointing to the Creator; it contains subtlety pointing the Subtle One and beauty pointing to the Beautiful One. In it are manifested Allah's Glorious Names and His Excellent Attributes. The Universe is a fundamental agreed upon and complied with by all people, so in times of misguiding, tempting, and different ideological disturbances the Universe remains as the primary fundamental of faith.

How come man, in spite of his arrogance and reluctance, doesn't submit to those astonishing Signs? How come he isn't amazed at a galaxy 20 billion light years away from us? Given that light travels at the speed of 300 thousand kilometers per second, how far does it travel in a minute? In an hour? In a day? In a month? In a year? In 20 billion years? Allah Most High says:

“On the earth are Signs for those of assured Faith.”

(al-Dhariyat, 51:20)

Let us take water into consideration.



Water has a property without which this lecture could never take place, or this city or country exist, or a single human being inhabit the surface of this earth. Water, just like any other element, expands when heated and shrinks when frozen. In fact, when we freeze water, it shrinks like any other substance until it reaches 4° C, then the whole process is remarkably reversed and it starts to expand, lessening its density and, as a result, floating on the surface.

This process protects the seawater from freezing, because if water shrank like other frozen substances, its density would increase and it would get immersed instead of surfacing. If the seas, and other big water sheets, got frozen, there would be no rain; plants would die, so would animals; and so would man. This indeed is a remarkably outstanding property of water.

Dear brothers, I swear by Allah, the One and the Only, that one's whole lifetime could be spent on reflecting on the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. Does Great Allah deserve disobedience? Does He deserve not to be loved? Shouldn't His Hellfire be feared? So, this Universe is a fundamental.

Who erected the mountains? Who brought water out of its springs? What does it mean to have a spring on a mountain top? Is it the high mountain that provides its summit with water for the sake of ibexes living there?



Indonesia consists of 17 thousand islands. On each one of them there is a water spring as big as the island itself, and because rainwater there is not enough to feed those springs, water is brought in from lands with abundant rainfall. Now, who has created this plumbing system? I swear by Allah, dear brothers, if we reflect on the creation of the Heavens and the Earth, we come face to face with the Greatness of Allah. The entire Universe speaks of His existence, Oneness, and Perfection. When man gets lost in tittle-tattle, in ideological conflicts, in aberrations and endless discrepancy, we turn to the Universe as the primary fundamental. He Who has created these worlds is the Great Allah, the Absolute Perfection, and he is the One who made this Qur'an descend. Allah Most High says:

“Furthermore I call to witness the setting of the Stars; And that is indeed a mighty adjuration if you but knew, that this is indeed a Qur'an most honourable.”

(al-Waqia, 75-77)

It is an act of worship to reflect on the Universe:

Hence, reflection is the greatest act of worship of all, and it is the Path to Allah. Thus, reflecting on Allah's Signs in the Universe, Allah's phenomena on earth, and His ayaat of the Qur'an is the only way to find Him. Most of the Mekkan suwar start with the mention of the Signs of the Universe. Thus, Allah Most High says:

“By the Sun and its (glorious) splendour; By the Moon as it follows (the Sun); By the Day as it shows up (the Sun's) glory; By the Night as it conceals it;”

(al-Shams, 91:1-4)

“By the Break of Day; By the Nights twice five; By the Even and Odd (contrasted); And by the Night when it passeth away; Is there (not) in these an adjuration (or evidence) for those who understand?”

(al-Fajr, 89:1-5)

Numerous ayaat explicitly invite us to reflection. Allah Most High says:

“Say: "Behold all that is in the heavens and on earth”

(Yunus, 10:101)

“Now let man but think from what he is created! He is created from a drop emitted,”

(al-Tariq, 86:5-6)

“Then let man look at his Food, (and how We provide it)”

(Abasa, 80:24)

It is also worth mentioning here that numerous ayaat start with the phrase “Don't they see?”

Dear brothers, the Signs of the Universe mentioned in the Qur'an are a method for us to understand His Greatness and His existence, and to mention some of them we say: Who stores water in the mountains for us? Allah says:

“Though you are not the guardians of its stores,”

(al-Hijr, 15:22)

We shall focus on the Universe later on. At present let us continue talking about the elements of the Mandate in general.

So, the Universe is the first fundamental that no two will argue over, and it makes all the people on earth admire the Greatness of Allah. The Universe was subjected to us when Man undertook the Trust. Allah Most High says:

“We did indeed offer the Trust to the Heavens and the Earth and the Mountains; but they refused to undertake it, being afraid thereof: but man undertook it;”

(al-Ahzab, 33:72)

When man agreed to undertake the Trust, Allah Most High subjected to him what is in the heavens and on earth, altogether.

Because you belong to mankind, you are honoured, and you come first, so he who knows himself, will know Allah; and because you are human, you are masters of creation and the most honorable creatures. And yet, this headmost creature, although capable of rising higher than angels, can also fall lower than animals.

Angels were created without the faculty of reasoning or desire; animals have been given desires but no reason, whereas Man has been created with both. So, if his reason gains control of his desires, he is better than angels. Allah Most High says:

“Those who have faith and do righteous deeds; They are the best of creatures.”

(al-Bayyina, 98:7)

The best Allah Most High has created.

**You think you are just a tiny body
yet the big universe is within you**

Don't you know that if you get to know Allah, you are better than angels?
Dear brothers, there are Signs of Allah in the Universe on which we should reflect, and Signs in the phenomena He creates on earth, which we should examine. The following ayah confirms this meaning:

“Say: "Travel through the earth and see what was the end of those who rejected Truth.”

(al-An'am, 6:11)

Islam is the only hope:



Where are now those who opposed the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and his Companions? They are in the dumpster of history. Where are those who took his side? They are in Illiyin (the topmost level in Heaven). Where are those so keen on putting down Islam? Thousands of tyrants have intended to

put down Islam, but they all passed away and Islam carries on. Some western scientists said: "I don't believe Islamic world is able to catch up with the west in the short run because of the wide gap between the two, yet I firmly believe that the whole world will come to its knees before Muslims, not due to their power but because Islam is the salvation of the world."

All earthly systems have fallen flat, and only Islam, the asylum of all people, has stood its ground, supported by its teachings and principles.

Dear brothers, when you muse on the Universe, you examine Allah's acts. Imagine the extreme case of Pharaoh, the powerful tyrant, the strong hater filled with hidden hatred, his hosts armed to the teeth, following a small group of people who believed in Sayyidina Musa (Moses), and who suddenly found themselves facing the sea. Was there any hope of survival? Absolutely none, zero hope. Allah Most High says:

"The people of Musa said: "We are sure to be overtaken. (Musa) said: "By no means! My Lord is with me! Soon will He guide me!"

(al-Shua'ra, 26:61-62)

I swear by Allah, dear brothers, I will never tire of repeating these words: If you have Allah by your side, who can beat you?

Who, in this Universe, can get at you? But if Allah were against you, whom else would you have by your side? Nobody –beyond all doubt. Therefore:

Be with Allah, and you'll find Him by your side; leave all people and watch your greed.

If He bestows on you, who can avert it? But if He withholds the blessing, who else can grant it to you?

"And Allah said: "I am with you: if you (but) establish regular prayers, pay zakat, believe in My Messengers."

(al-Maida, 5:12)

Thus, Sayyidina Musa was asked to strike the sea and it turned into land –to whom was this story told? To him or to us? It was told to us since the Qur'an descended after the time of Sayyidina Musa, so it is for us. You shouldn't be at ease nor should you be depressed.

Allah Most High says:

"So lose not heart, nor fall into despair: for you must gain mastery if you are true in Faith."

(Al-Imran, 3:139)

The right attitude towards the Signs in the Universe:

Thus, we muse over the Signs of the Universe and observe the phenomena on earth and ponder the ayaat of the Qur'an.

Muse, observe and ponder, and you will, eventually, get to know Allah, and when you know Him, you will become cognizant of everything; when you reach out for Allah Most High, you reach out for everything, and if you manage to earn His acceptance, you earn everybody's acceptance as well as everything else. Hence, I frequently repeat the following words: "O Lord, what does one who finds You lose? He loses nothing. And what does one who loses You find? He finds nothing."

People may own bags of money, houses, and vehicles but they are all connected to their heartbeats, and when the heart comes to a stop, everything is gone with the wind. Allah Most High says:

“Say: Truly, those in loss are those who lose their own souls and their people on the Day of Judgment.”

(az-Zumar, 39:15)

Therefore, we muse about the Signs of the Universe and we observe the phenomena on earth and we ponder the ayaat of the Qur'an. We follow the Path of Allah, the Path of His Signs in the Universe, of His phenomena on earth, and of His ayaat in the Qur'an.

The gist of this deen is knowing Allah, and it was narrated in the ahadith:

"Oh, son of Adam ask for Me, and you will find Me; and when you find Me, you find everything else; and when you miss Me, you miss everything, and I should be loved by you more than anything else."

The Universe is a fundamental, and there are 1300 ayaat in the Qur'an referring to it, and that forms one sixth of the Qur'an. All of these ayaat encourage you to reflect on the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. The ayah worth quoting in this context is as follows:

“Behold! In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of Night and Day, there are indeed Signs for men of understanding. Men who celebrate the praises of Allah, standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and contemplate the (wonders of) creation in the heavens and the earth (with the thought): Our Lord! Not in vain have You created (all) this! Glory to You! Give us salvation from the Penalty of the Fire.”

(Al-Imran, 3:190-191)

Thus, the first element is the Universe, the primary fundamental; and it is in no way a controversial issue among the inhabitants of Earth as anyone is able to read this Universe. Allah Most High says:

“ Read!In the name of your Lord and Cherisher, Who created, Created man, out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood: Read! and your Lord is Most Bountiful, He Who taught (the use of) the Pen, taught man that which he knew not.”

(al-Alaq, 96:1-5)

The second element - The faculty of reasoning:

Allah the Almighty bestowed on us the faculty of reasoning. He says:

“And the Firmament has He raised high, and He has set up the Balance (of Justice).”

(ar-Rahman, 55:7)

And to elaborate on it, I can put forth the case of a man who owned nothing in this life but an expensive house, and he sold this house and got paid in cash. In one pocket he had the counterfeit money detector and in the other one the numbers of the counterfeit banknotes, but he failed to make use of either. If this man, after having sold the house, had found out that all the money he had received was counterfeit, his loss would be tremendous but he would be the only one to blame because he used neither the detector nor the list of counterfeit banknotes. The numbers, in our case, represent the orders of the deen, whereas the detector is the faculty of reasoning.

Hence, reasoning is considered the second essential element of the Mandate and its objective.

The principles of the faculty of reasoning:



That means that, being human, you can't comprehend anything using your faculty of reasoning unless there is a cause for it, an objective and harmony in it. Man can't be in two places, say Damascus and Aleppo, at the same time; it would be irrational, but the point here is that the Universe has a cause, so nothing takes place in it without a reason or an objective, and without being in complete harmony. The principles of cause, objective, and harmony are within your reasoning; so the faculty of reasoning is the second element.

The role of reasoning in knowing Allah:

The mission of reasoning is to verify transmission:

What is the role of reasoning in knowing Allah? Its task is twofold.

The gist of the deen is transmission: We have the Qur'an, which is the recited revelation and the sunnah (all acts and sayings of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace), which is the revelation that is not recited. The essence of the deen is to get to know Allah, so reason comes before transmission to verify its truth, and then after verification, the task it has to carry out is to comprehend it. Reason is not meant to judge the transmission –the main part of the deen. Accordingly, 50 years ago reason couldn't have comprehended the possibility of recording 7000 books on a disk, given the fact that each title consists of 40 chapters, every chapter consists of 400 pages, every page contains 80 lines, each line has 35 words and every word 5 letters.

Reason is reality-oriented, while Revelation is related to the Creator. Hence, Revelation is the source, whereas reason is the verification tool of transmission in the first place, and comprehension tool in the second place.

Reason is congruent with the rules of the Universe:

The most outstanding thing about this concept is that reason is congruent with the rules of the Universe, without which it would be useless. Everything in the Universe has a cause, an objective, and it is in perfect harmony, much in the same line as your reason, which will never comprehend unreasonable things.

To elaborate on it, let me say: Before travelling to Latakia the couple turned off all the lights and locked up the front door with the key possessed only by them. Wouldn't it exceed the bounds of reason if, on coming back a week later, they found all the lights on? Suppose now that an irrational dialogue takes place between the husband and wife, in which he exclaims: "The lights are on!" To which she answers: "Well, turn them off!" Yet, the problem here is not their being on but rather that of somebody having intruded into the house in their absence since it would be unreasonable to think that the lights simply became turned on, and that's how reasoning works. Hence, the faculty of reasoning, one of the elements of the Mandate, has to be in harmony with the elements which constitute the Universe. That's why Allah Most High says:

“Do you not understand (their aim)?”

(al-Baqara, 2:76)

“Do they not see?”

(al-Ghashiya, 88:17)

“How are they turned away (from Reality)?”

(Ghafir, 40:69)

“What is the matter with you? How judge you?”

(as-Saffat, 37:154)

However, reason –pay close attention here– is like the eye which, although it can see perfectly, is useless without light. Similarly, reasoning is useless without Revelation, and we can say that the eye and the light are in perfect harmony, and so are reasoning and Revelation, because Revelation to reasoning is like the light to the eye. And thus, as mentioned before, reasoning is useless without Revelation. Allah Most High says:

“For he thought and he plotted. And woe to him! How he plotted! Yes, woe to him! How he plotted! Then he looked round; then he frowned and he scowled; then he turned back and was haughty. Then said he: 'This is nothing but magic, derived from of old. This is nothing but the word of a mortal!' Soon will I cast him into Hellfire! And what will explain to you what Hellfire is? Nothing does it permit to endure, and nothing does it leave alone! Darkening and changing the colour of man! Over it are Nineteen.”

(al-Muddaththir, 74:18-30)

Reasoning is in need of Revelation and whatever is hard to be comprehended by this faculty has been revealed by Allah. So, reasoning is an element of the Mandate and the means to know Allah. Its task is to verify transmission, then comprehend it, but never judge it.

The third element: Fitrah:

You have fitrah (primordial nature of the human being). Allah Most High says:

“So set thou your face steadily and truly to the Deen being upright: the pattern on which Allah has made mankind.”

(al-Rum, 30:30)

Fitrah is congruent with Allah's Way:

Your psychological structure is congruent with Allah's Way, and your nature (fitrah) is at ease when carrying out Allah's orders. Similarly, a very expensive car has been designed to be driven on paved roads only, and if you drive it on a bumpy road, it breaks down and fails you because it has been designed only for the roads which have been surfaced. As for you, you have been designed according to Allah's Way, and if you carry out His orders, you attain indescribable happiness. Allah has ordered you honesty, so when you tell the truth, you feel very comfortable. He has ordered you to be loyal, so when you are, you feel content. He has ordered you to be compassionate, so when you are merciful towards people around you, you feel at ease. Hence:

“So set thou your face steadily and truly to the Deen being upright: the pattern on which Allah has made mankind.”

(al-Rum, 30:30)

Fitrah is the primordial nature of the human being and Islam is the deen of fitrah. Your nature is comfortable with all Allah's orders. Therefore, Allah Most High has called what goes against your nature munkar (sins), and He has called what matches your nature ma'ruf (good deeds).

So, all the things your nature rejects are munkar and the things in harmony with your nature are ma'ruf; and the two words, munkar and ma'ruf, reflect the congruence between nature and deen. That's why Allah Most High says:

“By the Soul, and the proportion and order given to it; And its enlightenment as to its wrong and its right;”

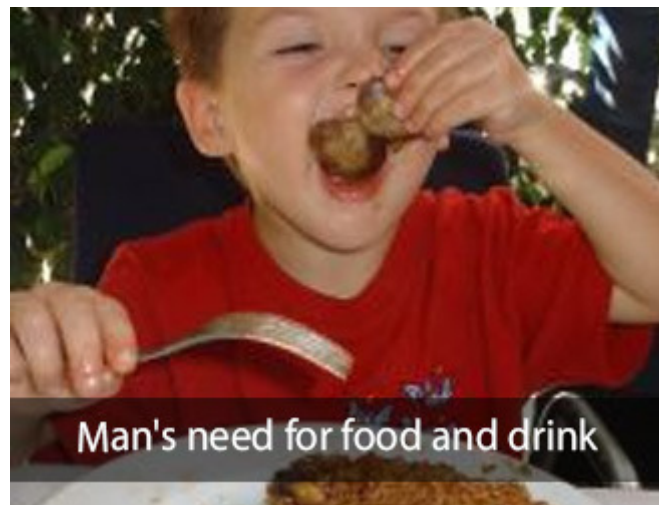
(ash-Shams, 91:7-8)

You don't need anyone to tell you that it is upright when you do good deeds because you know you are being righteous; or to tell you that something is wrong because your nature will tell you so. Admittedly, animals also comprehend their world by fitrah. For example, when a cat snatches away a piece of meat, it eats it away from you; but when you feed her by hand, the cat eats it next to you because it knows by fitrah that taking a piece of meat without your knowledge or stealing it is a wrong deed, though it is not responsible for it, of course.

Universe, reasoning and fitrah...

The fourth element - Lusts:

The importance of lust as an element of Mandate:



Allah the Almighty has installed in us lusts, such as desire for women, money, beauty and comfort. We long for a comfortable house or a luxurious vehicle. Man loves perfection, beauty and success; this is lust; and Allah has installed lusts in us to make us progress, sometimes by means of gratitude and sometimes by means of patience. So lusts are the engine, reasoning is the steering wheel, and orders are the road.

Your motion in life is motivated by lusts without which there would be no life, home, bridge, road, factory, school, or hospital on the face of the earth. If there were no need for food, drink or women, you would turn into a piece of wood, and would remain so for millions of years, entirely ignoring marriage, food or drink. Man, in this case, would be an inanimate object, doing nothing. However, Allah Most High has installed in him desires so that he should walk in marketplaces, look for a job, seek income, and get married; and when he gets a wife, he tries to find another source of income to raise his offspring. Furthermore, Allah Most High draws our attention to the fact that also Prophets are human beings. He says:

“... who eats food, and walks through the streets?”

(al-Furqan, 25:7)

They need food to stay alive and they need to walk in the marketplaces to earn their provision. We all share this characteristic. You look for a job to be able to afford a house, or you rent a house to get married and have children. Therefore Allah Most High has installed in us desires, and it is mentioned in His Saying:

“Fair in the eyes of men is the love of things they covet: women and sons; heaped-up hoards of gold and silver; horses branded (for blood and excellence); and (wealth of) cattle and well-tilled land. Such are the possessions of this world's life;”

(Al-Imran, 3:14)

Every desire should be properly channelled:

Pay attention to these precise words: No lust has been installed in man but that it should be channelled in a proper way, this being due to the fact that nothing engraved in man by Allah can be at fault. Thus, Allah has installed in you love for money and has opened up numerous legitimate ways of earning it. Yet, there also exist illegitimate ways.

Desire is a 180-degree-field, so to speak, and because of the motivation it produces you can move within the entire 180-degree angle. However, the legitimate scope of action lies within the 90-degree angle, the other 90-degree angle comprises the illegitimate ways. Such being the case, the believer should narrow his activities of earning money to the first 90-degree angle, while the disbeliever feels free to work anyhow he wants; to steal, cheat, cover up faults, bluff, and dispossess. Thus, although lusts cover the 180-degree angle, the believer abides by what is permitted by Allah Most High, and this is the meaning of the following ayah:

““That which is left you by Allah is best for you.”

(Hud, 11:86)

Women:

You are allowed to sit with your maharam (a relative of the opposite gender usually described as being "within the forbidden limits"), such as your wife, mother, sisters, aunts, and nieces. However, you are not allowed to be in company of women other than those as it is forbidden within the limits of faith to have a relation with them. In such case, you would be channelling your desires in the wrong way.

Money:

Money can come from trade, employment, gift, self-employment, agriculture, and industry, but it is forbidden to steal, dispossess, cheat, and monopolize. In a nutshell, all kinds of fraud in earning money are forbidden.

Prestige on earth:

It is the third type of desire –to be somebody remarkable, renowned. Seek knowledge, learn, and perform good deeds, and you will be renowned.

An outstanding scientist from a big Islamic country travelled once to Britain to be operated on. It was said that more than 100 thousand phone calls and messages came in from all over the Islamic world inquiring about his health. A London radio station found it both amazing and unusual, so they decided to interview him. The anchorman asked him: "Why did Allah grant you such an honorable position?" What do you think he answered? His answer was indeed marvellous. He said: "Because I am dedicated to Allah, in the same way as you, as a believer, should be dedicated to Allah."



Therefore, prestige on earth should come from serving the Cause of Allah and the well-being of men, spreading knowledge and performing good deeds. Otherwise, you will be hurting others, earning unlawful money in order to buy fantasy houses and luxurious vehicles, throw parties and have love affairs; hotels, traveling and touring.

Your essential need is for food to stay alive, for women to sustain the human species, and you need to be honorable so that your name is respected, and all these needs are granted within the Way of Allah or outside it. Hence, no lust has been installed in man but to be channelled into a clean canal. So, you mustn't worry as there is no privation. That's why Allah Most High says:

“And who is more astray than one who follows his own lusts, devoid of guidance from Allah?”

(al-Qasas, 28:50)

He who follows his lusts within the Way of Allah is clean. He gets married, and people blare the horns of their cars on his wedding night, is that shameful? No, it is not, because marriage is permitted by Allah and there is no shame at all because she is his wife. Sometimes the man signs the marriage contract before getting wedded, and he pays his fiancée a visit and stays till 2 a.m. Well, no one says a word because legally she is his wife.

No desire has been installed in man but to be channelled into a clean canal.

Universe, reason, fitrah and desires...

The fifth element - Freedom of choice:

Allah Most High says:

“Let him who will, believe, and let him who will, reject (it)”

(al-Kahf, 18:29)

“We showed him the Way: whether he be grateful or ungrateful (rests on his will).”

(al-Insan, 76:3)

“To each is a goal to which Allah turns him;”

(al-Bakara, 2:148)

“Those who give partners (to Allah) will say: "If Allah had wished, we should not have given partners to Him, nor would our fathers: nor should we have had any taboos." So did their ancestors argue falsely, until they tasted of Our wrath. Say: "Have ye any (certain) knowledge? If so, produce it before us. Ye follow nothing but conjecture: ye do nothing but lie.”

(al-An'am, 6:148)

Man is free with respect to Mandate:



The above statement belongs to the mushrikun (those who associate equals to Allah).

If Allah forced us to obey Him, recompense would have no sense; and if He forced us to commit sins, punishment would have no sense; and if we were not accountable before Him, it would be disability on His part. Allah Most High has

endowed his worshipers with the capacity to choose, and protectively forbidden them from sinning; and He made submission to Him easy, not hard; and He rewards them abundantly for their good deeds, no matter how small.

Man is free to choose, and if he thinks there is any kind of compulsion on him as regards his actions, he is completely mistaken. Yet, there is compulsion in things out of his control, such as being male or female. Did anyone ask you what you would you like to be or what kind of father or mother you would like to have? Was there an application form for that? Did anyone ask where you would like to be born, whether in Chicago or Damascus? Your birthplace and birthdate have been destined by Allah, and so have been the epoch you live in, your sex, and your parents.

Scholars agree as to the fact that the path you were made to follow is for your own sake, and you won't be better off other than following what you have been granted by Allah. In the Hereafter, when the secret behind your being male or female gets revealed, and behind who your father and mother are, and behind which home country yours is, and the place and time of your existence, your abilities, the way you look, and the amount of beauty you have... you will melt with love for Allah Most High because He has chosen the best for you.

So, in all that you have no other choice than to conform with your fate. On the other hand, as regards what you have been ordered to do, you have freedom of choice. He said to you: Perform salat (prayer), so should you not pray? He says:

“O you who believe! Fear Allah and be with those who are true (in word and deed).”

(al-Tawba, 9:119)

You head for the mosque, but you have other options, such as a bar, or an internet cafe with pornography sites. However, He has asked you to be with those who are true so you come to the mosque. Thus, you have freedom of choice. Allah Most High says:

“Let him who will, believe, and let him who will, reject (it).”

(al-Kahf, 18:29)

The moment you assume you are forced in all your acts, you are cancelling recompense, punishment, Mandate, Trust, Heaven, and Hellfire, and the whole life turns into an absurd play.

What would you say if a competition were held for a post of a civil servant, 3000 having applied for it; the committees formed, applicants interviewed, their general knowledge tested, their licenses verified, eventually all the applicants graded, but, as it turned out, the employee having been nominated beforehand? This is an irrational situation, yet exactly the same happens when you assume there is compulsion as regards your acts. This assumption cancels the deen, Heaven, Hellfire, recompense, punishment, and the Mandate; you cancel all that.

Hence, when a drunkard was brought to him, Sayyidina Umar ordered the punishment to be applied. To this the man said: "I swear by Allah, Amir of the Believers, that Allah has destined me to drink." And the saying has it that "few drinks in few places", so this man believed that Allah had made him do it, but in fact he himself chose to do it and that's why Sayyidina Umar said: "Apply punishment twice on him, once for drinking and once for lying about Allah," and he added: "Woe to you! Allah's fate didn't make you abandon freedom of choice for constraint." So, never say that Allah has chosen (wrongdoing) for me. You should say that you have erred since Allah Most High has ordered you to do good deeds.

Freedom of choice, lusts, fitrah, reasoning and the Universe are elements of the Mandate.

The sixth element: The Islamic Law (shari'):

The Islamic Law is the last element. I'll put forth the following example: Every store has a set of weights: a kilo one, a two-kilo one, half-a-kilo-one, and so on. Thus, if the shopkeeper melted the lead in his weights in order to decrease them by 100 grams, how would we detect this fraud? By measuring them against the standard weights kept at the Town Hall. The Islamic Law is this kind of measurement. Hence, the good deed is what corresponds with the Islamic law and the wrongdoing is what is in conflict with it.

Thus, if your reason directed you against the Law of Islam and you approved it, you should know there is a big malfunction in you since your measures should match the Islamic measures, and what is haram (forbidden) is always haram. For example, the mixed company of men and women is not recommendable and adultery is haram, something unacceptable, but in times of social disintegration, adultery becomes an acceptable act as a result of being widely spread. Nevertheless, it doesn't change the way Allah the Almighty looks at it. Therefore, the Islamic Law is an element of the Mandate. Reason might go astray but the Islamic Law puts it in order.

Imagine you have to solve an arithmetical problem. Before you solve it, I give you the solution so that if it matches your answer, it means your answer is correct. But if your answer is different, it means you have got the wrong answer. Similarly, what is to be done when you assume that a sin has some of the deen in it? You might say to yourself that it is customary now because times have changed and we live now in the era of science, when women are half of the society. Yet, when you assume something which is against the Islamic Law, you should know that you are wrong.

It is true that women are half of the society, and are highly honoured, and no religion or ideology gives the woman more rights or honours her more than Islam. When the Noble Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, conquered Mekka, he was invited to stay in any of its houses, but he asked for a tent to be put up nearby Khadijah's grave, and then he planted the standard of victory by her

grave so that the whole world should know that the woman lying there was his partner in victory. Allah Most High says:

“... and take mutual counsel together, according to what is just and reasonable.”

(al-Talaq, 65:6)

The controlling measure when reason goes astray:

Corruption, indecency, body revealing, and sitting with a maharam woman in privacy are all unacceptable acts. Therefore, the Islamic Law is the judge here, and a good deed is what conforms to it. If reason goes astray and fitrah gets obliterated, what will be the controlling measurement here? It will be the Islamic Law, in the same way as the standard weights we talked about, kept at the Town Hall.

Such is the Islamic Law, and Allah Most High has additionally bestowed on us time, the framework for our deeds; and you are here but a few days, and every day that passes takes away a piece of you.

In our next session we will talk in detail about the elements of the Mandate.

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