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Verification of Intellectual Differences and Deviant Sects

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ABSTRACT

There are intellectual and ideological differences among humans. The question this issue raises in any researcher's mind is that are all of them right? That is, do all these intellectual differences reflect truth and reality? Or some of them might not do so and thus might not be right and correct and some other might be wrong? And then another question pops up that if some of them are true and some false, how are we supposed to find out? In other words, how can we know if they are right or wrong? Our answer is that we consider the principle of intellectual differences to be originated from the nature and mind of human being and also from human's intellectual growth and we receive it warmly; however, we do not consider it to be the whole truth as does pluralism. We believe some of them are right and some are wrong; nevertheless, we believe that it is possible to find out and achieve the right and wrong and the correct and incorrect and that human being can understand the right and wrong by referring to common principles and only through reason and rational judgment and all other ways (obedience, savor, intuition, revelation and love) lead to the same destination.

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How is it possible to verify intellectual attitudes and schools?:

We are going to discuss the ways in which we can verify different, conflicting, and paradoxical thoughts about an issue. In order to explain this problem, it is necessary to provide an introduction so as to analyze the main issue more reasonably.

- A) It is quite natural to see differences in details. Differences in principles, even in little amounts, may not be suitable for human life and the system of human mind is somehow inclined towards unity; however, not only is it quite natural to see differences in subcategories, but it is a sign of people's intellectual growth and we should not consider it as something against the stream of human nature and interest. According to the 213th verse of Surat Al-Baqarah, people were a united nation at first. Then they were broken up and God sent the prophets among them to judge between them and show them the right. "Mankind was [of] one religion [before their deviation]; then Allah sent the prophets as bringers of good tidings and warners and sent down with them the Scripture in truth to judge between the people concerning that in which they differed. And none differed over the Scripture except those who were given it - after the clear proofs came to them - out of jealous animosity among themselves. And Allah guided those who believed to the truth concerning that over which they had differed, by His permission. And Allah guides whom He wills to a straight path."

There is also another interpretation for this verse. Rumi interprets it this way:

*God sent the prophets with their books to earth,
So He could pick the grains that have true worth,
We were all as one whole before they came,
No one knew good from bad – we were the same.*
(Book II of Masnavi, verses 285-6)

It means that people were all as one whole, but God sent the prophets to guide people and this caused people to get divided and engage in conflicts. The reason is that before prophets were sent to guide the human being, people were ideologically in absolute darkness and there was nothing clear, as objects are not visible in the darkness and their value is not clear; however, with the emergence of prophets, their guidance facilitated recognition and real values were manifested. This is realized with the emergence of prophets, because people, like animals, had a normal life, but when divine prophets emerged, they were classified based on

their different perception and reason. Therefore, the people who enjoyed a healthy nature were separated from the others.

At least it can be interpreted from this verse of Qur'an that: people were like animals at first. There was no difference between them. Then intellectual growth created conflicts among them and God sent prophets to show them the right way (Morteza Motahhari, pp. 52-5).

Of course it is natural not to expect the whole world to be the same and all people to think in the same way. Differences are not always negative. Sometimes they can be a blessing and opportunity for perfection, promotion, growth and elevation. For instance, if all people choose to become doctors, what unfortunate would happen?

Or if everyone wants to study in a single major, wouldn't life seem meaningless and absurd? Then difference in nature makes human life hopeful and purposeful and leads to the elevation and promotion of human society. God says in the holy Qur'an: "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you." This holy verse shows that God Himself has created the differences and this is why some contemporary Shiite and Sunni scholars prohibit "human cloning", because they believe that as a result of cloning phenomenon, differences and varieties are removed from human society and this is against the divine wisdom and creation. In addition, there would be an evil succession in terms of intermixing of genealogical lines and other abuses that disarranges human life system. Or some verses express that if God willed, He could have guided everyone "And if He willed, He could have guided you all" and in some verses, God postpones His judgment between the two groups (which one is right and which is wrong) to the Day of Resurrection, as in "But Allah will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that over which they used to differ." (Al-Baqarah, 113); "And He will surely make clear to you on the Day of Resurrection that over which you used to differ" (An-Nahl, 92). To sum up, it is natural to see some differences in the world and these differences make this world organized and help people achieve perfection.

Then there definitely is variety and diversity in the context of natural world and this very variety and difference in nature can be the reason for human's prosperity.

B) Difference in opinion and thought is a kind of divine justice.

Now that we admit the existence of difference in natural world and believe that these differences are beneficial, it can be said that there is plurality, diversity, conflict and contradiction in intellectual world as well.

The question is that with all those differences in thought, are all of them right? Is there any wrong? With all diversity we see, why are we always judging and evaluating? And leave beliefs and customs behind, turn to other beliefs and customs and consider certain things good or bad?

As asserted in a narrative, "To be satisfied with infidelity is an act of infidelity" (Masnavi, edited by Reynold Alleyne Nicholson, Book Three, verses 1362-75). In another narrative, which is a Hadith Qudsi, it is stated that "Anyone not pleased with my satisfaction, that is infidelity, and he is seeking a god other than Me". How can we justify these two narratives?

It should be mentioned that "satisfaction" is divided into two types:

- 1- Primary satisfaction
- 2- Secondary satisfaction

Primary satisfaction, for example, is when I am thirsty and I want to drink cold water. But secondary satisfaction happens when a patient, out of frustration and with unwillingness, has to get injection in order to be treated. Yes, this is how intellectual and ideological differences are considered as a type of divine justice. All the creatures in the world are created this different and this difference is true, but our responsibility is to judge and evaluate, and we should compare and assess actions based on goodness and badness originated from human common principles. We had better hear this from Rumi's mouth:

*Yesterday an inquirer put a question to me,
for he was fond of disputation.*

*He said, "This Prophet uttered the deep saying,
'To be satisfied with infidelity is an act of infidelity';
his words are (conclusive like) a seal.*

*Again, he said that the Muslim must be satisfied (acquiesce)
in every ordainment, must be satisfied.*

Is not infidelity and hypocrisy the ordainment of God?

If I become satisfied with this (infidelity) it will be opposition (disobedience to God)

And if I am not satisfied, that too will be detrimental: between (these two alternatives), then, what means (of escape) is there for me"?

I said to him, "This infidelity is the thing ordained, it is not the ordainment; this infidelity is truly the effects of the ordainment.

Therefore know (distinguish), sire, the ordainment from the thing ordained, so that thy difficulty may be removed at once.

I acquiesce in infidelity in that respect that it is the ordainment (of God), not in this respect that it is our contentiousness and wickedness.

In respect of the ordainment, infidelity indeed is not infidelity.

Do not call God 'infidel,' do not stand here.

Infidelity is ignorance, and the ordainment of infidelity is knowledge: how pray should hilm (forbearance) and khilm (anger) both be one (and the same)?

The ugliness of the script is not the ugliness of the artist; nay. 'tis an exhibition of the ugly by him.

The power (skill) of the artist is that he can make both the ugly and the beautiful".

If I develop the investigation of this (subject) methodically, so that question and answer become lengthy,

The savor of Love's mystery will go from me. the form of piety will be deformed.

Reason is the ultimate judge in the verification of thoughts:

The only criterion that can help us in our path is "reason" that can distinguish right from wrong. Even if in some cases such means as "obedience" are used, it is again the use of reason in some way; that is, by using reason and thought we understand that in some places, our reason cannot find the right way by itself and should be obedient, or else, obedience would seem meaningless. That is, in obedience, there is nothing said against the reason. Yes, our reason understands that those are not unreasonable and only we cannot find their deep philosophy, and this is what obedience means.

Conformity of Differences to Common Principles:

It was mentioned in the first section that it is quite natural to see difference and diversity in details; however, in this issue we believe that despite all differences, there is still a united and specific language and moreover, there are also other commonalities that human society believes in.

For example, the fact that human hates cruelty and is inclined towards beauties and the good, or human's love for his children and examples like that, which are among human commonalities, are called the axioms of practical reason and such examples as the impossible aggregation of paradoxes are described as the axioms of theoretical reason. The reason is that if such commonalities do not exist, how can human beings possibly argue in their conversations and arguments and convince each other? Can they even understand each other? Will there be any understanding and reason among people? Thus, as long as human beings cannot understand each other, they would not be able to convince each other. If there is only difference among people, there always has to be a retaining wall between humans. On the other hand, in terms of occurring possibility, we see that people give up their beliefs and turn to other ones and this means that communication takes place based on common principles; humans understand each other's logic and recognize the rightness or wrongness of thoughts by conforming them to common principles.

In summary, in order for the truth of thoughts to become evident, it is necessary to refer those different opinions to these common principles. If there is conformity, that thought and opinion is right, and otherwise, it would be wrong. Yes, "Since Truth they cannot see, to fantasies they would flock." Our belief about pluralism is the same; that is, any thought expressed, should be verified by conforming it to the accepted and common principles, and to do so, one needs to use reason to get from the world of pluralism to the world of unity. With the help of reason, the path of future and human history is specified. Thus far, human beings have established communication and moved closer to each other (in an observable way) using reason argumentation and will move towards unity with more communications (in a demonstrable way).

Conclusion:

Then we can conclude that:

- 1- The right in thoughts, beliefs and customs is concealed like oil in mil and not all thoughts are right.
- 2- We humans can make a distinction and judge between right and wrong; however, this ability develops gradually and over time like the shepherd's refinement by stirring the yogurt to extract oil from dough. If we lacked the ability to distinguish and judge between right and wrong, there would not be any understanding and changing one's belief would seem meaningless.
- 3- Our only initial criterion for judgment and evaluation is our reason.
- 4- With the help of reason, we can understand the prophets, they can help us with our recognition, and the revelation afterwards can help the reason.
- 5- Savor, intuition and love (spiritual path) are also understood with the help of reason and this can help the reason itself.
- 6- Most differences lead to unity and maybe, as the philosopher Ockham says, human mind is inclined towards unity.

- 7- It has been understood from the experience of human history that human has established more communication by referring to reason and argumentation and have moved closer to each other with more communication. This has led to more (observable) unity and in future, human will advance towards total unity and oneness with more communication and using the help of reason. This is how the human history has moved towards argumentation and reason and unity (demonstrable). Then, it can be concluded that in both observable and demonstrable ways, the path of human history is the path of reason, argumentation, communication, unity and oneness.

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