

NATURAL AVENUES OF GOD - REALIZATION

LECTURE ONE

INTRODUCTION: Imagine a child is abandoned on an island where there is plenty of food and shelter but there is nobody no humans on that island. Assume too that the child grows up healthy but all the time all alone in nature on that beautiful island.

Question? Will this human at anytime in his entire life alone on this island ever ever imagine of a creator that created him and his little world? Will he have an awareness? Won't this awareness distinctly indentify him over and above the animals all around him who don't have the capacity to this awareness regarding creation?

A spark of human awareness in respect of a Creator and his existence poise this human mind on the way to "Maarifa" - knowledge awareness - conviction etc. All his life he learnt by seeing, touching, smelling, feeling etc. He now contemplates on creation as a plan.

1. MAARIFA
MEANING & VALUE
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"Maarifa" means awareness and general knowledge. It plays an important part in man's progress in life. Man's distinction and superiority over all other creatures lies in his ability to contemplate and understand. The more his awareness and understanding, the more his value and the more and the more benefit he is able to enjoy and also impart to others in society. Supporting this view, Imam Ali bin Abi Talib (A.S.) had said:

" The value and status of every man
isto the extent he knows"

2. BENEFIT OF AWARENESS

Take an example of a coconut tree East Africa ⁱⁿ India, Sri Lank, Thailand etc. ~~To a simple~~ It is a useless wild jungle tree to the one who lacks awarness and knowhow of how to climb the tree, how to fell the coconuts, how to rip open and extract the white juice and how to derive benefit from its contents. Moreever the awareness of the use of its empty shells, the coconut tree leaves also provide benefit.

Similarly the awareness of the medicinal value of different created herbs and plants growing in the woods enables one to derive benefit not only for one's own self but also to impart to others.

3. SUPREME GOAL

The primary and supreme goal of "Maarifa" - awareness is God-realization the knowing of Allah - the Almighty the glorious. Why? Because it is He who is the source and Creator of everything in this universe. There is nothing like Him. All affairs of mankind, nay the function and survival of the whole of universe infact is dependent upon Him. The Holy Quran endorsing this view says:

"Surely Allah has power over all things"
(Sura Al-Bagarah V.20)

As such, reason dictates that it is the awareness and knowing God which should be recognized as supreme. In support of this view, Ali bin Abi Talib (A.S.) said":

"Of all kinds of awareness and knowing that of Allah is supreme" (Meezanul Hikmah)

4. CORE OF RELIGION

Having accepted the need of Creator Allah as the primary and original also as a continuous operator and nourisher of all Creation, the first and core of religious understanding is awareness of Him. Islam, as a God-sent religion, has come to lead mankind on the path of perfection in life. Guiding us to commence seeking awareness of Allah, Ali bin Ali Talib (A.S.) says:

"The foremost (step) in religion is the awareness of Him (God-knowing)"
(Meezanul Hikmah)

5. PATH TO PERFECTION

When seeking general awareness is commenced with right God-knowing, the foundation-stone of knowledge, man's understanding can be expected to become perfect. God-knowing and realization acts like a torchlight and produces offshoots in the field of science and general knowledge. In this respect, Imam Ali bin Abi talib (A.S.) says:

"With God-knowing, knowledge bears fruit"
(Meezanul Hikmah)

6. ENTRY INTO HEAVEN WITH "MAARIFA" PREFERABLE

So important is the value of awareness of Allah in the eyes of Ali bin Abi Talib (A.S) that he says:

" I would not feel pleased to die in childhood and enter heaven without growing up so as to recognize my Nourisher (Allah) the mighty the Exalted"

SUMMARY

1. Man's true value lies in his knowledge and awareness.
2. The more aware he is the more he benefits.
3. God-realization and knowing is the supreme goal of awarness.
4. Perfection of one's awareness lies in his knowledge of God.
5. Entry into heaven only preferable if with "Maarifa" - knowledge of God.