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## The Divine Guidance

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(2:120) ... قُلْ إِنَّ هُدَى اللَّهِ هُوَ الْهُدَى ...

"Say: The guidance of Allah, that is indeed the (true) guidance."

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(24:35) ... اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ...

"Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth".

Allah commands the affairs of the universe by providing guidance to living as well as non-living objects. From the minutest subatomic particles to the largest stars in the universe are all under His control. This control is exercised by means of a set of laws. These laws are initiated in what is known as **عالم الامر** in the Quranic terminology. Allah is **فَاطِرُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ** (Al-Quran 6:14), which means that He initiated the creation of the heavens and earth when nothing existed in the universe.

The Quran says:

(2:117) بَدِيعُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَإِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ○

"He is the originator of the heavens and the earth. When He decrees a plan, He says to it BE and it is."

Again it is said:

(36:82) إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ○

"His law of creation is such that when He intends a thing, His decree is BE and it is."

Thus the Divine intentions and decisions are in fact an integral part of God's process of creation. The Holy Quran has used two different words for creation. They rather indicate two different stages of creation. One is **امر** (Amr) and the other is **خلق** (Khalq). Khalq means to create a new object from the existing constituents. This is where an object appears in its manifest form. But prior to this, is a stage where an object is still in the process of 'becoming'. This planning stage is described by the Holy

Quran as `Alam-e-Amr. What is the nature of this planning and how it is carried out is beyond human comprehension. This is also described by the Holy Quran as `Mashiyyat' of Allah which no-body can question:

(14:27) ... يَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ ۝

"Allah acts according to His will."

Here `will' does not mean whims and wishes. It means a set of laws.

(21:23) لَا يُسْأَلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ ...

"He cannot be questioned for His acts."

For example why fire has got the burning property, nobody can question. Why an unsupported object of certain density falls to the ground, nobody can question.

Thus the initiation of divine laws was absolute and unquestionable. Now the execution of these laws is carried out within specified patterns. This is known as ..... (Taqdir):

(33:38) ... وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ قَدَرًا مَقْدُورًا

"The divine laws are bound by certain measures." (65 : 3)

Allah has made a specific pattern for everything that exists. A mango seed shall always grow into a mango tree and never otherwise. This is its Taqdir. Thus after the initial planning, the execution of these laws has been channelised.

The process of emanation of these laws is termed by the Holy Quran as ..... Wahi. Literally Wahi means a sharp pointer, a guidance or a guidance by command. This guidance has been given to all animate and inanimate objects in the universe. The Quran says:

(41:12) ... وَأَوْحَىٰ فِي كُلِّ سَمَاءٍ أَمْرَهَا ...

"He assigned to each heaven (or celestial body) its duty and command."

About earth it is said:-

(99:5) يَا نَرَبِّكَ أَوْحَىٰ لَهَا

"For that Allah will have given her (the earth) وحي (inspiration)."

The above-said verses indicate that every individual component of the heavens and the earth is commanded to perform a specific role by means of the physical laws assigned to them. For instance, atoms and subatomic particles have specific structures and specific functions which enable them to make compounds. Thus the ionic or nuclear bonds are being made and unmade in every nook and corner of the universe. The energy is released at one place and supplied at the other. Energy in one form is

being converted into another. One form of matter is being replaced by another. Precious treasures are being shaped inside the oceans and in the depths of the earth. The solar radiation reaches the earth and promotes photosynthesis in the vegetable kingdom. Innumerable other phenomena occur day and night. So many species of animals and plants are being differentiated. This entire performance occurs in specific patterns by command of the Lord.

The living objects, other than man are also commanded to perform their specific functions within specified patterns. A sheep always eats grass and never meat; a lion always eats meat and never grass; a duck floats on water and a hen walks on the ground from the very first day of their respective births. Similarly a worker bee, a queen bee and a drone all perform their specific roles within specific patterns. These phenomena in the animal kingdom are also not self-acquired. These occur by command of the Rabb and again the word **وحي** *Wahl* is used for it by the Holy Quran:

(16:68) **وَأَوْحَىٰ رَبُّكَ إِلَى النَّحْلِ** ...

"And thy Lord placed in the bee His **وحي** guidance."

Thus all objects in the universe receive guidance by command of their Lord by means of specific laws assigned to them in their respective spheres. These laws are objective i.e., they are not self made or self acquired; rather they are enforced from outside.

Man is also a part and parcel of the universe and is thus subject to divine laws. But the case of man is unique in this respect. He is commanded by two different sets of laws. His body is controlled by the physical laws, as in the case of all other animals, while his 'personality' is controlled by laws which are not given directly to individual human beings but are delivered to humanity as a whole, through certain persons selected specifically for this purpose. The question arises; why this novelty in the case of man? For this we shall have to consider first *the features which distinguish man from all other creatures*:-

The evolution took a different turn with the appearance of man on the earth. Since the creation of the earth 5000 million years ago, it was only a chemical evolution; atoms evolving into simple inorganic compounds and simple inorganic compounds giving birth to complex organic compounds. This was followed by the organic compounds, water and minerals, reacting with one another and making possible the origin of life on the earth. This change-over which occurred 2000 million years ago, superadded biological to chemical evolution. This continued till man appeared on the scene. At this stage, human evolution became superadded to biological and chemical. The holy Quran calls man a distinguished creation, stating, at the same time, the points of distinction from other creatures as follows:-

(1) Man possesses 'Rûh' or 'divine energy'.

The evolutionary stages in the creation of man are described as follows:-

الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ وَبَدَأَ خَلْقَ الْإِنْسَانِ مِنْ طِينٍ ۝ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ نَسْلَهُ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ  
مِنْ مَاءٍ مَهِينٍ ۝ ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ وَنَفَخَ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِهِ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ ۝

"It is He Who has made all that is created in due proportion. And He initiated the creation of man from the inorganic matter of the earth and made his progeny from an extract of the nature of a despicable fluid. Then He fashioned him in due proportion and breathed into him His 'Rûh' and gave you\* the faculties of Hearing, Sight and Mind. But very few of you make use of these faculties." (32:7-9)

(2) The second distinguishing feature of man which makes him superior to all other animals is his power of speech or the expression of thoughts by auditory and visual means for their conveyance to others and the comprehension of the ideas of others by means of their written or spoken words:

(55:3-4) ۝ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ ۝ عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ ۝

"He created man. He taught him speech."

What is this Rûh or Divine energy, and how it works actually, is not within the domain of perceptual knowledge:

(17:85) ۝ وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ۝

"And they ask thee (O Muhammad) concerning Rûh. Say: The Rûh comes from the command of thy sustainer. Of its knowledge, it is very little that is communicated to you."

However the Rûh or Divine energy manifests itself in various ways. In human individuals it appears in a specific form which is called *Nafs* by the Quran. All human actions dependent on freedom of choice and will, cast their image on *Nafs* or Human Personality. The *Nafs* presents itself in an undeveloped form and has got immense potentialities. It has the capacity to develop on the blue-prints of divine attributes. Its potentialities become actualised by such human actions as are in conformity with the divine laws, given to mankind through the messengers of God. He who gradually develops the *Nafs* draws closer to God, i.e., he realises and manifests divine attributes within himself. The more the human Self is developed, the more is it capable of survival and capable of passing on to its higher stage of evolution, after physical death of human body. On the other hand one whose actions are in the opposite direction, causes disintegration of *Nafs*, i.e., he recedes from the real and draws closer to the unreal.

\* It may be pointed out here that in the above said verse, the preliminary stages or the stages of prehuman creation are described in the form of a third person (نسله - سوله - فيه). But the stage at which the mind is developed through Hearing and Sight and the Rûh appeared in man, granting him the faculty of Freedom of choice and Will, the Quran addresses man in the form of second person (لكم). This indicates that man reached his present state of existence, gradually and progressively step by step, every step being in an ascending order.

The Holy Quran says:

رَفَعْنَا وَمَا سَوَّيْنَاهَا ۚ قَالَ لَهَا مُتَّجِرَةٌ وَتَقْوِيهَا ۚ قَالَ قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا ۚ  
 وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا ۚ  
 (91:7-10)

"By the *Nafs* and its perfection. He endowed it with possibilities of both integration and disintegration. Truly he succeeds who nourishes it and he fails who stunteth it."

The human '*Nafs*' is progressive and to undergo evolution is in its nature. The making and breaking up processes of *Nafs* or human personality are affected only by those actions which are performed wilfully and after making a choice. It is 'Ruh' or divine energy which confers on man the capacity to choose between right and wrong and thus provides man the unique distinction to act freely as he chooses. The freedom of choice and will, thus, become the directive force in human evolution, which in fact is the evolution of human personality.

We may thus conclude that man is composed of two different things, his physical body and his personality. The making and breaking up processes of human body are controlled by the physical laws and that of the human Self is controlled by the laws which are given to mankind through the messengers of God.

Let us revert to the question: why these laws are given to mankind through messengers of God and why not to individual human beings? That is so because human evolution is the evolution of human 'Self'. The development of human 'Self' takes place through the development, in it, of divine attributes. This in turn can take place only through social living. The more you act for the benefit of humanity, within the pattern prescribed by the divine laws, the more you acquire the attributes of God. Thus the development of human 'Self', being not an individual but an organisational affair, required a central control for guidance, in order to produce a coordinated functioning of the society. This role was taken up by the messengers of God. Hence a different way of providing divine guidance at the human level.

The messengers of God appeared on the earth in different ages. Every time a messenger of God came, he brought the same universal truth, explained in the manner understandable by the people of his age. But after a lapse of time, the human self interests made his followers deviate from the path shown by him until another messenger came with basically the same message. This process continued until man was mature enough to receive a complete code of life applicable for all times to come. This final code of life was brought by Muhammad (peace be upon him) 1400 years ago and now it lies safely inside the Quran.

**IMMUTABILITY OF DIVINE LAWS**

The Divine laws given to mankind as well as to the physical world are immutable:

(6:34) ... لَا مَبْدَلَ لِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ ...

"No-body can change the laws of God".

(30:30) ... لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ...

"Allah's process of creation never changes."

(17:77) ... لَا تَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِنَا تَحْوِيلًا ○

"You do not find a change in the working of our (Divine) laws."

(35:43) ... فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا ...

"So you can never find a change in the working of the Divine laws."

Even a messenger of God cannot change the laws of God.

(3:127) لَيْسَ لَكَ مِنَ الْأَمْرِ شَيْءٌ ...

"(O Messenger of God!) you are not given the authority to change the laws of God.