

The Value of Duties and Obligations

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All these innumerable means of living, that are now available to man and that we endeavor to acquire and use them day and night, were not available to man from the beginning of his life on the earth. They have, gradually, been brought into existence by man's efforts and have been utilized.

But in any case, from the primitive man to the civilized man of today, human beings have never ceased working and striving and through their Allah-given nature, they have tried to provide better means of living. This is because if a man loses his energy and the internal and external organs of his body such as his eyes, ears, mouth, hands, feet, and also if his brain, heart, lungs, and liver fail to function properly, he will be nothing but a dead person.

For this reason, man works not only out of necessity, but also because he is a human being, he displays various activities. Since by his commonsense he realizes that he should arrange for the happiness and prosperity of his life in any way possible, he engages in work and effort and moves in the direction of his demands.

Therefore, living in any environment and in any manner, religious or non-religious, legal or despotic, urban or nomadic, man feels the necessity of a series of duties and obligations for himself (those things which are indispensable for living). If these duties and obligations are carried out, the reasonable desires of man will be fulfilled and he will lead a happy, comfortable, and prosperous life.

Certainly, the value of these duties and obligations, which are the only means of prosperity, is the humanity itself. We cannot perceive anything more precious and valuable than the humanity and which cannot be exchanged with any other commodity.

Therefore, 'dutifulness' and its implementation are the most important practical matters that man confronts in his life, for its value is exactly the same as that of man himself. Whoever refrains from performing his indisputable duties, or sometimes neglects them, he proportionately lapses in morality from the eminent position of humanity and naturally accepts his humility and worthlessness. With every violation of his human duty, such an individual inflicts blows after blows on the body of his society and indeed on his own body as well.

The Almighty Allah states in the Holy Qur'an: "Most surely man is in loss, except those who believe and do good and enjoin on each other truth, and enjoin on each other patience (103:2-3)."

The Almighty Allah also states: "Corruption has appeared in the land and the sea on account of
".(what the hands of men have wrought... (30:41

Difference of Opinion in the Identification and Specification of Duties

The importance attached to the identification of duties and their implementations are indisputable obligations in the world of humanity. Never can a human being possessing human nature be found who would deny this reality.

Since human duties have an absolute relationship with man's prosperity and life and because the religion differs with non-religious isms and practices as far as views regarding man's life are concerned, naturally religious duties will differ from the duties of other non-religious isms and practices.

Religion believes that man has an infinite and endless life which does not terminate with death. The capital of pure and true beliefs, praiseworthy ethics, and good deeds that man has acquired in this world prior to his death, serves as the great investment for his infinite life in the Hereafter.

Therefore, in obligations and duties that religion has formulated for the individuals and the society, the life in the everlasting Hereafter is also taken into consideration.

Religion establishes its provisions in the sphere of theism and the worship and servitude of Allah, the obvious consequence of which will become manifest on the Day of Resurrection.

Non-religious isms and practices (whatever these may be) only take the short and transient life of this world into consideration and formulate duties through which man can benefit more from his materialistic life and material profits which are common between him and other animals.

Indeed with a reasoning which originates from feelings and sentiments of grazing animals and beasts, they draw up an animal life for man. They pay no attention to man's realism and his everlasting life full with intellectualities.

Therefore, the sublime human ethics (as definite experience indicates) gradually disappear from non-religious communities and the moral decadence of their members becomes clearer and more manifest day by day.

Some people argue that the base of religion is following and also the unquestionable acceptance of a series of duties and regulations; whereas, social policies can be justified by the current logic.

Those who have said so neglect the fact that the rules and regulations which are implemented in the society must be carried out indisputably. No one has ever heard or seen the people of a country following the prevalent laws after argument and scientific discourse or be exempted

and free from following the laws whose philosophy they do not understand. Thus, in this respect, the religious and non-religious practices do not differ. Indeed, through a study of the natural and social conditions of a country and on inquisitiveness in its general policies, one can find out the philosophy behind the generalities of the laws of that country and some of their details (not all). This also holds true in the case of religious laws. By means of realism and inquisitiveness about creation and man's natural requirements, one can discover the generalities of the laws of religion which is an innate policy and some of their details. The Holy Qur'an and many ahadith call the people to reasoning, reflection, and pondering and in some precepts refer to the brief expedience behind the commandments. There are many ahadith available to us from the Holy Prophet (S) and the Ahl al-Bayt (as) which state the reasons behind the precepts.

Dutifulness

As mentioned in the beginning of this book, the holy religion of Islam is a general and permanent program that has been descended to the last Prophet, Muhammad (S), from the Almighty Allah for human life in this world and the Hereafter to be carried out in the human society so as to pull the ship of humanity out of the whirlpool of ignorance and tribulation and carry it to the coast of salvation.

Since religion is a program of life, it has inevitably specified duties for man on things which are linked to his life and asks him to carry them out.

In general, our life is connected to:

(1) The Almighty Allah Who has created us. Our moral obligation towards His blessings is greater than any other duty and our dutifulness towards His Holy Presence is more obligatory than any other obligation.

(2) Ourselves.

(3) Our fellow creatures with whom we are obliged to live and perform our duties and tasks with their cooperation and assistance. Thus, according to the order, we have three general duties: duty towards Allah, duty towards ourselves, and duty towards others