

A Healthy Society under the Grace of Ethics

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Without ethic, the plan of a healthy society is defeated. We know that man has a social life, and undoubtedly, "society" is the most important factor in development, improvement and or retardation and degeneration of men.

The sociologists believe that man without society loses everything (sciences and knowledge, mental perfection, affections, and even speaking and similar subjects).

The situation of children being isolated from the human society for any reason, and trained in an inhuman environment, like "forest", besides wild animals, proves this matter. In history, we have repeatedly observed such children. Neither they could speak and comprehend high concepts of human life, nor there was any trace of humanistic affections in them, and their behavior and deed was just like wild animals of forest! Observing the situation of desert wanderers and nomadic tribes, whose society is very limited and small, and their communication with others is less, is a good proof for showing that if man loses the society, what will be his destiny!

This and a lot of other evidences exactly approve the belief of sociologists that "society is prior to the individual". Of course, an individual as a "living being" may be prior to the society, but as a "human", he will not be prior to the society. And also for this reason, the more social relations of man develop, the more his civilization, although in special aspects, improves. Facility of communication tools in the present world, which has caused more proximity and contact of individuals, is one of the main causes of formation of present civilization, and also is considered as a criterion for assessment of degree of civilization in different countries of .world

Privileges of man's social life

Of course, social life is not restricted to man, because we know a group of insects as "social insects", like honey bee and termite, which enjoy a considerably respectable social life, and there is also a group of "social birds" among the birds, like swallows and storks, and there is a class of "social animals" among the wild animals like most of monkeys.

Social life of such animals may be even more developed than men in some aspects. For example, in the beehive even does not exist an idle and hungry one, while it is not so in the most developed industrial countries of world. Method of distribution of work and income

among them is very interesting and strange, and is peerless in human environments. However,

their social life has two basic differences, totally separating them from man's social life:

a- Social life of animals, whatever superior and more developed it may be, is limited to special parts, and the appearances of their social life are only summarized in some limited subjects, including nest, collecting purveyance, training infant, and such like, while the appearances of social life in man are much more, and approximately infinite, and not restricted to one or more subjects. b- Social life of animals is completely uniform and without any change and alteration, and in other words, they are always repeating the same so that for example, the present beehives are completely similar to the petrified beehives of several millions years ago which are discovered currently, and this certifies that engineering and in general, form of their life is not changed during these long years! While even during one century or less, the form of social life of man is so changed in all stages that basically it is not comparable with the past. These

two great differences distinguish man's social life from other animals.

In summary, whatever perfection a man has achieved, either in mental, practical and moral aspects, or in material and industrial sections, or the other sections, he has indebted to the society, and without society, the civilization and humanity and such like will never be .meaningful

Source of formation of society

There are a lot of words among sociologists about why man has acceded social life, and accepted its relatively difficult rules and regulations, but typically we can mention following opinions:

- 1- Some believe that sense of solidarity is included in man's nature, and he seeks for the society according to an instinctive inspiration.
- 2- Some others say fearing dreadful natural factors and wild animals has been the cause of first tendency of man to social life.
- 3- Some others believe that the "instinct of employment", existing in man, has made him to social life.
- 4- Some others say present social life is the result of a series of customs and habits, which has gradually led to this form.
- 5- Some others recognize development of man's requirements and his disability in fulfilling them as the factor of man's social life.
- 6- Some believe that man's social life is the result of family life and gradual expansion of families.
- 7- And finally some say that discovering this concept that why man has intended to social life

since millions of years ago when man is created, is not possible. Because, lapse of centuries and ages has obscured this and similar issues and we do not have available significant documents for judging in this respect.

Although the recent view seems more realistic than the other opinions and judgement about the main cause of man's attention to the society in the past is not an easy task, but obviously first of all, present continuation of this social life is indebted to "desire in perfection" and "development of man's requirements" and "disability in fulfilling them".

It should be explained that in one hand man sees that his corporeal requirements including cloth, food, house, medicine, and his spiritual requirements, including sciences, knowledge, training, various tastes and initiatives, and feeling spiritual security and attracting others' affections are so extensive and numerous that it is not possible for one to fulfill all of them alone. Rather, supplying each of these requirements, according to the fastidious nature of human, should be performed by the individuals and groups being proficient and skillful in their task. And on the other hand, man's escape from monotony and uniformity of life and willing to a better and more perfect life,—the features of man's life, which are rarely found in the animals, make him to join social life, because this objective is not possible unless thanks to the accumulation of different thoughts, powers and talents. These two are the most important .factors making man to continue his social life

Social value

Although, all people are the same in all regulations in view of social rights, and the principle of equity before law is one of the most basic foundations of progressive legal rules, but observance of this principle does not account that value of individuals is actually equal in the society. Rather, it is mostly due to unavailability of any other way for preserving discipline and preventing misuses of the arrogant and influential classes and colonization of man by man. Otherwise, it is undeniable that social value of individuals is very different. For example, the existence value of a resourceful, gracious and competent scientist is never equal with an illiterate, improvident and vicious person. But if we want to consider privileges in view of social rights, it will result in the corruptions, the harms of which are much more than observance of difference in social values.

In general, social value of individuals depends upon the degree of utilization of the society from them, and the wisely valuable utterance of Prophet S.A. in this respect may refer to this reality,

(where he says: The best people are the most beneficial ones.)(1

Islam and social concerns

Undoubtedly, no religion has respected relation of individual and society, and has strengthened the social chains by its decrees and regulations like Islam. Of course, a divine and eternal religion, guaranteeing education of hidden talents of man, and his perfection and progress should certainly be so. For understanding the importance of society in view of Islam, and

special concern of Islam to this subject, studying following instructions is sufficient:

1- If you do not surprise, there is not even one individual instruction among the basic instructions of Islam! The best reason is enactment of Islamic jurisprudence, consisting of sorbs, transactions and policies. There is no need for explaining the sociality of the second and third parts making the major part of jurisprudence. In the first part too, which is based on

relation of creature with Creator, the spirit of society patently governs on it.

Daily obligations, which are the most important Islamic rules are so mingled with social concepts that separating them is difficult, and when they are performed individually it seems that they have lost their real sense. For instance, the introduction of prayer, which is "prayer call and prayer perform" is nothing else than a public invitation and declaration to the society, and performing this obligation in congregation, and in case of solitude, it does not have any sense save preserving a practice and establishing a sort of mental readiness for inclusion in this obligation.

Al- Hamd sura, which is the beginning of the prayer and includes the main invocation and And the salutation at the end of (تَعْبُدُ - نَسْتَعِينُ - اِهْدِنَا). supplication, is uttered in a plural form prayer is in a plural form, and in case of solitude, it nearly loses its main concept. All of these indicate that the foundation of this great obligation is based on society, and moreover, strange and unique emphases are made in respect to performing this obligation in congregation.

Among Islamic sorbs, pilgrimage is stronger than the others in view of disregard to the material world and its formalities, attachments and privileges, and notice to the realities is observed therein very strikingly, but it is strange that nevertheless in view of "social appearance" and its effects, it is stronger and more rooted than all other sorbs.

2- Importance of social relations in view of Islam is so high that it is considered as one of the signs of God and indications of monotheism, where it says:

And of His signs is that He created for you, of yourselves, spouses, that you might repose in them, and He has set between you love and mercy.(2)

3- Holy Quran reiterates that one of the miraculous deeds of Prophet S.A. was creation of more friendship among the hearts, where it says:

He has confirmed thee with His help, and with the believers, and brought their hearts together.(3) The above verse makes an interesting reference to this point that material things

could not create friendship alone, because they themselves, in contrary with belief and spirituality, are the causes of scattering, disturbance and struggle. It is remarkable that in this phrase of Quran, confirmation of the believers is immediately mentioned after divine confirmation, and this shows the high importance of the subject.

4- Quran calls scattering and hypocrisy as one of the divine chastisements: Say: He is able to send forth upon you Chastisement, from above you or from under your feet, or to confuse you in sects and to make you taste the violence of one another.(4)

And somewhere else Quran has placed it besides the burning fire, which swallows and incinerates every thing: You were upon the brink of a pit of Fire, and He delivered you from it.(5)

5- Quran calls the relation of believers "brotherhood" which is the nearest and more respectful family relations established based on equal and mutual respect.

6- In Islamic instructions, there are a few sins equal with creating enmity and scattering among people, as there are a few good deeds equal with bringing hearts of people together.

It is narrated from Imam Sadegh A.S. in Ehtejaj book: The most important charm (in view of effect of causing disunity) is gossip, which causes dispersion among the friends and attracts enmity. A lot of bloods are shed as a result of it, and the houses are ruined, and the secrets and mysteries of people will be disclosed. The informer is the worst one stepping on the earth.(6)

Moreover, it should be considered that in some of Islamic traditions, charm is compared with blasphemy.

7- Islam even does not permit Moslems, save in exceptional cases, to sulk each other so that their amity is weakened and the cordiality of their friendship is decreased.

In the numerous traditions being narrated from Islamic leaders in this respect, it is forbidden in a harsh tone in more than seven traditions, and if inevitable, its permitted limit is determined to be three days. Prophet S.A. says:

It is not permitted for a Moslem to sulk more than three days with his religious brother.(7) And in another tradition, he says:

Sulking is forbidden, and one who performs it of necessity, shall not be in sulks with his brother more than three days. One, who is in sulks more than this, is more worthy of the Fire!(8) In these traditions, Islamic leaders have introduced continuation of sulk as exclusion from Islam's reality, and taking the lead in placation as the cause of taking the lead in entry to paradise.

8- In Islam, kindness, friendship, equality, assistance and cooperation are the certain duties of each Moslem, and all are obliged to observe these principles.

We read in a tradition from Imam Sadegh A.S.:

It is obligatory for the Moslems to try for bringing their hearts together, and do not neglect cooperation mixed with kindness, observe equity among the needy, and express their affection to each other to become the proof of utterance of God "they are kind with each other".⁽⁹⁾ 9- Islam has not only mentioned the matters of friendship, kindness, social cooperation, and equity as a command and obligation, but also has offered comprehensive plans for bringing forth these commands.

Thus, in one hand Islam has forbidden the factors causing dispersion, hypocrisy and scattering, including slander, gossip, overriding, strictness in adjudication, suspicion, mis-nomination, too much humor, and on the other hand has eulogized the factors resulting in consolidation of kindness, friendship and mutual trust, such as visiting, shaking hands and embracing, good opinion, expressing friendship to each other, defending the reputation of each other in one's absence, reconciliation of difference and disunion, attempt in fulfilling supplications of each other and such like, and thereby Islam has founded a humanistic society in its full sense based on real affections, and has proceeded this issue as far as has called it one of the most essential means of life.

Prophet S.A. says:

The same tranquility, which the thirsty feel when finding water, the believers feel in solidarity with each other.⁽¹⁰⁾ Furthermore, it is inferred from this interpretation that the need of society's individuals to social life is based on a natural and normal need, without which it is not possible for a man to live. 10- It is noteworthy that Islam has never contented to any limit of social relations, and is continuously trying for making these relations more strong and nearer, and proceeds in this part as far as it says: there should be such a spiritual relation among the believers that even their bodies are influenced.

Prophet S.A. in a tradition says:

Pay attention that friendship with a believer is one of the greatest causes of belief, and two believers who make friends with each other for God, become like a body so that when one of them feels discomfort in one part of his body, the other too feels pain in the same part.⁽¹¹⁾ It is deduced from above tradition that sometimes friendship and relation of two believers becomes so strong and solid that their bodies are unified, and when one of them feels discomfort in one of the organs of his body, the similar organ will become painful in the body of the other without any special cause. That is to say the relation of spirits is so strong that the complications of each body are transferred to the other (as it is narrated about some of Prophet's S.A. companions).

This is not unlikely considering two introductions. First, the relation of spirit with body is so close that mental discomforts leave a deep effect in the body. Nowadays, psychiatrists believe that most of physical diseases do not have any special physical cause, such as organ disorders or microbes, and are merely the effect of mental distresses.

Second, it is currently proved that transmission and exchange between two minds is possible even from remote distances. In other words, two persons can create a mental relation with each other through a particular spiritual agreement and or exercise without any physical means, and transmit their thoughts to each other's brain. This is called telepathy. So, it is possible for distresses of a person to be transmitted to his friend through mental relation, and then that particular distress will influence on his body, and make the similar organ painful.

11- Joining to great assemblies: Islam instructs people to join greater assemblies. Imam Ali A.S. in a sermon for repressing the thoughts of divisive minority of "Kharijites" (Rebels) says:

Be with the great majority because Allah's hand (of protection) is on keeping unity. You should beware of division because the isolator from the group is (a prey) for Satan just as the isolator from the flock of sheep is (a prey) for the wolf. Certainly the two arbitrators were appointed to revive what Quran revives and to kill what Quran kills. Revival of Quran means uniting each other and acting accordingly, and killing it refers to scattering and isolation from it.(12)

Studying in the life of predecessors too indicates that smaller societies have been always more retarded in view of culture and appearances of human civilization, and developed cultures and civilizations have appeared in the great and extensive societies. Thus, in the above phrases, first it is invited to attend in the great societies, and then it refers that God's hand is over such societies, and in contrast, the single footers are the victim of Satan, and are excluded from divine support, and the similitude mentioned in the next phrase shows that overcoming the social problems and salvation from the paws of wolfs is only possible within the society, and thereby, the more massive and condense society results in the more powerful and victorious society against the events.

And finally, he says in the last phrases that reviving Quran means gathering and uniting around it, and killing it means scattering and proceeding in a path alone!

Moreover, we can use two following issues for showing Islam's attempt for the greater societies:

1- In view of Islam, significance of each congregation prayer depends on the number of its participants, and also the reward of mosques, including Bazaar mosque, city's great mosque and the mosques belonging to the Moslems, and finally The Sacred Mosque, which is the

greatest center of Islamic society, is in proportion with their social situation. 2- Islam has encouraged breeding and increasing population. Prophet S.A. says: Desire child because I will boast in the day of resurrection for plentitude of your population.⁽¹³⁾ It should be noted that plentitude of population may cause discomforts and problems in some societies in view of insufficient foodstuffs, and such like, but these transitory and exceptional problems can never devaluate human resources for a society. These problems may occasionally occur for those nations for example lacking abundant underground resources .or agricultural products and such like

Social seclusion

Reaction of dissociability and mockery in retardation of individual and society The sociologists believe that social seclusion, in any form and in any case, has very unfavorable effects in the spirit and body of individual and society. This is approved both in respect to those living in seclusion, and also the tribes and nations and in general the groups living separately for social, political and or geographical reasons.

One of the sociologists, Rousseau, in his book "Principles of sociology" has studied the effects of social seclusion on a large number of prisoners being imprisoned in individual cells. He says: Ten percent of them have died or committed suicide or become insane after one year, and the others too have suffered from a sort of mental disease (depression). Then he adds: among the individual prisoners, the challenge of social spirit of a person against death is really pathetic, because sometimes only offering one flower or one candy to a prisoner may quench his thirst for social contact and save him from death. He stipulates about the monks and cenobites that seclusion has ill effects in their spirit, and causes depression, despair, delusion and most often a sort of mental disorder.⁽¹⁴⁾

The effects of social seclusion in desert travelers and nomadic tribes, who live in a sort of permanent seclusion, are particularly visible, because their retardation is manifest in all mental and social aspects and in proportion with the manner of their tribal seclusion. In addition, the countries dissociating the others for special political regimes will be involved in retardation in different aspects, if they do not communicate through other means like publications, and such like.

Considering previous discussions and the point that we are indebted all developments to the accumulation of thoughts, experiences and innovations of nations and individuals, the main cause of this issue is completely clear. So, we shall accept that social seclusion is the greatest enemy for perfection of societies and progresses and men's development in all aspects and it .is also the source of all types of deviations

Islam and Monasticism

Now, we shall see what is the view of Islam in this respect? Islam condemns social seclusion and all of its appearances, being commented as monasticism. The well-known tradition, "there is narrated in most of tradition books. «لا رَهْبَانِيَّةَ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ» "is not any monasticism in Islam Monasticism is commonly applied to those who dissociate and seclude people for worship and .fear of God

Historical origin

This action has been popular among the Indians from old times, and then it became common among Christians. Some believe that its prevalence among Christians or the Jews originated from the repeated defeats, which they suffered from one of the cruel and dictator kings of that time, and then they decided to become scattered and engage in worship in deserts until the (promised prophet appears, and delivers them from humbleness and scattering.(15

Mental origin

Basically, the mental reaction of various individuals and nations to defeats and failures is different. Some tend to seclusion and subjectivism, and disturb the course of their social thoughts in general, but some others, the number of which is less than the first group, become more rigorous and harsh, and return from superficial challenge to the rooted and underlying challenges. Monasticism is actually the same reaction of defeated individuals and nations of the first group. Now that we know the historical and mental origin of monasticism, and it is made clear that monasticism is against man's healthy nature, the following tradition can explain the attitude of Islam towards it:

Osman Ebne Mazoun inclined to monasticism as a result of a mental defeat (losing his beloved child) and resorted to worship to relieve his grief. When the Prophet S.A. was informed, he forbade him and said: The Great God has not assigned monasticism for us. Then he added to it a fundamental phrase:

Surely, the monasticism of my nation is struggle in the way of God.(16) In other words, if monasticism means neglecting the pleasures and comforts of life, it should be applied for serving preservation of Islamic principles and magnificence of the society, like warfare. And it is narrated from Imam Mousabne Ja'far that someone asked him:

Is it permitted for a Moslem to select journey and vagabondage, or monasticism, and not going out of house? He said: no.(17) Wandering in this tradition may refer to a sort of monasticism in the form of tourism without luggage and provision with the purpose of separation from cities and societies and or escaping house and family. Anyhow, it is deduced from above tradition

that monasticism and social seclusion, either in the form of sitting at home, closing the door and leaving the world, or in the form of wandering without any means and escaping home, life and society, is condemned in Islam because it is in contradiction with the spirit of Islamic instructions.

Moreover, Holy Quran has called monasticism, which is common among Christians, a condemned innovation: And monasticism they invented - We did not prescribe it for them, only seeking the good pleasure of God; but they observed it not as it should be observed.(18)

The total of these evidences explains the attitude of Islam towards monasticism. And one point remains here unsolved, that is: Has monasticism existed in the other religions?

According to the Islamic documents there has been a sort of monasticism in Christianity, but very different with the present monasticism and program of monks. Because the appearance of above phrase indicates that God has prescribed a sort of monasticism for them, with the purpose of seeking God's pleasure, but they did not observe its limits, and invented another one instead of it that Quran has called it an innovation. Now, we shall see what this legitimate monasticism meant. Certainly, in the original Christianity, as per historical and religious documents (even the gospels) there have not been giving up marriage absolutely, social seclusion and separation from society, and habit in the convents and cloisters, which are among the today's monasticism ceremonies.

As per definite documents, a number of apostles and Disciples of Christ married and associated with people. Therefore, the legitimate monasticism may signify the same lexical meaning and fear of God mingled with a sort of asceticism, and being heedless to worldly splendor, and simplicity while living within the society, as Christ A.S. and his disciples were.

But the phrase "but they observed it not as it should be observed", has two senses. First, they did not observe the limits of legitimate monasticism, and violated its regulations, and innovated therein, and altered it into monasticism and leaving normal life in the world and giving up marriage absolutely.

Second, they did not observe the same false and innovative monasticism, and as it will be later referred, some of them committed unlawful deeds in the covenants instead of righteousness, chastity and being heedless of the world, and proceeded in the way of worldliness, and provided the facilities for revelry, pleasure, and carouse in some of those centers, being .established with the name of monasticism

Monasticism among Christians

The existing histories of Christianity indicate that monasticism, in present form, did not exist in the first centuries of Christianity, and its appearance dates back to third Christian century,

when the Roman Emperor, called Dissious, conflicted vigorously with the Christians, and after being defeated by this Emperor, they escaped and resorted to the mountains and deserts.(19) It is noteworthy that the same is narrated in the traditions of Prophet S.A., when he said to Ibne

Masoud: Do you know whereof monasticism originates?

He said: God and His Prophet are more informed! He said: Some of the unjust rulers appeared after Christ A.S., and the believers fought them three times, and when they were defeated, escaped to the deserts and mountains and waited for appearance of the Promised Prophet of Christ (Mohammad S.A.), and engaged in worship therein.(20) Will Durant, the famous Christian historian writes a detailed discussion in respect to monks in the volume 31 of his history. He believes that joining of nuns to the monks was started from fourth century A.C., and monasticism developed increasingly so that it was in its utmost degree of progress in the tenth Christian century.

Then he narrates a detailed explanation about the situation of convents, and the custom of giving up marriage and attempt of monks for inhabiting the arid lands and agriculture, hand crafts, embroidery and other amusements of nuns. One of the most basic requisites of monasticism was giving up marriage absolutely. Farid Vajdi narrates in the encyclopedia that some of the monks assumed attention to the female so satanic that they even did not accept to take a female animal into the house, for the fear of their spirituality to be damaged by its satanic spirit! However, the history remembers a lot of calamities and tragedies so that Pope Inossan III described one of the convents as "lupanar"!(21) And some of them were a center for gathering of epicures and secularists and sensual people and the best wines were prepared !there

References:

- 1- Nahjol Fessahe, page 315
- 2- The Romans sura (30), verse 21
- 3- The Spoils sura (8), verses 62 & 63
- 4- Cattle sura (6), verse 65
- 5- The House of Imran sura (3), verse 103
- 6- Tabarsi, Ehtejaj, 340/2
- 7- Majlessi, Beharol Anvar, 189/75
- 8- Horre Ameli, Vassaelo Shiite, 586/8, narration 8
- 9- Horre Ameli, Vassaelo Shiite, 552/8, narration 2
- 10- Majlessi, Beharol Anvar, 280/74
- 11- The same document

12- Nahjol Balaghe, sermon 127

13- Horre Ameli, Vassaelo Shiite, 3/14, narration 2

14- Sociology, Samuel King, page 428

15- Refer to the History of "Will Durant"

16- Majlessi, Beharol Anvar, 170/8, narration 112

17- Majlessi, Beharol Anvar, 119/70, narration 10

18- The Iron sura (57), verse 27

19- Refer to the encyclopedia of twentieth century, article monk

20- Refer to Majmaol Bayan commentary, under verse 27 of The Iron sura, and Beharol Anvar, volume 70, subject "forbiddance of monasticism"

21- Will Durant, History of Civilization, 443/13