Return to Islam

Mansoor Hashemi Khorasani

Translation of the Persian explanation of
Shaykh Saleh Sabziwari

Translation of the Persian explanation of Shaykh Saleh Sabziwari

Lesson four

Being cognition of standard as trivial; Intellect

Pages 23 to 25

(I seek refuge to God from the expelled Shaytan

In the name of God, the most merciful and the most beneficent

Praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and peace be upon Mohammad and his purified family

3. (The third characteristic of cognition standard after necessity and unity is) **being trivial** (meaning obvious. Our master, Mansoor says in explanation of this characteristic:) **Cognition standard means anything which is recognized by itself** (meaning without the help of anything else) **and causes other things to be recognized; which means that for the purpose of its cognition, nothing else is required and other things are recognized through that means** (this is the meaning of being trivial)**; such as light which is seen by itself and causes other things to be seen. This means that cognition standard, has no need to cognition itself; since if it needs to be recognized itself, its cognition also requires a standard and this means an unending chain which is impossible** (The term "unending chain" means that one thing requires something else to be created, and the other thing also requires something else to be created as the same way, and the other thing would be likewise and this chain will continue just like this without ending with something that does not require something else to be created. It is clear that in such a situation, it is not possible for any of these things to be created; like a few people who want to exit a room, but they are having compliment, and none of them would exit before the others. Clearly, with this condition, none of them will exit the room, unless one of them stops complimenting and exits the room. It is the same thing with the cognition standard. Our master, Mansoor says: If the cognition standard requires cognition itself, then cognition of that cognition also requires a cognition standard itself; because the assumption is that cognition is not possible without a standard and with this explanation, no cognition would be obtained. Hence, he says:) **The human being's cognitions must inevitably lead to a trivial cognition which is the origin of all cognitions and is not origi-**

nated from any other cognition itself; since anything which needs to be recognized itself, may not be a standard of cognition; regarding the fact that it needs a cognition standard itself. As described before, people who make such a thing as their cognition standard (such as those who make religious narrations as their cognition standard)**, should not be confident of their cognition** (let alone having prejudice to it)**; as their cognition is weak and baseless** (given that it is not based on a trivial standard)**; such as someone that has made his building foundation on pebbles and may sink in it anytime** (such a person should not be safe on his life for a moment)**; or like someone, about whom God has said:** ﴿أَمْ مَنْ أَسَّسَ بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَىٰ شَفَا جُرُفٍ هَارٍ فَانْهَارَ بِهِ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ﴾**;**[1] **"Or someone who has made his building foundation at the weak edge of a cliff that sinks suddenly in the fire of the Hell"!** (God has blamed such a person severely, and it turns out that He does not accept such approaches and rejects them. Now the question is, what eventually is this cognition standard, which is necessary and also unite and also trivial? What is this precious jewel that all human's cognitions will lead to it, and if they do not lead to it, then they are not cognitions at all and would not have credibility? Our master, Mansoor responds with determination, clarity and courage: intellect)

Intellect (is)**; The cognition standard**

(For human, and then, he says in explaining this very important and basic point:) **The human being is a distinct animal** (the meaning of animal is every living thing that has voluntary tangible motion, meaning it can move with its own will in a tangible and visible way and the meaning of distinct animal, is a creature with this characteristic which differs from other beings of this kind. But the question is, what is the difference and distinction between this animal and other animals? Our master, Mansoor answers:) **and his mark of distinction is the power hidden in his soul** (meaning his essence and his existence) **which makes him able to distinguish between his benefit and loss, more than any other found animal** (because it is not clear if all the existing animals have been found)**, so that through achieving his benefit, he may increase**

1 . At-Tawbah/ 109

his survival, and prevent his decline through avoiding his loss (so it becomes clear that the benefit of every animal is something which will increase his survival and the loss of every animal is something which will lead to his decline. Now what is this hidden power which cause cognition of benefit and loss? He says:)**. This hidden power is called "Intellect"** (so it turns out that the human differentiation with other animals is his intellect. Then, to ascertain this fact more, he does an induction and examines all human powers and holdings to see if is there any another distinction for him than other animals? He says:)**. There is no doubt that human being's body is not sufficient for his superiority over other creatures; since compared to many others'** (like lion and tiger and elephant)**, human being's body is weaker and more vulnerable** (thus, once he sees a trepidation he will start escaping) **and has no special and considerable advantage** (he says: "special advantage" because, for example, not having a tail and the ability of walking on two legs, are not his special features, and some animals do not have tail either and they walk on two legs and he says: "considerable advantage" because, for example, an advantage like walking straight, if it is an advantage for human, it is not considerable)**. His soul is also in common with the soul of other animals** (because they also have life and death, and this reflects the existence of soul in them)**, such as an unknown power** (since the essence of soul is not exactly known, and the Quran has said about it: ﴿وَمَا أُوتِيتُم مِّنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا﴾. However, it is as clear as that we know it is a power) **which causes his physical movement and growth and may not be sufficient for his superiority over other animals that have physical movement and growth like him.** (It turns out that) **The only thing which exists in human being which is not found in other creatures** (meaning to the amount that can be found in human being)**, is the intellect which has the ability to comprehend the general concepts** (like good and evil) **and looks for their conformity to detailed instances** (such as goodness of this particular thing or evilness of that particular thing) **and with an effort** (meaning mental effort) **which is called "thinking", finds its way from the things he recognizes, toward the things which he does not recognize** (in such a way that he gathers recognized things together and reveals the unknown things)**. This power may possibly exist in other**

animals (given that the animals also comprehend the general concepts and its examples to some extent, and they have intellect of their own)**, but definitely it is stronger in human beings and for this very reason, has made him dominant over other animals** (this is the best reason for human being wiser than other animals. He says:)**. If there was another animal which understands more than human being** (meaning it could think and had a more creative mind and had more knowledge)**, without a doubt it would be dominant over him and would make him serve it** (because this power would dominate others)**, while this has not happened and human being's domination over other animals is evident** (meaning it is visible and it can be seen clearly)**. This supremacy is merely the result of human being's intellect** (meaning it is the result and outcome of his intellect) **and no other privilege can be observed for him** (since we examined and we saw that his body and soul are equal to the body and soul of other animals)**. Therefore, a human being who lacks intellect** (meaning he is insane) **or does not utilize it enough** (meaning he is not insane, but acts like insane people, and his thinking and speaking are not based on intellect)**, has no superiority over other animals, rather he is inferior to them; as God has said:** ﴿أُولَٰئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْغَافِلُونَ﴾;[1] **"Those who are like the beasts, they are rather more depraved; they are indeed ignorant"!**

Considering this fact (which means the only advantage that exists to human being)**, the only thing that can be the cognition standard for human being, is "Intellect"; since the intellect, is the mere means for mankind's cognition and there is no perceptive power except intellect in his soul. In other words, there is no substitute for intellect which can be equivalent** (meaning same-level) **to it and can bring about needlessness of it** (meaning human being has nothing else besides intellect in his soul to know things so that if he abandons intellect, he would still be able to gain knowledge about things) **and this is a tangible and conscientious matter** (meaning human being can feel and find it in himself)**. Furthermore** (meaning then and in addition to that)**, human being cognition** (meaning from different things) **is performed practi-**

1 . Al-A'raf/ 179.

cally through the intellect (meaning in practice, regardless of what his opinion is about it) **and his consent or reluctance has no effect on this reality** (meaning whether he accepts intellect and validates it or do not accept it and hates it like Salafists, in any case, he uses intellect for cognition he does not have any other choice than this)**; as this fact** (meaning using intellect for cognition)**, is the natural quality of the human being** (meaning the natural quality that has been put in human nature and is not detachable from him) **and is creation of Wise[1] God** (he says "Wise" so it would become clear that God has created such a thing in human being based on Wisdom[2], not based on vanity or oppression) **and with above descriptions, it is not possible for human beings to change it** (since it was said that this is his natural quality and his natural quality cannot be changed by himself)**. In this way, the intellect is the most principal and primary basis for cognition** (meaning it is the basis of all cognition and their first foundation) **and any cognition which does not lead directly or indirectly to intellect, is meaningless** (a cognition that leads directly to intellect, is a cognition that intellect obtains without getting help from an external instrument, just like this cognition that two multiplied by two is equal to four, or that a whole is bigger than its own component, or that justice is good and oppression is evil; Given the fact that the intellect understands these facts independently and does not need anything else to understand them. But a cognition that indirectly leads to intellect, is a cognition that intellect gains with the help of an external instrument such as Shari'a, just like this cognition that fasting is good or backbiting is bad; given that intellect does not understand goodness and evilness of such things independently, but understands credibility of Shari'a and for that, it judges goodness or evilness of things based on their promotion and demotion. Therefore, all human cognitions rely on the intellect either directly or indirectly and lead back to intellect with mediator and cognitions that are not like this are only being titled as cognition and do not have the meaning of cognition; therefore, he says: "meaningless" and continues:)**. Other bases, if ever any exists** (since the discussion has begun from zero and it has not been cleared yet that is there any other basis

1 . Hakim
2 . Hikmah

although included in intellect. However, other basis with the assumption of existence)**, return to intellect themselves; since they are not recognized without intellect** (since it became clear that intellect is the only standard and mean of cognition in human) **and are useless except for the wise people** (meaning they are not usable for insane and wisdom-less people)**; as the religion** (according to The fact that many Muslims substitute Shari'a for intellect)**, even though it is very useful, is recognized itself through intellect** (meaning an unbeliever recognizes the Shari'a with his intellect and becomes Muslim) **and only addresses the wise people** (given that only wise people can recognize it and act on it) **and has said as an example:** ﴿فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾;[1] **"Be afraid of God, you the wise people, so that you'll be blessed"** ("Albab[2]" is the plural for "Lub[3]" and "Lub" means "intellect" and a wise and intellectual person is called "Labib[4]"; hence in this verse God is asking and expecting wise people to be afraid of him and have piety) **and has said:** ﴿إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ﴾;[5] **"Indeed in the creation of the heavens and the earth and changes in the day and night, there are signs for the wise people"** (meaning the owners of intellect who use their intellect, can recognize the nature that is created by God) **and has said:** ﴿إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ﴾;[6] **"There are only the wise people who take advice"!** (Meaning the owners of the intellect who use their intellect can recognize Shari'a and act on it. It turns out that both cognition of nature and cognition of Shari'a are possible by intellect. What was said above was introduction of cognition standard, but it has already been said that cognition standard has three characteristics: firstly, it is essential, secondly, that it is unit and not numerous and thirdly, that it is trivial and does not require cognition itself. Now the question is whether the intellect has these three characteristics to be a standard of cognition? It became clear from this last discussion that it does have the first characteristic; since it

1 . Al-Ma'idah/ 100

2 . الباب

3 . لُب

4 . لبيب

5 . Aal-i Imran/ 190

6 . Ar-Ra'd/ 19

became clear that human being, whether he wants to or not, has to use his intellect and using the intellect, is his natural quality and this is the highest level of necessity. But the second and third characteristics will be studied in the next lesson Insha'allah.

wa salamualaikum wa rahmatullah)