

Merits of the Soul: Human Being's God-seeking Nature – Fitrat

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...The nature made by Allah in which He has made men; there is no altering of Allah's creation; that is the right religion, but most people do not know (Qur'an, 30:30)

Zurarah said: "I asked Abu `Abd Allah (Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq) (a) regarding the words of God, '**God's creation (fitrah) upon which He originated mankind**' (30:30). The Imam (a) answered: 'He originated mankind upon *tawhid*."

[Al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, v. II, p. 12, hadith # 2]

Fitrat Allah, is the state in which God fashioned human beings, and its essential condition of their existence. It is present in the very essence of human creation and into the very substance of their nature. God's *fitrat* is one of His favours with which He has endowed the human species out of all creatures.

What Are Fitrat And Fitrat Allah?

- The word *al-fitrah* means creation. The word may have been derived from *fatr* in the sense of splitting and tearing as the creation tears the curtains of non-being and the veils of the hidden and brings something into being or existence.
- *Fitrat Allah* is the instinct with which God fashioned mankind and is essential condition of their existence. It is present in the very essence of their creation and is inextricably kneaded into very substance of human being's nature. God's *fitrah* is one of His favours upon human species out of all creatures. It includes all true teachings which He has ingrained in nature of human beings. Other creatures either totally lack these attributes, or have been endowed with a weaker degree.

- The differences of geographical region, climate, other such conditions that affect everything, even rational facts that create disparity and diversity of all sorts, have no effect whatsoever on essentials of human nature. Disparity of intelligence, strength and weakness of understanding do not affect it. Hence the *ayah* states, (فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا), **-He originated mankind in accordance with it (Qur'an, 30:30)** that is, no specific group or race is meant, all have same nature or God's *fitrah*.

God-given Human Instinct

- According to perfect 'arif, Shaykh Shahabadi (r), among God-given instincts is the belief in existence of the Sacred and Sublime Source of everything, the belief in Its Unity, i.e., *tawhid*, the innate belief that A Sacred Being encompasses all perfection, the instinctive belief in the Day of Resurrection, and the innate faith in *nubuwwah* (prophethood) and the instinctive belief in existence of angels, of holy spirits, in revelation of scriptures and path of Divine guidance.
- **Human Being's Love for Perfection:** Human nature is love and yearning for perfection. It is something which pervades entire chain of humanity's generations and not a single individual in entire human species can be found without it. No custom, religious or legal institution can transform or remove this innate tendency.
- Human beings vary in their identification and understanding of perfection in what they regard as perfect and whom they see as beloved. Irrespective of field, the moment he finds perfection in it, his attention focuses upon it. Like men of science and arts, when they observe perfection, they love what appears as beloved.
- This light of *fitrat* guides hearts of all members of human species, from people inhabiting far-flung regions of world to the dwellers of civilized countries, from believers in materialism to the followers of various religious creeds, all yearn by nature and from the core of their hearts to attain immaculate perfection.
- **So Where is the Source of Absolute Perfection in This Universe?** Thus, all human

beings are inherently lovers of Absolute Perfection. They are attracted to Absolute Beauty; they are in search of Absolute Knowledge and Absolute Power.

- But, does anyone know of any being in entire Universe or in spheres of imagination or rational notions, which possesses attributes of absolute perfection and absolute beauty, except the Sacred Essence of Supreme Majestic Source of the cosmos? Does anybody know of any absolute, eternal and immaculate beauty except that of Absolute Beloved, the Almighty God who created all the beautiful and attractive but transient things we perceived as perfect and took as our beloved?
- This is a glaring example of *fitrat Allah*, that He created all human beings with innate love of perfection as is said in Qur'an:

'(It is) God's nature upon which He originated mankind.' and 'There is no change in Allah's creation' (30:30).

Thus, human beings should turn to Him and love Him:

***'I have turned my face towards Him who created the heavens and the earth.'* (6:79)**

As

***'God is the Light of the heavens and the earth.'* (24:35).**

- **Human Beings Innately Dislike Imperfection:** Another characteristic of *fitrah* (nature) upon which God has fashioned whole mankind is dislike for imperfection. Human beings by nature loath everything they perceive as defective and faulty. Thus imperfection and defectiveness are repulsive to human nature.
- This dislike is because *fitrah* is inclined towards absolute perfection. Thus, the pole of attraction of human nature becomes one and unique, as everything capable of plurality and made up of parts is imperfect and defective. Also, everything other than God has finitude, which is a defect and is thus repelled by human nature.

- The presence of these two natures – that is, the nature of attraction towards perfection and the nature of repulsion towards defectiveness—not only posits the principle of *tawhid*, it also pits that the Being of God encompasses every perfection and that It is free from every defect. This is *fīrat Allah*.
- **Human Being's Innate Belief in Resurrection:** Yet another God–given innate tendency in nature of entire human species is love of absolute comfort, free of any pain or distress. This is found in every human being, from learned to ignorant, from noble to mean, and from savage to civilized.
- If all human beings are asked about the aim of all their various efforts, pursuits, diverse desires and purpose of their hardships and labors, all will unanimously answer in one voice with the explicit tongue of nature that whatever they desire is for the sake of their ultimate comfort, untainted with labor, toil and distress.
- With this goal of life, everyone imagines that lost comfort lies in something and pursues every such thing which he believes to be associated with that desired goal. While, such an absolute comfort is not found anywhere in this world of transient existence, nor is such an undisturbed peace and rest possible here.
- All bounties, blessings and pleasures of this world are mixed with tiresome efforts, exhausting toil and pains. Throughout entire history of human kind, not a single individual is to be seen who enjoyed comforts and joys without pains and sufferings. Accordingly, the ultimate human goal is not to be found in this world.
- Hence, there should exist such a world in realm of existence where comforts will not be associated with distress, grief and pain, where ease and rest will be absolute, permanent and pure. That world is the House of Divine bounty, The promised Paradise, the manifestation of God's magnanimity– where on the Day of Resurrection, one will get reward of his worldly efforts carried out with pain.

Advice To Discover And Return To Divine Instinct

- Human life is a conscious or unconscious unending journey of seeking perfection. A child is inherently curious to know more and develops skills by copying others. A student in any field of knowledge aspires best and pursues it. Whole life of individuals is spent with long hours of hard work to achieve ultimate aim of life. Similarly, those who are rich, wish to become richer, powerful to become more powerful, winners to win more, skilful to become more skilful and so on. However, absolute perfection is never achieved in their lifetime.
- In addition, every human being inherently loves justice, wishes perfect reward for his toils and efforts, wishes a life free of sufferings and pain and complete freedom to have a permanent life where everything around him should be perfect.
- Human being now wishes to go beyond solar system, reach out to galaxies, design sophisticated computers and instruments, seek newer pleasures and comforts and use quickly curing medicines. Similarly, human beings inherently abhor imperfect, faulty and deficient things. Thus, whenever something new is invented, older one becomes outdated, loses attraction and utility because a better one is available. Thus, love for perfection, comfort and freedom is admixed with dislike for deficient. This is in fact image of his inherent nature.
- This universe is itself full of beautiful and attractive things, perfectly designed, like colourful flowers giving out scents, beautiful creatures, sceneries, sky full of stars and millions of galaxies unimaginably far away. Hidden microscopic world of organisms, cells, atoms and molecules miraculously making complete living systems from single cell to largest animal.
- However, pleasures and comforts of human life are transient and associated with hard effort, pain and suffering. Ageing, diseases and disasters cannot be prevented. Beauties and attractions are lost with time. Despite most sophisticated technology, it is not possible to have absolutely perfect, free and permanently comfortable life; while, inherent human nature wishes opposite.

- An intelligent mind is attracted to love the Creator and Designer of this immensely beautiful, highly complex and vast universe Who has created transient pleasures and admixed them with sufferings, but has also blessed human beings with perfect nature like Himself – Absolute Perfect. Such a Creator can also design a perfect world with permanent comfort a human being wishes is available without any suffering, where justice and freedom will prevail. That world is life of Hereafter, where justice will be served and sincere and good actions will be rewarded with Heaven – the perfect and permanent place with complete freedom.

Conclusion

Imam al-Baqir (a) said: "...**God has created human beings on his *fitrah* so that they recognize who is their Lord and if it was not the case, they wouldn't be able to reply to questions about who is their lord and who provides them with sustenance.**" [*Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 3, p. 279, hadith # 13]

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