

Spirits and its identity

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The spirit is from the world of Divine Commands

Although sciences are not yet ready to accept it, there are, besides the subdivisions in a world. like the worlds of plants, animals and human beings (vegetable kingdom, animal kingdom and human kingdom) and the world of jinn, many worlds in the universe one within the other or above or enveloping the other.

Of these worlds, the visible, material world is that in, which we live, addressing itself to our senses. From tiniest particles to galaxies, this world is the realm where God Almighty gives life, fashions, renews, changes and makes to die. Sciences concern themselves with the phenomena of this world.

Like the laws seemingly operative in the universe, the spirit is a law issuing from the world of Divine Laws or Commands. Nevertheless, unlike the others, the human spirit is a living, conscious law.

Above this visible, material world is the immaterial world of Divine Laws or Commands. In order to have some knowledge of this world, we can consider, for example, how a book or a tree or a human being comes into existence. The main part of a book's existence is its meaning. Without meaning, it is impossible for a book to come into existence, no matter how excellent a printing machine or how many sheets we have. As a second example what stimulates a seed to germinate under earth and grow into a tree is the essence of life and the law of germination and growth with which it is endowed. We can observe even with the naked eye the germination of the seed and the development of a tree from it. But for the essence of life and the laws of germination and growth which, although invisible or unobservable, govern the birth and growth of a new living thing, there would have been no plants in the world.

Similarly, through menstruation, the womb of a female is prepared every month for insemination. This is a process dictated by a (biological) law. Out of millions of male sperms heading for the womb, one reaches the ovum to fertilize it. After this, menstruation stops until birth. This is another process governed by another (biological) law. The development of the embryo into a new individual through many stages is a third process governed by other (biological or embryological) laws. This process is mentioned in the Holy Book quite explicitly:

"We created man from a quintessence of clay. We then placed him as a drop in a place of rest firmly fixed. Then We made the drop into a leech-like structure suspended on the wall of the womb, and then of that leech-like structure We made a chewed-like substance. Then We made out of that chewed-like substance bones (skeletal system). Then We clothed the bones with flesh (muscles). Then We developed out of it another creation. So blessed be God the best to create (23:12-15)."

This process takes place, according to the Holy Book's statement, within three veils of darkness:

"He created you in the wombs of your mothers, in stages, one after another, in three veils of darkness (39:6)."

These three veils of darkness are the belly, the womb and the caul or membrane, or the constituents of the fetal membranes or the three regions of the decidua: decidua basalis, decidua capsularis, and the decidua parietalis. Or rather, the verse includes all of these meanings.

We conclude the existence of all those laws from almost never-changing repetition of all those processes. Likewise, by observing the (natural) phenomena around us, we also conclude the existence of many other laws like gravitation and repulsion and the freezing or vaporization of water.

Thus, like the laws we have thus mentioned and many others like them, the spirit is a law issuing from the world of Divine Laws or Commands. Nevertheless, unlike the others, the human spirit is a living, conscious law. The verse, Say: "The spirit is of my Lord. s Command (17:85)." states that the spirit is from the world of Divine Commands, not from the visible, material world.

If the spirit were to be stripped of life and consciousness, it would become a law; if on the other hand, the laws were to be given life and consciousness, they would become each a spirit.

The spirit cannot be defined, nor can it be perceived through scientific information

While matter or anything in the material world is composed of atoms and atoms are made up of more minute particles, the spirit is a simple entity. Since it is simple, it does not disintegrate. We cannot see it as we see a material thing; we know it through its manifestations in the material world. Although we accept its existence and observe its manifestations, we cannot know its nature. Our ignorance of something's nature must not mean that it does not exist.

It is spirit which sees, hears, thinks, etc.

We see with our eyes. In other words, our eyes are simply instruments with which to see. The main center of sight is in the brain. However, it is not the brain itself which sees. You do not say "My brain sees", but you say "I see". It is we who see or hear or sense. But who is it that we call "I"? Is it something that is composed of a brain, a heart and other organs and limbs? Why can we not move when we die although all our organs and limbs are there? How does a factory work? Does it work by itself or does some other thing like what we call electrical energy move it to work? Any defect or something wrong with the factory which causes a disconnection between the factory and the electrical energy is enough to reduce a whole, once highly productive, invaluable factory into a heap of junk. Should this relation between the factory and the electrical energy be, in one way, comparable to that between the spirit and the body?

When the connection of the body with the spirit is cut. the event which we call death. the body is reduced to something which we do not like to keep even a few hours more because it will rot and decompose.

The spirit is a conscious, powerful thing, which is apt to learn and which thinks, senses and reasons, and continually develops, usually in parallel with the physical development of the body, mentally and spiritually, through learning,

reflection, belief and worship.

Of course, the spirit is not an electrical power. It is a conscious, powerful thing, which is apt to learn and which thinks, senses and reasons, and continually develops, usually in parallel with the physical development of the body, mentally and spiritually, through learning, reflection, belief and worship. It is also the spirit which determines the character or nature or identity of an individual which makes one different or distinguishable from others. Although on human beings, from the first to the last, are substantially made up of the same elements, they are all different from one another in character, nature and features, down to fingerprints. Thus, what determines this difference is the spirit.

What we call 'natural laws' are the names which we give to the ways of acting or the attributes of the primordial nature God has determined for creatures.

God has given a particular "nature" to each creature:

All that is in the heavens and earth submits to Him, willingly or unwillingly, and they will be returned to Him (3:83). Glorify the Name of your Lord, the Most High, Who has created (all things) and well proportioned (them); Who has assigned for each a particular form and a particular way to follow and ordained their destinies, and guided (them) (87:1-3).

Whatever exists in the universe, including man's body, acts according to the . primordial nature. God Almighty has assigned for it. That is why we observe a strict determinism in the operation of the universe. What we call "natural laws" are the names which we give to the ways of acting or the attributes of the primordial nature God has determined for creatures.

The primordial nature of things does not 'deceive' . For example, God has set the earth to revolve around both itself and the sun, therefore it always revolves. A seed says in the tongue of its being or primordial nature: 'I will germinate under earth in proper conditions and grow into a plant' , and it does what it says. Water declares that it freezes at 0°C and vaporizes at 100°C, and does what it declares.

The spirit commands man's inner faculties

Similarly, man's conscience, so long as it remains sound, does not lie. If it is not deluded by man's carnal self or desires, it deeply feels the existence of God and finds peace in belief in and worship of Him. Thus, it is the spirit which directs or commands man's conscience as well as his other faculties. The spirit seeks the world from which it has come and yearns for its Creator. Unless it is stunted and spoiled with sins, it will find the Creator and in Him will it attain true happiness.

The spirit has deep relations to the past and future

Animals have no conception of time; in accordance with the primordial nature God has assigned to them, they live only the present time and they feel neither the pains of the past nor the anxieties of the future. Whereas man is deeply influenced by the pains of past events and misfortunes and is anxious about his future. This is because his spirit is a conscious, sentient entity.

The spirit is never satisfied with this mortal, fleeting world. Nor man's accomplishments or worldly things such as money, high positions and the satisfaction of all worldly desires never suffice for the happiness of the spirit. Rather, worldly gaining increase it only in dissatisfaction and unhappiness. It only becomes at rest with belief in God and worship and remembrance of Him.

Man feels a very strong desire for eternity. This desire cannot come from the physical dimension of his existence.

Because, physically, he is mortal and the feeling of eternity and the desire for it cannot issue from mortal existence.

Rather, this desire or feeling originates in the eternal dimension of man's existence and it is his spirit which consists this dimension. It is the spirit which causes man to sigh: 'I am mortal but I do not desire what is mortal. I am impotent but I do not desire what is impotent. What I desire is an eternal beloved (who will never desert me) and I yearn for an eternal world.'

The spirit establishes its connection with the material world through the body

The spirit is a simple entity which issues from the world of Divine Commands. In order to be manifested and function in the material, visible world, it needs material means. As the body is unable to get in touch with the world of symbols or immaterial forms, the spirit can not establish any contact with this world without the mediation of the heart, the brain and other organs and limbs of the body.

The spirit functions, as we have just said through all the nerves, cells and other elements of the body. Therefore, if something wrong happens to a system or organ of the body, the relation of the spirit with that system or organ is disconnected and the spirit can no longer command it. If the failure or . illness. causing the disconnection is big enough to cut the relation of the spirit with the whole of the body, the event which we call death happens.

Although some coarse, meaningless movements are observed in hands or fingers as the result of stimulating certain areas of the brain, those movements are like some confused, meaningless sounds produced by pressing the keys of a piano at random. Or rather, those movements are some automatic responses of the body to any stimulation, coming about as the result of the automatic working of the body. Therefore, in order that the body can produce meaningful movements, it needs the spirit, which is conscious and has free will.

Although psycho-analysisists like Freud have tried to make different explanations, dreams cannot be said to consist in jumbled activities of the subconscious self. Almost everyone has had several dreams which have brought news of the future and have come true. Also, many scientific or technological discoveries have taken place as the result of 'true' dreams. So, as will be discussed later, dreams point to the existence of a part of man which can see in a different way while man himself is sleeping. This part is the spirit.

Although the spirit sees with the eyes, smells with the nose, hears with the ears and so on, there is a considerable number of examples of people who have demonstrated an ability to see with their fingers or the tips of their noses and smell with their heels.

It is the spirit which determines the features of one's face

The spirit manifests itself mostly on the face. Truly one's face is a window opened on one's inner world. Through all its features, one's face discloses one's character.

Psychologists assert that almost all one's movements down to coughing reveal one's character. However, one's face is so clear a sign to discover one's character, abilities and personality that it caused the birth of an art called physiognomy, which is the art of judging one's character from the features of one's face. It is one's spirit which determines the features of one's face.

As is known, the cells of the body are continuously renewed. Everyday millions of cells die and are replaced by new ones. Biologists say that the whole of the cells forming the body are renewed every six months. Despite this continuous renewal the face remains unchanging with its main features. We recognize individuals through those unchanging features of faces. Likewise, one's fingerprints also remain unchanging. Neither the renewal of the cells of the fingers nor the injuries or bruises the fingers suffer can cause the fingerprints to change. It is again one's spirit, different from all other spirits, which secures the stability of one's distinguishing features.

It is the spirit which receives moral, spiritual and intellectual education and causes differences of character among people. The body undergoes an uninterrupted change during its whole lifetime. This change is toward physical growth and development until a certain period, becoming stronger and more perfect. However, this growth stops at a certain point and decay begins. Unlike these changes, first toward growth and development and then toward decay and death, a man can continuously grow in learning and he can also continuously develop or may decay spiritually and intellectually or while developing or decaying he may stop at any point and then change his direction. That means his moral, spiritual and intellectual education does not depend at all on his bodily changes. Also, the moral, spiritual and intellectual differences among human beings have nothing to do with their physical structure. Although every human being is composed of the same substantial, physical or material elements, what is it that causes the moral and intellectual differences among them? What part of man receives moral and intellectual education and what part of him is trained physically? Does physical training bear any relation to learning and moral and intellectual education? Can we say that the more a man is trained physically and the more developed bodily, the more he becomes developed in learning and morality? If we cannot say so and if physical training or development has nothing to do with one's scientific, moral and intellectual level, why should we not accept the existence of the spirit and how could we attribute learning and moral and intellectual education to some biochemical processes in the brain? Are those processes more swift in some than in others? Or so, are some more developed intellectually because those processes are more swift or the processes are more swift because some study and are developed intellectually more? Also, what relation do those processes have with one's spiritual and moral education and development? How can we explain the differences his regular worship makes on one's face? Why are the faces of the believers more radiant than those of unbelievers and sinful ones?

Also, we have mentioned that man undergoes a continuous physical change, first toward growth and then toward decay, and the cells of his body are renewed every six month. But, he does not change, in parallel to those changes, in character and morality and thinking. Again, how can we explain, other than by admitting the existence of the spirit as the center of thinking, feeling, making choices and decisions, and learning, the differences of opinion and preference among human beings and the differences in characters?

It is the spirit which feels and believes or disbelieves

Furthermore, man is a being who has innumerable, complex feelings. He loves or hates, rejoices or becomes grieved, feels happy or sad, hopes or becomes desperate, cherishes ambitions and imagines, and feels relieved or bored, and so on. Also, he likes or dislikes, appreciates or disregards, and he fears or becomes timid or he becomes encouraged and feels enthusiastic, and he repents, becomes excited and longs. If we look through a dictionary, we can come across hundreds of words used to express man's feelings. And there are great differences among human beings with respect to feelings also. Besides, he may reflect on events happening around him or on beauties in creation and develops in learning. He also makes comparisons and reasons, and then comes to believe in the Creator of all things. Then through worship and any following His Commandments, he develops morally and spiritually and becomes a perfect man. So how can we explain all these phenomena other than by admitting the conscious part of man, which is his spirit? Can we attribute them to chemical processes in the brain?

The real identity of a man consists in his spirit

If we regard man as a physical entity only, made up of blood, bones, flesh and tissues, and attribute all his movements to biochemical processes in the brain, we should not recognize any set of laws to obey. For as we have said earlier, a man's body is renewed every six months. Suppose a man is being tried in a court for a murder he committed a year before. The following exchange ensues between him and the judge:

-When did you commit that crime?

-A year ago.

The judge announces the verdict:

-Since the murder was committed a year ago and the cells of this man who is accused of committing it, including those of his fingers which pulled the trigger, were completely replaced with new ones, and therefore since it is impossible to punish the one who committed the murder, the jury has decided on his acquittal.

So, man is not solely a physical entity and his movements, feelings, thoughts, beliefs and decisions are not the result of biochemical processes in his brain. The main part of man's being is his spirit, which is alive and conscious, and which feels, thinks, believes, wills, decides, and which commands the body. The body is the instrument of the spirit, which the spirit uses to put its decisions into action.

The spirit is the basis of human life

As was pointed out earlier, God acts in the material, visible world behind the veil of causes. However, besides this one, there are many other worlds or realms like the world of ideas, the world of symbols or immaterial forms, the world of the

inner dimensions of things and the world of spirits, where God acts directly and which have nothing to do with matter and causes. The spirit is breathed into the embryo directly without the mediation of causes. It is a direct manifestation of the Divine Name, the All-Living, and therefore the basis of human life. Like . natural. laws, which issue from the same realm from which the spirit is sent, the spirit is invisible and known through its manifestations.

In this world, matter is refined in favor of life. A lifeless body, no matter how big it is, like a mountain, is lonely, passive and static. But, life enables a body the size of a bee, for example, to enter into transactions or business with almost the whole world and causes it to go as far as saying: . This world is my garden and flowers are my business partners.. The smaller a living body is, the more active, astonishing and powerful life is. You can compare a bee, a fly or even a micro-organism with an elephant. Also, the more refined matter is the more active and powerful a body. For example, when wood burns, it produces flames and carbon. When heated, water vaporizes. We come across electrical energy in the atomic or subatomic world. We cannot see electrical energy but we can come to know how powerful it is through its manifestations. That means existence does not consist in the visible, material world. Rather, this world is only the apparent, mutable and unstable dimension of existence. Behind it lies the pure invisible dimension, which uses matter to be seen and known. Thus, the spirit belongs to that dimension and is therefore pure and invisible. The arguments for the existence of the spirit also point to the existence of the Creator. They are as follows:

- a. Just as the body, which God creates from elements, needs the spirit to command and govern it, the universe, with everything in it, needs God to bring it into existence and to command and govern it.
- b. There is a single spirit for a single body to make it alive and govern it. So, there must be a single Lord, with no partners to create and govern the universe. Otherwise, disaster and confusion would be inevitable.
- c. We cannot say that the spirit is in any place or part of the body. It is not contained in a specific place in the body. It may even leave the body and, as is the case with dreams, it can continue its relation with the body by means of a cord special to it. Likewise, God Almighty is not contained by time or space; although He is always present everywhere, He is nowhere. However, the spirit is in the body and, as it is contained by time, it is also contained by space.
- d. The sun is one and the world is very distant from it. But the sun is present everywhere in the world through its heat and light and through reflection it can even be in every transparent thing in the world. Therefore, it may be said that the sun is nearer to things than things themselves. Similarly, the spirit has the same relation with the whole of the body as well as with all of the cells separately at the same time. This may be an analogy to understand God's relation with existence. He controls and directs all things at the same time like a single thing and although we are infinitely distant from Him, He is nearer to us than ourselves.
- e. The spirit is invisible and its nature is unknown to us. Likewise, however we think of or imagine God, He is different from it. His Essence cannot be known at all. Like the spirit, God Almighty is known through the manifestations of His Names, Attributes and Essence.

The spirit has a cover or envelope of itself

The body is not the cover of the spirit. Rather, the spirit has a cover or envelope of itself and when it leaves the body at death, it is not left naked, without a cover. This cover is like the . negative. of the material body and called by various names such as the envelope of light, ethereal figure of man, energetic form, second body of man, astral body, the double (of man) and phantom. The picture of this body can be taken through Kirlian photography. In the pictures taken through this kind of photography, taking its name after the photographer, even amputated limbs can be seen.