REVIEW OF THE FACTORS AND OBSTACLES FOR DIVINE GUIDANCE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE QURAN

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***Abstract:*** *Divine guidance plays a key role in human life and achieving the desired perfection. And certainly a person who is deprived of such guidance is a real loser; In order for man to attain true guidance and, consequently, to attain divine bliss, he must recognize the factors that lead man to salvation and try to remove the obstacles that prevent him from attaining true perfection. Since the Qur'an itself is a book of guidance, it has pointed out these factors and obstacles.*

*In this research, with the help of rational and narrative method and with the help of library tools and descriptive-analytical information processing, it has been tried to identify the guiding factors and the method of removing its obstacles by relying on divine verses; What has been obtained from this research is that some of the guidance factors are external and some are internal ones that cause happiness. In the field of guidance obstacles, also, there some external and some internal ones that must be confronted to determine the path to ultimate happiness and perfection.*

***Keywords:*** *Guidance, External factors, Internal factors, External obstacles, Internal obstacles*

**Introduction**

 The guidance and flourishing of nature has a fundamental and important role in human life and reaching him to ultimate perfection, so that if man is deprived of divine guidance, he is considered a real loser; Therefore, it is necessary to conduct extensive research in this field so that human beings can reach their destination and be close to God. For the importance of this issue, it is enough that the philosophy of the work of all the prophets and messengers is to guide man to the path of health, perfection and eternal abode.

In this research, using written sources and Islamic software, an attempt has been made to identify the factors and obstacles of guidance and misguidance and ways to remove obstacles of guidance with the aim of map the way to ultimate happiness and perfection.

**Conceptology**

 Since the explanation of concepts such as guidance and misguidance plays a key role in providing an explanation of the factors of guidance and misguidance; therefore, first, we will explain the meaning of these words and terms.

**1. the word of “guidance”**

 Guidance ( هدایت ) has been drived from the root

 "الهاء و الدال و الحرف المعتل ، أصلان اَحَدُهُما التَّقَدَّمُ لَلاِرَشَادَ وَالاخَرُ بَعْثَهَ لَطَفْ"

) Ibn Faris, 1369 Sh., in the entry of هدی ). The root has two meanings: first to be in front for leaership and another to send a gift out of kindness. In Sihah (Juhari, 1997 AH, vol. 6, p. 2533) and Qamus (Qarashi, 1371 AH, vol. 7, p. 145) in the meaning of a هدی (huda) it has been written: “هدی means to guide and to be guided”, but others have taken the meaning of guidance as the implication of guidance. (Tabarsi, 1363 Sh., vol. 1, p. 42) And in Raghib's words, it is a sign and guidance out of kinness. "(Raghib, n.d., p. 836) in the present study هدایت is considered to mean guidance out of kindness and benevolence.

**2. the word of “misguidance”**

 Since misguidance is in fact an obstacle to guidance, so in this section, this word is analyzed. Regarding the meaning of ضلالت, it has been stated: “This word has one-meaning root which implies deterioration and destroy of something due to improper use.” ( ibn Faris, 1369 Sh. In the entry ضل) And in Mufradat by Raghib:

 الضّالل العُدُول عَنِ الطّريق المستقیم و يُضادّهُ الهِدايَه و يُقالُ الضَّالُ لِکُلِّ عُدوُلٍ عن المنهجِ ، عمدا کان أو سهوا يسیرا کان أوْ کثیرا.«

“ضلالت means misguidance and deviation from the right path and it is the opposite of guidance, and any deviation and misguidance from the right path is called misguidance, whether it is intentional or inadvertent, less or more.” (Qarashi, 1371 Sh.p.193) also ظل, ظلال and ظلالت mean deviation from the truth:

 "إِنِّي أَرَاكَ وَقَوْمَكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ"

***“…I see you and your people are in clear error****.”( the holy Quran 6:74)* Meaning of deviation from the truth makes clearer when compared with guidance, as stated in the Qur'an:

 قُلْ رَبِّی أَعْلَمُ مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْهُدَى وَ مَنْ هُوَ فِی ضَلَالٍ مُبِینٍ

***“He who has obligated the Koran will bring you to an appointment. Say: 'My Lord knows well who comes with guidance, and who is in clear error.” (****the holy Quran; 28:85)*

In this article, the word ظلالت is taken to mean misguidance and deviation from the truth. To better understand the factors and obstacles of guidance, it is necessary to refer to the position of guidance first.

**The position of guidance**

As the high importance of guidance to reach ultimate perfection and one depriving from guidance could not reach eternal salvation from one hand, and the emphasis of Islam of prevention prior to healing from the other hand, it is possible to pave the way of guidance towars human being by knowing obstacles and avoiding them.

Therefore, guidance plays a very important and key role in human life, and if the light of guidance is turned off in a person's life, this person is a real loser. The importance of guidance is such that God Almighty considers the guidance of one person as the resurrection of all human beings, just as Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) in response to a question about the holy verse

مَنْ أَحْیَاهَا فَکَأَنَّمَا أَحْیَا النَّاسَ جَمِیعا

***“…and that who ever saved it should be regarded as though he had saved all mankind…”*** *(the holy Quran; 5:32)* were asked, he said,

مَن أخرجَها مِن ضَلالٍ إلى هُدَى فکَانَّما أحیاهَا وَ مَنْ اخرجُها مِن هُدى إلى ضلالٍ فقدْ قَتله

(Majlisi, 1362, vol. 2, p. 20). If a person guides a person from error, it is as if he has revived all human beings, and if he leads someone astray from guidance, it is as if he has killed all people.

The important thing that needs to be mentioned here is that when guidance has taken place, this guidance must be continuous and lasting in order to be useful, otherwise, if the guidance is not continuous, it is not useful.

Guidance is one of the divine blessings, which can be interrupted by a factor at any moment, and its continuation depends on God's bestowal. For example, when the lamp is on, which requires the continuation of electricity, and when the electricity is cut off, it is not possible for the lamp to be on, likewise at any moment when God does not want to, the guidance is cut off and the person will go astray. For example, in verse 29 of Surah Takvir:

وَ مَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلاَّ أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِینَ

**"*You disbelievers do not want the path of truth unless God Almighty wills*"** (Tabatabai, 1374 Sh, vol. 11, p. 271 and Qarashi, 1371, pp. 148 and 149). Therefore by the Grace of God the guidance shoul be continued to lea to man’s salvation. Of course, guidance has a wide scope and any creature that wants to reach perfection will need guidance.

As a result, the realm of guidance should be considered as the realm of existence, and for the verse of the Qur'an:

 رَبُّنَا الَّذِی أَعْطَى کُلَّ شَیْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَى

***“Our Lord, ' he replied, 'is He Who gave everything its creation and then guided it.”*** *(the holy Quran; 20:50)* a broad and comprehensive meaning shoul be chosen.

But God reminds us in the Qur'an that He does not guide some groups because of their incompetence, including:

1. The oppressors:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

***“…Allah does not guide the wrongdoers.”*** *(the holy Quran; 5:51)*

2: The disbelievers:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ

***“…surely Allah will not guide the unbelieving people.”(*** *the holy Quran; 5:67)*

3. The transgressors:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ

***“…Allah does not guide the evildoers.”*** *(the holy Quran; 63:6)*

4. The ungrateful liar:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ كَاذِبٌ كَفَّارٌ

***Allah does not guide he who is an unthankful liar.*** *(the holy Quran; 39:3)*

5. Extravagant liar:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ كَذَّابٌ

***“…Allah does not guide the lying sinner.” (*** *the holy Quran; 40:28)*

Of course, it means that God does not guide the disbelievers, etc. in their disbelief, etc., that is, disbelief does not save them, in other words; Oppression, immorality and betrayal are ways against the truth and there is no guidance in them and in fact they are misguidance and cruelty. (see. Tabatabai, 1374, vol. 11, p. 271 and Qarashi, 1371, pp. 148 and 149,); Therefore, the realm of guidance should be considered as the realm of existence of possibilities, which are guided by divine grace. Now that the position of guidance has been determined, in this section it is necessary to get acquainted with the factors of guidance.

**Guidance factors**

 Considering that theology and theism, and also man's inclination to the religion are inborn of human beings and is embedded in the soul and hearts of all, God has sent prophets to guide human beings and make their religious nature flourish. Ways of flourishing human guidance in the Qur'an are several, some of which are referred to from two aspects of external and internal factors.

**Internal factors of guidance**

 In this section, the internal factors such as the intellect and self-purification are examined.

**Intellect (‘*Aql*)**

According to what the infallible leaders have said: Man has two proofs (*Hujjat*): the inner prophet whose name is intellect and the other is the apparent prophet who is called "Nabi" or "Messenger" or "Imam". Man needs the guidance of the thought given to him; The intellect is the prophet of man, that is, it is the means given by the grace of God required in order to find the way; because walking the path that man must find requires means. There are many ways that man should follow them by instinct. The human intellect is another guide. In the human soul, he discovers and understands many of his own issues and interests according to his intellect. (Tabatabai, 1374 Sh., vol. 10, p. 389 and Bulaqi, 1386 AH, vol. 6, p. 301 and Mutahari, n.d., vol. 21, p. 239)

‘Allameh Tabatabai says in this regard: "In the Qur'an, the meaning of reasoning is perception with the health of nature, not reasoning under the influence of instincts and mundane desires. A logical man in cases when one or several instinct(s) or lust and desires flood or when love is closed the eyes of his intellect, or the glasses of anger blind him, while he is both human and wise, can not judge rightly, whatever he rules might be false. God Almighty has defined the intellect as a force that man can benefit from in his life, and by which he finds and leads the way to the truths of knowledge and righteous deeds, so if the human intellect does not locate in such a channel, and the realm of his knowledge is limited to worldly good and evil, it will no longer be called intellect, just as the Holy Qur'an tells of such people who say on the Day of Resurrection:

لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِي أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ

***“…Had We listened or used our minds, we would not have become the dwellers of hell.” (the holy Quran;67:10)*** (Tabatabai, 1374 Sh., 132, vol. 2, p. 376) Therefore, the intellect is the inner guide of man, but not in all cases it does respond to human needs but it responds to generalities. Therefore God sent an external guide who is the prophets and imams for human guidance.

**Self-purification ( *Tahzib Nafs*)**

Self-purification means emptying soul of vices and then adorning it with virtues, (Tabatabai, 1995, vol. 5, p. 428) and piety means that man protect himself from what he fears by sheltering inside a shelter. And the meaning of this shelter and piety as opposed to immorality is to avoid immorality and avoid any action that is contrary to the perfection of the soul, and in the narration it is also interpreted as piety and avoidance of divine prohibitions. (Meybudi, 1371, vol. 1, p. 732 and Tabatabai, 1374, vol. 20, p. 500)

In the verse: وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا

***“And those who corrupt their souls will certainly be deprived (of happiness).”***(91:10) the answer to eight previous pledges has been given and و قد خاب is attached to it and is the second answer. And the interpretation of self-purification and its corruption and its cultivation and purification is based on the point that: The perfection of the human soul is that it recognizes immorality from piety by its own nature, and the summary of the holy verse tells us that religion means submission to God in what he wants from us which is also in our nature; therefore, adorning the soul with piety means self-purification and its righteous training, which is the cause of its increase, and its survival, as it has been stated in another place: “Or the first of the verses

 مِنْ خَيْرٍ يَعْلَمْهُ اللَّهُ وَتَزَوَّدُوا فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الزَّادِ التَّقْوَى وَاتَّقُونِ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ

***“The best provision is piety. Fear Me, O owners of minds.”*** (2: 197) and the state of the soul in immorality and wickedness is the opposite of the state of which in its piety. (Tabatabai, Muhammad Huseyn, 1374, vol. Zahili, 1418 AH, vol. 30, p. 260, and Samarqandi, n.d., vol. 3, p. 58)

The logic of the Holy Qur'an is that if a person reduces his interest in the world, the divine truths will boil from his heart, and this emergence of truths is because these teachings were stored in his institution and when the veils were removed, what was stored in his heart was flourished or it is because he has removed the veil of the heart and dusted the mirror of the heart, so the secrets of the world shine in the mirror of his heart and he observes.

Purification of the soul from the sting of attachments to the world, in both its basis and meaning, has such an effect on man that man becomes acquainted with the secrets of the universe. In order to get acquainted with the truths of the universe, there is a way of thinking that acquaints man with those truths through acquired knowledge (*‘Ilm Husuli)*, and there is also a way of piety that informs man of the knowledge of the truths of the universe through direct knowledge (*‘Ilm Huduri*). Of course, combining these two ways is both possible and useful. That is, those who are walkers of the way of thinking, if are pious, the results of their knowledge will be more correct and deeper. And those who are seekers of piety and self-purification, if they are familiar with rational arguments, the evidences of their direct knowledge will be more complete and clear. But if one could not combine the two, between the path of thought and acquired knowledge and the path of piety and direct knowledge, following the path of piety and self-purification is more appropriate; Because this path is both possible for all human beings and continuously possible for human beings and its application and effect is greater than the application of the way of thinking and acquired knowledge, of course, the combination between the two is specific to the perfect human being ( Javadi Amuli, 1372 Sh. Vol.12, pp.324-325). Therefore, another way to flourish an guide mankin is the purification of the soul, that is, the way of piety an self-purification, that means a man who cultivated his soul through austerity and purification, sees the unseen of the world and the kingdom of the universe.

**External factors of guidance**

 In this section, the external factors of guidance are discussed.

**God, the true guide**

 إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ مَنْ يَضِلُّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

***Your Lord knows best who stray from His Path and the guided. (the holy Quran: 6, 117)***

He knows who deserves to be accepted into the faith. He knows whose hearts are beating for the truth, he knows in whose hearts the interests for the love of God flows. He knows these worthy people well and gives them success and makes His kindness a friend of them in their way to enter the path of faith. But regaring the dark hearts of the ugly character who are the enemies of the truth in their hearts and have risen up with all their might to fight the messengers of God and and in their life are so polluted and disgraced that they do not deserve the light of faith, God never puts the lamp of success in front of them. This is the exclusively act of God to sow the seeds of faith in the hearts and His work is not reasonless, He looks at the ready hearts and sprinkles this heavenly light on them. However, this verse is a kind of consolation for the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) to pay attention to this fact; neither the insistence on polytheism by a group of pagans in Mecca is unreasonable, nor the sincere faith of the people. (Tabatabai, 1374 AH, vol. 10, p. 86 and Makarem Shirazi, 1373, vol. 16, p. 115 and Ibn ‘Ajibah, 1419 AH, vol. 4, p. 262).

A narration from Imam Saiq is also proof on this: "Thabit Ibn Sa’eed says: Imam Sadiq (as) said: O Thabit, what do you do with the people? Give up the people and do not call anyone to your religion. By God, if the people of the heavens and the people of the earth come together to guie the servant whom God wanted to lead astray, they can, and if the people of the heavens and the earth come together to mislead the servant whom God has guided, they will not be able to. Leave people to themselves and no one says, "This is my uncle or my brother or my cousin or my neighbor (and I can not see my loved ones in error). Because when God wills good for a servant, He magnifies his soul, so that he knows every matter of truth and denies every ugliness and falsehood, then God puts in his heart something that helps his believes.) ( Kulayni, 1375, p.475)

Of course, it should be noted that the will to good and evil in the case of God does not mean their compulsion and force by God, but it is base on His wisdom (*Hikmah*).

 **The divine teachings by the prophets** (peace be upon them)

God has said concerning the duties of the Prophet of Islam;

يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ

***“To recite to them His verses, to purify them, and to teach them the Book and the Wisdom (prophetic sayings)”*** (the holy Quran; 3: 164) the first responsibility of divine mission is to recite the holy verses and the second responsibility is purification of soul and the third responsibility is teaching the holy Book and Hikmah.

Allameh Tabatabai says in this regard: "Education is the guidance of the learner's mind by a knowledgeable teacher, and it is to guide the learner's mind to the teachings that are difficult for him to achieve, and it cannot be said that teaching is guidance to understand things that are impossible to understand without teaching, because teaching is to make the way easier and closer to the destination, not to create the way, and to create the destination, the teacher in his teaching wants to deliver the materials in a categorized way that the learner’s mind finds it easier, and become accustomed to it, does not feel difficulty in classifying and ordering them, his life and the gift of his talent are not wasted, and he may not be mistaken. And this is the fact that the verse: "وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ" implies.” (Tabatabai, 1374 Sh., vol.3, p.132)

The teachings of the Prophet are of two types: Part of the Qur'an is the rational teachings that the Holy Qur'an guides human beings to their results with rational arguments, that is, it teaches man what he does not know, and part of it is explaining the innate issues and reviving memories, the inner memories that human being have with their creation. Holy Quran explains the intellectual way of learning with this verse:

وَاللَّهُ أَخْرَجَكُمْ مِنْ بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

***“Allah brought you out of your mothers' wombs, and gave you hearing, sight and hearts, in order that you be thankful.”*** (the holy Quran;16:78). God gave proper means to men to establish a scientific connection with the outside world and become aware of its secrets, and through this reach the stage of reason and gain access to the acquired knowledge. The emergence of the direct knowledge and the flourishing of intuitive knowledge belonge to the second part, that is, man knows the main lines, but does not know in detail, so they are taken out by the teachings of the prophets. Then, they are transformed into acquired knowledge; therefore, one way to flourish nature (Fitrah) is the same way of thinking and the way of reasoning and acquired knowledge that the prophets provide so that man can flourish his nature with it. (Javadi Amuli, 1372, vol. 12, p. 323) Therefore, one of the external factors of guidance is the teaching of the prophets which determines the path for man.

***Hidayah bil Amr* by the Imams**

 وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا لَمَّا صَبَرُوا وَكَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يُوقِنُونَ

***“When they were patient, We made from them leaders, guiding with Our Command and they were certain of Our verses.”*** (the holy Quran;32:24)

According to this verse, Imamate is a special guidance which is called (***Hidayah bi Amr***). Allameh Tabatabai says in this regard: “The Imam is the one who guides and leads the beings from the heavenly aspect. Therefore, the position of Imamate … is kind of guardianship over the actions of the people and their guidance. Guidance here means to reach to the destination, not just to offer the way which is the work of the prophets and massengers and every believer who guides people with good advice and preaching. This verse clearly indicates *whatever* pertains to the subject of guidance; that is, the hearts and deeds of people, which, like other beings, have two aspects, and its *command (Amri)* and *heavenly* aspect are apparent to the Imam. Therefore, good and bad deeds are present before him and he is aware of both paths of happiness and cruelty.” (Tabatabai, 1374, vol. 2, p. 273)

Imam means the one who has been chosen by the Almighty to advance the path of the Villayah (guardianship) and has taken the rein of spiritual guidance in his hands. The guardianship that shines in the hearts of the servants is the rays and lines of light from the center of light that is before him, and the various blessings are streams connected to the infinite sea that is with him. (Mutahari, n.d., vol.3,pp.295-296)

Therefore, the Imams, with the grace and blessings of God, reach the highest authorities of the guardianship and have opened the way for people as much as people’s existential capacity and attempts, and have provided the way to God; And since human beings have always shown their weakness in knowing the real and true path if they do not follow a guide, the necessity of the need for divine guides who show the way, in other words, take the hands of human beings and lead them to true happiness has always existed. And all believers, by entering the divine guardianship, enjoy special divine blessings and approach God Almighty, and in parallel, gain guardianship over their own existence and life, and can have limited miracles in their realm of existence and the outside world with such guardianship and in fact the miracle that appears by the hands of the righteous servants of God are due to this. Of course, there are many differences between the two sects of Islam in this regard to the extent that we can say the Sunnis deny this, especially the Wahhabi sect, which does not accept the Imams at all.

**Barriers to guidance**

Not only the opposite of guidance is misguidance but misguidance itself is an obstacle to guidance. Therefore, in this section, the obstacles to guidance that cause man to go astray and fall into the abyss of nothingness and destruction are referred to.

**Internal barriers to guidance**

 There are some barriers inside man that prevent man from attaining true guidance, and these obstacles are like a barrier to happiness and prosperity that if a person values ​​them, they will throw him to death. Some of these inner obstacles:

**Lust and mundane desires**

 Instincts and emotions are the basis of survival of human and if they are removed from human life, man will be destroyed, but at the same time, if they are not adjusted and their boundaries are not defined and man becomes a toy of his boundless instincts, he will be destroyed again. The Qur'an says in this regard***:***

 ***“Do not follow (worldly) desires lest you go astray from the way of God”(38:26)***

According to the Qur'an, the group who gives the control of their lives to the hands of lust and unfinished and unadjusted desires are the worshipers of lust, who have made it their idol:

أَفَرَأَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ

***“Have you seen he who took his desire for a god?”(45:23)***

In fact, lust is the same animal instincts and feelings for which there is no limit, and if they are limited and demarcated by a person or object, not only is it not lust, but it is the source of survival of life. In a verse God says:

فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَكَ فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّمَا يَتَّبِعُونَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّنِ اتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ بِغَيْرِ هُدًى مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

***“If they do not answer you, know that they are only following their desires. And who is further astray than he who is led by his desires without guidance from Allah! Allah does not guide the harmdoers.”(28:50)***

Majma’ al-Bayan writes in the interpretation of this verse: some say when they are not guided by the guidance of Go, it is as if God has not guided them. (Tabarsi, 1363, vol. 7, p. 401)

**Attachment to the world**

Attachmentto the world and loving it is one of the main obstacles to the flourishing of nature. For this reason, it is stated in the narrations: The love of the world is the reason of all errors. (Kulayni, n.d., vol. 2, p. 315) The basis of all errors is the love of the world. As the love of the world hinders the practical reform of man, it also causes the destruction and scientific corruption of man. Because of this Quran introduces the world as a toy. Imam Ali has introduced it as entertainment. (Kulayni, 1375 AH, vol. 1, p. 45) The effort of Satan and the *Nafs Ammareh* is to entertain man to the world. The sign that the world is a toy and a pastime is that if one is afflicted with it, he becomes addicted and falls into the hands of that means of entertainment. As a result, such a worn out and tired person is sometimes such addicted that he does not let it go until he is destroyed by that. The Holy Qur'an forbids man from worldliness and belonging to the world, because worldliness and belonging to that make man dependent and such a person does not lead to monotheism and monotheistic virtues. Since the world is the greatest obstacle to human progress and the flourishing of nature, God sent prophets to remove the veil of worldliness from the eyes of society, as Imam Ali (as) said:

“God has made the world the abode of His creatures and sent His Messenger to the jinn and man to unveil the ugly face of the world and warn them of its harms.” (Ali ibn Abi Talib, Nahjul Balaghah, sermon 183);

When man, by teaching and reminding of the prophets, removes the veil of belonging to the world from his eyes, he becomes acquainted with the inner world (*‘Alam Batin*) and *Malakut* *‘Alam*, and implements virtue and piety in himself. It should be noted that all the obstacles to the flourishing of nature can be referred to this barrier which is the comprehensive obstacle of all of them, … it is necessary to interpret such a world in the same conventional sense with the people of knowledge that everything that deprives man of God is the world.” (Tabatabai, 1995, vol. 5, p. 441, Javadi Amuli, 1993, vol. 12, pp. 401 and 400) Therefore, one of the most fundamental internal obstacles is attaching to the world.

**Rust on hearts**

 One of the obstacles to the flourishing of nature and the knowledge of the truth is the rust on the hearts, the Holy Qur'an says:

كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

***“No indeed! Their own deeds have cast a veil over their hearts.”(83:14)***

The reason of why some people do not see the truth is because their souls are covered with the veil of sin and the rust of their hearts. "If the mirror becomes dusty, the light of truth and goodness will never shine in it … likewise and the veiled person is deprived of seeing the truth and the inclination towards it. (Javadi Amuli, 1372, p. 402) Therefore, having piety, which is the abandonment of sin and performing obligatory duties, is one of the important drugs for healing the heart.

**Feeling needlessness**

While wealth can be prosperous but feeling to be needless of God leads to misguidance. In this regard, the Qur'an says: ***"They will answer: 'Exaltations to You. We should not have taken others for a guardian, but You gave them and their fathers enjoyment until they forgot Your Remembrance and they were a destroyed nation.."*** ( 25:18) In another verse, this truth is stated differently where he says:

كَلَّا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَيَطْغَى

أَنْ رَآهُ اسْتَغْنَى

***Despite this, the human being still tends to rebel.***

***Because he thinks that he is independent.***

(the holy Quran;96: 6-7)

It might in a superficial look, man finds himself needless. This false self-knowledge causes him to feel needless. It is obvious that this feeling of needlessness stands up against a serious and fundamental reform and it blocks the way for any principled construction and causes a human uprising.

**Negligence**

Man who neglects himself and the divine revelations is deprived of the scientific movement for acquiring knowledge of God and of the practical movement for the flourishing of the human virtues. Because negligence, which is dirt in the culture of religion, does not allow man to move towards perfection. As in the Qur'an:

وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ آذَانٌ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا أُولَئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْغَافِلُونَ

***“We have destined many men and jinn for hell. They have hearts but do not understand, eyes but do not see. They have ears but do not hear. They are worse than lost cattle. These are the heedless ones”.*** ( 7: 179)

Not paying attention to self leads to paying attention to outside and the person who is engaged with outside of himself does not provide the means for his prosperity. (Javadi Amuli, 1372, vol. 12, p. 397 and Meybudi, 1371, vol. 5, p. 456) and in fact these are the ones left on the path of guidance.

**Arrogance**

Another cause of misguidance is arrogance. The Holy Quran says: ***“Those who dispute the revelations of God without having received any authority do so because of their arrogance, but their arrogance cannot bring them any success. Seek protection from God for He is All-hearing and All-aware.”*** (40:56) Controversy originates from arrogance, and arrogance is a dirth that darkens the clear pages of the heart, and the person whose heart is darkened is deprived of seeing the truth and the tendency to virtues. (Tabatabai, 1374, vol. 17, p. 517) Therefore, according to the divine verses, arrogance is one of the internal obstacles that has bad consequences for the individual and society, and if someone assumes responsibility in any society with this attribute, he will cause the destruction of the generation and the establishment of tyranny and deprivation of people's freedom. Therefore, the talents remain barren. For this reason, God has condemned arrogance and has made Fire the place of the arrogant.

**External barriers to guidance**

These factors are carried out either by the misguided group, other than the individual himself, as several verses of the Holy Qur'an consider the misguidance of some people to be due to following the commands of Satan, with the analysis that they are followers of misguidance and their action is deviation from the truth. And deviation from the straight path is in fact a kind of oppression and God does not guide the oppressive people and when He does not guide, they go astray.

**Satan**

وَيُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُمْ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا

***“… satan desires to lead them astray into far error***.”( 4:60)

Misleading by the devil is something that is upon him. That is, whoever the devil loves and follows, will lead him astray, so even though all human beings are servants of God and He is the owner and mastermind of all but the devil is leader of the people who themselves want to follow him and leave their destiny in his hands, and in fact they are the ones who are ruled by the devil. (Tabatabai, 1374, vol. 16, p. 181) and by following him are in error and misguidance.

Satan is the enemy of human salvation. Therefore, he lurks in his path to seduce and trap him. There are many traps spread by the devil:

1- Sometimes he ambushes in the realm of worship (Tabatabai, 1374, vol. 2, p. 203) in order to exclude man from worship, he tries man not to do his deeds based on revelation, but to act according to his will, while in the realm of worship man, who is a servant of God, should do all his work according to divine revelation.

2. Sometimes his ambush is the realm of reason (Tabatabai, 1374, vol. 2, p. 633) and works to make man understand and accept fake reasons instead of divine knowledge.

3. Sometimes he lurks in the realm of wittness (Tabatabai, 1995, vol. 2, p. 219) a realm where man can see the truth as they are by his hearts and without any means, here Satan lurks not let him see reality as it is or makes him deny the truth. In fact, the devil first distorts witnessing, then thought and then action.

**Bad friend**

 Another cause of misguidance or obstacles to the flourishing of nature is the bad friend, and considering the importance of the friend in human life and the effect that a person receives from a friend, we examine the effect of the bad friend on people's lives:

 Friendship and living with another person is a natural thing for a person, and preventing an inborn need is like swimming against the flow of a river which has no result but defeat; but at the same time not every person deserves friendship, the person whose friendship means leaving religious and moral restrictions in life becomes a source of human misery.

Quran states about this type of friends,

وَيَوْمَ يَعَضُّ الظَّالِمُ عَلَى يَدَيْهِ يَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي اتَّخَذْتُ مَعَ الرَّسُولِ سَبِيلًا \* يَا وَيْلَتَى لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أَتَّخِذْ فُلَانًا خَلِيلًا \* لَقَدْ أَضَلَّنِي عَنِ الذِّكْرِ بَعْدَ إِذْ جَاءَنِي وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِلْإِنْسَانِ خَذُولًا

***It will be a hard day for the unbelievers. It will be a day when the unjust will bite their fingers, (regretfully) saying, "Would that we had followed the path of the Messengers.\* Woe to us! Would that we had not been friends with so and so.\*He led me away from the true guidance after it had come to us. Satan is a traitor to people."***(25:27-29)

 There are many stories in the history of mankind about bad friends and companions. We all know that many times a short-time association with a bad person has been the cause of the disintegration of family life. (Tabatabai, 1374, vol. 15, p. 282 and Subhani, 1373, vol. 3, p. 159)

**Following the leaders of misguidance**

 Quran counts one of the reasons of going astray as following the heads of the tribes and so, and by the words of those who go astray quoted as saying on the Day of Judgment that:

يَوْمَ تُقَلَّبُ وُجُوهُهُمْ فِي النَّارِ يَقُولُونَ يَا لَيْتَنَا أَطَعْنَا اللَّهَ وَأَطَعْنَا الرَّسُولَا \* وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّا أَطَعْنَا سَادَتَنَا وَكُبَرَاءَنَا فَأَضَلُّونَا السَّبِيلَا

***“On that Day when their faces are turned about in the Fire, they shall say: 'Would that we had obeyed Allah and obeyed the Messenger! \* And they shall say: 'Our Lord, We obeyed our masters and our eminent ones, but they misled us from the way”***.(33-66-67)

And

قَالَ ادْخُلُوا فِي أُمَمٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ فِي النَّارِ كُلَّمَا دَخَلَتْ أُمَّةٌ لَعَنَتْ أُخْتَهَا حَتَّى إِذَا ادَّارَكُوا فِيهَا جَمِيعًا قَالَتْ أُخْرَاهُمْ **لِأُولَاهُمْ** رَبَّنَا هَؤُلَاءِ أَضَلُّونَا فَآتِهِمْ عَذَابًا ضِعْفًا مِنَ النَّارِ قَالَ لِكُلٍّ ضِعْفٌ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

***“He will say: 'Enter the Fire and join the nations of jinn and humans that have gone before you. ' As they enter, every nation will curse its sisternation, and when all are gathered in the pit, the last of them will say of the first: 'These, Lord, are those who led us astray. Give them a double punishment of the Fire. He will answer: 'For each double, although you do not know it.”*** (the holy Quran; 7:38)

In this verse the heads who are the cause of misguidance are called “**لِأُولَاهُمْ**” which means anscestors. Therefore, one of the external obstacles to guidance considered by the Qur'an is obedience to the chiefs and heads of the tribes.

**Following the misguided ancestors**

While fathers and ancestors have a special respect in Islam, but inner interest should not cause man to shut down his thinking power and give himself to them, and therefore the Qur'an, where it commands respect for them, is reminded if the parents invite their children to polytheism, they should not follow them where he says:

وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ عَلَى أَنْ تُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا

***But if they strive with you to make you associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them***.(the holy Quran; 31:15)

A free man is a man who breaks any kind of veil that prevents him from seeing the truth and loves the truth the most. …( Tabatabai, 1995, vol. 16, p. 153 and Subhani, 1373, ibid., p.161) in islam it is ordered to respect elders but if they cause misguidance they should not be followed.

**Explain a challenge**

 The challenge in this section is whether in the creation of man, have the factors of guidance and attraction towards the goal for which he was created been established in a way that if external factors do not interfere in his mental and intellectual state, he will be constantly on the path to the destination for which he was created? Or, in creation, is his relation to happiness and cruelty and good and evil the same, and this is constantly an external factor that pulls him towards one pole? In other words, just as the health of creation is original in human beings and the disease and defect in creation is a kind of deviation from the norm of creation of human beings, so is guidance? Is it like health as the principle of human creation and misguidance and getting out of the way of truth, like a disease? Or is the human relationship to both the same?

The Holy Quran supports the first theory and associates the creation of man with the inner factors that guide him towards material and spiritual evolution, and according to the Qur'an, the natural human being is a human being whose creation is intertwined with these factors and all the means of guidance are hidden in him. And the right man is a man whose deeds are in accordance with nature and the values ​​of nature, and such a person is the true man.

There are many verses in the Qur'an that testify that religion is inborn and also testify to the existence of a natural conscience in human beings, such as:

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ \*فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا\*قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا

***Therefore set your face to the religion purely, the upright creation upon which He originated people. There is no changing of the creation of Allah. This is the valuable religion, although most people do not know ?\*And inspired it with its sin and its piety,\* Prosperous is he who purified it (91:8-9)***

In these two verses, man's familiarity with good and evil or the path that leads him to happiness is introduced as innate, and the Qur'an raises this issue when it speaks about his creation.

Therefore, guidance is original in human beings and it is these external factors that sometimes neutralize the matter of nature and lead to his misguidance, and the Qur'an has referred to the destructive factors of nature and internal conscience in various verses. (Tabatabai, 1374, vol. 2, pp. 174 and Subhani, 1373, vol. 3, pp. 151-148)

Therefore, just as physical illness is a kind of deviation from norm of creation and from the law of creation, so misguidance of man and his fall into the abyss of destruction is also departure from the law of creation of man.

**Strategies for dealing with guidance barriers**

 A person who faces the above-mentioned obstacles and the like, his nature is veiled, so the moral virtues in his life are lost and the path to salvation is gradually lost. Therefore, after getting acquainted with the mentioned obstacles, it is necessary to know the ways of removing these obstacles and by destroying them, help Fitrah (nature) to flourish. The strategiesare divided into two parts: internal and external which are examined in this section.

**Strategies to solve internal barrier**

 Since the rebellious *Nafs* takes man to nowhere, so first the internal solutions should be removed.

**Repentance**

The first step for the seekers of the truth is to remove the sins, because sins are not only the entrance to hell, but they will also prevent good deeds in the world and not only spiritual blessings but also ordinary blessings are taken from man. It is stated in the Holy Quran:

وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْقُرَى آمَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَفَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ بَرَكَاتٍ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَكِنْ كَذَّبُوا فَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

 ***“And if the people of the towns had believed and guarded (against evil) We would certainly have opened up for them blessings from the heaven and the earth, but they rejected, so We overtook them for what they had earned”***(7:96) Repentance has different quality and quantity. The quantity of repentance is that the Holy Qur'an instructs all believers: ***“…turn to God in repentance so that perhaps you will have everlasting happiness.”(24:31)*** and quality should be "*Nasuh*" meaning purified (Tabatabai, 1374, vol. 19, p. 563) in this regar the Holy Qur'an says:

***يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا تُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَوْبَةً نَصُوحًا***

***“Believers, turn to Allah in sincere repentance.”(***66:8)

Therefore, according to this the Nasuh repentance is a kind of repentance which is with pure intention, unbreakable and permanent.

**Asceticism**

 In order to reach salvation, there is no choice but to leave the world of deception, and this abandonment is called "asceticism", which, according to the late Muhaqiq Tusi, is one of the stages of removing obstacles from path towards God. (Tusi, n.d., vol. 9, p. 533) And of course asceticism does not mean forgetting the world of deception. Rather, it means reluctance, and because reluctance requires practice, one must first leave the deceptive world, then gradually become reluctant in it, and for reluctance, knowledge is necessary.

The sign of asceticism is mentioned in Surah Al-Hadid verse 23: ***“so that you will not be saddened for whatever does not come to you, nor be overjoyed in what has come to you. Allah does not love those who are proud and boastful.”*** Therefore, we are obliged to train our nafs. If it asks us for something forbidden, it is like a horse being trying to go astray, which must be restrained and set in motion by the ridder. If we do not respond to the desires of the nafs, it gradually becomes accustomed to wait in adversity. This is called “fight with nafs”.

**Strategies to solve external barriers**

 In this section, external barrier solutions are reviewed.

**Thinking and reasoning**

 The importance of thinking and reasoning in human life is such that it is called as the main difference between humans and other living things. In fact, what distinguishes man from other beings is his great ability to think and reason. In order to fight against all obstacles, both internal and external, we must think, for example, we must have an accurate knowledge of the devil and so on and to believe that Satan is the sworn enemy of man and wants to lead man to the abyss of nothingness. So, after thinking and reasoning, we must have an accurate and complete knowledge of the obstacles ahea of guidance tobe able to struggle against these obstacles. In this case, it is enough that the Qur'an mentions one of the attributes of the Hell-dwellers lack of thinking and reasoning:

***“And they will then say: 'If only we had listened and understood we should not now be among the inhabitants of the Blaze.***” (the holy Quran; 67:10) (Makarem Shirazi, 1373, vol. 18, p. 141) Therefore, the Holy Qur'an openly emphasizes on the independence of the intellect and introduces it as a sieve and a means of guidance and considers "intellectual guidance" to be "divine guidance".

**Obedience to divine commands**

 One of the important attributes mentioned in the Qur'an for the believers is their obedience to God Almighty. God, who created us, is closer to us than anyone else and knows our goodness. He is aware of our needs and is aware of us, so if we really believe that he is our only true helper in the life, we do not disobey His commands and do follow His commans. As God says: "

... وَ أَطِیعُوا اللَّهَ وَ رَسُولَهُ إِنْ کُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِین

***“…Obey Allah and His Messenger, if you are believers.” (the holy Quran:8:1)***

Therefore, the Qur'an is a cure for human mental and spiritual illnesses. And the verses of the Qur'an are full of light and brightness that puts a bright light in the way of human life.

وَنُنَزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَا يَزِيدُ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا

***“We sent down of the Koran that which is a healing and a mercy to believers, but to the harmdoers it does not increase them, except in loss”.(17:82)***

In addition, God, the Creator of us human beings, has given us a guide, and that is the Qur'an, by which we could lea to salvation.

**Following the prophets, imams and scholars**

Prophets and Imams are messengers of guidance and raise the banner of human guidance. They illuminate the human world like a light on a dark night so that people do not fall into the dreadful valleys of sin and perish. (Tabatabai, 1374, vol. 2, p. 138) In our time, which is in the age of disappearance of imam Mahi (a.s.), following the religious scholars is the right way. Therefore, one of the ways to remove the obstacle is obedience to the prophets, imams and religious scholars. Of course, in principle, obedience to the Prophet and the Imams is obedience to the commands of God, which came down from heaven, and therefore obedience to God; it is because the prophet rose to invite people to the principles and sub-principles of religion, so obedience to God's commands is also His obedience.

**Conclusion**

In order for man to be guided and finally achieve the desired perfection, he must know the internal factors of guidance, which include intellect and self-purification, as well as external factors, which include divine teachings from the prophets and imams, and remove the internal an external obstacles to guidance; because in the holy religion of Islam, there is an order and recommendation for prevention before treatment, and with the knowledge that man acquires about the factors and obstacles to guidance and strategies to deal with obstacles such as repentance, asceticism, thinking, reasoning and following the divine commands of the prophets and saints, he paves the way for self-guidance and ultimately achieving salvation in a way that even he can hold other people's hands and helps them. Of course, in this way, we should always seek help from God Almighty and by praying and appealing to God, we should ask Him to place us among those who are guided.

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