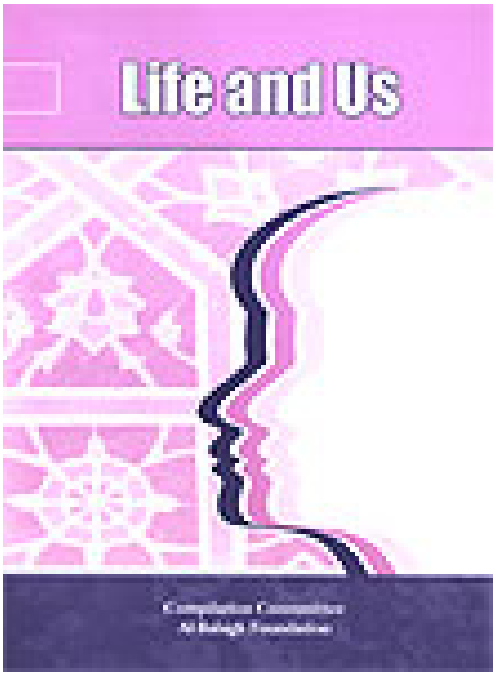
Life and Us



Youth Forum

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Life and Us

A Compilation Committee

Al-Balagh Foundation

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful A Glance Around Us

From the time I opened my eyes to what is around me of the creatures of life and -since I started understanding and comprehend-ing the movement of all the beings surround ing me, I started making impres-sions, notions, and concepts in my mind about everything which I met.

This wide and expansive world consists of the sky and stars, the sun and moon, water and air, darkness and lightness, earth and plants, seas and rain, trees and animals of different kinds and colours, people living in societies, speaking and understanding each other, exchanging commodities and services.

These disunited scenes, full of beauty and order, made me think more and even caused me ask myself: “Why is it I do not prolong looking at them and think of the greatness and beauty of this wonderful and splended existence around me? Rather, why do I look at these things separately? Are not they a perfect picture completing each other? Are not they facts which teach me many things? In other words, why do I look at everything as it is separeted from the others?

In fact, in everything I meet, there is a condition of admiration and contemplation in it. For instance, sunlight, the falling of rain, the origin of a plant and its growth, colours of a flower and its divers perfumes, the blueness of heaven, the redness of the rising of the sun, etc…

What is the reason for all these existences and varieties and just how beautiful are they any way?

How surprising and wonderful it would be, if I could understand it from the moment I

was born and had met with it for the first time?

Indeed, I came from another world…from the world of the womb; the world of darkness concealed from the present world.

Now, I feel it necessary to understand that world…the world of the womb to which I did not think of nor understand anything about it. Indeed, I lived therein devoid of awareness, will, and depending on one's self. Verily, therein I was only a fetus which depended on his mother's blood, protected by Allah's care. It was an unknown period with the exception that now I understand the favour of that Divine undertaking, and the effort of the mother who bore me in her abdomen; a period of nine months which I was fed out of her blood. She made all her wearisome efforts for the sake of passing that period peacefully.

Indeed, I had no active role in that unknown world. I had no role in orginating nor in choosing my form and picture, nor in providing food, or air or protecting against dangers. I was only a fetus, like an egg in its incubation, or like a seed in the soil of the earth. I was brought up under the Divine care, while my mother bore me inspite of her sufferings and pains. She surrounded me with love and expectation and counted the days in order to meet me.

Living in that unknown and dark world, I had two kinds of love: The love for my mother and the love for my God (Allah).

I started life amid the hearts of love and mercy…now I feel the significance of that love and the favor of that mercy and care. Now I feel that I am in debt to the one who surrounded me with her love and care and provided me with the blood of her heart during the period of my residence in the depth of her pelvis, without my feeling my existence or managing any affairs of my life.

Surely, it was great goodness and it is a duty on me to ask: "Is the reward of goodness aught but goodness?" Yes, it is my duty to say: "To disguise such goodness means injustice and deviation and the owner of such a callous act deserves punishment."

It is my duty to be thankful and to express my gratitude and love to the one who surrounded me with love and goodness.

Evidences of Greatness and Organization:

Let us go from the world (of the womb) into the world of the sun, lightness, wisdom, will and depending upon one's self. Likewise, the scholars have opened for us, through their discoveries, the door of know-ledge to this world. They also discover-ed the secrets and ambiguities of nature and biology; of plants and animals. They opened for us the door of knowledge concerning the world of man

and the contents of the oddities of organization, systems, different bodily activities and the ability to understand, speak and think.

-Indeed, reading the information discover-ed by the scholars causes surprise and admira tion in ourselves. They discovered for us the greatness of the Creator and the existence of an organizer of this world.

In fact, one scientist named ‘A.Chrisie Morrison’ a book called ‘Science Calls for Faith’. In this book, he talks about the great-ness of the Divine organization of this world and also proves that everything in this existence indicates the greatness of its creator. In fact, I felt the existence of Allah, and the greatness of His power, while I was reading the book.

This scientist adds saying:

“The earth rotates round itself completely once every 24 hours at an average speed of 1,000 miles per hour. Now, let us suppose that it revolves at the average of 100 miles per hour…why not? …our days and nights will be ten times longer than now. In this case, the scorching summer sun would daily burn our plants and freeze them at night.

The sun , the source of all life, has a fiery surface of 12,000,000 degrees Fahren-heit. The distance between the earth and the sun is so perfect that it gives our earth sufficient warmth and no more. Throughout millions of years, the alteration of this balance was so rare that life on earth did not cease to exist. If the temperature on the earth was raised by 50 degrees during one year, the result would be the inevitable death of all plants and animals. Man would also succumb to the consequences of the increased heat.

The earth revolves at an average of 18 miles per second. If it revolves, for example, at an average of 6 or 40 miles per second then all types of life would cease.”

Then, this great scientist continues by saying:

“The moon is 240,000 miles away from the earth. If this distance were 50,000 miles, for instance, the tide would be so great that all areas usually below sea level would be covered twice daily by flowing water capable of washing away the mountains themselves. If it were so, maybe no continent could have risen from the ocean beds. The earth would have been destroyed, and the tide would have been destroyed …”

Every one thinks to himself, while reading these scientific facts, and asks how did this accuracy and organzation occur and who did all this?

Indeed, the Holy Qur’an, answers us by saying:

“…the handiwork of Allah, Who has made everything thoroughly…” Holy Qur’an (27 : 88)

"Who created the seven heavens alike.You see no incongruity in the creation of the Beneficent…" Holy Qur'an (67: 3)

"And the sun moves on to its destination. That is the ordinance of the Mighty, the Knower. And the moon, We have ordained for it stages till it becomes again as an old dry date-stalk. Neither is it for the sun to overtake the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day. And all float on in an orbit." Holy Qur'an (36:38-40)

If the world of earth and space is like this, let's consider the seas and oceans.

And how beautiful and interesting is this world and whatever it contains of anilmals, fish, pearls and corals.

Surely, these researches and studies made the specialized scholars reach to discover -astonishing realities concerning this world. These facts cause admiration and contemp lation about the greatness of those strange secrets in those water creatures.

The well-known scientist, Chrisie Morrision, in his book, "Science Calls for Faith", presents us an interesting story about a kind of fish called "Salmon" and also about "eels-snake-like fish", in the following words:

The scientists, in their studies about the life of these fish, discovered astonishing and strange phenomenon. These kinds of fish are born in seas, live for years in these seas and then return to the same sea in which they were born. And even if they are transferred into another sea connected with it, they began to swim on the opposite side of the water current till they return to the sea in which they were born.

Indeed, they know and recognize their place of birth and are connected with it and search for it till they return to it.

Furthermore, this scholar records another bewildering puzzle regarding the life of eels, he says:

Eels migrate from the water of rivers in which they are born after completing their growth and then pass thousands of miles in the oceans in order to reach the deep depths in the south of the Island, Bromoda, and there they stay and die. When their eggs hatch and the small eels are born and after completing their growth, they again start an opposite migration and cover the same distance in order to reach the places where their mothers were born and then they scatter in the rivers there. Thus, this is the way this kind of animal lives, generation after generation.

Verily, it is an amazing story…which portrays for us a bewildering puzzle to which the Holy Qur'an answers:

"Said he (Moses): `Our Lord is He Who gave unto everything its (suitable) form, and then (also) guided it (aright)'" Holy Qur'an (20: 50)

It is He Who guided us instinctively and inspired us with inherent knowledge.

These facts make us acknowledge the meaning of the Almighty says:

“Verily fear Allah only those of His servants endued with knowledge.” Holy Qur’an (35: 28)

Without, we do not know the greatness of the Almighty, Allah except through science to which the Holy Qur’an calls on us to obtain. Likewise, it calls on us to think and use wisdom and proof in knowing Allah, the Most High, knowing His creatures, and understand-ing His Glorious Book:

“What! Reflect they not on the Qur’an? Nay! On (their) hearts are (set) their locks.”

Holy Qur’an (47: 24)

So, the division which separates us with the Almighty, Allah and understanding His Book is ignorance, and when we obtain an abundant portion of science, the horizons of knowing Allah will be opened before us and thus the lights of His Book will shine in our selves.

A Close Look at the Self

I have the right to understand myself and know my personality and my value in life. I am a human being, and a man has a great value in this existence. So, he has a dangerous responsibility in this life. Indeed, I was born on this land as respected and honoured and Allah, the Most High has granted me all these rights as He granted me my right and share in this life. He, the Almighty says:

“And indeed We have honoured the children of Adam, and We carry them in the land and on the sea and We provided them with sustenance of good things, and We have exalted them over most of those whom We have created, by (high) decree of exaltation.” Holy Qur’an (17: 70)

Likewise, I was born innately and as a pure existence, far from evil and wickedness, and with me also instincts, feelings, conscience, and sensation were born. So, I grew as my body grew and my mind opened. Therefore, I began to deal with life through wisdom and wishes. It is my right to express all these with a safe expression and accurately understand that it is my responsibility to safeguard my pure and white page in the record of this life.

Surely, my personality, and the future of my life is a deposit in my hand. I behave with it as I wish and lead my self as I like. Indeed, the ways of life are numerous and diverse. In them, there is deviation and loss and guidance and righteousness.

Most people are deviated while they are in their early years before reaching the age of 17 and fall victim of their low desires, and as a result of bad dealings with their instinctive motives.

Indeed, ignorance and arrogance overwhelms such people and they submitt themselves to such false impressions and the world of imagination or are led by pleasure and enjoyment towards the pit. Therefore, their pure pages are polluted and while the courts and the criminal offices of investigation record their deeds and actions as the stupidity of shame in their files. People also look at them as degraded and rarely do we find people who give them sympathy or strive towards saving them.

How do I deal with my instincts and capabilities?

Indeed, the human self bears in it the feelings of love and hate; content and discontent; the instincts of food and sex and the love of self and domination; the love of property, the will of dominating over others, all these elements cause man to commit more evil and bad deeds, as much as they cause doing good, and lawful interests.

Thus, the right attitude is to think about the results of the affairs before undertaking any act and also know what results we get from our deeds and positions, be it good or bad.

Likewise, it is also useful to utilize other’s experiments and seek counsel with those whom we trust, such as, father, mother, brother, good friends, our teachers, and experts.

Surely, there are various emotional motives which stir man. It may happen that anger, dislike, and selfishness may cause man to commit crimes or be involved in acts from which he can not get rid of the evil results and may be obliged to make an apology for it.

And it may happen that illusions and imaginations overwhelm man and he begins to have unreal expectations and projects in order to achieve his own wishes or to obtain property, reputation, position and etc... Therefore, he spends too much effort, time, and property without achieving any interest and sometimes, all his efforts may go in vain.

And it may happen that sexual desire and having pleasure lead man towards committing acts and evil behaviours like drinking alcohol, smoking, and having forbidden sex and other acts which may cause him to regret and he will not recognize his mistakes until it is too late.

Indeed, it is wise and mature of personality for man not to repeat the same mistake committed before, and it is also wise and logical not to commit the mistakes made by others. Surely, experiments are but a school which teach man what is right and what is bad. Therefore, one should utilize his own mistakes and the mistakes of others.

In olden times, it is said: “Whoever tries the examined ones,will be afflicted with regret.”

Imam Ali (a.s.) has a remarkable saying concerning reasoning and labour, he (a.s.) says:

“Happy is the one who takes lessons from other’s experiences”1

Respecting Personality:

The most precious thing which man possesses is his personality, and identity which are considered a deposit on his shoulders. Indeed, Allah, the Most High, granted these upon him and also prohibited him from degrading and humilating himself or slighting his efficiency.

Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.), explaining this important principle, says:

“Surely, Allah, the Almighty, gave full power to a true believer regarding everything, with the exception of degrading himself.”2

Among the responsibilities of man towards himself is that of safeguarding his personal file, which covers his social history, and should be clean before authorized offices. This file is indeed made by people and remains forever in the memory of a society, because it is not a polluted file which may spoil not only his reputation, but also causes the owner to fall into shame after a period of time.

On one hand, the areas of respecting one’s self and providing dignity to one’s personality are numerous. On the other, the ways for degrading man’s personality, capabilities, qualifications are just as many.

Thus, lying and transgressing on other's rights are among the causes which insult and offend one's self.

Committing immoral contraventions bring insult and degradation to one's personality.

Accepting humiliation, degradation, and scorn is among the causes which ruin one's self and its value, whether man accepts these for the sake of wealth, sex, entertainment or for the sake of fame or because of cowardness and hypocrisy…etc.

For example, feeling deficiency, and making one's self to be weak, feeble and incapable of undertaking actions, for partici-pating in offerings, inventions and production and being in the service of a society are among the main factors which destroy the personality and its value by its owner.

Indeed, the Almighty Allah has granted man different capabilities, qualifications, and talents. Therefore, man should invest and utilize them not undervalue his capabilities and qualifications.

Allah, the Almighty, never prohibited people from having talents. Some people have the talent of obtaining medical sciences, while others have the ability of learning -languages. Some have the talent of produc-tion, and cultural and technical achieve ments, while others are best qualified in commercial actions. Some have the talent of handcraft and mantual deeds, and others are best qualified in administration activities. Some have the best ability in military actions, others in political fields…etc.

Thus, an individual unveils his abilities through experiments and never slights his own capabilites and qualifications.

It may happen that many people fail and lose in making use of their abilities; practical and ideological capabilites, and psychological tendencies for work and inventions as a result of pessimism and the feeling of incability and introversion. In this way, they kill their own capabilities and wrong their own dues and miss the opportunity to progress and prosperity.

Surely, self-confidence and hope and optimism cause psychological strength and give one's self an energy and cause hidden ability and readiness to be a strong creative power which acts to revive one's self. Therefore, having trust in Allah and self-confidence are the main keys toward labor and progress.

I and the Society:

A society is a group of individuals and communites who are connected to each other by different relations; such as, faith, kinship, common interests, historical relationships and others.

So, every individual feels that he belongs to his own community and society and is a part of it.

Therefore, an individual exchanges interests with the community and society in which he/she lives. Likewise, he/she earns from his family not only morals, behaviour, a way of living, but also, part of his ideology and the way he thinks.

Every individual has his own interests and independent personality, as a society has its own personality and independent interests. Mostly, contradictions take place between the interests of an individual and a society. Therefore, all Divine and man-made laws and regulations give more importance to arranging the relations and solving the contradictions which may occur between the interests of an individual and a group, particularly in the fields in which both individual and social interests contradict each other.

Indeed, all religious teachings are concerned with organizing the civil life of both an individual and a society in order to safeguard human rights and obligations. Furthermore, the studies of ethics and social morals devote their attention to organizing the life of an individual and a society altogether and also equalizing them on moral bases and sound conscientious sense.

Some people are only concerned with achieving their own personal interests without thinking of other's interests.

For instance, a monopolist businessman, a seller and a producer who play with prices, do not think except to achieve their own individual profits. Such people are never concerned with what happens to the poor consumer who suffer high cost of living, problems and crises.

And the one who is in need only thinks of supplying his own needs without thinking of others who may suffer or that their needs remain unresolved.

The one who has a particular political objective only strives towards achieving his personal goals in order to have a position or post. If such a man achieves his ambition, he never cares about what happens to others or their security, living and political sufferings and problems.

And a farmer who possesses agricultural land, but, does not cooperate with others in supplying water in the case of it being available for sowing it.

In fact, these kinds of people never look at issues and problems except through their own interests.

The honorable Messenger of Islam, Muhammad (s.a.w.), specifies this dangerous social problem and such selfishness as being harmful to collective interests. In this regard, he (s.a.w.) says:

“None of you will have faith till he wishes for his (Muslim) brother what he likes for himself.”3

Therefore, the Apostle of Allah Muham-mad (s.a.w.) makes a connection between the mediating of collective interests and leaving the individual selfishness. A selfish man who never thinks of the collective interest cannot be a truthful believer. Whoever thinks not of other’s interests, no one thinks of his interests, either. As a result, the unity and the base of a society will be destroyed.

And if a pure educational and psychological feeling of both an individual, and a group is not achieved and if there is no law to safeguard both the interests of the individual and the group, surely the society will be turned into chaos and selfishness. The majority of the community will become deprived, which also opens the way for the strong to overcome the weak and oppress them even more.

Verily, the conscientious and moral sensation existing in our selves and the supreme Divine principles, altogether, call on us to observe the interests of the group, just as we should be devoted to our specific individual interests. Because most individual interests cause damage to the interests of the community, as a result, we should avoid them.

For example, the smuggling of financial funds attains great financial benefits for those who practise such a kind of work. However, this action causes huge damage to the economics of a nation and its wealth. Therefore, Islamic law forbids and punishes it.

In the behaviour of the pious and the righteous, we find fundamental situations and practical applications with the aim of having a balance between individual and collective interests.

Regarding this practical attitude, Mu’attab, one of the companions of the Imam of the Muslims, Ja’far al-Sadiq (a.s.), was responsible for the Imam’s domestic affairs, and is quoted to have said:

“The Imam (a.s.) asked me when prices were getting high: ‘How much food do we have?’ I told him: ‘We have what is enough for many months’. He (a.s.) said: ‘Take it out and sell it.’ I told him: ‘In Medina, there is no food’. He (a.s.) again said: ‘Sell it.’ Then when I sold it, he (a.s.) said: ‘Buy like the people, day by day.”

The Imam (a.s.) said: “O Mu’attab! Make the food of my family, a half of barley and a half of wheat. Surely Allah knows that I can feed them by wheat in the best way, but, I like that Allah sees me that I have done well in appreciating sustenance.”4

In fact, this story and situation expresses a practical statement about Islam’s concern over collective affairs.

Thus, the Imam (a.s.) refuses to provide sufficiency of food for several months from the market for his own family at one time and store it up in his home, while, for some unexpected circumstances, it is difficult for the rest of the society to provide for their daily needs. He (a.s.) forbids those who are capable of buying great quantities of food in order for it to be available in the markets. Thus, the quantity of supply increase, the supply of food in the market, its price will be decreased and will be easy for all to obtain

it.

Indeed, Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) dealt with this issue, starting from the principle of his concern with the affairs of society as he (a.s.) is concerned with the affairs of his personal family, too. This situation expresses a true picture of belief.

It is worth mentioning here that causing any damage to a society, will not keep an individual, whatever his personal interests are achieved, safe from harm, because man is social in nature and is in need of living in a safe and peaceful society.

What is Right and Obligation

Every existence on this globe has a mutual relation with those things surrounding it. It gives and takes. For instance, man, plant, animals, and nature exchanges benefits like: Oxygen, carbon dioxide, food, warmth, light, water etc...

A man, as an individual, lives with his family and society and deals with others and exchanges interests with them. He has rights on his family and society and his family and society has also rights on him.

Every man has a right and a duty. This is a social equation and law without which no justice and stability can be achieved in a human society.

So, whoever requests his right without performing any duty, indeed, does wrong to others and wants to live as aparasitie on his family and society. At that time all will refuse him.

Surely, a man has the right to live and be provided for with other suitable life necessities. Among his rights also is to have work, freedom of earning, lawful possession and also to have his own share from the advantages of the earth on which he lives.

Allah, the Most High, clarifies man's right in the following verse:

"And the earth, He has made it for (His) (living) creatures." Holy Qur'an (55: 10)

Thus, this earth is made for the whole people. They all should make use of it and no one has the right to monopolize it only for himself or forbid others from it.

Man is a member in this society; so he has the right to utilize its available services and benefits.

Monopolizing benefits, interests and blessings for the sake of some sects or groups and forbidding others from it, is injustice and an oppression against the laws of life and the principles of truth and justice. The Holy Qur'an empahsizes this concept in the following verse:

"Verily, Allah enjoins justice and benevol-ence (to others) …" Holy Qur'an (16: 90)

In this regard, the honourable Messenger, Muhammad (s.a.w.), says:

"People are equal like the teeth of comb."

When people keep silent against injustice and deprivation, its danger will prevail and consequently will reach a stage where some oppressors will not only dominate over the whole society, but also, will oppress them too.

As man attempts to get this right for his own self, so he should also want it for others, and should not keep them away from it.

Man has the right to live in peace and be assured of his life, dignity and property and what is related to them. He should be far from any fear and worry, because to deprive this right is indeed an oppression and an aggression on others and its doer should be punished.

As man has this right, others have it too. When he agitates other's security or causes them fear, or spreads terror and worry among people in a society, indeed, his deed not only causes an aggression on the human society, but also, this will disturb even his own personal security, in the end.

Allah's Apostle, Muhammad (s.a.w.), fixes the base of security and peace in a society by saying:

"A Muslim is a brother of a Muslim. He neither cheats him, nor betrays him, nor backbites

him, nor does his blood, or wealth become lawful to him, with the exception of his own desire."5

Man's value is in his reputation and dignity, and for this reason, Islamic legislation forbids backbiting, slander, causing suspicion, insulting other's dignity by word or deed or by a practice or spying on others or spreading his secrets, or disgracing him.

This law, itself, obligates an individual to respect other's dignity and not to transgress against their personal sanctity.

The Almighty, Allah, says:

"O you who believe, let not people laugh at people, perchance they may be beter than they; nor let women (laugh) at women, perchance they may be better than they. Neither find fault with your own people, nor call one another by nick-names. Evil is a bad name after faith; and whoso runs not, these it is that are they iniquitous. O you who believe, avoid most of suspicion, for surely suspicion in some cases is sin; and spy not nor let some of you backbite others. Does one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You abhor it! Ad keep your duty to Allah; surely Allah is Oft-returning (to mecry), Merciful."

Holy Qur'an (49: 11-12)

As man has rights upon his society, the state, on behalf of a society, should also offer most of these rights to him, such as: the right of learning, protection, security, providing all municipal and health services and others.

And as man has duties towards his society and country and if in case of not striving towards safeguarding the interests of his community, protecting them and performing his -duties specified by the legal and moral laws, social life will face disorder and deter ioration. At that time what afflicts others of losses, afflicts him, too.

How Do We Understand Life?

How do we understand and deal with the life in which we live, and make our destiny?

Man's life is the origin and spiritual, theological and bodily activities practised by man between the periods of birth and death and through which man makes his existence and his self, spirit and personality complete.

Indeed, he will achieve this through what he possesses of life, wisdom, the ability of

being aware of the world surrounding him, perceiving both pleasure and suffering, and recognizing all creatures.

For example: We eat, drink, play, enjoy, with beauty and good things, practise sex, feel love and hate, sadness and happiness, pleasure and suffering, laughing and weeping, despair and hope (be optimistic) when expectations are disclosed before us.

We think and invent; figure out; discover and design things; express our feelings through speech, painting, poetry, happiness and sadness.

We set out with our consciousness and contemplation outside the border of this world, think of its origin and how did it come into existence; then we know the principle of existence and its creator.

We are composed of a spirit, wisdom, body and feeling. All these are granted to us. We make life as a painter paints a picture. Indeed, the life of each of us is an image of his self. So, who wants to disfigure his own picture.

Life is not only an enjoyment and delight, but it is a mixture of grief, and distress, too. It is not a chaos, but a responsibility, a responsibility before the Almighty Allah, first, and before a society and people with whom we live; a responsibility before law and conscience.

Allah, the Most Exalted, says:

“Then certainly We shall question those to whom messengers were sent, and We shall question the messengers.” Holy Qur’an (7 :6)

The Holy Prophet, Muhammad (s.a.w.) says:

“All of you are leaders and all of you are responsible for your subjects.”

The Creator of the existence explains the nature of life and gives us an example which brings it close to our mind. He, the Almighty, explains that it is the process of formation, growth, integration and prosperty and, then, withering, disintegration, and vanishing. Thus, it is the life of every individual in the life world.

“And set forth to them the parable of the life of this world as water which We send down from the cloud, so the herbage of the earth becomes luxuriant thereby, then it becomes dry, broken into pieces which the winds scatter. And Allah is the Holder of power over all things.”

Holy Qur’an (18:45)

Therefore, life, inspite of having an adornment, beauty, entertainment, and pleasure, it is full of events which occur and end, like a plant which originates, grows and flourishes and, then, withers, yellows and changes into dry stalks scattered by winds.

When this stage in man's life ends, another stage of his life begins. This stage is called the world of Resurrection. The world of eternity. The world which neither changes nor vanishes. It is either the world of blessings, beauty and paradise or the world of misery, torment and hell.

What decides man's destiny in the next world is the nature and outcome of his deeds and ideology in the present world as the student's striving and his educational achievements decide the result of examination and his scientific future in this life.

Surely, man paves the way of his life for the next world as he paves the way of the world of the womb to the present world.

The Holy Qur'an, indicating this fact, says:

"Whoever disbelieves will be responsible for his disbelief;and whoever does good, such prepare (good) for their own souls."

Holy Qur'an (30: 44)

For this reason, all Divine legislations are revealed in order to arrange man's activities and behaviours in the life.

Man may be misled towards low desires, entertainments and pleasure or overcome by his self-conceit, ignorance and aggression, therefore, his life will be turned either to the processes of satisfying his low desires or a path leading him towards crime, corruption on earth and worshipping his own pleasures if he is controlled by his selfishness and being admired by his own self.

The Creator gave this life as a gift to man in order to live peacefully and enjoy life's pleasures and its beauties in accordance with the bases of the law of safeguarding life and organizing man's behaviour in a way which enables him to achieve goodness both for himself and his society.

And when man commits a mistake in understanding life, surely he does harm to himself and leads himself towards destruction. He will not feel his mistake except when it is too late.

Millions of human beings are misled by their low desires, and self-conceit into chaos, calamities and regret, but, after being too late.

Indeed, the life of most of them has ended in prisons or suicide or is afflicted with sexual deseases or addicted to drugs, and wandering and worry and loss of happiness.

The institutes of statistics and the reports of private offices, such as, hospitals, psychological sanitariums, and offices contro-lling crimes record astonishing statistics and are themselves best indications of this.

Indeed, our life is a gift from the Most Merciful Allah, so it is obligatory to deal with life on the bases of the law of safety and safeguarding life. It is the Divine law

which forbids what is harmful for us and permits what is useful and good for us.

There are means for understanding life, so we should refer and depend on them. Among them are:

1. The Book of Allah and the path of prophethood. These two, altogether, present for us enough explanation concerning the nature of life. They also provide for us a guide, proof and method in life. It is for us to read them with consciousness and in a scientific and rational contemplation in order to be acquainted with their goodness and wisdom.

2. The second main source for understanding life is science and scientific discoveries. Indeed, science provids us with knowledge and consciousness, and also presents us information regarding what is harmful and what is useful. All its researches and studies came compatible with the Qur'an's teachings of what is lawful (halal) and what is unlawful (haram).

Science has been able to discover the danger of wine, drugs, illigal sexual practices, usury, monopoly, and the advantage of cleanliness, love and having soliderity among family members and their impact on the psychological health of man. And it is the same concerning the effect of faith (iman) in creating happiness, righteous behaviour, getting rid of worry and crimes …etc.

Science, also, participated actively in raising the level of man's consciousness and his understanding of life, developing means of production, providing services, organizing society, and the movement of life. It, also, has a share in solving man's problems in life.

The discovery of electricity, the atom, petrol, radio, television, and the means of the press and transportation…etc. has opened, for man, another consciousness of life. Surely, the more our consciousness and understanding of life increases, the more we are increased in understanding and awareness of religion and the meaning of faith (iman), because science calls for faith and is its fellow in life.

3. Intellect and Experience: Intellect is man's evidence in life. When man uses his intellect in the right way, it will guide him towards goodness and save him from falling into destruction, loss and regret.

Man exercises various methods in his life and thus obtains experiences. So, he should utilize his experiences in his life, and also make use of other's expriences in all fields of life, such as, personal, marital, economic, political, cultural...etc.

Accordingly, the Qur'an calls on us to make use of the previous nations' experi-ments. Because human experiment, the events of the past and history; the outcomes of man's intellect of knowledge, culture, wisdom, manners, constructive arts altogether are gifts participated in enriching life and opening new horizons to be understood.

For that reason, the Holy Qur'an guides us towards making use of the expriences of other nations and individuals and also deeply penetrating into thinking and use of the intellect. It says:

"And He it is who spread the earth, and made in it from mountains and rivers. And of all

fruits He has made in it pairs, two (of every kind). He makes the night cover the day. Surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect."

Holy Qur'an (13:3)

"And We sent not before you any but men, from the people of the towns, to whom We sent revelation. Have they not then travelled in the land and seen what was the end of those before them? And certainly the abode of the Hereafter is best for those who keep their duty. Do you not then understand? Until, when the messengers despaired and (the people) thought that they were told a lie, Our help came to them, and whom We pleased was delivered. And Our punishment is not averted from the guilty people. In their histories there is certainly a lesson for men of understanding. It is not a narrative which could be forged, but a verification of what is before It, and a distinct explanation of all things, and a guide and a mercy to a people who believe."

Holy Qur'an (12: 109-111)

Imam Ali (a.s.), addresses his son Imam Hassan (a.s.), while calling him to make use of other's experiences and consider them and says:

"…so that you might be ready to accept through your intellegence the results of the experience of others and be saved from going through these experiences yourself. In this way, you would avoid the hardship of seeking them and the difficulties of experimenting with them. Thus, you are getting to know what we have experienced and even those things are becoming more clear to you which we might have missed…."6

When we make a safe understanding of life available for our selves, according to Islamic law (Shari'ah), intellect and science, surely, we would be able to deal with them more consciously and successfully.

Endnotes:

1. Mohammad Ray Shahri, Mizan al-Hikmah, vol. 4, Chapter on Sa'adah.

2.Ibid, vol. 3, Chapter on Dhilah.

3. Ibid, vol. 1, Chapter on ‘Haqiqat al-Iman’, p. 395.

4.Kulaini, vol. 5, p. 166, Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyah.

5. Al-Ya’qubi, vol. 2, Khutbat al-Wida’, p. 110, printed in Beirut

6. Nahjul Balaghah, Edited and Published by Ahlul-Bait Assembly of America, p. 219