

Inclining Towards Falsehood

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Man and the Two Inclinations towards Right and Falsehood

Man has two different attractions in two directions; circumstances have to be provided in order to clarify to what man is more inclined when faced with two antagonistic inner attractions towards right and falsehood. Sometimes, the right deed which he carries out is not opposed and is not at conflict with his desire and wish; in this case discharging that work is not difficult. The problem lies where there is antagonism and disagreement between these two pulls; the devil commands one thing and Allah orders other than that, the carnal soul demands one thing and Allah enjoins the opposite of it. It is in these circumstances that man becomes an object of trials and the value of deeds becomes apparent.

In this case, the more the allurements towards sin and the more an individual tramples his carnal soul underfoot and opposes it, the more he will earn reward and that resistance against the appetitive soul has more considerable fruits in the perfection of man's heart and soul.

For the reason that man grows and is nurtured on the laps of nature, he naturally initially feels the sweetness and pleasures of the natural cosmos. His sense of taste is more prepared for the perception of worldly, material and sensual pleasures; it takes long for him to attain a spiritual experience and disposition.

It has been said that right is bitter and falsehood is sweet; but the sweetness of sin and the bitterness of sin is meant for ordinary people, not everyone. Ordinary people, on the basis of their natural disposition, pursue the desires and wishes of their hearts and duties which impose restrictions on them are hard and unbearable. In contrast, falsehood is for them light and easy, because they do not see any hardships and restrictions in doing it.

For example it is very easy for man to utter vain and futile words, but once he decides to say meaningful things, he ought to reflect upon every word of his speech lest he utters void words and it is misconstrued as gossip, false accusation or slander and lest he makes fun of and torments someone. In that case, he meditates about the effects and fruits of his words. But if he wants to utter futile and vain words, he opens his mouth and utters whatever empty words he wishes.

The reason why it has been stated that the bridge over hell is thinner than a hair is because man ought to take the destination and the provisions of this journey into consideration whatever step he intends to take and whatever course he sets foot on along that path. He ought to ask himself whether Allah is pleased with his course or not. He ought to take the motive and incentive of every work into consideration and guard over his tongue lest he utters whatever crosses his mind and he must watch over his eyes to avoid looking everywhere and at everything or everyone.

Without doubt, observance of all its aspects is very hard and equal to performing toilsome duties. In contrast, if man intends to do everything according the futile whims and desires of his heart, he lives easily and with pleasure and sweetness.

Beyond the shadow of doubt, all adversities of the believer are confined to this world and he will not have any pains and hardships in the eternal Garden of bliss:

الَّذِي أَحَلَّنَا دَارَ الْمُقَامَةِ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ لَا يَمَسُّنَا فِيهَا نَصَبٌ وَلَا يَمَسُّنَا فِيهَا لُغُوبٌ

...Who has settled us in the everlasting abode by His grace. In it we are untouched by toil, and untouched by fatigue (Sura Fatir, 35:35)

Not only is the eternal Garden of bliss devoid of hardships and tribulations, and nothing similar to what is in the world exists there but also even the dwellers of paradise do not feel hunger too but, on the contrary, feel appetite for food and derive pleasure from it. In contrast, the nature of this world's life is intertwined with pain and hardships and everyone is confronted with adversities and encumbrances whether he is a believer or unbeliever.

The General Inclination to Sensual and Worldly Pleasures

Taking into consideration the fact that most of the people have an inclination to sensual and worldly pleasures, the point of discourse is that what ought man to do in order to remain on the course of perfection and to have the capacity to fight against materialistic leanings and set foot on the path of right in spite of feeling the animal instincts and pleasures of the flesh in himself? In response to this query, it ought to be said that pleasure-seeking has been embedded in man's natural disposition and man's motivation for doing deeds is the gratification which he brings to hand. We do deeds which please us and keep aloof from what is displeasing to us. We conceive pleasure for ourselves even in the vanity and sin which we do but the way to forsake it is to reflect upon the fruits, consequences and encumbrances which result from sin, or meditate upon the pleasures that are a result of good works.

Even if enduring the hardships of good and right deeds is exhaustive, but still if the pleasing benefits and fruits of good deeds are taken into consideration, bearing those tribulations becomes easy for us. In reality, people have this kind of comparison when performing the hard and difficult chores of life:

The labourer who embarks upon hard work early in the morning with motivation and works up to night time in sweat derives pleasure from enduring all hardships because he is engrossed in thinking about the fruits of his work. The baker who sometimes bakes bread at fifty degrees of heat bears all hardships because he earns a wage with which he procures the needs of his life. When he ponders about the results of his work and conceives that some of his problems in life will be solved, he derives benefit from life and he easily bears the pains of his work. In reality, enduring these hardships is reasonable and all people are such that once they have compared hardships with pleasures, they do that which will grant them more gratification. If they

earn more profit and wages from their occupation, in the end they attain more satisfaction. In truth, they do not directly derive pleasure from the profit and benefit of their labor, but it is a means by which to derive pleasure.

An intelligent man keeps aloof from using drugs and his transient pleasure because he ponders about his long term ill effects. He knows that he will derive pleasure for a few seconds and feels high, but he will be miserable for the rest of his life. If we admit that no matter how sweet and pleasurable sin might be, what consequences and encumbrances it gives birth to—if in the world we are not with bad consequences, beyond the shadow of doubt we will be encountered by them in the hereafter—it is for this reason that we keep aloof from using drugs. We also forsake sin because we fear lest we are entangled in eternal divine retribution because of it.

If we were to reflect upon the entanglements which the sin we are about to commit gives rise to, we would certainly keep aloof from it. In addition to the hereafter, a lot of sins have ill consequences right in this world. Sometimes, one licentious look at a strange person makes the entire life of a person miserable and a household crumbles as a result of that licentious look. This is one of the consequences of sin in this world; the divine retribution and requital of the next world have not yet been inflicted:

فَأَذَاقَهُمُ اللَّهُ الْخِزْيَ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَلِعَذَابِ الْآخِرَةِ أَكْبَرُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ

So Allah made them taste disgrace in the life of the world, and the punishment of the Hereafter will surely be greater, if they knew. (Sura Zumar, 39:26)

Elsewhere, it states:

لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَلِعَذَابِ الْآخِرَةِ أَشَقُّ...

There is a punishment for them in the life of this world, and the punishment of the Hereafter will surely be harder, and they have no defender against Allah. (Sura R'ad, 13:34)

Until man has not gone under the influence of carnal desires and/or anger, he is peaceful and he is capable of reflecting and making decisions and self-inspection so that he may have the ability to resist the temptation to sin. But if he does not pre-decide and pre-meditate, he does not find the opportunity to think at the time of enticement by carnal desires or when overtaken by anger because the intellect is put out once man is enticed by carnal desires.

Besides the carnal desires and anger, the Devil has other means and forces too for misleading man, some of which are social causes: in the society, everyone naturally wants to be like the others. This is a psychological and spiritual cause which appears in man in his early days of life. Of course, this cause, like the rest of the causes, has both negative and positive results. What is necessary is to know the bounds of good and evil and derive benefit from this cause to the correct extent so that man does not blindly follow and imitate.