

CAUSES OF SOUL CHASTENING

Friday sermon by

Dr Mahmud Abul-Huda Al Husaini

Al 'Adiliyya Mosque Aleppo, 13\7\2007

All kinds of immoral corruption have spread on the earth. Aggression has increasingly practiced upon man (killing, cheating and plundering), upon plant, animal, environment, and upon creatures' equilibrium.

Covenants are discarded by whoever wants to rebel, and verified International treaties are thrown aside.

According to this fact, and from the standpoint of the mercy that exists in the heart of every caller to Allah, from the guidance of the Heavenly revelation, and from the desire for welfare, it is inevitable for us to explore the reason that produces the aggressor's aggression, the corrupter's corruption, the murderer's murder, and the thief's theft.

As dwellers on this earth witnessing this miserable reality, It is obligatory for us to look for the main reason that produces all that evil.

It is a crucial question that necessitates a brief and concise answer to point out directly to the wound.

After I appealed to the Holy Qur'an looking for this concise answer revealed by Heaven to present it to the world, I found it briefly stated in the fact that the soul corruption is the source of every evil. When the soul corrupts, everything around it becomes corrupted. On the other hand, when the soul is set aright, everything around it becomes righteous.

This idea is well expressed in the following Exalted Allah's speech:

"whatever evil happens to thee, is from thy (own) soul" (An Nisa',v. 79).

If you consider thoroughly the Exalted Allah's creatures, you find equilibrium and perfection. When you see the types of confusion in heat, climate, animal, inanimate objects, in man, and in nations or societies, you realize the reason of deforming this perfection created by the Exalted Allah. Consequently, deformation is originated by the soul corruption instigated by the Devil:

"I will order them to deface the (fair) nature created by Allah" (An Nisa', v. 119),

and,

"whatever evil happens to thee, is from thy (own) soul"(An Nisa',v. 79).

Thus, soul corruption is the source of all disturbance. The Holy Qur'an expresses this idea quite clearly presenting a general description in the following Exalted Allah's speech:

"Mischief has appeared on land and sea because of (the deed) that the hands of men have earned" (Ar Rum, v. 41).

-If we go deep into the details of corruption, i.e., its types and branches, we find that the Holy Qur'an asserts that soul corruption is the source of murder.

Read the following verse:

"The (selfish) soul of the other led him to the murder of his brother: he murdered him, and became (himself) one of the lost one" (Al Ma'ida, 30).

The soul of the criminal instigates him to murder the others. It makes it easy for him to kill, and it facilitates the abominable deed for him.

His soul encouraged him to kill, so he killed his brother for a mere whim his soul desired. When the soul controls man it makes him commit all sorts of crimes even if it were the killing of his own brother.

-The Holy Qur'an asserts that the spreading of poverty which is a great blight of humanity is caused by soul corruption.

Exalted Allah said:

"And those saved from the covetousness of their own souls, they are the ones that achieve prosperity" (Al Hasher, v. 9).

The soul instigates covetousness which is a sort of miserliness and niggardliness. This bad quality on the part of the penny-pincher makes the poor get nothing good. How can a miser give money to the poor when he is niggardly?

In one of the Sufism books, I read the following beautiful statement related to this meaning:

"The ugliest ugliness is the niggardly Sufist".

That is, the chaste and pure soul can never be miserly and niggardly.

Thus, killing is caused by soul corruption, and the spreading of poverty and destitution is caused by the blights of the soul stinginess and covetousness.

-When the Samirian caused the ordeal of worshipping the calf among the people of Israel after he had made a golden calf and commanded them to worship it, the Holy Qur'an asserted that the cause of this ordeal was soul corruption. It was a trial that changed the way of a whole Ummah, an Ummah that had a long companionship with one of the Apostles of Allah who was the Speaker with Allah.

As is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, when Moses (PBUH) came to the Samirian, the latter confessed his sin saying: "thus did my soul suggest to me" (Taha, v. 96). That is, the Samirian's soul facilitated to him bringing up this tribulation and made it graceful for him, so he did it.

Consequently, the human soul may reach a state in which man trifles with everything, not caring for murder or corruption. the Exalted Allah calls this case *Safah* (impudence). It is a state in which the sinner feels no conscience pricks, nor does he feel the heavy burden of the sin he is committing. However much he steals, corrupts, or commits any kind of evil, he finds himself quite satisfied, which is the description of '*Safah*'. Therefore, the Exalted Allah said in the Holy Qur'an:

"And who turns away from the religion of Abraham but such as debase their souls with folly? (Al Baqarah, v. 130).

This verse refers to the fact that whoever becomes *Safih*, (impertinent) and trifles with everything, will not choose the religion of Allah that is the method of Abraham (PBUH). It is a

religion that calls for directing the heart to Allah inwardly, and worshipping the Exalted Allah outwardly, verbally and practically.

The soul can never get rid of this evil quality (Safah), unless it is engulfed in the mercy of Allah. It is not enough to refer to the blight and disease mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, but it is essential to look for a way of salvation that enables the soul to be saved by the Qur'anic medicine that the Exalted Allah revealed to all people.

As is mentioned above, the soul cannot get rid of its evil qualities unless it is engulfed in the mercy of Allah.

In the Holy Qura'n, the Exalted Allah mentioned what the Aziz's wife said after she had repented and assured the chastity of Joseph (PBUH):

"Nor do I absolve my own self (of blame): the (human) soul is certainly prone to evil, unless my Lord do bestow his mercy" (Jusef, v. 53).

In the Holy Qur'an, the Exalted Allah took eleven oaths to emphasize the value of chastening the soul. He said:

"By the Sun and his (glorious) splendour; By the Moon as she follows him; By the Day as it shows up (the Sun's) glory; By the Night as it conceals it; By the Firmament and its (wonderful) structure; By the Earth and its (wide) expanse; By the Soul, and the proportion and order given to it; And its enlightenment as to its wrong and its right" (Ash Shams, vs. 1-8)

If we want to summarize the practical or educational way mentioned in the Holy Qur'an through which we can attain soul chastening and its good qualities, we find four levels:

1-Reminding the soul of the guidance of the Exalted Allah that is sent through the Heavenly Revelation to mankind on the earth.

Reminding the soul of the Holy Qur'an is when one becomes acquainted with the Holy Qur'an and Snnah. It is when one follows the instructions of our Master, Muhammad (PBUH) as presented in Hadith that is also inspired by the Heavenly revelation. Only then, one is reminded of the guidance of the Exalted Allah whose purpose is guiding all mankind.

Read the following verse of the Holy Qur'an:

"Remind (mankind) hereby lest a soul be destroyed by what it has earned" (Al An'am, 70).

That is, remind people of the revelation Allah sent to you so that they may not be destroyed by their own bad deeds.

"Lest a soul be destroyed by what it has earned", i.e., so that souls may not be destroyed by their own chaos and fall into confusion.

If we want soul chastity to spread, first in ourselves and next among people, we have to remind ourselves of the guidance of the Exalted Allah. We have to present the Holy Qur'an to our souls so that we read it, meditate upon its connotations and learn a lesson from our reading it.

2-Reminding the soul of the Hereafter

This idea is clear in the following verse:

"and let every soul look to what (provision) he has sent forth for the morrow" (Al Hasher, v. 18). 'Tomorrow' means the Hereafter.

The soul should be reminded of the second life after death day and night. Man should always ask himself what he has presented; what provision he has prepared for the second life; what good deeds he has done for the Hereafter. If one desires anything in this world, he should make himself be sure that in the Hereafter he will get whatever he desires, he will see what no eye has ever seen, and he will hear what no ear has ever heard.

If you abstains from realizing a whim that leads to evil in this world, you will find your desire come true in the Hereafter with much more sweetness and perfection in the Hereafter. Read the following verse while you remind yourself of the Hereafter and Paradise:

"Not the slightest sound will they hear of Hell: what their souls desired, in that will they dwell" (Al Anbiya', v.102).

The earthly desire is short and transient, whereas that of the Hereafter is realized by the elements of Paradise. This world is a place for realizing the needs, but the Hereafter is the place of enjoyment and pleasure. Consider the following Qur'anic verse:

"And for such as had entertained the fear of standing before their Lord's (tribunal) and has restrained (their) soul from lower Desires, their Abode will be the Garden "
(An Nazi'at, v. 40-41).

And:

"To them will be passed round, dishes and goblets of gold: there will be there all that the souls could desire, all that the eyes could delight in: and ye shall abide therein for ever" (Az Zukhruf. V. 71).

3- Reminding the soul of the Greatness of Allah

When man reminds himself of the Greatness of Allah, his soul becomes humble and obedient to the Exalted Allah's order. This is clear in the Following verse:

"And do thou bring thy Lord to remembrance in thy (very) soul" (Al A'raf, v. 205).

That is, remind yourself day and night of the Greatness of Allah. Realize the fact that the Great King is Allah, and that He is the One Who controls everything.

Make use of the example of the one who realized the Greatness of Allah in his heart when his brother raised his hand to kill him:

"The (selfish) soul of the other led him to the murder of his brother: he murdered him" (Al Ma'idah, v. 30),

The former said to him:

"If thou dost stretch thy hand against me, to slay me, it is not for me to stretch my hand against thee to slay thee: for I do fear Allah, the Cherisher of the worlds" (Al Ma'ida, v. 28).

He was in a state of glorification of Allah. When such a quality exists in the heart, the soul becomes chastened and purified.

4-Reminding the soul of our Master, Muhammad (PBUH)

The Exalted Allah said:

"The Prophet is closer to the Believers than their own selves" (Al Ahzab, v. 6).

We should convince ourselves that what the souls inspire us to do is mostly not good, while what our master, the Messenger of Allah recommends us to do is perfectly good, because the Prophet (PBUH) is closer to us than our own souls. He (PBUH) never commands me to do but good. Sometimes, the soul may command us to do good, but at another time, it may instigate us to do evil. On the other hand, the Messenger of Allah commands me only to do good. Therefore we should adore the Messenger of Allah, love him and follow his steps. We should not prefer what our souls dictate us to do to what our Master, the Messenger of Allah, commands us to do.

When we apply the following four levels, i.e., reminding the soul of the Holy Qur'an, of the Hereafter, of the Greatness of Allah, and of the beloved and lover, the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (PBUH), if we change all these into a practical method, we shall find an apparent and outward change derived from that inward change:

"Verily never will Allah change the condition of a people until they change it themselves (with their own souls)" (Ar Ra'd, v. 11).

Allāhum...Guide us to You favorably, and make us from those who listen to wisdom and follow the best of it.

I say my words and ask God's forgiveness.

