

Abstinence

Abstinence is the key to the door of the next world and freedom from the Fire. It consists of leaving everything which could distract you from Allah without regret, nor feeling proud about leaving it, nor waiting for relief from your renunciation, nor seeking any praise for it. Indeed abstinence means a person considering such things to be of no avail to him: he deems their passing him by as a relief and comfort for him, and their presence as a misfortune for him; thus he always flees from misfortune and clings to what brings him ease and relief. The man of abstinence is the one who chooses the next world. He chooses abasement over might and this world, striving over rest, hunger over being full, the well-being of what is to come later over immediate trials, and remembrance over heedlessness. His self is in this world and his heart is in the next world.

The Messenger of Allah said, 'Love of this world is the fount of every error;' and elsewhere, 'This world is a corpse; whoever seeks it is like a dog.' Do you not see how it loves what Allah hates? What error is a greater crime than this?

One of the Holy Prophet's family said, 'If all of this world were a morsel in a child's mouth, we would have mercy on him. What then is the state of someone who throws the limits set by Allah behind his back, seeking and desiring this world? If the dwelling place of this world had been any good, it would not have shown you mercy, nor answered you, and would have bidden you farewell in departure.'

The Messenger of Allah said, 'When Almighty Allah created this world, He commanded it to obey Him and it obeyed its Lord. He told it, "Oppose the one who seeks you and give success to the one who opposes you."' It acts according to what Allah charged it to do, and what He impressed upon its nature.