

Lecture 9: Lust And Anger Must Be In Accordance To One's Intellect And Divine Decree

We said that Allah, with His perfect wisdom, gave man two powers, lust and anger. If these two powers are in congruence with the third power, intellect, man will be successful. He will achieve bliss in this world and the next. Man will reach perfection if these two powers are used in the middle course, the course accepted by both the intellect and the divine decrees given to us by the prophets. Man will fall if he acts in excess. He will leave the human world and enter the animal world. According to the Qur^{ān} he will be even lower than animals.

Physical And Spiritual Benefits Found In Food

Eating too little is when all of the necessary food products do not reach one's body. A person who eats too little does not benefit from the good things that Allah created for him. One must benefit from food both materially and spiritually. When one eats *halāl* food it will both strengthen his body and strengthen his soul. The reason for this is that there is a little bit of Allah's perfection in the food. Man must eat sweet fruit and pay attention to who created the fruit. He should think about the power and wisdom He must have had to make these fruits from water and dirt. He should thank Allah and increase his love of Him. One should benefit from the delicious food that Allah has made. So, one has lost both physically and spiritually if he does not benefit from food.

Worshipping One's Stomach

Eating too much is worshipping one's stomach and going after complete comfort. It is eating with out even thinking about it, just like an animal fills his stomach. ¹ Excess in the amount of food is eating more than what is necessary and excess in the types of food is eating many different varieties of food without thinking about their physical or spiritual benefits and harms. Eating in excess is eating without thinking.

One, While Eating, Should Remember That Allah Blessed Him With This Food

One should remember the One who blessed him while he is eating at the dinner table. It is good to say 'in the name of Allah' (*bismillah*) before taking every bite of food. One should not eat food that Allah's name has not been pronounced over.² The late Sayyid bin Tawoos (r) acted in accordance to this verse with every type of food, even though it is only obligatory to recite the name of Allah when slaughtering an animal. If one intentionally does not say *bismillah* while slaughtering an animal the animal will fall under the category of a dead body and its meat will be forbidden to eat. The Sayyid acted according to this with all types of food. For example, the Sayyid would not drink milk if the person who milked the cow did not start by saying *bismillah* or he would not eat bread if the baker did not start by saying *bismillah*.

A servant who knows reality, who thanks Allah when eating, is not only aware of Allah while he eats, but he is aware of him whenever he is benefited by anything.

The Middle Course In Marriage And Anger

One way to be excessive in marriage is not to marry at all. This is against man's nature and the creation of mankind. Men and women marry for social reasons, building a family and procreating. Being excessive on the other side is marrying or performing the act more than the necessary amount.

Anger has also been discussed. When one does not use his anger enough he is indifferent to crimes committed against him. He does not care if his property is stolen, if his life or honor is taken, or if one of his loved one's life is taken. This same person is indifferent when he sees sin. He does not help the oppressed and does not try to stop the oppressor.

What is excessive anger? We are going to talk about this; this is a very important subject especially for the general public. Excessive anger destroys one's life in this world and the next. For this reason it is important for all of us to know what it is and act according to whatever we understood.

The Prophet (S) Never Had Personal Anger

Anger can be excessive either because of how one became angry or how one showed his anger. Anger becomes excessive when one becomes angry at a time when neither the intellect nor the divine decree allows it. An example given earlier is one becoming angry at someone who did not have a choice in what he did. This is against the intellect and against religious law. Another case is when one does not act according to another's expectations. Why did you have expectations so that you would get angry when someone acted against them?

The Messenger of Allah (S) never had personal anger directed at someone who acted against what he

(S) wanted. The Prophet's eyes were always divine; he would become angry at disbelief, corruption and sin.

Imam 'Alī' (A) And 'Amr Bin 'Abd Wudd

Our Imam's also acted like this. Everyone has heard that 'Amr bin 'Abd Wudd spat in Imam 'Alī's (a) face when they were at war. Imam 'Alī (a) did not kill him at that moment; instead he waited for a little while and then chopped his head off. After people asked him why he hesitated, he said that if he would have killed him at that moment he would have been acting according to personal anger which is wrong.

Tribalism

Another kind of anger is coming to the aid of some one with whom you have some kind of relationship even though he is in the wrong. For example, if a person in your family commits a crime and you help him only because he is a member of your family. One must help the oppressed not the oppressor, even if the oppressor is one's child.

Sometimes people help out members of their own gang, even if they are oppressors, just because they are from the same gang.

Tribalism Is Against The Divine Decree

Imam Sajjīd (a) said that negative tribalism is when a person thinks that a bad person from his tribe is better than good people from another tribe.³ They think that a terrible person is good only because he is a member of their tribe or family.

Loving One's Family And Tribalism Are Two Different Things

I will also mention the point that one must love one's family. This is a natural feeling that Allah put in man. One must also love one's friends. He must help his family and his friends, but what is disliked and bad is helping out a friend or a family member even when he is an oppressor. One must help his family and friends, but not in oppression. One must not differentiate between family members and other people when it comes to oppression. One must always act in accordance to justice.

Imam Sādiq (a) said: "The army on the right side is just and the opposing army acts in accordance with tribalism." One must help the oppressed even if one's son is the oppressor and even if his help will hurt his son. One must help the oppressed even if the help that he gives will hurt his own self. The Qurān says the following about this: ***"Stand up for justice... even if it is against your own selves."***⁴

For example, suppose one of your friends or relatives got in a fight and he was in the right. Here you should give witness to help your friend or relative. But, if you know that the other person was in the right

you must give witness against your friend or relative. This should not be exclusive to the courtroom, but in any case that you must give witness. One should not forget about the person who is in the right because of personal issues.

Justice

If man is not just he is an animal. He will not pay attention to who is in the right and who is in the wrong. We must make a pact to pay attention to who is in the right, even if it is our enemy.

So, the opposite of tribalism is justice. One must become angry at oppression, no matter who is oppressed, and at the oppressor, no matter who he is. Here, one must put his personal feelings aside.

[1.](#) Refer to 47:12

[2.](#) Refer to 6:121

[3.](#) Shaykh 'Alī Namāzī, Mustadrak Safīnat al-Bihār, volume 2, page 199.

[4.](#) 4:135.

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