

On Envy

“Do they envy people for what God hath given them of His bounty”? (Qur’an Chapter 4: verse 54).

Envy is the third basic evil; and itself is a product of pride, greed and anger. It is the most foolish of all evils. Every evil has some attraction to catch the eyes of mankind, except envy. It has no immediate or long-term benefit, no comfort, no sweetness. On the contrary, an envious man burns his own heart, wastes his own time thinking why God has given such bounties to my neighbor, and keeps awake the whole night imagining that neighbor as ruined. But all this wishful thinking affects nobody but his own psychology and health. It is a fire which burns the fire-maker only.

The inner layers of envy are worth studying. Why a man indulges in this most futile exercise? Does he think that God should consult him before bestowing His grace upon someone else? Does he imagine that he is a partner of God, and that nothing, especially no good, should happen on the Earth without his consent? If not so, then why so much heart-burning on the decisions of God? On the other hand, does he think that God’s grace is a limited quantity which must be taken away from one to give to another. If not so, then why envy your relatives or friends? Why not ask God to bestow His grace upon you also as He has done with them?

Envy ruined Satan when he began burning his heart on the status of Adam. It destroyed Cain when he became envious of his own brother Abel. Therefore, the Holy Prophet has said: “Envy eats away the good deeds as fire eats away the wood”.

Islam has prescribed a medicine for this spiritual sickness: love. It shows the way towards the Love of God through the love of His creatures. The best person in the eyes of God is that who is the best for the creatures of God.

It also emphasizes that the real grace and bounty is not that of this world. The bounty and grace in the life-hereafter is the real one. Therefore, you should not make the comforts of this world ultimate goal of your life. Your aim must be the ‘Eternal Grace of God’. That grace cannot be obtained by envy; it may be obtained by love. Love of God, love of His Prophet, love of the family of the prophet, love of your parents and your relatives, love of your neighbors, love of your brothers in religion, love of your fellow human

beings – these are some aspects of love which are stressed by Islam, to make a man free from envy and spite. Let the ‘love’ conquer ‘envy’, and be a real Muslim.

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