

The Twenty- third Talk

1. Suspicion

Today's discussion is about misunderstandings. Misunderstandings are like serious illnesses and play a major role in destroying homes. There is nothing more lethal in rendering a home barren than the element of misunderstanding amongst its inhabitants. Families should therefore abstain from allowing misunderstandings to take roots in their midst.

2. Misunderstandings Crop Up

Misunderstandings crop up because of *waswasa* (repeated, unfounded doubts or fears). Sometimes Satan gains control of a person's mind, rendering him worse than a hypocrite or a show-off. In other words he becomes Satan in the garb of a human being! Satan enslaves his thought-process, and the person does whatever Satan wants him to do

Sometimes Satan is also able to dominate the hearts of certain people. According to the Quran, this person then becomes an idol worshipper. This means that his heart becomes a slave to his desires, rendering him a *fasiq* and *fajir*. According to the Quran, this person becomes a Satan worshipper, not a servant of Allah. We read in the Sura Yasin:

أَلَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ يَبْنَىءَ آدَمَ أَن لَّا تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ

Did I not charge you, O ye sons of Adam, that ye worship not the devil - Lo! He is your open foe!
(Sura Yasin, 36: 60)

O children of Adam, did you not promise Allah that you would not worship Satan? Then why are you worshipping Satan now? This verse shows us that a Satan worshipper is actually a person whose heart is enslaved by Satan. Satan eradicates the love of Allah from this person's heart, and corrupts his thoughts. This type of a person is a Satan worshipper. When Satan is able to dominate over a person's

power of thinking, it is known as *waswasa* (repeated, unfounded doubts or fears), and this person is called *waswasi*. *Waswasa* is of two types: One of these is the *waswasa* of thought, which is the topic of today's discussion. Another type of *waswasa* is the *waswasa* of action. Sometimes even pious people are inflicted with *waswasa* of action. They experience *waswasa* in worship – regarding purity (*taharat*) and impurity (*najasat*), prayer, fasting etc. We shall talk about this later, inshaallah. Anyway, when Satan is able to control a person's power of thinking, he creates *waswasa* in his mind. The affected individual is then ruled by evil and wicked thoughts. If a person becomes inflicted with the *waswasa* of action, the individual commits lewd and wicked acts. *Waswasa* affects him at the time of action. Both these conditions are fraught with danger. In both these situations Satan overwhelms the thought-process of the persons. In the view of Imam Jafar al Sadiq, this condition is nothing short of madness. A man came to meet Imam Ja'far al Sadiq (a.s.), and started praising someone. He praised the man for being intelligent and then mentioned that the man was affected by *waswasa*. The Imam (a.s.) smiled and said, "This man is a slave of *shaitan*. If he is asked whether his deeds are godly or evil, he himself will tell you that his deeds are evil."

3. Effects Of Waswasa: Negative Thoughts

One of the harmful effects of *waswasa* of thought is that the affected person always takes the negative view of things. Some people don't see anything positive about themselves or those around them. They take a negative and morose view of everything. They never think of the strengths they or those around them have, but are always complaining about their failings and weaknesses. These are the persons who are always pessimistic about themselves, their friends and the society at large. This is a very harmful condition and, in many people, it is a result of *waswasa*.

Another harmful effect of always having negative thoughts is that the individual is unable to progress. He is unable to reach perfection. This attitude is also a big sin. Negative thoughts are like the flies which search for some filth to sit upon even in a garden in full bloom. If your body and the clothes are clean, flies will not sit on them. But if there is some dirt or a suppurating wound on the body, flies get attracted to it. Some men, too, are like the flies. They excel in carrying negative thoughts. .

One should abstain from negative thoughts. The wives should think positively about their husbands. Similarly men should not allow the shortcomings of their wives to dominate their thoughts. Don't be on the look-out for her flaws; don't hanker after dirt like flies. Instead you should always be in search of flowers like a nightingale. You should search for her positive qualities. On the whole, a human being is unfaithful. Even if you always treat your wife well, a single episode of misbehaviour is enough to make her forget your past good behaviour. Similarly, if a good wife misbehaves one day, her husband forgets all her past kindness. This shows that humans are not faithful. Even the Quran complains about this aspect of human nature:

قُتِلَ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا أَكْفَرَهُ

4. Grief

Another symptom of *waswasa* of thought is that the person gets fed up with life and remains sad. If the person is pious, he wonders why he has come into this world. He thinks it would have been better if he had not come into the world. If this person is not religious and is not afraid of Allah, then he commits suicide. Such events are more widespread in the Western world. This is the result of *waswasa* of thought. The affected individual is always lost in thought, and when he is unable to come to a conclusion, he becomes fed-up with life and ends up committing suicide.

A question asked, usually by the youth is: why have we come into this world? According to the psychologists, the source of this question is *waswasa* of thought. Such questions are asked by unhappy people, who are fed-up with life. They don't know the reason for their existence in the world. If you try to make them understand, their *waswasa* of thought does not allow them to be satisfied with your replies. If you present them with proofs and arguments, they will still insist that it would have been better if they had not been born. I am unable to recollect the name of the author who wrote that one morning when he got up, he found the morning to be sad and gloomy. He was still pitying the day when he happened to glance at the newspaper. He read two news items which were completely opposite to each other. The first item was about a man who had slashed his stomach with a knife and had thrown out his intestines, saying that he wanted to be without his intestines for just a minute. He died after one minute. The other item in the newspaper was an article by a lady. She wrote that, by the Grace of Allah, as soon as she woke up in the morning, she found a pleasant day coming her way. She thanked Allah for giving her life and yet another opportunity to stand before Him. The author then began to think about the source of the lady's happiness, that man's suicide and his own grief and depression. He came to the conclusion that all the negative thoughts had their source in *waswasa* of thought. In other words, it can be said that tiredness, lack of understanding and *waswasa* of thought affect our lives.

5. Suspicion

The worst effect of *waswasa* of thought is that the person becomes suspicious. First he is plagued with bad thoughts about his own family, and then gradually this extends to the society. If this malady progresses further, he starts doubting Allah, the Holy Quran, the Prophet (s) and his Progeny (a.s.). These doubts ultimately turn him into an unbeliever. Suspicion is from *shaitan*. *Shaitan* makes a small beginning, but as soon as man gives him an opportunity, he takes man to the seventh level of Hell. He will not settle for anything less. In addition, *shaitan* even ridicules man and says, "you have reached the depths of Hell yourself, what do I have to do with you?" Suspicion, driven by *waswasa* of thought, starts on a low scale, but soon escalates to the extent that one even starts suspecting Allah and the *Ma'soomeen* (the infallible ones.)

6. The Dangers Of Suspicion

The biggest danger of suspicion is that it may lead one to sin. Because of *waswasa* of thought and suspicion, the affected person sees others as sinners and bad characters. He, then, wants to punish them. We come across many youth who are pleasant, and have even participated in the (Iranian) revolution, but suspicion has turned them into sinners. They even accuse the scholars and pious people of disbelief (*kufr*). Because this sin can attract the death penalty, they end up murdering innocent men of piety and religious scholars. Suspicion can lead man to commit such sins. Suspicion arises from *waswasa* of thought. Do not underestimate a sceptic. Sometimes, the sceptic becomes involved in a strange type of madness. For example, a man suspects his wife. This is a great sin. Or, for example, when a man enters their path, the husband tells his wife, "He is making passes at you." This man talks like insane people. Sometimes the wife suspects her husband, although he has become so old, he is devoid of carnal desires. But the moment he steps into the house, she creates a hue and cry and accuses him of maintaining a second wife secretly. "Where else could you have gone all this while?" she asks him.

There is a story making rounds in the society. A husband and his wife were sleeping on their terrace. As you may be aware, at night, a row of stars points to the Kaaba. The husband asked the wife, "What is the significance of this row of stars". The wife replied, "People say that it shows the way to the Kaaba. When hajjis lose their way, these stars guide them to the correct path." As soon as the man heard this, he started beating his wife and said, "Now I know why you make me sleep here. Your intention is to hand me over to the hajjis. After they kill me, you want to marry again". This is probably just a story, but a man once told me about a couple. The husband was a victim of *waswasa* of thought, and the wife was a victim of *waswasa* of action. When the couple consulted this man, he turned to the lady who had *waswasa* of action regarding purity and impurity (*taharat and najasat*), and told her that your problem is suspicion. If you follow my advice continuously for six months, you can be cured. It was then that he became aware of the husband looking at his wife in a strange manner. He even refused to consult this man and left. After a few days the husband telephoned the man and said, "I have understood what you were trying to tell my wife. You were trying to tell her to divorce me, marry you and stay with you for six months. Then you would cure her". It is as if the husband was insane. There are many persons with such disorders. When husbands and wives doubt each other, they assume their spouse to be a thief. For example, the husband spends some money and forgets or it falls out of his pocket, while he was unaware of it. When he can't find the money, he pins the blame on his wife and considers her to be a thief. He considers her to be a thief, an adulteress, a shameless woman. Even the wife can suspect her husband of these things, if she becomes entangled in *waswasa* of thought. This is a major sin about which the Holy Quran says:

وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَٰئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا

(O man), follow not that whereof thou hast no knowledge. Lo! The hearing and the sight and the heart--- of each of these it will be asked. (Sura al-'Isra', 17: 36)

O men! Do not talk about matters without knowledge. Don't assume things. Don't suspect others. Your eyes, your ears, and even your hearts will be questioned on the Day of Reckoning about these suspicions and these wrong thoughts! On that day, the organs of your body will bear witness against you. A husband suspects his wife but does not let her know, neither does he tell anybody, even then, when he will be brought to the grounds of Judgement, his heart will bear witness against him that he used to suspect his wife in the world. Islam has strictly forbidden doubting others. A good Muslim should act on his conviction and not on doubts. The Holy Quran says:

وَظَنَنْتُمْ ظَنَّ السَّوْءِ وَكُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا بُورًا

... And ye did think an evil thought, and ye were worthless folk. (Sura al Fath, 48: 12)

A society where people doubt each other is on its way to destruction. Their lives in this world and the Hereafter will be bleak. These days this ailment is very prevalent. May the person die who, like the silkworm, weaves a cocoon of suspicion and conjecture so that he can hide within it. I appeal to my audience to remember and recite this verse whenever any doubts crosses their minds:

قُتِلَ الْخَرَّصُونَ

الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي غَمْرَةٍ سَاهُونَ

Accursed be the conjecturers

Who are careless in an abyss! (Sura Zaariyaat, 51: 10 – 11)

Like the silkworm, a person who remains trapped in the cocoon of his doubts and wrong thoughts will suffocate to death. According to a tradition, the Prophet of Islam (s) faced the Kaaba and said, "O Kaaba! You are much respected! But respect for a believer (*mu'min*) exceeds the respect for you. Allah has declared only one thing *haram* with regard to you. But for the *mu'min* He has declared three things *haram*:

1. He has declared killing an innocent human *haram*.
2. Usurping a *mu'min*'s, property is *haram*.
3. Entertaining doubts about a *mu'min* is *haram*."

The Prophet (s) has placed murdering people, usurping others' property, and suspecting people, on an equal level. If, God forbid, you suspect your wife and utter even one sentence about it to your innocent

wife, she will never forget this sentence, even if she is always willing to forgive and forget. If the character of a woman of good character is suspected, not only will this destroy the love in her heart, but it will also sow the seeds of hate in it.

It is said that the husband of a suspicious wife came home late. The wife opened the door and told him to go back to the place where he had spent his evening. Saying this she slammed the door shut in his face and went back into the house in a huff. The man went to a hotel, rented a room, and had his dinner. The next morning he rented a house and married a second wife. He returned home after about a week. He told his first wife. "My dear, I have reached the place you had sent me to. From today, one night is for you, one night is for her – that is if you want it this way, otherwise one night is for you and two nights are for her."

Yes! Men toil so hard that sometimes they develop calluses in the soles of their feet. Still they work to provide the comforts of life to their wife and children. Even after all this if the wives suspect their husbands, it goes to show that the suspicion is not a product of their intelligence, rather it is the work of someone else.

وَإِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لِيُوحِيَ إِلَىٰ أَوْلِيَائِهِمْ لِيُجَدِّلُوكُمْ وَإِنْ أَطَعْتُمُوهُمْ إِنَّكُمْ لَمُشْرِكُونَ

Lo! The devils do inspire their minions to dispute with you. But if ye obey them, ye will be in truth as idolaters. (Sura al An'am, 6: 122)

When Satan whispers in the ear of a person, goading her to do wrong, an intelligent person should not cause the destruction of her house and loose the love of her husband by paying attention to such senseless talk. May Allah protect men and women from becoming suspicious of their spouses. Being suspicious of ones spouse is a very big sin. Usually, the woman does not suspect her husband of adultery; she accuses him of re-marrying on the sly. But if the husband suspects the wife of adultery and tells her so, the jurist can order a punishment of anything between 29 and 79 floggings. Such suspicions are major sins and it is regarding this that the Quran says: May you die. Therefore it is imperative that there are no suspicions in the family. One should not be suspicious even while dealing with persons outside the house.

Sometimes suspicion leads one to spy on others. Spying is such a major sin that the Prophet of Allah (s) once said, "O those people whose faith is limited to their tongues and has not reached their hearts, do not spy! Do not search for defects in others. If you spy on others, Allah will humiliate you. Even if you are very intelligent, suspecting others will lead you to spy on them. Inquisitiveness and curiosity can sometimes become the cause of wrongdoing. For example: a woman standing at her threshold finds an unfamiliar young man entering the door of the neighbour's house. If she is a good Muslimah, she should assume that the young man must be their relation or visiting them for some errand. But if she spies on her neighbours and, God forbid, spreads it among the people, it will give rise to innumerable ills. Imam

Husayn (a.s.) has said slitting the throat of a person is a lesser sin than causing separation between a husband and wife. Some people pretend to be very religious and pious, and yet they perpetrate such acts. They run the gossip mill and cause the destruction of happy families. They ruin the respect and reputation of families and cause divorces. These people want to do good but end up doing evil.

The Prophet of Islam (s) used to repeatedly say that one should always have a good opinion about his *mu'min brother*, and always be his well-wisher. One should always try to hide the flaws of his *mu'min* brother. Try all the possible ways to hide his shortcomings. If one method does not work, try the second. If it fails try a third, but don't give up. Tell yourself: what kind of a Muslim am I that I can't even hide the flaws of my brother-in-faith? Do we ever adopt this method? I appeal to those of you who can understand the message of the Holy Prophet and his infallible progeny to the pious people; your Prophet (s) is telling you not to be curious. Gossip mongers flit around in search of stories about others. Many people are inflicted with this disease, whether they are businessmen, soldiers, or workers – this scourge is found in everybody and it is found especially in ladies. This is a sin which is not just equal to killing someone, it is equal to taking out all the blood vessels from his body. Then why should we indulge in this act?

Inquisitiveness and gossip is a major ill, but there is a simple cure for this as well! This can be done by adopting the dictum of forgive and forget! Even if one notices a defect in his wife, he should think positively about it. When he does this, he is literally slapping *Shaitan*, who then goes away. Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) says, "Slap him on his impious face! When you slap him, when you refuse to heed to his whisperings, he will run away. If you give credence to his talk, then the accursed Satan will gradually overwhelm your thought-process and turn you insane. The ailment is serious, but easily curable. The ailment will destroy your world and your Hereafter, but each one of us can easily cure himself. The cure lies in giving no importance to suspicion and gossip.

إِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا

Indeed conjecture is no substitute for the truth (Sura Yunus, 10: 36)

The Quran says that suspicion is of no use. Those who are suspicious aren't following the Quran.

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