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32) Suspicion

One of the other vices, which creates division among Muslims and will cause backbiting, slander and telling lies and will ruin human beings, is suspicion.

Moralists have said: This vice shows a man's inner evil nature. When a person is wicked, he has the impression that others are wicked too. How can a person possibly guess that his friend's words and behaviors are hypocritical? How can he pass such a judgment when he cannot read other people's minds?

Sometimes, we can get to know the inner feeling of a person through indications, yet it is very difficult. How do we know that we are right? How do we know that we have not made a mistake?

How do we know that we have not been tempted by Satan who is always in ambush to create division among Muslims, to create enmity and to mislead human beings? It is for the same reason that God says: ***"And follow not that of which you have not the knowledge; surely the hearing, and the sight and the heart, all of these, shall be questioned about that."***[1]

Therefore, no one has the right to be suspicious of others. Man should never allow his thoughts to go unrestrained. He should always observe Taqwa in relation to suspicion. In this relation, God has said: ***"O you who believe! Avoid most of suspicion, for surely suspicion in some cases is a sin."***[2]

Nevertheless, the Lord of the universe has not forbidden every suspicion, for in certain conditions, it is good and even recommended like having a good opinion of God, of people, of religious rules and fatwas.

The occultation of Imam Mahdi (AS) is an example. The only kind of suspicion, which has been prohibited and it requires Taqwa, is one's suspicion of God and people.

Imam Ali (AS) has been reported by Imam Baqir (AS) as saying: "Assume what your brother says as true. Never suspect him when there is a reason for good intention."[3]

The Messenger of Allah (SAW) has been reported as saying: "God Almighty has forbidden shedding the

blood of a Muslim, seizing his property and being suspicion of him."[4]

In Kashf al-Ghummah, Shaqeeq al-Balkhi has been reported as saying: "In the year forty-nine (A.H.), I went to perform the Hajj. When I reached Qadissiyyah, I noticed that many people were on the way to the Hajj. My look was cast on a good-looking thin young man with a dark face. He was wearing a woolen garment with a cloak on it, wearing sandals and withdrawing from people. He was sitting by himself. I said to myself: 'This young man must be a Sufi. Surely, he will be a burden on people. By God, I will go and reproach him.' When I approached him, he said: 'O Shaqeeq! Avoid most of suspicion, for surely suspicion in some cases is a sin.' He said this and walked away. I said to myself: 'This is not a normal thing! How was he aware of my feeling? How did he know my name? He is but a righteous servant of God! I should go and ask for forgiveness.' Therefore, I went after him but could not find him.

I did not do anything until we reached another station where I found him praying. He was anxious and tears were flowing from his eyes. I said to myself: 'This is the same person I am looking for.' I waited until he completed his prayer. I went to him to ask forgiveness when he said: 'O Shaqeeq! Recite this verse: ***"And most surely I am Forgiving to him who repents and believes and does good, and then continues to follow the right path."***[5]

He said this and walked away. I said to myself: 'This young man must be a saint, for he read my mind twice.'

I saw him no more until we reached Zubalah. I saw the young man with a pail in his hand and standing near a well to draw some water when suddenly the pail fell into the well from his hand. The young man raised his head towards the sky, saying: 'You are my Lord! You make me satiate whenever I get thirsty, and you provide me with food whenever I feel hungry.' Then he said: 'My Lord, my Master! I have no pail other than this. Do not take it from me!' By God, I saw that the water of the well gushed up. The young man took the pail, filled it with water, performed ablution, offered a four-rak'a prayer, went towards a hill of pebble, took some pebbles, put some in the pail, shook it, and drank from it.

I went to him, greeted him, and he answered my greeting. I said: 'Bless me with what God has blessed you with!' He said: 'O Shaqeeq! The manifest and hidden blessing of God has always been with us. Therefore, have a good opinion of your Lord!'

He gave me the pail, and when I drank from it, it was so sweet that I had never drunk such a good-smelling and wholesome drink in all my life. I was satiated in a way that I did not feel any need for food or water for days. I did not see him until we arrived in Mecca. At midnight, I saw him performing prayers near the Zamzam Well with weeping and in a humble state until it was dawn. He sat down on his prayer rug, glorified Allah, performed the Morning Prayer, rose up and circumambulated the Ka'ba seven times, and then, he went out.

Following him, I found that he had several servants. Contrary to his being alone on the way, people had gathered around him and respected him with great honor. I asked one of them: 'Who is this young man

who is being respected so much?' I was said: 'This man is Musa ibn Ja'far (al-Kadhim) (AS).' I said to myself: 'All these wonders are not strange from this honorable man!"[6]

From what we said, we infer that we should never be suspicious of a person from whom we may see something strange, especially when we know that Satan is always at work to tempt human beings and to create doubt in them.

Moralists have said: Satan is an evil doer. God has said: ***"If an evil doer comes to you with a report, look carefully into it."***[7]

But, why human beings are so easily affected when they are exposed to temptations? Islam has considered the words of four just persons necessary in our daily life, whereas we sometimes listen and do according to the words of an unfaithful, evildoer.

Suspicion in relation to what we hear requires more Taqwa, for it has been proved that most of what we hear may not be true. In our time, there are many baseless rumors that are often heard, but when they are examined closely, they are found to be false. It is for this reason that it has been recommended not to take seriously all what we hear.

Imam Ali (AS) was asked: "How much is (the distance or difference) between the truth and the untruth?" He said: "(As the distance of) four fingers (joined together)." Then, he put his hand on his ear and two eyes, saying: what your two eyes see is the truth and what your ears hear is untruth."[8]

In Nahj al-Balaghah, Imam Ali (AS) says: "Untruth is that when you say: I heard, and the truth is that when you say: I saw it."[9]

Man should keep himself away from where he may be exposed to suspicion. He has to observe Taqwa in this connection.

Imam Sajjad (AS) has been reported as saying: "Safiyyah daughter of Hayy ibn Akhtab, who was one of the wives of the Holy Prophet, reports: 'When the Messenger of Allah (SAW) was undergoing seclusion in the Mosque, I went to visit him. After dinner, I set out towards home and the Messenger of Allah (SAW) accompanied me for a few steps while speaking to me. A man from the Ansar saw us together. The Messenger of Allah called him, saying: 'O man of the Ansar, this is my wife, Safiyyah!' The man said: 'I was not suspicious of you!'

The Holy Prophet (SAW) said: 'Satan runs in our veins. I feared that he might tempt and ruin you.'"[10]

Allahmah Naraqi says: "There are two guidelines in this story; first, to avoid suspicion and second, to keep away from being exposed to suspicion even if you are a prophet. A verse of poetry recites:

"The eye of satisfaction ignores every defect,

But the eye of spite shows all vices.”

Of course, there is an exception to the message of this poetry; it is when oppression and cruelty rule over people. In that case, whatever man sees is cruelty and treason, and he cannot notice justice. Here, man may have a pessimistic look, unless he sees the opposite.

Imam Hadi (AS) has been reported as saying: “Whenever justice overcomes injustice, it is unlawful to be suspicious of others, unless you see the contrary. But, when injustice overcomes justice, no one has the right to have good opinion of others until he sees something good from them.”11

1. Qur'an, 17:36.
2. Qur'an, 49:12.
3. Al-Kafi, vol. 2, p. 362.
4. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 72, p. 201.
5. Qur'an, 20:82.
6. Montaha al-Aamaal, vol. 2, p. 212.
7. Qur'an, 49:6.
8. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 72, p. 196.
9. Ibid., p. 197.
10. Mi'raj as-Sa'adah, p. 182.
11. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 72, p. 197.

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