Al-Islam.org
Ahlul Bayt Digital Islamic Library Project
Published on *Al-Islam.org* (https://www.al-islam.org)

Part 9: Effect of Spiritual Factors

The forgoing examples of the causes and the factors affecting destiny were concerned only with the material factors and their effects. We took into consideration only the material and perceptible aspects of the events, for from material angle only these factors and their causative relations are worth consideration. But from spiritual angle and reality is not confined to matter and body and their physical reactions and susceptibilities. The world of events has a more complicated structure and there are many more factors which contribute to an occurrence.

From material angle it is material factors only which cause death, provide means of living and bring about health, happiness and success. It is material factors alone which prolong or damage health and ensure or destroy happiness. But from religious point of view there are other factors also, known as spiritual factors, which are working side by side with the material factors and which affect every aspect of life.

From spiritual point of view the world is a living and conscious unit. All human deeds produce reactions. It is not immaterial to be good or to be bad. Human deeds, whether good or bad produce certain reactions in the world and the individual concerned himself is sometimes affected by them during his lifetime.

To cause hurt to a living being, whether a man or an animal, especially to the persons of such privileged position as that of father, mother, teacher etc. brings about evil consequences in this very world. Requital is a natural system. The consequences and effects of the human deeds are a part of the manifestations of fate and destiny. The cases of the interrelation between the events and this phenomenon can be explained only by the doctrine that this world is a living and conscious unit. They cannot be explained by materialistic way of thinking.

In accordance with the spiritual thinking the world sees and hears. It listens to the cry of the living beings and responds to them. That is why prayer is an effective cause. It produces certain occurrences and prevents certain others. In other words, it is such a manifestation of fate and destiny which may determine the ultimate lot of an event.

The Holy Qur'an says:

When My bondmen question you concerning Me, then surely I am nigh. I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he cries unto Me". (*Surah al-Baqarah*, 2:186)

The Holy Prophet (s) has said: **"Prayer changes even confirmed destiny".**

Similarly charity is another factor which is a manifestation of fate and destiny and which is effective in changing the fortune.

On the whole, vice and virtue, repentance and impenitence, justice and injustice, prayer and curse and the like are things which affect human beings in regard to their life, health, means of living etc.

Imam Sadiq (a) has said: "The number of those who die because of committing sins is larger than the number of those who die their natural death, and the number of those who live because of doing good deeds is larger than the number of those who live because of their real age".

The idea is that the sins shorten life and the good deeds prolong is. They change the appointed time and death. They change the destiny though, as we have pointed out earlier, this change is also a part of the divinely ordained destiny.

Here we cannot enter into the discussion as to how the spiritual matters affect the material things and how the system of causation works in this respect. That will require deep philosophical discussion. Anyhow, the philosophical view expressed in this connection agrees with what is indicated by the religious texts. In the present context we do not propose to dwell on the conditions under which the spiritual causes, such as prayer and charity and similarly injustice, tyranny and infringement of the rights of others are effective and create reactions. Perhaps a voluminous book can be complied on the cases of human experience in this connection.

At present we only want to point out that the sequence of causes and effects in the world is not confined to material and perceptible phenomena.

Source URL:
https://www.al-islam.org/man-and-his-destiny-murtadha-mutahhari/part-9-effect-spiritual-factors#comment-0