

Discourse 22: Misguidedness

قِيلَ لَهُ الْإِمَامُ السَّجَّادُ يَوْمًا: إِنَّ الْحَسَنَ الْبَصْرِيَّ قَالَ: لَيْسَ الْعَجَبُ مِمَّنْ هَلَكَ
كَيْفَ هَلَكَ؟ وَإِنَّمَا الْعَجَبُ مِمَّنْ نَجَا كَيْفَ نَجَا. فَقَالَ: أَنَا أَقُولُ: لَيْسَ الْعَجَبُ مِمَّنْ
نَجَا كَيْفَ نَجَا وَ أَمَّا الْعَجَبُ مِمَّنْ هَلَكَ كَيْفَ هَلَكَ مَعَ سَعَةِ رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ! S?

One day, it was said to Imam as-Sajjad (as): 'Hasan al-Basri has said, 'I am not amazed how the person who is destroyed (by Allah) is destroyed; rather what is truly amazing to me is the one who is saved (by Allah) and how he is saved!

[I am not surprised how a person deviates from the straight path (as this is quite easy); rather, I am surprised how a person attains true guidance]. The Imam (as) retorted, 'Rather, I say that it is not amazing how the one who is saved (by Allah) is saved, rather that which is amazing for me is the one who is destroyed (by Allah) and how he is destroyed with the vast mercy of Allah being present!'"¹

This tradition points to a very important topic as there are some people who have developed a habit of pessimism and negativity in their lives. In today's terminology, they see everything as being dark and gloomy. They state that by keeping in mind the ever presence of Satan – the one who is seeking to misguide everyone – and the lower desires, passions and the corruption of the time we are living in, it is an amazing feat for a person to be saved from all of these things. In essence they are saying that our original state is that of corruption and pollution by sins and that true guidance is that which goes against the 'natural state' of life and if this develops, then it is something amazing!

In our opinion, people who think in this way actually have Satanic thoughts running through them, and thus Hasan al-Basri is also one of those people who had Satanic thoughts in his mind!

The story of him and his encounters with Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib (as) are well know. On one occasion, Imam 'Ali (as) had said to him: "Why did you not take part in the Battle of Jamal?"

Hasan al-Basri replied, "I went forth to take part in the Battle of Jamal, however I saw a person yelling that both the killer and the one who is killed will be in the hell fire."

In reply, the Imam told him, "Definitely it is Satan, your brother, who made this claim so as to misguide you!"

During the time of Imam 'Ali (as), one of the things which led to others being misled was Hasan al-Basri himself – a man whom the Ahluls Sunnah consider as one of the Jurisprudents and commentators of the Qur'an!

The intimate friends of Allah (SwT) do not think in this way and without doubt, the Muslim scholars too must not think that people are destined for perdition! Rather, they must let everyone know that all people are worthy and deserving of salvation since the grand and expansive Mercy of Allah (SwT) is that which led to 124,000 Prophets being sent and was the reason for the Divine Heavenly Books coming to us – especially the Qur'an. In addition to this, Allah (SwT) has given humanity, brains and if they were to use this asset, then they would definitely take control over their soul.

Humanity has also been granted the pure nature (Fitrah) which is something else that contributes to one's guidance. The person has also been granted a conscience which is the best authority and judge over himself. In addition to all of this, Allah (SwT) has also given humanity lessons to learn from which everyone can see and understand. The signs of Monotheism and the greatness of the Heavens and the Earth are full of His Signs. With all of this, what else is needed for guidance?

If we were to put a single hair under the lens of a microscope and analyze it in, we would see that one strand of hair is enough to recognize Allah (SwT) – thus, what can we say about the eye, heart and brain and the great way in which they have been designed! In addition, what about the plants and the over 15,000 different types of animals which live in the oceans, rivers and seas – all of these things point to Allah (SwT) and are a way for us to gain guidance.

Imam Musa b. Ja'far al-Kadhim (as) once told Harun al-Rashid:

كُلُّ مَا تَرَاهُ فَهُوَ لَكَ عِظَةٌ

"Everything that you see around you is a lesson (which you can learn from)."

The mercy of Allah (SwT) dictates that the signs of guidance must be present in the world for everyone. Therefore, it should not be a surprise that one attains salvation, as our original state is that of salvation and not destruction!

One of the forms of the evil whispering of Satan that affects young and old and even affects some of the

religious scholars is when one says that this present time has become corrupt. Such people give up all hope and feel that they have no responsibility left as they cannot do anything to change the time they are in. In reality, thinking in this way is merely the act of 'passing the buck' – removing the responsibility from one's own shoulders and placing it on someone else's and looking at the world in the eyes of Hasan al-Basri by stating that it is not possible for mankind to attain salvation which is incorrect!

The true believer must be just like Imam 'Ali b. al-Husayn as-Sajjad (as) and must say that it should be no surprise that people are saved (from destruction), rather the true surprise is when a person becomes misled. Therefore, we must always be looking forward to salvation and work hard for this.

We should think about the period of the Bani Umayyah since their era was actually better than the period in which we are living today. It was a period full of spiritual darkness, however at the same time, the Imam still said that it should not be surprising if one attains salvation (even in such a difficult time).

We pray that we are able to understand this lesson from Imam 'Ali b. al-Husayn as-Sajjad (as) and that we do not seek to remove ourselves from the responsibility which Allah (SwT) has placed over us!

1. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 75, pg. 153

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