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20. Does 'Injury by an Evil Eye' Possess any Reality?

In verse 51 of Suratul Qalam, we read:

وَإِنْ يَكَادُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيُزْلِقُونَكَ بِأَبْصَارِهِمْ لَمَّا سَمِعُوا الذِّكْرَ...

“And those who disbelieve would almost smite you with their eyes when they hear the reminder...”

In view of the above verse the question that arises is: Does injury by means of an evil eye possess any reality?

Many people are of the belief that some kinds of eyes possess a peculiar influence such that if they happen to look at something in wonder, they destroy it or break it, and if they happen to look at a person, they can make him sick or (even) insane.

According to the intellect, this is not something which is impossible. Many of today's scientists believe that concealed in some eyes lies a special magnetic force which possesses great utility, such that it can even be developed by means of training and exercise; the magnetic sleep is induced by means of this very magnetic force of the eyes.

In a world wherein x-rays are able to perform tasks, the like of which even the most destructive of weapons are unable to perform, acknowledging the presence of a force in certain eyes that is capable of influencing someone by means of some special waves should not appear to be fantastic.

It has been widely reported that people have personally witnessed individuals, possessing this mysterious power of the eyes, to have incapacitated humans, animals and things by injuring them by

means of 'evil eye'.

Thus, not only should one not insist on rejecting such issues but instead acknowledge the possibility of their occurrence – scientifically and intellectually.

In the Islamic traditions too, various expressions meet the eye which, to a certain extent, corroborate the existence of such an issue.

In a tradition we read that Asma Bint 'Umayy once said to the Noble Prophet (S): “At times, some people inflict injury to the children of Ja'far by means of 'evil eyes'. Should I procure a charm for them?” (Charm means prayers, which people keep in their possessions to protect themselves from 'evil eyes'; this is also referred to as ta'widh).

The Noble Prophet (S) replied:

لَوْ كَانَ شَيْءٌ يَسْبِقُ الْقَدْرَ لَسَبَقَهُ الْعَيْنُ.

“Yes (there is no harm in it). Had there been something that could have superseded Divine fate and destiny, it should have been 'evil eye!’”¹

In another tradition it has been reported that the Commander of the Faithful (a.s.) said: The Noble Prophet (S) secured a charm for Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn (a.s.) and recited the following supplication:

أُعِيذُكُمْ بِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ التَّامَّاتِ وَأَسْمَائِهِ الْحُسْنَى كُلِّهَا عَامَّةً مِنْ شَرِّ السَّامَّةِ وَالْهَامَّةِ وَمِنْ شَرِّ كُلِّ عَيْنٍ لَامَّةٍ وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ.

“I place you in the refuge of all of the Perfect Words and the Best Names of Allah (s.w.t.) from death, harmful animals, evil eye and from the evil of the envious when he envies.”

Then turning to us, he (S) said: “Likewise Prophet Ibrahim did the charm for Isma'il and Ishaq.”²

In Nahjul Balaghah we read:

الْعَيْنُ حَقٌّ وَالرُّقَى حَقٌّ.

“Injury by the evil eye is true and resorting to prayers to ward away its evils is true too.”³ and 4

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1. Majma'ul Bayan, vol. 10, pg. 341
 2. Tafsir Nurul Thaqlain, vol. 5, pg. 400
 3. Nahjul Balagha, Short Sayings 400. This tradition has also been narrated as: العين حق in Sahih Bukhari, vol. 7, pg. 171 in the chapter العين حق. In the book al-Mu'jam al-Mufahhras Li-Alfadh al-Hadith al-Nabawi, (vol. 4, pg. 451) this same meaning has been reported from various sources.
 4. Tafsir-e-Namuna, vol. 24, pg. 426

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