

Envy

Dear Muslims, envy or destructive jealousy (Hasad) is among the most destructive emotions or feeling which a man may have towards his fellow human being. It causes him to wish evil for others and to be happy when misfortune befalls them. It is one of the first sins to be committed and one of the three origins of sins, which are, arrogance, assiduousness and envy. Arrogance led Satan to disobey Allah; assiduousness led Adam to eat from the tree and, as consequence, to be abandoned from paradise and brought to the earth, while envy drove Adam's son, Qabil, to kill his brother, Habil.

In addition to driving Qabil to kill his brother, envy was the reason behind throwing Prophet Joseph down to the bottom of the well "**They said: "Truly Joseph and his brother are loved more by our father than we: But we are a goodly body! really our father is obviously wandering (in his mind)";** and also reason for which the Jew did not join Islam "Quite a number of the People of the Book wish they could Turn you (people) back to infidelity after ye have believed, from selfish envy, after the Truth hath become Manifest unto them: But forgive and overlook, till God accomplishes His purpose; for God Hath power over all things"

Taking the above mentioned incidences into consideration, it is clear how far one can go in doing wrong if he let his envy to drive him. It is also clear that the attitude of envy is not healthy for the community. Because Islam is concerned about the community, envy is strongly prohibited. Allah asked his prophet to seek refuge from the envy "**Say: I seek refuge with the Lord of the Dawn * From the mischief of created things; * From the mischief of Darkness as it overspreads; * From the mischief of those who practise secret arts; * And from the mischief of the envious one as he practises envy"** Al-Falaq.

Prophet Mohamed also ordered us not to envy and showed us that it destroys our faith, belief and deeds. **(Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: Avoid suspicion, for suspicion is the gravest lie in talk and do not be inquisitive about one another and do not spy upon one another and do not feel envy with the other, and nurse no malice, and nurse no aversion and hostility against one another. And be fellow-brothers and servants of Allah.) Narrated by Muslim.**

(Alzubair Ibn Al-Awam reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: You have been afflicted with the illness of the nations that came before you – jealousy and hatred. They are the shearers, I do not mean shearers of the hair, rather they are shearers of the religion) Narrated by Al-Termithy

Fundamentally, envy occurs when someone else attains power and authority; otherwise the one who is performing actions is not normally envied, even if this person is blessed with far more food, drink and wives than others, as opposed to these two blessings of power and authority, for they cause a great deal of envy. This is why you find envy directed at the People of Knowledge, who have a following among the people, but you will not find it directed to others who do not have such a following. Similarly the one who attracts a following due to his spending his wealth is envied more than the one who doesn't do that, even if the one who does not spend money on people has more wealth.

Envy can be divided into two types:

1) Unrestricted dislike of the blessings bestowed upon the envied. This is the type of jealousy which incurs blame. When one hates something he is then hurt and grieved by the existence of what he hates. This becomes a sickness in his heart such that he takes pleasure in removal of the blessings from the envied even if this does not result in any benefit to him except for the single benefit of having the pain that was in his soul removed. In fact, this pain is not totally removed as it come back when the same blessing, or another similar one, returns to the envied.

2) That the person dislikes the superiority of another person over him, and he desires to be like him or better. This type of jealousy has been called *ghubta*, and the Prophet (PBUH) called it hasad in the hadeeth reported by both Al-Bukhari and Muslim from the hadeeth of Ibn Mas'ood and Ibn 'Umar, that the prophet said: **(There is no envy (hasad) except in two cases: a person to whom Allah has granted wisdom, and he rules by this and teaches it to the people, and a person to whom Allah has**

granted wealth and property and along with this the power to spend it in the cause of Truth.). These are the wording of Ibn Mas'ood. The wording of Ibn 'Umar is, **(A person to whom Allah has given the Qur'an and he recites it night and day, and a person to whom Allah has granted wealth and property from which he gives in charity night and day.).**

The generality of mankind have been tried with this second type of envy that has also been called competition, because two people compete in a single desired matter, both of them trying to attain the same good. The reason for their trying to attain it is that one of them dislikes that the other be blessed with this matter over him just as any one of two competitors dislikes that other beat him. Competition is not considered blameworthy in general, rather it is considered to be praiseworthy when competing for righteousness.

As Muslims, we are commanded to compete for delights and rewards given by Allah in the Judgment Day but not for the delights of this fleeting world. This is in total agreement to the hadeeth of the Prophet (PBUH), for he forbade envy except of the one who has been granted knowledge and he acts according to it and teaches it, and the one who has been bestowed wealth and spends it (in the way of Allah). As for the one who has been granted knowledge but does not act upon this knowledge, or the one who has been bestowed wealth but does not spend this is obedience to Allah, then such a person is not to be envied and neither is his condition to be hoped for, for he is not in a state of good that is desirable, rather he is being presented with punishment. He also allowed jealousy for the one who has been given a responsibility and he fulfils it with knowledge and justice, and fulfils the trusts of its owners, and judges among people by the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Dear Muslims, jealousy is a sickness that affects your faith and deeds as mentioned in hadeeth reported by Abo Dawood from the Prophet (PBUH) that he said, **(Jealousy eats away at good deeds, just as fire eats away at firewood, and giving charity extinguishes sins just as water extinguishes fire.).** This is because the envier dislikes the favours of Allaah bestowed upon His servants. However, no one is clear of jealousy as Shaikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah said: **"Nobody is free from Hasad, but the noble person hides it whilst the base person shows it."**

And, hence, we need to know how to control and cure ourselves when we encounter such feeling. Imam Al-Ghazali, may Allah have mercy on him, said in his book (Al-Ihya') after a number of pages on envy and its dangers, "Be aware that envy is one of the most dangerous diseases of the hearts, and there is no medicine for the diseases of the heart except with knowledge and deeds".

As to the knowledge that treats the disease of envy is to know without any doubt that envy is dangerous for you in this life and for your religion. You should also know that there is no danger from it on the envied person neither in this life nor for his religion. On the contrary, the envied person will benefit from it. The fact that envy is dangerous for your religion is because with envy, you hated Allah's predestination and hated his blessings that He divided among his servants. You hated His justice that He established in His world for certain wisdom. You contested that and objected it, and this is against the true oneness and belief. In addition to that, you would have shared with Satan and the rest of the non-believers their love for the crises to fall upon the believers and for the blessings to go away from them. These are evils in the heart that eat up the good deeds and erase them like the night erase the day.

The fact that envy is dangerous for your life comes with the fact that you suffer from your envy in this life and you are tortured by it. You will always be in sorrows every time you see the blessing of Allah on the envied person."

And as to the deeds that would treat envy, you should control yourself and for everything that you did in the process of your envy for someone else, like any saying or action, you should now strive to do the opposite; if envy had driven you to say something bad about your envied person, then strive to make your tongue complement him, and if it had driven you to look down upon him, then act with humility and apologize to him, and if it had driven you to stop doing good things for the envied person, you should push yourself to do good things for him.

Then, Imam Al-Ghazali said: "These are the medicines for envy, and they are very effective, but they are bitter on the hearts, but the effectiveness is in the bitter medicine, so whosoever cannot be patient with the bitterness of medicine cannot get the sweetness of the cure."

We ask Allah to clear our hearts from envy or hate, forgive us and bless us both in life and after death. Amen