

Sin: The Obstacle in our Path

Dissecting the spirituality of Muslims to unravel underlying causes to our moral decadence is ever on the increase, and with good reason. The Ummat has always been confronted with different challenges, but presently the crisis we face has reached gigantic proportions. Undoubtedly the Ummat-e-Muslimah is at a moral crossroad, and making the going all that much heavier is the amount of sin that has straddled our already over-burdened shoulders. In fact, not only is it the large amount of sin that blocks our spiritual path, but also the extreme insensitivity towards breaking the laws of Allah.

What is sin? Sin can be defined in several ways. Sin is breaking the Law of Allah, or failing to fulfil one of His Commandments. Sin is committing an act that displeases Allah Ta'ala. Sin is also transgressing Allah's Limits, or violating His Rules. It is also a sin of extreme proportions to trample on the rights of others. From the examples mentioned hereunder, these definitions will become very clear.

Let us first proceed to outline the harmful and detrimental effects of sin. As mentioned above, few of us actually realize the ill-effects of sin and its adverse and negative impact on our lives. Centuries ago, the spiritual doctors of Deen had analyzed the ill-effects of sin on the lives of Muslims, and the harms that develop in its wake. These spiritual guides did incisive analysis of the Ummat's spiritual predicament, in the light of Quran and Sunnah. They found that breaking the Law of Allah resulted in a host of worldly as well as Deeni difficulties, the effects of which linger on almost for lifetime. Almost all the strife and misery that we suffer in this world can be attributed to wrong-doing against Allah, and disobedience to His Rasool (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam). That is what the structure of sin collapses into: Disobedience to Quran and Sunnah.

THE EVIL EFFECTS OF SIN IN OUR WORLDLY LIVES

We now enumerate some of the harms of sin expounded by the Doctors of Roohaniyyat or Spirituality. Most of these are derived from the Quran and Sunnah, whilst others have been learnt through experiences of people.

Physical and bodily weakness.

Fear of the enemies of Islam, or fear of enemy in general. A hadith states that weakness and fear for enemy eventuate from two sins: love of the world and forgetting about death. (Mishkaatul-Masaabeeh)

Paranoid fear of one's surroundings and environment. For example, the Holy Quran has attributed this outcome to the sin of consuming ribaa or interest.

Poverty, which strikes through zina (adultery and fornication). (Ibni Majah) This poverty can either appear in a physical sense, i.e. depletion of finances and money; or it can become apparent in an economic sense, i.e. money will be plentiful but will be totally bereft of blessings. So in spite of having lots of money, people will still be suffering financial woes and will still be deep in debt. This form of financial strife is mainly precipitated by the devastating sin of RIBAA. Ribaa has destroyed economies.

Plagues, epidemics, and diseases that were unheard of in the past. This too, is the result of the sin of zinaa. (Ibni Majah) It therefore comes as no surprise to hear about Aids, Hiv, and all these newly-founded sicknesses that threaten the lives of people.

Drought and famine. This arises from neglect of zakaat, or cheating in business dealings, as the hadith of Ibni Majah mentions.

Oppression of rulers on their subjects. This stems from deceit and fraud in business matters.

Invasion by an enemy from outside Muslim circles. This ill-effect comes as a result of breaking pledges and agreements. Internecine strife (fighting among each other) results from Muslims leaders who do not rule according to the Law of Allah and openly transgress Shariah in their rule. The sin of the rulers thus affects the entire populace. Today, the heart-breaking events unfolding in Libya and other Middle Eastern countries are directly linked to such blatant violation of Shariah.

Waswasa or doubts in matters of cleanliness. This ever-increasing phenomenon is due to one not taking precaution in avoiding urine in the toilet (Bukhari) as well as urinating in the bathroom (Raddul-Muhtaar). It is the view of the writer that the common practice nowadays of having the bathroom and toilet in one cubicle comes within the purview of this prohibition. And Our Allah knows best.

Weakening of the heart, i.e. losing courage and bravery.

Lacking courage to do good deeds.

Avoiding pious and good people, and finding solace in evil people and evil places.

Addiction to further sin. The chief cause of this is lack of taubah. When people don't repent sincerely, then they fall further into sin. This is because the hadith says each time a sin is committed, a black spot appears on the heart. If the individual repents, the black spot disappears. If not, the blackness increases until it completely overwhelms the heart. That is almost the point of no return.

Affliction by Shaytaan and Jinn. The Holy Quran states that this disaster is spurned by neglecting the recitation of the Quran and the Thikr of Allah Azza Wa Jall.

Disunity and in-fighting among Muslims. This harm is caused by a number of factors as mentioned in Quran and Sunnah. For example, not straightening the saffs at the time of jamaat salaah, disobeying The Messenger of Allah, neglecting the all important duty of Amar bil-Marooif and Nahi anil-munkar, arrogance and pride, conceit, sticking

stubbornly to one's opinion regardless of whether it is wrong or right.

Disunity is also caused by gheebat, slandering people, treating people harshly and with disrespect,

Not being able to differentiate between good or bad, or confusing good for bad and vice versa. This eventuates from abuse of trust and neglect of sunnah. (Bukhari) This is very serious, for such a level of sin means that the doors of taubah are almost closed for that individual.

Natural disasters like earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, etc. These disasters sometimes occur when good people associate with evil sinners but do not take steps to stop or prevent open perpetration of sin and violation of Allah's Commandments; and not even a frown appears on the faces of the good. In a hadith of Hazrat Ayesha it is stated that earthquakes strike a community when it openly commits zina, consumes wine, and indulges in music and singing.

Distortion of Islamic Belief. This disastrous situation is prompted by indulging in the sin of bid'ah.

Hypocrisy or hypocritical behaviour. The hadith says that listening to music inculcates hypocrisy in the heart. With the preponderance of music in our shops, offices, shopping malls, and on our cell-phones, it's a small wonder that people are generally disposed to the behaviour of munaafiqs.

Some sins have a spin-off that results in other sins, thus widening the field of harm and detriment. For example, one who suffers from nifaaq or hypocrisy will swear in an argument, lie in a discussion, break a promise, and abuse trust.

Dying without ieman. This is undoubtedly the worst type of harm that could befall a believer through sin. And the people who face this serious risk are those addicted to wine, drugs, and intoxicants, for they are perpetually drunk or on a shaytaani 'high'. If death comes at that moment, they will die in state of drunkenness. Likewise, people who live in haraam, either by shacking up with a woman out of wedlock, or working in haraam vice-dens like gay clubs and brothels, or peddling drugs and wine, are all susceptible to losing their ieman at the time of death. May Allah Ta'ala protect us from all these evils. Losing ieman at death can also be the result of disobedience to parents.

Bad-luck and misfortune in life. This is caused by hurting parents and being disobedient to them. Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) declared this as one of the seven deadly sins, along with adultery and murder.

Nazar or the evil gaze that affects the health of people. This happens to young girls who go out with the hair and body exposed, or girls who are always ogled at by young boys with gazes of lust and desire. This detrimental effect strikes at the mental, physical, and emotional well-being of victims. Even adult women who do not cover up when appearing in front of men run the same risk of being affected by nazar. According to some Ulema, as mentioned by Allama Aini and other scholars, many natural deaths in the Muslim community are caused by the ill-effects of nazar! Alas, people do not realize this.

Laziness and lethargy in doing good deeds. This develops through eating and drinking haraam.

Disgrace and humiliation that is imposed on Muslims by their enemies. This disastrous situation is a result of neglect of Jihad. That means those who despite having the capability of waging Jihad and the resources to launch the Jihad, still refrain from doing so due to worldly pursuits and indulgences.

Losing children to vices such as drugs and intoxicants occurs as a result of parents neglecting the proper Islamic tarbiyah of their young ones.

Losing children to outsiders who befriend them, and sometimes mislead them is the result of parents inability to communicate with love, wisdom, and tolerance with their offspring.

Occurrence of fitnah among Muslims, such as loss of wealth and worldly stability, enmity towards each other, loss of true Islamic belief and practice: These harms accrue when Muslims take the Jews and Christians as their bosom friends.

Misguidance and lack of direction in Deen: This stems from disrespect to Ulema. When enmity against Ulema reaches extreme levels then this can result in death without ieman, for Allah has said that he declares war on those who oppose His Auliya (Bukhari).

Just like sin brings in its wake devastating worldly effects, good deeds produce beneficial worldly results. In a future publication of Al-Farouq, we will enumerate some these benefits as well, insha Allah.