

YAQEEN INSTITUTE FOR ISLAMIC RESEARCH

40 HADITHS ON SOCIAL JUSTICE

LECTURE NOTES

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Chapter 21: Greed

The Root of All Social Injustice

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Jabir b. Abdullah (ra) reported that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: Be on your guard against committing oppression, for oppression is a darkness on the Day of Resurrection, and be on your guard against stinginess for stinginess destroyed those who were before you, as it incited them to shed blood and make lawful what was unlawful for them.

[Sahih Muslim]

عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ اتَّقُوا الظُّلْمَ فَإِنَّ الظُّلْمَ ظُلُمَاتُ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَاتَّقُوا الشُّحَّ فَإِنَّ الشُّحَّ أَهْلَكَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ حَمَلَهُمْ عَلَى أَنْ يَسْفِكُوا دِمَاءَهُمْ وَاسْتَحَلُّوا مَحَارِمَهُمْ

[صحيح مسلم]

Introduction

- The Hadith tells us that greed was the reason nations were destroyed and caused people to murder each other and to violate each other's sanctities.
- In another Hadith the prophet (ﷺ) said in a sermon: Beware of greed. It destroyed those that came before you. First it caused them to spill each other's blood. And then it caused them to break off family relationships. It ruined families. And oppression is darkness upon darkness on the day of judgement.
- In Sahih Bukhari it is narrated that the prophet (saw) would say: Had the son of Adam be given a valley of gold then he would try to use that valley of gold to attain another valley of gold. And if he was given a second valley of gold then he would use those two to attain a third valley of gold. Nothing would fill the mouth of Adam except for dirt. (nothing would end that greed except his death) And Allah forgives those who repent.
- Connecting these hadiths, the prophet (s) said it starts with greed and it plays itself out in every dimension of social injustice. It tears apart your relationships. It causes you to disregard another person until you would kill another. If you let your greed go

unchecked it will ruin every relationship you have. It destroys communities, families, and you as an individual spiritually.

Greed

- The prophet (ﷺ) said, I'm not worried about you going into poverty. I'm afraid you'll kill each other over money.
 - The trial of this nation is wealth. When trying to attain as much wealth and power as possible, everything in front of you becomes a way to either attain wealth, or as a hindrance to you for attaining wealth. You stop seeing people as people. Allah said, you have been destroyed by quantity.
 - It just doesn't destroy you but it destroys your communities. Shuh is the greatest enemy of social justice. It's what caused Adam to slip from paradise. It's what doomed Iblis. It's what doomed the first son of Adam. If you look at the first parties in the story of man and creation, greed is what tripped of everyone in some manifestation. It's a gradual process-I just want this. You're likely to not respond with gratitude but end up wanting more.
- Adam wanted one more tree. Iblis wanted one more rank. The son of Adam wanted one more thing that his brother had that he didn't. For each of them, they just wanted one more.
 - Sufyan Al-Thawri said Adam sinned out of desire and Iblis sinned out of pride. Desire is natural.
- The Prophet (s) also said about Shuh: The dust in the cause of Allah (battle) would not be combined with the fire of hell.
 - Faith and greed can never be combined in the same part of man. Greed expels imaan out of man.
- Greed makes every expendable in the cause of what you want. Imaan is the constant renewal of wanting Allah's pleasure. Your imaan will diminish if you don't constantly renew it. when you're in the pursuit of greed, the love of Allah will vanish. Faith should overtake greed. You realize I'm not supposed to be that attached to this

world in the first place. If I have imaan I'm not going to pursue this world at the expense of Allah.

- The resources of this world are finite and that often means you have to take something from someone else. Who's more likely to be greedy-someone who doesn't have or someone that has? Greed usually afflicts those who already have. You already have a lot and that's when you become diseased with shuh.

Richness

- Some of the companions were very wealthy. Abdul Rahman Ibn Awf had so much when would come into town there were so many camels that came with him the people would think it's an opposing army. He was once heard doing tawaf around the kaaba and he was making dua-Allah protect me from the greed within me. He said it for all seven circles. He understood that his pursuit could lead him against his deen.
- It's from the mercy of Allah that he doesn't allow you to be rich. He's protecting you from yourself.
- If you think of the corporate or wall street crimes, it's in the pursuit of greed. It's the greatest fitnah of this ummah.

Stinginess vs. Greed

- What's the difference between stinginess and greed? In the arabic language there is a difference between the two. Shuh (greed) is the extreme want of it-strongly coveting it-trying to pursue something you don't have. Stinginess is after you attain something, you are extremely protective of it. Shuh precedes stinginess. If you have a lot and you find it easy to let it go, that lack of stinginess shows that you've conquered greed.
- Surah Adiyat: Verily man is ungrateful to his lord.
 - His pursuit becomes severe. Allah then takes you to the grave. You don't stop until you're in your grave. You can put whatever you want on top of your grave, you're still going in the dirt.

- The prophet (s) said, The worst two qualities a man can have-an alarming level of greed and an unrestrained cowardice.
- What's the relationship between these two qualities. The relationship between being a coward and stingy-in both you're going into self preservation. If a person is overcome by greed they lose any sense of integrity. Greed does away with all sense of principle. A person has to conquer greed within themselves.

Conclusion

- The people without greed and stinginess prefer others to themselves, even to their own detriment.