

## What Do Faith and Deviation from the Normal Path Mean?

### The Difference Between Faith and Deviation from the Normal Path (*Fisq*) Lies in the Prioritization of Beloved Ones

What do we know about faith and deviation from the normal path in life?

Are we currently on the path of faith or deviation?

How important is this matter?

We constantly make choices in life, and our most important decision is between faith and deviation from the normal path.

Considering that all of us, without exception, seek happiness and peace in life, our most important choice is one that secures our happiness and peace. Moreover, as eternal beings, we have come to this world for a short period and then will return to God. Therefore, there is nothing more important than our bliss in eternity. Through the free will that God has granted us, we determine our status in the eternal realm ourselves; thus, our most significant choice in life is one that guarantees our bliss in the hereafter. From this perspective, we conclude that the choice between the two paths of faith and deviation is our most important choice in life because choosing between faith and deviation not only influences the level of our happiness and peace in this world but also determines our status in eternity. The path of deviation from the normal path or *fisq* in the world is accompanied by sadness and anxiety and leads to misery and Hell, while the path of faith brings happiness and peace in this world and guides us toward our ultimate destination,

which is eternal bliss. Linguistically, *fisq* means deviation and departure from balance, while faith signifies peace and assurance of heart.

Knowingly or unknowingly, we all choose one of these two paths in the world; consequently, all human beings are divided into two general categories: believers and *fasiqs*.

The first notable point, as discussed in previous lessons, is that faith and deviation are directly related to the prioritization of our beloved ones. This lesson begins by reviewing the organization of our beloved ones and their relationship with faith and deviation, followed by an analysis of the two paths and their characteristics.

### **Faith and Deviation Depend on the Prioritization of Beloved Ones**

In this world, we face two main paths: faith and deviation from the normal or straight path. To understand the connection between these two paths and prioritization of our beloved ones, we must have a brief overview of our beloveds. Each person interacts with five categories of beloved ones related to our five existential dimensions: inanimate, vegetative, animalistic, intellective, and supra-rational. The supra-rational or human dimension is the Spirit breathed into us by Allah, and it innately loves the Absolute and Infinite Perfection, meaning Allah;<sup>1</sup> therefore, our most natural state as a human is to love Allah, move toward Him, and seek His approval, since Allah is the Beloved of our human dimension; otherwise, we have deviated or disobeyed Him. An important rule in organizing our beloveds is that if we prioritize other beloveds such as family, relatives, wealth, and

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<sup>1</sup>. There is no deity but Allah

profession over Allah, the Household of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be upon Him and His Family), and *jihad* in the way of Allah, then we are considered *fasiq*.<sup>2</sup> Conversely, if Allah, the Household of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be upon Him and His Family), and *jihad* are at the forefront of our priorities, we are considered true human beings.

Generally, human beings can be categorized into six groups based on their hearts' beloveds. Five groups are on the path of *fisq* and are called *fasiq*, while the sixth group is on the path of faith and are called believers. Thereafter, we will delve deeper into the characteristics of the two paths of faith and deviation and the six categories.

### **Path of Deviation or *Fisq***

Those who divert their hearts from their purpose of creation, which is intimacy with and similarity to Allah, by becoming preoccupied with inanimate, vegetative, animalistic, or intellectual perfections, are on the path of *fisq*. Such individuals have distanced themselves from their *fitrah* and do not have a human inward self.

In the Holy Quran, God classifies *fasiqs* into five groups, based on their inward state and heart: stone-like and harder than stone,<sup>3</sup> animal-like and lower than animals,<sup>4</sup> and Satanic.<sup>5</sup> We will explain each group briefly. A stony heart develops through attachment to inanimate beloved ones such as houses, cars, money, or gold and

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<sup>2</sup>. Quran, 9:24

<sup>3</sup>. Quran, 2:74

<sup>4</sup>. Quran, 7:179

<sup>5</sup>. Quran, 6:112

jewelry, meaning that for these people, inanimate objects are more lovable than human beloveds.

As for the animalistic heart, when animalistic desires like lust, ambition, and family attachments overshadow human perfections, a person's inward self becomes animalistic.

A heart lower than animals is a heart whose concerns are limited to vegetative perfections such as food , physical appearance, and reproduction.

A satanic heart, instead of surrendering to Allah, submits himself to the desires of Satan, eventually becoming like him. A heart harder than stone is one that, due to the dominance of inanimate, vegetative, animalistic, and intellectual beloveds over human beloveds, hardens to the point where no advice has any effect on it.

In essence, we are on the path of *fisq* when in our decisions, relationships, thoughts, and behaviors, we prioritize limited beloveds over unlimited human beloveds.

Since limited beloveds do not satisfy our infinity-seeking desire as human beings, a *fasiq* constantly suffers from issues like anxiety, depression, and despair. The further he strays from his True and Infinite Beloved, the more his problems increase.

The thought-provoking point here is that all humans are on the path of *fisq* and loss, except for the group of believers who follow the path of faith.

### **The Path of Faith**

As we mentioned, only those who prioritize the human beloveds, namely Allah, the Household of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be upon Him and His Family), and *jihad*

over other beloveds are on the path of faith. On this path, individuals move toward the purpose of creation and strive for similarity to their true Beloved, Allah, while possessing human desires; therefore, only such people have a human inward self and a sound heart. Regarding the qualities of those on the path of faith, Allah says: "...those who have believed and done righteous deeds and advised each other to truth and advised each other to patience."<sup>6</sup>

Therefore, true human beings not only uphold faith and righteousness themselves but also feel a sense of responsibility toward others, guiding them toward truth and patience and positively influencing those around them.

A vital prerequisite for following the path of faith is self-knowledge, or in other words, humanology. Without knowing our true self and our true Beloved, we risk becoming enslaved to inanimate, vegetative, animalistic, or intellectual beloveds.

One of the characteristics of moving on the path of faith is that believers possess lasting beneficence, peace, and happiness, as they have intimacy and connection with their true Beloved or Absolute Perfection, that is, Allah, and they grow increasingly similar to Him. For example, a believer is kind and compassionate toward his family and others, and avoids vices such as envy, hatred, impatience, anger, hypocrisy, and worldly regrets. Moreover, they will be born into the hereafter with a sound heart and attain eternal bliss.

In this lesson, we explored the paths of faith and deviation and their characteristics. We mentioned that if we prioritize inanimate, vegetative, animalistic, and intellectual beloveds over human beloveds, meaning Allah, the Household of Prophet Muhammad, and *jihad* in the way of Allah, then we are on the path of *fisq*

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<sup>6</sup>. Quran, 103:3

and are called *fasiqs*. However, if human beloveds are more endearing to us than other beloveds, we are on the path of faith and are called true human beings or believers.

*Fasiqs* are classified into five categories based on the type of their hearts: stone-like, harder than stone, animal-like, lower than animal, and Satanic. Another characteristic of the path of *fisq* is that a *fasiq*, due to attachment to limited beloveds and the dissatisfaction of his infinity-seeking heart, suffers from depression, anxiety, anger, and despair. While, on the path of faith, due to intimacy and similarity to Allah, one is full of compassion, love, happiness, and inner peace.

In your opinion, which path would a wise person choose, faith or deviation from the normal path?