

## **“We Reap What We Sow”**

### **How Do Our Deeds Create Heaven and Hell?**

#### **An Examination and Introduction to the Concept of “We Reap What We Sow”**

One of the unchangeable laws of creation, established and fixed by Almighty Allah, is that every person’s deeds—whether good or bad—are their eternal and perpetual companions. Each individual will be resurrected on the Day of Judgment with the inner reality of their deeds. In other words, we reap what we sow, and their entire destiny is shaped by them.

Our acquisitions and the foods we consume significantly affect the health of our material or physical dimension. For example, if we eat high-fat foods, our body fat naturally increases; similarly, if we consume sweets, our calorie intake rises. The same principle applies to spiritual nourishment. What we see, hear, smell, dream of, think about, and imagine are all forms of acquisition that play a role in shaping our souls. We are all experiencing the results of our past deeds. Our current state is a reflection of our past decisions, relationships, thoughts, and behaviors. Every action we take leads the soul to acquire a specific disposition, which can be either positive and constructive or negative and destructive. We constantly reap what we sow and are bound by what we acquire through our imaginal, estimative, intellectual, and supra-rational faculties [1]. Ultimately, it is we who, through our good or bad acquisitions, create heaven or hell for ourselves.

In this lesson, we intend to further explore the meaning of the phrase "We reap what we sow" and examine the relationship between our deeds and our existential assets concerning heaven or hell, as well as the quality of our eternal life.

### **How Acquisitions Are Absorbed and Their Impact on the Soul**

A newborn's growth and existence depend on acquiring genes inherited from their parents. Moreover, everything a mother acquires during pregnancy and breastfeeding—including the food she consumes, the scenes she sees, the sounds she hears, her emotions, imaginations, thoughts, sorrows, joys, grudges, jealousies, and spiritual experiences—is transferred to the fetus and shapes its existence. The father not only passes down hereditary traits but also influences the fetus through his impact on the mother during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

Essentially, there is no ineffective acquisition. Everything that enters our existential structure is absorbed by the soul and exerts its influence on it. In other words, we reap what sow, and our current state is the result of our past acquisitions. Every faculty of our existence—whether sensate, imaginal, estimative, intellective, or supra-rational—has acquisitions; colors, images, various scents, different tactile experiences, and more all affect the soul. For example, seeing a particular color can make us happy, while another color may cause sadness and anxiety. A pleasant fragrance can refresh and invigorate the soul. Similarly, our thoughts and imaginations, whether positive or negative, leave distinct impacts on our soul.

A crucial point to note is that the acquisitions of one dimension of our existence influence the higher dimensions. The acquisitions of the sense perception faculty affect the imaginal faculty; those of the imaginal faculty affect the estimative

faculty; the acquisitions of the estimative faculty affect the intellective faculty; and the acquisitions of the intellective faculty affect the supra-rational faculty or the heart.

For example, someone who does not protect their eyes and ears from forbidden sights and sounds can never have pure and spiritual imaginations and will instead be trapped in corrupted thoughts. When the imaginal faculty is tainted, the estimative faculty also becomes tainted, causing intellective processes and thoughts to deviate. Many of our fears and anxieties stem from this very principle. For instance, we all know that a corpse is an inanimate body that cannot harm us. Yet, many people are terrified of being alone with a corpse because their estimative faculty dominates their intellective faculty. Even though their intellect confirms that a corpse is harmless, they still feel afraid. The estimative faculty also influences faith and belief. Many of us strongly believe that giving charity increases wealth, yet when the time comes to donate, we hesitate. This is because our estimative faculty is tainted with false fears, weakening our faith.

Considering this, our soul is always bound by the good or bad inputs that we acquire and absorb through the faculties of sense perception, imagination, estimation, intellect, and supra-rationality. If we find ourselves bad-tempered, sensitive, lazy, or restless, it is the result of our past thoughts, decisions, relationships, and behaviors, in short, the result of our previous acquisitions.

### **Heaven and Hell as Manifestations of the Soul**

What is the relationship between Heaven and Hell and our deeds? Are Heaven and Hell pre-existing places, or do we play a role in their creation? Are the pleasures of

Heaven and the torments of Hell manifestations of the soul, or are they independent realities?

The answers to these questions become clear considering the previous discussions. As we stated, we reap what we sow—meaning that deeds and their consequences are not separate entities. In other words, a person's bliss or misery, their entry into Heaven or Hell, is determined by their deeds. We are constantly faced with the manifestations of our own selves. Heaven and Hell are nothing but the manifestation of our deeds. Each of us either burns in fire or enjoys Heaven based on what we have created with our thoughts and bodily faculties in this world. Everything that exists in Heaven or Hell is the outcome of our worldly acquisitions. In reality, it is not Allah who prepares Heaven or Hell for us; rather, it is we who create Heaven and Hell with our own deeds. Each person has the power to create an eternal Heaven of blessings or a Hell of ceaseless torment for themselves.

We always face the consequences of what we have acquired. Whatever impure and corrupt quality we acquire will affect and taint our soul. A person with polluted acquisitions will not only be unable to enjoy pure and enlightening matters, but their soul will also continuously desire filthiness since it is compatible with it.

Pure individuals seek purity, while impure individuals seek corruption. Someone who spends their entire day feeding their mind with toxic thoughts—such as pessimism, jealousy, hatred, and anger—can never find happiness or peace. The manifestations of each of us are based on our acquisitions and assets, not merely on our knowledge; therefore, if we do not have good and sound acquisitions, we will ultimately deviate from the truth and deny it. Many times, even when we understand the immorality of certain behaviors, we find ourselves unable—or even

unwilling—to abandon them. This is because our past acquisitions have enslaved our character and stripped us of the ability to act rightly.

In this lesson, we discussed the fact that we reap what we sow, explaining that our souls acquire qualities according to our actions, ultimately manifesting themselves as either Heaven or Hell. In fact, it is we who, through our good or bad acquisitions, create our own Heaven or Hell.

### References

[1]. Quran, 74:38