

The Impact of Making the Right Decision on Our Lives

Why Do Our Decisions Matter?

Is There a Criterion for Knowing the Right Decision in Life?

The impact of making the right decisions and their consequences is one that accompanies us from the very beginning of our worldly life until its end—and even extends into the Hereafter. But what determines whether our decisions are right? How can we be certain about the correctness of decisions that vary widely in importance—from selecting clothing or its color, to choosing a carpet, a house, or a car, all the way to far more significant decisions like choosing a spouse or a profession? The key question regarding making the right decision when evaluating different matters is this: how can we know what the best and most appropriate decision is? Is there a specific and reliable criterion for human decision-making?

Every decision we make has a direct impact on our status on the Day of Judgement and in the Hereafter. On the other hand, our status in the Hereafter is assessed by the scale. Considering these two points, it becomes evident that there must be a relationship between the scale and the right decision. But how well do we truly know this relationship?

Regarding the importance of making the right decision, we must understand that the universe is a mathematical system—everything within it operates according to precise laws and principles. Therefore, every action brings about a reaction proportionate to itself. Accordingly, all our decisions carry consequences. At times, these consequences are confined to this worldly life; yet in many cases, we must

also consider the eternal and afterlife consequences of our decisions—for we are infinite beings, created for an everlasting life.

From a humanological perspective—and with emphasis on the necessity of self-knowledge—the connection between the scale and making the right decision can also be examined. Unless we come to know ourselves and understand our true value, we will not be able to distinguish, in critical moments, what action, relationship, thought, or behavior is right or wrong. A lack of self-knowledge inevitably leads to poor decisions. And one who cannot make the right decisions should not expect his scale to be filled—because the scale is only made heavy by deeds that are aligned with the truth, and such deeds are the direct outcome of making the right decision.

The necessary provisions for attaining a full and heavy scale must be secured from this worldly life. In this process, our choices play a highly significant and twofold role: they can either lead to the heaviness of the scale or cause a person to deviate from the path of truth, ultimately resulting in a light and empty scale.

In this lesson, we seek to understand what the effective criteria are for making decisions that align with the scale, and what the best sources are for identifying the criterion of such decisions. We also aim to explore whether the ability to know these kinds of decisions is accessible to all human beings.

Influential Criteria for Making the Right Decision Aligned with the Scale

To grasp the significance of making the right decisions, it is enough to consider the role decisions play in our behavior, speech, relationships, and actions—most of which are fundamentally based on the decisions we make at the outset.

Given the importance of making the right decision and its relationship to the most vital and central instrument for evaluation on the Day of Judgment—the Scale—it is essential to understand what criteria we should consider in our decisions if we are to attain a scale heavy with good deeds.

Many factors impact our decisions, and one such factor is the kind of perfection we strive to acquire. Human beings possess five dimensions of existence, and in each of these dimensions, we seek Absolute Perfection. For instance, in the inanimate dimension, we desire the finest and greatest material wealth; in the vegetative dimension, we pursue ideal physical beauty and fitness—and so it continues across the remaining dimensions. The crucial question we must ask ourselves is this: does the pursuit of Absolute Perfection in the lower dimensions of our existence necessarily lead to growth in the highest and most essential dimension of our existence—that is, the supra-rational or human dimension?

The growth and perfection of the human dimension—namely, becoming a true servant of God—is the primary purpose set forth for our creation. All other forms of perfection in the lower dimensions are merely means for attaining this ultimate purpose. The higher the quality of our human perfection and ubudiyyah (servitude), the heavier our scale will be—for the heaviest scales belong to those who have reached the pinnacle of humanity and ubudiyyah. Therefore, one of the most essential criteria in any decision we make should be the extent to which that decision contributes to the growth and perfection of our human dimension. We

must gravitate toward decisions that ultimately nurture the human dimension of our existence and thereby lead to a weightier scale.

As mentioned earlier, we will remain entangled with the consequences of our decisions until the Day of Judgment—and even beyond. Many of our decisions are shaped by our wishes—the very wishes we hold across our inanimate, vegetative, animalistic, intellectual, and supra-rational dimensions. Wishes are so significant that Imam Ali (Peace be upon him) referred to them as our intimate companions [1]. With such a role in our lives, it becomes essential to choose the right companions for ourselves. If we fail to understand the true value of our wishes, we will inevitably suffer loss and harm in our decisions. Improper organization and prioritization of our wishes leads only to sorrow and dead ends.

The selection and organization of our wishes must not disrupt our peace and joy in this world, nor should they hinder our healthy birth into the Hereafter. The arrangement and organization of our wishes is directly related to both the scale and our decisions: paying attention to the scale prompts us to select and organize our wishes differently, and the wishes we choose, in turn, influence the weight of our scale.

Indeed, the choices we make regarding our wishes—whether positive or negative—can have lasting impacts throughout our lives and even beyond, until the Day of Judgment. Therefore, we must exercise the utmost care when organizing and prioritizing our wishes. As Imam Sajjad (Peace be upon him) teaches, we ought to seek the most fitting and appropriate wishes—those that truly suit our reality and purpose.

References

[1]. *Gurar al-Hikam wa Durar al-Kalim*, trans. Ridha Jaffar, p. 109, Hadith 35

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