

The Seven Signs of *Fisq* (Deviation from the Normal Path) and Ways to Overcome Them

What Are the Signs of *Fisq*, and Why Is Knowing Them Necessary in Our Lives?

Signs of *fisq* are one of the most important criteria for examining the soundness or disease of our hearts. In previous lessons, we defined *fisq* as the deviation from the normal path of truth, when the soul distances from its natural and innate (*fitri*) state and, instead of prioritizing the three main beloveds, leans toward the beloveds of the lower parts of existence.

Fisq indicates a disruption in prioritization of values and lack of proper management of our hearts and souls. In fact, any choice or desire that distances a person from their connection with God and their heavenly family can be a sign of *fisq*. The Holy Quran and Islamic traditions have repeatedly described these signs, introducing them as a warning signal for the human soul.

Knowing the signs of *fisq* is necessary because it has many destructive effects not only on individuals but also on society as a whole. Also, knowing these signs helps us move toward the soundness of the heart and soul, enabling us to properly manage our hearts and beloved ones, change our perspectives, and correct our behaviors to escape the trap of *fisq*. Furthermore, awareness of the signs of *fisq* enables us to resist the external and internal factors that lead us to *fisq* and, by strengthening our faith and will, to take steps on the path of perfection and nearness to God. For this reason, knowing these signs is necessary and obligatory for all humans.

This article aims to explore the signs of *fisq*, attempting to clearly explain the relationship between these signs and the nature of the human soul. In this lesson,

we explain how identifying these signs can be a tool for analyzing the current state of the heart's soundness and a guide for self-improvement.

What Are the Signs of *Fisq*?

To better assess the soundness of our soul, we must pay attention to the signs of *fisq*. *Fisq* refers to a deviation from the right path, which can manifest in our behaviors and thoughts, often without our awareness. While we may outwardly appear committed to religious values, the presence of hidden signs of *fisq* in our hearts or actions can indicate that we are drifting away from the balance of a divinely guided lifestyle. Examining these signs helps us find the way back to soundness and reduce its personal and social harms. Now we will discuss the most important of these signs.

Doubt: The First Sign of *Fisq*

Doubt is one of the most important signs of *fisq*, indicating a person's doubt regarding God and religious beliefs. Doubt occurs when a person no longer has complete trust in God's support or His promises. For example, if in times of hardship we feel abandoned by God or if our belief in His power and wisdom weakens, this can indicate *fisq* in our hearts.

Of course, doubt is not limited to matters of belief, but also manifests itself in practice. A person afflicted by doubt does not have the presence of heart in his worship or does not enjoy it. This situation gradually leads the individual away from God and places other priorities in a person's life in high importance. In fact, doubt is a great obstacle to moving toward the soundness of the soul.

The Holy Quran and Islamic narrations emphasize the necessity of removing doubts. This is because with doubts about God and the Infallibles (Peace be upon them), one cannot achieve true bliss, and in this case, even one's good deeds will have little effect.

The Second Sign of *Fisq*: Dominance of Worldly Desires

Another sign of *fisq* is the dominance of worldly desires over our hearts and souls. We become afflicted by *fisq* when material desires become so important that they take the place of the three mains beloveds in our hearts. In such a situation, our love for God, our heavenly family, and *jihad* in the way of Allah fades, and most of our time and energy is spent on achieving wealth, status, fame, or material pleasures and these things become our main purpose in life.

The dominance of worldly desires gradually leads us to forget the truth of life and the purpose of our creation. The consequences of this forgetfulness usually manifest themselves in the form of indifference to divine values and a distance from the remembrance of God, and socially as things like disregarding the rights of others. In this case, we may outwardly appear to be religious, but inwardly we are enslaved by attachments that divert us from the right path. The Holy Quran and Islamic traditions have repeatedly warned that excessive materialism darkens the heart and distances a person from God.

This is a serious warning sign that, if not paid attention to in time, can change the entire course of our lives and distance us from true salvation.

Worldly Sorrows: The Third Sign of *Fisq*

Sadness is a natural and human state that can play a constructive role in life if its origin aligns with human values. However, sorrow that results from attachment to the world, a lack of reliance in God, or material failures can be considered a sign of *fisq*. This sorrow leads a person astray from the beloveds of human dimension. In such a state, a person distances themselves from human values and loses their heartfelt trust in God. This condition can lead to a weakening of faith, reduced motivation for worship, and a sinking feeling of helplessness and despair. Worldly sorrows are not only a sign of weakness of faith and lack of reliance in God, they are also considered an important factor that intensify the signs of *fisq*. This is because a person who cannot distance themselves from these sorrows increasingly resorts to behaviors and values that, instead of increasing the soundness of the heart, distance them from the ultimate purpose of their creation. This process can create a chain of misguidance that reinforces other characteristics of *fisq*, including neglect and doubt in God.

Jealousy: One of the Signs of *Fisq*

Jealousy is one of the destructive emotions that can bring us closer to *fisq*. When we feel sadness and regret upon witnessing the blessings and successes of others, wishing those blessings were taken away from them, we are experiencing jealousy, which is one of the signs of *fisq*. This state is rooted in weakness of faith because the jealous person cannot accept God's wisdom and justice in distributing blessings. Instead of being grateful for their own possessions and happy for the blessings of others, they engage in pointless comparisons.

Jealousy darkens the heart and leads us to negative behaviors such as gossip, character assassination, and harboring grudges. These feelings lead a person away from the path of spirituality, remembrance of God, and soundness of the heart, leading to a deviation from ethical values, which is one of the manifestations of *fisq*.

The Fifth Sign of *Fisq*: Indifference to Enjoining Good and Forbidding Wrong

The decrease in motivation and spirit for enjoining good and forbidding wrong is one of the signs of *fisq* and is directly related to it. This is because these two ethical and religious duties fundamentally prevent the spread of sin and distance from God in society. Anyone who abandons this duty or neglects to perform it demonstrates a weakness of faith and a lapse in their social responsibility. This weakness can lead us to *fisq*, as neglecting sins, especially those that occur in society, indicates the normalization of *fisq* in our view.

If someone is not sensitive to the wrong behaviors of those around them, they will gradually become inclined to these behaviors and distance themselves from divine values. Abandoning enjoining good and forbidding wrong is a lack of responsibility for the spiritual growth of others, which is rooted in a decline in faith and a lack of compassion for guiding other humans. This process can also be a sign of a person's gradual inclination toward sin or deviation from the path of truth. When a person does not fulfill the duty of enjoining good and forbidding wrong, the ground is prepared for the spread of sin and corruption in society. This silence in the face of sin not only makes the individual indifferent to *fisq*, but also causes it to spread in society. Ignoring these ethical duties has no result other than weakening religious values and making sin more prominent in collective life.

Negligence: The Sixth Sign of *Fisq*

Negligence, as one of the main signs of *fisq*, refers to a state in which a person distances themselves from the covenant with God and the truth of the hereafter and becomes unaware of or indifferent to truth and falsehood. This state is rooted in ignorance and immersion in worldly affairs, such that the person remains distant from the remembrance of God and the ultimate purpose of their creation.

Neglect of the heart, especially when it persists, causes a person to forget God's presence in life and become indifferent to their religious, spiritual, and moral duties. This process gradually weakens faith, makes acts of worship unimportant, and diminishes divine values in human life. Negligence not only prevents us from remembering God and the hereafter, but also leads us to be more interested in fleeting worldly matters and attachment to lower desires. This situation is one of the most important initiators of *fisq* because negligence causes a person to forget their main priorities and, by replacing them with worldly values, suffer from inner corruption. In other words, negligence is a gateway to other forms of *fisq*, such as doubt, weakness, neglecting enjoining good and forbidding wrong, and the dominance of worldly desires.

The Holy Quran and Islamic traditions have repeatedly warned about the dangers of negligence because negligence causes hardness and darkening of the heart. An ignorant person becomes indifferent to divine signs and loses the ability to discern truths. This negligence, along with a desire for comfort and the fleeting attractions of the world, is considered an important factor in deviating from the divine path and approaching *fisq*. For this reason, negligence has destructive effects not only in individual life, but also in the social dimension. The prevalence of negligence in a society can lead to a decrease in the spirit of responsibility, the weakening of

morality and spirituality, and the creation of an environment in which divine and human values are marginalized. Therefore, cleansing the heart from negligence by returning to the remembrance of God, strengthening faith, and paying attention to divine wisdom is one of the most important strategies for preventing one from sinking into *fisq*.

The Most Important Sign of *Fisq*: Lacking Hostility Towards the Enemies of Imam Mahdi (Peace Be Upon Him)

Loving the friends of God and hating the enemies of God are important parts of adherence to guardianship in Islam. If a person becomes indifferent to the leaders of disbelief, or the enemies of Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him), then their heart is not sound and has a problem or disorder in accepting divine guardianship. Growing cold toward religious truths is another sign of being affected by this illness. A decline in faith can ultimately lead a person away from the path of guidance and trap them in *fisq*.

The enemies of Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him) are the representatives of oppression, sin, and arrogance on earth, who, besides creating endless hardship and suffering in people's worldly lives. They also prevent the manifestation of humanity's true existence. They are the cause of human deviation from growth and the obstacle preventing us from attaining the purpose of our creation. Being indifferent to these enemies shows that we have lost the motivation and sensitivity necessary to support divine truths. This situation is a prelude to straying from the path of truth and is one of the signs of *fisq*.

Faith, in addition to loving God and His chosen ones, requires hostility toward the Front of Falsehood. Lacking enmity toward the enemies of the Ahl al-Bayt, including

Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon them), indicates a weakness in believing in divine justice and a lack of the requisites of faith in the heart. This weakness makes us prone to following sins and straying from the path of piety and makes us prone to *fisq*.

Recognizing the signs of *fisq* is a serious necessity for taking care of the soundness of the heart and soul because *fisq* not only distances humans from the path of truth and connection with God, but also has destructive effects on the individual and social life. Given the profound effects of *fisq* on human behavior and priorities, awareness of these signs helps us to identify weaknesses and strive to correct them, and prevent spiritual and moral harm.

Each of the signs of *fisq*, such as doubt, the dominance of worldly desires, sorrow, envy, the weakening of enjoining good and forbidding wrong, negligence, and lack of hatred toward the enemies of Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him) is a serious alarm that invites us to reconsider our beliefs, values, and behaviors. This reconsideration lays the groundwork for strengthening faith, correcting the path of life and moving toward divine perfection.

Freedom from *fisq* requires continuous efforts to purify the heart and prioritize the main beloveds, namely God, the Ahl al-Bayt (Peace be upon them), and *jihad* in the way of God. Only by strengthening our connection with God and inner reformation can one escape the trap of *fisq* and achieve true peace and bliss. This path is the prerequisite for achieving a pure life and spiritual growth toward nearness to God and attainment of success in both this world and the hereafter.