4094 - Dealing With Evil Within Oneself

the question

What should one do if he sees that he has inherent evil in him; such that, the evil outweighs the good?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Man is a weak being, who feels inclinations towards both good and evil. He may be weak and be tempted to follow the path of immorality and deviation, and evil may push him to the way of wrongdoing and transgression. The Shaytaan may make evil deeds attractive to him, and justify every deviant action to him.

But the element of good may stir his conscience, make him feel regret and push him to come back to the truth and respond to the call of reason.

People vary with regard to their capability, willpower, purity of soul and spirituality. Some of them train themselves to follow the way of virtue, noble deeds and right attitudes, so they resist their desires and deviant inclinations, and make themselves adhere to the straight and right way. These people can confront evil and bear all kinds of hardship for that purpose. They never lose hope that good will prevail and evil will be defeated.

Others follow their desires and cannot adhere to what is right. They ignore many of the commands of Allaah and His Messenger, and are too weak to confront evil. So they have no hope that good will prevail. It all depends on whether or not a person is striving against his desires and his own self that bids him to do evil, so that he will receive guidance from Allaah. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“As for those who strive hard in Us (Our Cause), We will surely guide them to Our paths” [al-‘Ankaboot 29:69]

There follow some beautiful expressions of this striving, as uttered by Ibn al-Qayyim, may Allaah have mercy on him:

“O feet of patience, keep going, for what remains is only a little. Remember the sweetness of worship, then the bitterness of striving will become easier for you.”

(al-Fawaa’id)

“Go out to the field of struggle and strive to sow seeds. Irrigate the tree of regret with the water of tears…”

(Badaa’i’ al-Fawaa’id, 3/742)

“It was said: Love is sincerity in striving to obey the commands of Allaah and pure sincerity in following the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).”

(Tareeq al-Hijratayn, 1/460)

“Whoever gives up striving completely, his religious motives will become weak and his motive to follow his desires will become strong, but when he trains himself to go against his desires, he can defeat them whenever he wants.”

(‘Uddat al-Saabireen, 1/46)

The believer who is striving knows that goodness will remain and will prevail, no matter how intense the darkness, how great the calamity, how prevalent and widespread the evil and how many limits are transgressed. And Allaah is the One Whose help we seek.