

WHAT IS YOUR LEGACY? SADAQAH OR SIN JARIYAHS

The ripple effect is a concept that expresses how a single event can trigger a chain reaction, resulting in a bigger impact than the original occurrence. While it is apparent in many aspects of our lives, it is particularly important when it comes to the topic of religion.

It is reported in multiple books of Hadith that the Prophet (PBUH) said that when a person dies, all of their good deeds come to an end except in three ways, amongst which he (PBUH) mentioned the concept of Sadaqah Jariyah. Sadaqah Jariyah means continuous charity; a good deed that continues to benefit people even after one dies. An example of this could be building a hospital or digging a well from which people or animals drink.

The opposite concept also exists in Islam; when bad deeds accumulate due to some originally committed sin. I have dubbed this concept “Sin Jariyah”.

Quran has explicitly mentioned this concept of Sadaqah Jariyah and Sin Jariyah at least on three occasions

1. **إِنَّا نَحْنُ نُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ وَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَدَّمُوا وَآثَارَهُمْ وَكُلِّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ فِي إِمَامٍ مُّبِينٍ**

(36:12) We shall surely raise the dead to life and We record what they did and the traces of their deeds that they have left behind. We have encompassed that in a Clear Book.

2. يُنْبَأُ الْإِنْسَانُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِمَا قَدَّمَ وَأَخَّرَ

(75:13) On that Day man will be informed of what he sent forward (of his evil or good deeds), and what he left behind (of his good and evil traditions)

3. عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ وَأَخَّرَتْ

(82:5) Then a person will know what he has sent forward and what he has left behind (of good and bad deeds)

Summarizing the about 3 Ayahs of Quran, Allah is saying that on that Day man will be told what good or evil deeds he had earned in his worldly life before death and sent forward for his hereafter, and also informed what effects of his good or evil acts he had left behind in the world, which continued to work and to influence the coming generations for ages to come.

We see an example of it in the story of Habil and Qabil, the sons of Prophet Adam (AS). We all know the story of how Qabil got jealous of Habil and killed him, committing the first ever murder on Earth. Qabil, being the first person to kill, will get the sin for every murder that takes place on Earth till the Day of Judgment, as said by the Prophet (SAW) in a Hadith:

“The first son of Adam takes a share of the guilt of everyone who murders another wrongfully, because he was the initiator of committing murder.” [Bukhari & Muslim]

Now, murder is something huge, but we can accumulate Sin Jariyahs for other smaller “bad legacies”. We might be the first to start an inappropriate trend or teach others something bad. Can you imagine teaching someone a bad

word, which they go on to use and teach others in the process? Can you imagine the gradual accumulation of sin that one would get from every usage of that bad word? These are things that happen almost on a daily basis, and so, who knows how many sins we may have accumulated this way?

Allah (SWT) is Rahman, He is the Most Merciful and He gives us the solution to every problem. By seeking forgiveness, by sincerely asking Allah (SWT) to wipe our slates clean, we can rid ourselves of these Sin Jariyahs. We should also strive to do good deeds to overwrite the bad deeds that we perform and be very careful about our actions, our words, and the overall legacy we leave behind. It can be hard to always be aware of one's actions and their potential consequences but, once this awareness is developed, we can avoid sins and gain so much reward.

May Allah (SWT) make us of those who leave ripples upon ripples of good in the world.

NOTE: For detail analysis of this subject, please also read my article "One very scary Ayah (verse) of the Quran" on this same website: