

The Relation Between Deeds and Morals

Are Morals Changeable?

What Is the Relation Between Deeds and Morals, and What Effects Do They Have on Each Other?

The relation between deeds and morals defines the mechanism of transforming deeds into moral characteristics and shows what process we have gone through to have our current personality. Understanding the relation between deeds and morals is one of the most important requirements for self-improvement and self-knowledge, and it greatly helps us improve our moral and behavioral characteristics.

Have you ever felt frustrated with some of your moral characteristics and wanted to change them? Have you made any effort in this regard? How successful has your effort been? Do you think we can change our moral characteristics, or should we accept them as fixed and unchangeable?

"I can't change; you have to accept me for who I am!" You have probably heard this statement from people who do not intend to improve their bad moral characteristics. But how true is this statement? The reality is that the personality of all of us is constantly changing, and no one can claim that he has not changed at all in the past few years. These changes are often so evident that if we compare someone's personality today to that of ten years ago, it seems like we are dealing with two completely different people. So personality change is happening automatically and unconsciously, but the question is, can we control these

changes? Can we transform who we are into who we want to be? The answers to these questions lie in understanding the relation between deeds and morals. But what is the relation between deeds and morals, and how can we use this relationship to improve undesirable moral characteristics?

What Is the Relation Between Deeds and Morals, and How Does a Deed Turn into a Moral Disposition?

As we have mentioned in previous lessons, our deeds turn into acquisition through persistence and repetition, and our acquisitions make up our moral characteristics. More precisely, each good or bad deed leaves an impression on the soul, and the repetition of the deed, especially if done willingly and out of desire, turns it into a disposition or *Malakah*. When a deed becomes *Malakah* through repetition, it is ingrained in the soul, and from then on, the soul shows that disposition continuously and unconsciously.

For example, when someone has to tell a few lies with reluctance, this lying remains as a temporary deed and does not turn into an acquisition or disposition. But if it continues, the person reaches a point where he tells big or small lies, without even realizing it, even in situations where there is nothing to gain from it. It is because through repetition, this deed has turned into a disposition and is ingrained deep in his soul. This lying may be even annoying for him, but because it has become a part of him, he can no longer get rid of it. In fact, instead of him having control over his tongue, his tongue takes control of him!

This relationship also holds true for good deeds. For example, someone who repeatedly practices generosity gradually reaches a point where this characteristic

becomes ingrained in him. After that, his soul constantly produces this characteristic, and he no longer has to struggle with himself or expend a lot of energy to give gifts, lend money, give voluntary charity, and do other deeds that require generosity. Deeds and morals also differ in terms of punishment and reward in the hereafter; the hell of morals is much more terrible and painful than the hell of deeds. We will discuss this topic in detail in future lessons.

According to what we mentioned, the relation between deeds and morals is a two-way relationship. That is, good or bad deeds create a moral disposition through persistence and repetition, and the moral disposition in turn produces the same deed. Of course, the word "deed" has a broad meaning. It is not just limited to the deeds we do with our limbs or organs. Our intentions and thoughts are also considered our deeds. They also have the same effects that other deeds have on our soul. If we hold a wicked intention in our heart for a long time and make no effort to stop it, that intention becomes ingrained in our soul and gradually changes our inward human state, even if it never manifests itself. Similarly, if we have a pure intention, it turns into light within our soul and always produces goodness and blessings, even if we never find the opportunity to actualize it.

Now that we understood the relation between deeds and morals, we can use this awareness to improve undesirable moral characteristics and transform them into desirable ones, but how?

Improving Undesirable Moral Characteristics

Considering the relation between deeds and morals, we know that our deeds shape our morals. Therefore, if we improve our deeds, our morals will consequently

improve. Just as an athlete practices one sports move thousands of times instead of doing thousands of different moves to develop a physical skill, we too must focus on one deed in order to acquire a skill and asset in our soul and turn that deed into an acquisition, rather than doing various deeds without any plans and purpose. For this reason, religious and spiritual teachings recommend that we keep doing a good deed for one year. With this consistent and regular practice, that deed becomes an acquisition and asset within our soul.

Of course, we know that such an endeavor is not easy at first! We have lived for years with our current moral characteristics, and they have become a part of us. Naturally, separating them from our soul is like removing a cancerous tumor that has deeply rooted itself amidst healthy cells. Removing this tumor naturally comes with pain and suffering. But if we know the severe consequences it will have on our life after death, we will put a great deal of effort and prepare ourselves for a great struggle against the ego self. Fortunately, as long as we are in the womb of the world, we have the opportunity to improve all our spiritual and moral impurities. As we mentioned before, each hour in this world can move us forward for thousands of years in the hereafter.

As a final point, it is necessary to mention that our hereditary moral characteristics are among our acquisitions. The only difference between them and acquired characteristics is that they have been passed down to us by our parents and ancestors, and we have not had a major role in creating them ourselves. However, the same method we mentioned for improving our acquired moral characteristics can be used to improve our hereditary characteristics as well. It is not true that

these characteristics are unchangeable or cannot be improved. In the following lessons, we will further explore other dimensions of acquisition.

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