

Sensitivity serves as inner check

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

All men and women have a unique kind of faculty, that is, conscience, which is the centre of moral sensitivity. This faculty is a natural gift to all. The Quran refers to this faculty in the chapter entitled Al-Araf (The Heights): "If an evil impulse from Satan provokes you, seek refuge with God; He is all-hearing, and all-knowing. When any evil suggestion from Satan touches those who fear God, they are instantly alerted and become watchful; but the followers of devils are led relentlessly into error by them. They never desist" (7:200-202).

These Quranic verses give clear guidance on how to maintain our spiritual purity. Each time a person comes under the influence of an evil temptation, his conscience, or his moral sensitivity, becomes alive. It warns him almost instantly, emerging like a moral teacher. It persuades man not to succumb to wrong temptations and not to

deviate from the right path. Anyone who listens to his inner voice is surely saved from becoming a victim of evil forces. But one who fails to pay heed to it will lose the opportunity to act righteously. And that will be his last chance. Nature endows man with two very important faculties: reason and conscience. Reason works in logical terms, while conscience works in terms of sensitivity. Experience shows that reason sometimes guides us rightly but, quite often, its analysis is wrong, being based on faulty logic. Conscience, on the other hand, never fails. Conscience is the strongest check against wrongdoing. Anyone who wants to live on this planet as an honest person or as a man of character must keep a guard upon his conscience or moral sensitivity. Nothing else can guarantee one's personal morality.

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