

WHAT IS SIN?

Questioner: Welcome to this first recorded live question and answer audio series on this website.

The subject of today's discussion is SIN because it is at the root of humanity's struggle towards attaining its higher self.

So, without further ado, how would you describe, or what would you say is SIN?

Answer: Actually, SIN is not necessarily the commission or omission of an act. SIN is refusing to mend one's ways when the error of the act is made known to the person. In effect, SIN is the conscious decision to go against or continue to indulge in that which we know, or have been told, causes disharmony in the world or creation.

Question: How do we know that an act will cause disharmony, before the fact.

Answer: There are very few of man's activities that are altogether new today. History gives more than enough evidence of the perpetration of many of the acts that are still creating disharmony today, on a grand scale as well as at the personal level. For example, on the grand scale, wars, exploitation of the weaker by the stronger nations, and at the personal level, malice arising from envy, malicious gossiping, stealing, cheating, etc. So, no honest person could possibly claim to be ignorant of the consequences of these acts which have been with mankind for thousands of years.

Enough time has passed now that we are beginning to see the consequences of our scientific activities. So that even here, we cannot honestly claim ignorance.

Question: If history, as you say, has ample evidence of these acts, is it still a SIN if these acts, as one may conclude, have become a part of human nature?

Answer: It is true that many have so indulged in activities that promote disharmony that these have become habits that characterize their traits. But, that does not mean that these habits are necessarily part of the fundamental human nature. We would be better off describing them as habits which in being relentlessly pursued have gradually buried our fundamental nature, and could in time almost or totally eclipse it.

That even the most hardened criminal can suddenly be overcome with remorse, enough to overthrow their negative traits, to change their ways completely, is clear evidence that any criminal trait is only superficial i.e. an overlay on the fundamental nature of the human being.

I should add that the word criminal is used here in a very broad sense, and does not necessarily mean those who are, or have been, incarcerated by any human criminal justice system.

Question: So, why is it that mankind is unable to avoid SIN i.e. unable to change one's ways, when the error of an act has been made known to a person?

Answer: The simple answer is the level of maturity of the person. Again, the word maturity is not being used in a disrespectful sense. Maturity, as used here, means the ability to see the greater picture. For example, the laws of Economics have proven that when a society has matured to the point of promoting inclusivity in its activities, the society generally experiences an economic boom.

Of course many who hold the power of monopoly in society find it difficult to give up on their privileged position in favor of promoting a greater good and larger economy. Perhaps that reluctance is motivated by fear. But basically, it is promoted by a self-interest that is given higher priority than the overall good.

This example, from everyday life, is very similar to what drives SIN at the national or personal (Spiritual and psychic) level. The more powerful nations want to maintain and expand their might and influence over the less powerful, in order to continue to secure or maintain economic power. At the personal level, the gossip wants to remain the center of attention in his or her circle by peddling stories. The cheat or thief does not wish to muster the effort it would take to acquire the reputation or goods that they covet.

At the national level, such actions only instigate a rival a power that sooner or later takes over their position, to do the same. Yet, again and again, history shows that periods of peace and harmonious cooperation result in higher standards of living, happiness and progress in mental and spiritual growth of mankind. Indeed, the golden ages of any of the ancient civilizations are always associated with the blossoming of the arts and good government, but never with periods of military expansion, or of civil unrest.

At the personal level, reformed sinners or anyone who has overcome a bad habit knows the inner peace and happiness that this can elicit in the individual. A feeling that has no bearing on materiality but engenders a sense of inner nobility.

Question: Is there a way out of the grip of SIN and its accompanying cycles of boom and bursts?

Answer: Yes. There is. It lies in simply paying heed to everything that we think, say or do, and in making sure that we endeavor not to, in our selfish desires or interests, create a situation that would eventually create disharmony.

Question: That sounds good. But, how does one put this into practice?

Answer: Actually many societies have golden rules to guide behavior in their societies. And these golden rules address basically all aspects of everyday life. Societies with a significant Judeo-Christian-Islamic population have the 10 commandments that cover any and all aspects of human relationship. Even countries that can be described as non-religious to atheist also have philosophical tenets that aspire towards a Just, and Equitable society in which their citizens can pursue a life of self-fulfillment and happiness. Quite similar to the ultimate desired outcome of living by the 10 commandments.

Question: The 10 commandments and these golden rules have been around for a long time, yet SIN has continued. Why?

Answer: Two answer is twofold: the first being the lack of a clear understanding, today, of what constitutes selfish-desiring, which then gives rise the second part of the answer, which is the inability to see clearly enough to learn from experiences in order to mature from them.

Question: So, how does one attain a better understanding of what constitutes selfish desiring?

Answer: One can try to become extremely objective in every decision that one has to make, even if it appears that it will lead to an immediate disadvantage. But, even this will be very difficult for many to attain today, simply because we no longer know the basis for arriving at the kind of objectivity that we need in order to recognize and overcome selfish desiring.

For example, many a parent may not recognize that it is selfish desire when they, "out of love", want to force their children onto a path that is contrary to the child's nature, perhaps because they, the parent, want to "protect" them, through bounding them to tradition, "save them from some hardship", or "make their life easier".

Such intrusions invariably create different degrees of stress, anxiety or other inner turmoil in the child, which may manifest as physical or mental handicaps in the adolescent or the adult. All this because the child was denied the freedom to develop its own innate abilities which would have automatically given that child a sense of direction and purpose in life. Sooner or later, the child gradually begins to experience an inner feeling of emptiness since it is living a life that is not in accordance with the way its spirit would have dictated.

Among the damages that such unrecognized selfish desire can cause is that the child's spiritual development is thereby stifled, and in some cases, it may develop into a mental psychosis in the physical world.

Another point that many fail to consider is that we can, by our own actions, create imbalances in our self (psyche). The continual self-infliction of imbalance/disharmony, after we have experienced its negative effect can, by the definition given earlier, be categorized as SIN, because they too retard our spiritual growth and the development of the innate potential with which every human being is endowed.

This last point sheds light upon the much more serious spiritual implications of self-destructive acts like drug addiction. It also clarifies what Jesus Christ already told us two thousand years ago in his parable of Talents. This parable and similar teachings, show that there is much wisdom contained in many of our sacred books. It is just that human beings today have lost the ability to relate them to our present circumstances.

Question: Very interesting. So, how did you come by this understanding that you have shared with us today? Are there resources, you know of, that may help those who are interested in rediscovering the hidden gems in our sacred books?

Answer: Yes, there are resources, such as books that can help anyone who is anxiously and seriously seeking answers on how to overcome SIN, and to become a better human being.

But, the first recognition is that this can only be attained through gaining a broader horizon of life that is based on Spiritual principles.

I have found the Grail Message (In The Light of Truth by Abdrushin) to be a most useful source in my own journey of self and spiritual discovery.