

On the Divisions of Ethics

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Chapter One: The Four Virtues and the Essence of Justice

The rational soul possesses two faculties: the faculty of perception and the faculty of movement, each of which is divided into two subsections. The first subsection of the faculty of perception is the theoretical intellect, which receives cognitive forms, and its second subsection is the practical intellect that, through thought, moves the organs of the body for performing particular acts. The latter, insofar as it pertains both to the power of anger and the power of passion, originates some active and passive qualities—such as shame, laughter, cry, and the like—and, insofar as it employs fantasy and imagination, is the source of arts and crafts, and finally, insofar as it is related to the intellect, is the means of acquiring universal positions concerning deeds, such as the goodness and beauty of telling the truth [veraciousness] and the badness and ugliness of telling lies [mendacity].

The first subsection of the power of movement is the power of anger that repels what is unpleasant by way of overcoming, and its second subsection, the power of passion, is a source that gains what is pleasant.

Now, if other powers are overcome and followed by the faculty of perception, the act of any of them would be moderate and every power would obtain its own virtue. Thus, the refinement of the power of intellect would result in knowledge and in wisdom, the refinement of the active power would result in justice, the refinement of the power of anger would end in forbearance and subsequently in bravery, and the refinement of the power of passion would give rise to chastity and to self-restraint. Therefore, justice is the perfection of the faculty of practical intellect.

To wit, since the soul has the powers of intellect, act, anger, and passion—provided that their acts and operation are moderate and the last three powers obey the intellect—it will attain the virtues of wisdom, chastity, and bravery, and by attaining them, justice will emerge. Hence, justice in this sense is not only the perfection of the active power, but of all powers.

As attested by the two preceding explanations, virtues are of four major types:

- a) “Wisdom” is to know the reality of beings as they are. If these beings are not under our volitional control, the knowledge pertaining to them is designated as *theoretical wisdom*[/philosophy], but if they are under our volitional control, the knowledge pertaining to them is designated as *practical wisdom*[/philosophy].
- b) “Chastity” is the domination of the intellect over passion, so that it can get rid of carnal desires.
- c) “Bravery” is the power of anger obeying the intellect in accomplishing frightening works.

d) Justice,” based on one definition means that the theoretical intellect is followed by the practical intellect in every act, or that anger and passion are restrained by the leadership of the intellect and the Divine Law—which, according to the intellect itself, must be followed. Using another definition, justice is the alliance and consensus of all powers on the obedience of the intellect. This is the perfection of all of them, not only of the active power. However, based on both definitions, justice and these three dispositions are concomitant; yet, according to the first one, justice is the cause and the dispositions are its effects, and, according to the second one, the opposite is true, because the acquisition of justice depends on these dispositions.

The next point is that vices and virtues belong to one or two or all of the three powers of intellect, anger, and passion. Take as an example for the first type knowledge and ignorance, which belong to the intellectual faculty; anger and forbearance, which belong to the power of anger; and greed and content, which belong to the power of passion. Ambition, i.e., seeking high position and status in people's hearts, is related to two or three powers: if what is meant by it is taking control or superiority over people, it is a vice of the power of anger; if its meaning is to gain wealth in order to satisfy one's gluttony and concupiscence, it is one of the vices of the power of passion. Also, with respect to jealousy, i.e. wishing for annihilation of another person's possessions, if the motivation behind it is enmity, it is one of the vices of the power of anger, but if the motivation behind it is solely to attain that blessing, it is one of the vices of the power of passion.

On the assumption that if a soul naturally tends towards what the force of lust desires, regarding it as beneficial, out of ignorance, this attribute is a vice related to the powers of intellect and passion.

However, if a soul tends towards what the force of anger desires, regarding it as beneficial out of ignorance, this attribute would be one of the vices related to the powers of intellect and anger. If, notwithstanding, a soul tends towards what both the forces of lust and anger desire, regarding it as beneficial, this is a vice of all three powers.

Now, we go on to discuss the virtues and vices of the intellectual faculty, then the virtues and vices of the power of anger, and followed by a discussion of the virtues and vices of the power of passion. Finally, we will mention virtues and vices which relate to two or all three powers.

Chapter Two: Ascertainment of the Mean Boundary and its Two Sides (Excess and Defect)

For every virtue, there is a vice that opposes it. Since virtues are of four major types, vices are also, at first sight, of four major types: ignorance, the opposite of wisdom; cowardice, the opposite of bravery; greed (avarice), the opposite of chastity (self-restraint); and injustice (inequity), the opposite of justice.

However, upon investigation, it becomes clear that every virtue has a definite limit, transgressing which leads to the extremes, i.e., vices. Therefore, virtues are seen as medium, which is only one, and vices are regarded as peripheral sides, which are innumerable. Every virtue, therefore, faces infinite vices; once one deviates from a virtue in any direction, he will be entangled in vices. Observing a virtue is like moving on a straight line, and to commit a vice resembles deviating from that line. There is no doubt that the straight line cannot be more than one, but there are countless curved lines. Thus, the motives of evil exceed the motives of good.

Obviously, it is extremely difficult to find the true medium and to persevere with the path of moderation. Hence, when the chief of the Prophets was ordered by God to “be steadfast, just as you have been commanded” (Qur’an 11:112), he said, “The chapter Hud made me an old man.”

The medium is either factual or relative. The factual medium is that which equally relates to both sides, like the number four, the relation of which to the numbers two and six is equal. What we discuss here, though, is the relative medium, because it is so hard to find the factual medium, and for this reason, a virtue varies with respect to different persons, situations, and times; a degree of moderation and relative medium may be a virtue with regard to one person, situation, and time, whereas it may be a vice with regard to another. Thus, if a virtue is attributed to someone, one cannot assert that this virtue is the factual medium. The only thing that can be maintained is that because this virtue is nearer to the factual medium, it is a relative medium with respect to other degrees, and the closer to the factual medium a virtue is, the more perfect it will be.

Therefore, every moral disposition has a level that is the best level and the closest to the real moderation and factual medium. It is not hard to carefully describe this desirable level. Other middle levels, even though they are not free from extremes, will be regarded as moderate and virtuous if they are close to the desirable level to the extent that one maintains his proper perfection.

Chapter Three: Major and Minor Types of Vices

As discussed, opposite to every virtue there are infinite vices; however, there is no particular name for each of them and it is impossible to enumerate them. Since the deviation from the mean can be in the direction of excess or in the direction of defect, for every

virtue there are two major types of vices. Because virtues are of four major types, this results in eight major types of vices.

In contrast to wisdom, there are two vices: slyness on the side of excess (cleverness at deceiving and cunning) and stupidity on the side of defect (foolishness). The former is to employ the power of intellect in what is not worthy and appropriate, while the latter is not to employ the power of intellect in what is worthy and appropriate. It is more fitting to construe slyness as sophism (knowledge mixed with falsehood) and stupidity as simple ignorance.

In opposition to bravery there are two vices: recklessness on the side of excess (foolhardiness) and cowardice on the side of deficiency (spinelessness). The former is to perform that which should be avoided and the latter is to refrain from works which should be done.

In contrast to chastity (self-restraint), there are two vices: rapaciousness on the side of excess (greed) and lethargy on the side of deficiency (sluggishness). The former is to engage in pleasures and passions which are not acceptable on the basis of intellect and divine law; the latter is to prevent oneself from seeking what is necessary for the body.

As opposed to justice there are two vices: tyranny on the side of excess (to oppress) and submissiveness on the side of deficiency (to be oppressed). The former is to make use of people's rights or properties unjustly and the latter is to comply with injustice and to submit to oppression and degradation.

It is evident from what has been said that it is groundless to classify certain attributes under the heading of justice, because all virtues and vices are related to the three powers, i.e. intellect, anger, and passion, though the active power, insofar as it mediates, is involved in all of

them. Therefore, we put all the virtues and vices under the major types of the three powers without including any of them under the heading of justice. As we pointed out, some of them relate only to the power of intellect, some to the power of anger, some to the power of passion, and some to two or three powers together. We shall discuss them in four sections.

First, we mention those major and minor types of virtues and vices which attach to the powers of intellect, anger, and passion, and then we allude to what pertains to the two or three powers. First, we point out to the vice and then to the virtue that is against it. Then, we explain the cure or treatment for every one of the major and minor types of vices. We refer to the two major types of vices in each power and afterwards deal with the major types of virtue opposed to them, admiring them to encourage people to gain those virtues and refrain from their opposite.

The two major types of vice in the power of intellect are “slyness and sophism” on the side of excess and “simple ignorance” on the side of deficiency, the opposite of which are wisdom and knowledge. But the minor types of these two vices are “compound ignorance” on the side of deficiency and “perplexity and doubt” on the side of excess. Opposite to the compound ignorance is the comprehension of the truth or at least being aware that one does not know the truth. Opposite to perplexity is to be certain about one of the two sides of doubt—hence, certitude is against compound ignorance and perplexity, because certitude is a confident conviction that corresponds to the reality. The origin of acquiring certitude is the clearness and directness of mind along with the observance of the conditions of argument. The origin of the compound doubt is lack of clarity and the indirectness of mind. It could also be caused by errors in an argument or by an obstacle to achieve the truth such as ignorant

fanaticism or slavish imitation. The origin of perplexity is the inability and the dullness of mind.

The two major types of vices in the power of anger are recklessness and cowardice, which are opposites of bravery. Their minor types and consequences include fear, which is a state of mind that proceeds from the expectation of the occurrence of something unpleasant and undesirable or of the disappearance of something pleasant and desirable. Fear is a blameworthy attribute except for sin, betrayal, and fear of the magnificence of God. Opposite to fear is the peace of mind and the calm state of soul. The type of fear, which is praiseworthy, is accompanied by hope, as opposed to despair. Another minor type or consequence is the immaturity and weakness of the soul, to wit, an inability to endure hardship and adversity. Contrary to that is the maturity and strength of the soul, to wit, an ability to endure difficulties and to withstand hardship and sufferings. This specific ability is called stability and perseverance.

The third minor type of vice in the power of anger is “nearsightedness and lack of ambition”, negligence in aspiring for noble and grand goals, contrary to it is “high-mindedness and lofty ambition,” which are the results of the dignity and the courage of the soul. That is to say the one with this quality makes attempts to attain felicity and perfection, and seeks for noble goals.

The fourth minor type is “lack of zeal,” namely, failing to maintain what should be maintained. This lack of sense of dignity is brought about by a weakness of character and indicates failure to take care and watch over matters which need to be looked after and watched over. Zealousness is its opposite.

Another minor type is “hastiness and rashness,” which causes one to embark on actions that come into his mind immediately and thoughtlessly. The opposite of that is deliberation and reflection.

Another minor type is “wrath” on the side of excess, which is an act of soul to prevail over or overcome something. Contrary to it is “forbearance and patience.” One of the consequences of wrath is “roughness and forcefulness” which is opposed to “tolerance and open-mindedness”. Another consequence of wrath is “vindictiveness and enmity” which is contrary to admonition and benevolence. Integral to wrath and vindictiveness are things like beating, swearing, cursing, and taunting.

Vanity and self-conceit are related to one of the minor types of the power of anger, that is, to have a very high opinion of oneself or to take great pride in oneself. In opposition to that is “self-depreciation” and belittling oneself.

Arrogance, another minor type of the power of anger, is to see oneself as better than others, as opposed to humbleness, which means not to see oneself as better than others and to regard oneself as having no advantage over others.

Infringement (disobedience, transgression, and oppression) is to disobey the one that should be obeyed. Contrary to it is the obedience and submissiveness to those whom one must obey.

Self-admiration is to think of oneself as impeccable and faultless, which is in conflict with acknowledgement of one’s faults and shortcomings.

Cruelty and heartlessness, contrary to mercy and compassion, is not to be affected by seeing sufferings and pains of others.

The two major types of vices in the power of passion are rapaciousness (greed) and lethargy (sluggishness); their opposite is chastity (self-restraint). The minor types and consequences of them are “love of this world” and “rapacity,” which are in conflict with “asceticism” (austerity). “Greed” is the opposite of “contentment”. “Covetousness” is the opposite of “self-sufficiency” (being in no need of others). “Niggardliness” is the opposite of “generosity” (largesse). “Seeking the forbidden” is contrary to “piety” (God-wariness). “Perfidy” (treachery) is the opposite of “trustworthiness” (faithfulness). Generally, all sorts of sin and iniquity, debauchery, getting occupied with amusement and play, immersing oneself in falsehood, talking nonsense, and talkativeness are among the minor types of the vices in the power of passion.

The most important virtues and vices that belong to the two or three powers are “Envy,” the opposite of benevolence; “indignity, disdain, scorn, and persecution” oppose honouring people and being cautious not to annoy them. Other vices in this category of two or three powers are: “frightening and upsetting Muslims” is contrary to removing fear and grief from them; “cutting oneself off from others” is opposite of interacting intimately with others; “to break off connection with relatives” is in contrast to the observance of connection with them; “to wrong the parents and therefore be disowned by parents” is the opposite of treating them with kindness; “fault-finding” is contrary to covering and concealing the faults and deficiencies of others; “to divulge secrets” conflicts with keeping secrets; “to make mischief among people” contrasts with conciliation among them; “disputation, quarrel, fight, and hostility” are in opposition to [friendly and] nice remarks; “to ridicule and to scoff” is the opposite of humour and joking; “to backbite people” is contrary to praising and not blaming them; “lying” opposes telling the truth; the opposite of all the corruptions of the tongue is silence; “love for

position and fame” is contrasted by love for anonymity; “dissimulation” is contrary to sincere devotion; “hypocrisy” is in conflict with oneness of what is apparent and what is hidden; the opposite of “delusion” is discernment and knowledge; “long-lasting aspiration” is opposed to short-lasting aspiration; “sin” in general is against piety and abstention; “immodesty and shamelessness” is in contrast to modesty; and others which will be mentioned below.

Chapter Four: Difference between Virtues and Vices

There are many acts which appear to be virtuous, but in reality are devoid of virtue. Thus, it is necessary to distinguish between virtues and vices so as to avoid any confusion and obscurity.

We have learned that the virtue of wisdom lies in the knowledge of the essence of things as they are, and it is not separate from certitude and peace of mind. Therefore merely knowing certain matters, but without the soul having certainty, is not considered wisdom.

The virtue of chastity is the innate disposition of the power of passion to obey the power of intellect. The motive behind this disposition should be only the virtue, perfection, and the true felicity of the soul that chastity brings about, not other things, such as avoiding harm, obtaining benefits, or compulsion. Therefore, it is not chastity to leave aside worldly pleasures in order to achieve more intense pleasures of this kind. Likewise, it is not regarded as chastity to put aside these pleasures because of inability, problems, or weakness, or owing to the fear of becoming sick or exposed to people’s blame.

The virtue of bravery is the innate disposition of the power of anger to comply with intellect. Therefore, it is not bravery to carry out dangerous tasks, to get involved in fights, and to be fearless of pains,

sufferings, and torments with the intention of achieving position, wealth, and the like; such actions are rather originated by the vice of rapaciousness or fear, as is seen with oppressive armies, bandits, or thieves. In short, the acts of a really brave man, motivated only by the mere goodness and beauty of bravery, are performed by the command of intellect. There are many cases where avoidance of dangerous situations is required by the intellect without being it being inconsistent with bravery. A brave man is able to endure catastrophes, possesses the disposition of forbearance in the face of difficulties, and is not anxious or worried about hardships. His anger, when it occurs, is required by the intellect and his revenge is confined by what the intellect and the divine Law approve. It is necessary to know that the revenge is not absolutely disapproved. It has been asserted by the sages that if one does not take revenge of those who deserve it, it would bring about depression and abjection in human soul.

Justice is the obedience of the active power to the intellect, or cooperation of all powers under the supervision of the intellect. In this state, human deeds are easily carried out with moderation, seeking no end other than this innate disposition, which itself is a virtue and perfection. Thus, one is not just, if he performs just acts due to pretentiousness and ostentation, or for winning people's hearts, or with the purpose of attaining position and wealth.

Accordingly, for every minor type of virtue, there is a corresponding vice, which ought to be known and avoided by those who seek happiness and felicity. For instance, generosity is an innate disposition to readily bestow wealth or money upon the needy, motivated only by its own merit and perfection, not by other ends. Therefore, it is not generosity to give to the needy in order to gain more wealth, repel harm, or attain a position; neither is it generosity to give to the wealthy or to squander one's financial resources.

Chapter Five: Justice is the Noblest Virtue

Since justice includes all virtues and accompanies them, it is the noblest and best virtue. Justice is to moderate all qualities and acts, to bring the extremes back to the medium, and to eliminate the conflict and tension among different powers and re-establish moderation between them.

Justice may belong to morals and deeds, or to the distribution of riches, or to transactions and business deals, or to rulings and policies. In all these cases, the just man brings the extremes back to the medium. However, it is not possible to do so unless he knows what the medium is, and it is not possible to know the mean except when there is a criterion by which the medium could be recognized. This criterion is merely the divine Law. The truly just man, therefore, needs to be acquainted with divine rulings and laws to be able to establish justice.

Justice is of three sorts:

- a) Justice pertaining to the relation between God Almighty and His servants. Since God grants us life, perfections, and blessings, He has certain rights that we have to respect; one who does not give gratitude to those who do good to him is unjust.
- b) Justice pertaining to the relation between people, such cases as giving people their due rights, returning their trusts, being fair with them in transactions and deals, respecting the elderly, and helping the oppressed and the weak. This sort of justice requires everyone to be content with what they deserve, to respect the rights of others, and not to do wrong to them.

- c) Thirdly, there is a sort of justice between the living and the dead: the living people should pay the debt of the dead, fulfill their testaments, and bring them divine mercy through alms and prayer.

It is apparent from what has been said that everyone's perfection is his justice and the observance of the moderation in every external and internal act or quality, whether it is related only to himself or both to him and to his fellow-creatures. Salvation and felicity are attainable through the persistence in moderation. Hence, one should be moderate concerning knowledge and action, not sacrificing one for the other, and he should attain both of them to the best of his ability. In his actions, he also ought not to go to the extremes with regards to the external and the internal aspects. To be internally evil and pretending externally to be pure is like the ugly, morose man who conceals his ugliness under beautiful clothes. The external dimension of man should be the mirror of his internal dimension. One ought to choose and to persevere with the moderation in every internal habitudes and external acts.

Furthermore, one should select the moderate way between the esoteric intellectual sciences and the exoteric legal sciences, and not be like those who have limited themselves to the apparent meaning of the Qur'an. One ought to adopt a moderate path in philosophy, not to be dogmatic about any particular philosopher. One also needs to choose the medium between the *akhbhari* and *usuli* approaches. In general, one needs to choose a middle way in every internal or external aspect [of his being] so that he is able to remain on the path of guidance.

Response to an Objection

One may object that the summary of what you said is that virtue in morality and characteristics is equality without any excess or

deficiency, whereas excess or abundance in virtues, while favourable, does not fall under the category of justice.

In response, we say that abundance as a precaution helps us to prevent deficiency or shortcoming. The moderation in morality is not equal in all cases; for instance, excess in generosity, if it does not lead to wastefulness, is better than deficiency in it. This excess proceeds from the superiority of justice; it is a kind of intensification of justice, and is not devoid of it in its reality. It is not a blameworthy action to grant a needy person more than what he needs; but it is blameworthy to grant to a non-needy one or to distribute unequally among the needy.

The reality of justice lies in the fact that the intellect, through the rectification of the soul, dominates other powers to employ each of them in the right direction and prevent corruption in the world. Unless one keeps his powers and qualities in moderation, one will not be able to establish justice among his family and community members; how can one who fails to reform and rectify himself reform others?

It is obvious that the most important justice is the justice of the ruler, since other aspects of justice rely on it. How could it not be the case when moral refinement hinges upon the peace of mind and the regulation of affairs? With the oppression of the ruler, arise waves of sedition and disturbance, appear different sorts of sufferings and obstacles to people's convenience and peace, and those who seek perfection, like those who are lost in deserts, cannot find the way to their destination. Thus, it is stated, "If the ruler is just, he will have a share of every reward that the subjects gain, and if he is an oppressor, he will share with them in every sin that they commit." The chief of Prophets (s) said, "The just ruler is the closest person to God

Almighty in the Day of Judgment, and the unjust ruler is the farthest one from Him.” He also said, “To serve justice one hour is better than worshipping God seventy years.” Some sages have also said, “If I knew that just one of my supplications will be fulfilled, I would assign it to the reformation of the rulers or statesmen, so that it may benefit all people.”

Sequence of Acquiring Virtues

There is a natural order among virtues to be acquired, which has to be preserved. In other words, the moral refinement of character, because it is a kind of artful skill, needs to follow natural acts in method and sequence. Beyond a doubt, the power for seeking food is the first thing that appears in an infant. When this energy is intensified, the infant seeks food through weeping and screaming. When his senses are strengthened [enough] and he becomes able to remember some images, he looks for his mother's face. This all pertains to the power of passion.

Subsequently, there appear in him the signs of the power of anger so that he can ward off what annoys and hurts him. Then, in him emerges the inclination to what makes him superior and higher, such as leadership, position, and reverence. After that, the faculty of distinction and discernment develops so that he is able to think of universals.

Since the powers of passion, anger, and discernment appear sequentially in nature, in moral refinement of character, also, one should first edify the power of passion to achieve chastity, then edify the power of anger to obtain the quality of bravery, and finally edify the faculty of intellect to acquire wisdom. Following this sequence brings about ease in edification, but the failure to follow the sequence makes it impossible.

If a virtue is acquired, one needs to strive to maintain it; if it is not acquired, one ought to obtain it via removing its opposite. Thus, the art of morality is divided into two parts: that which pertains to virtues and that which is useful in eradicating vices. Ethics is similar to medicine in having two parts: that which concerns health and hygiene, and that which pertains to the cure for diseases. Ethics, therefore, is called “spiritual medicine.”

Chapter Six: Maintaining the Extolled Characteristics and Warding off Their Opposites

Method for Keeping Moderation in Virtues

As the protection of health is provided by what fits one’s temperament, keeping moderation in moral virtues is achieved by the elements described below.

The first element is associating with those who possess moral virtues, refraining from association with those who are wicked, wrong-doer, vicious, and morally repulsive, not listening to their stories, and to neglect the abominable actions they perform. This is because association and interaction with a person creates the strongest motive for acquiring his qualities and traits.

The second element is to employ the powers in the acquisition of noble qualities and to take care of those acts which result in gaining virtues, as one who wants to maintain his innate disposition of generosity should regularly grant and bestow his wealth or properties to the needy, but if he is inclined towards stinginess or niggardliness, he should take the control of his soul.

The third element is that one needs to think and reflect when acting so that he does not unwittingly carry out an action that contradicts a virtue, if he did so, he would punish his soul to perform the opposite

of what he did. If an undue and disapproved anger issues from him, he ought to be patient and forbearing in circumstances similar to that. He can sometimes expose himself to the insolence of foolish people to vanquish his ambition and selfishness or discipline himself by means of difficult tasks, such as making vows, giving alms, etc.

The fourth element is to avoid seeing, hearing, and imagining everything that arouses passion and anger. When they are naturally provoked, in order to relieve them, he satisfies himself to the extent approved by the intellect and the divine Law, which is consistent with his health.

The fifth element is that one endeavours to discover his own concealed faults, and if they are found, he tries to remove them or eradicate them. Since the soul loves its qualities and actions, it frequently happens that certain faults remain hidden from him. Thus, it is necessary for anyone who is eager to protect his soul so he asks his friends to search for his faults and inform him about them. He must be pleased by this and strive to eliminate those faults. It is beneficial in this station to see people as a mirror of his own faults; whenever he finds their faults, thinking of its ugliness, he should remember that this ugly fault in him is recognized by others, so he has to ward it off.

The Remedial Instructions in Spiritual Medicine

Causes are recognized, and afterwards it is prescribed how to cure it. The method of curing is either a general one, applied to all illnesses, or a particular one, applied to a specific illness. This is true in spiritual medicine as well. We briefly explain below.

Diagnosing Diseases of the Soul

The diseases of the soul are caused by the deviation of moral characteristics from moderation. The way to diagnose them is as follows:

As we learned, human faculties are of three types: first, the power of discernment or intellect; second, the power of anger (or the repulsive power); third, the power of passion (or the attractive power). The deviation of each one of them is either in quantity or in quality. Quantitative deviation occurs either by an excess or by a deficiency, as qualitative deviation is caused by corruption or poorness in faculties. On this account, the diseases of each faculty are produced either by an excess or a deficiency or by the poorness of quality.

Examples of excess in the power of discernment include slyness, sophism, pretending to be clever, going beyond the limits of reason, excess in disputes, and applying reason to that which is incomprehensible. Examples of deficiency in this power include silliness, foolishness, stupidity, and the failure of thought to comprehend what is required.

Instances of excess in the repulsive power include intensified anger, wrath, and revenge, and deficiency in this power leads to vices such as non-zealousness or non-jealousness.

Excess in the power of attraction results in vices such as excessive greed in eating and having sexual intercourse; deficiency in this power may lead to lethargy in getting essential nourishment, ruining family, sluggishness and lassitude in lust to the extent that one loses all his potential progeny.

Causes of the Diseases of the Soul

The sources of moral deviation pertain either to the soul or to the body. The former is either caused by birth or by engagement in depraved acts, while the latter is a type of disease that generates certain depraved innate dispositions. The secret of this point lies in the fact that the soul and the body are interrelated and affected by each other in a way that qualities that appear in one are transmitted to the other. For instance, the anger of the soul can make the body tremble or make it sick.

General Cures for Diseases of the Soul

If the moral deviation is caused by a bodily illness, it has to be removed by medical cure. If the moral deviation is caused by the illness of soul, the general cure is as follows:

After the recognition of deviation, one ought to acquire the virtue opposed to that deviation and keep an eye on those acts that are the outcomes of that virtue. If this instruction was not effective, one should rebuke the soul due to that vice or deviation in thought, word, or action. One may address his soul, saying, "O carnal soul! You led yourself to death, you exposed yourself to divine wrath, and you will soon be tormented in Hellfire along with the wicked and devils." If this was not effective either, one needs to resort to the outcomes of the vice contrary to this vice providing that he preserves modification and moderation. Hence, a coward may take reckless, foolhardy, and fearful measures, putting himself in danger, and a niggardly person may overdo largesse, on the condition that when the disease is cured they do not fall into recklessness or wastefulness. If this is not useful owing to the strength of disease, one should punish himself by means of difficult, demanding tasks and severe asceticism, which may

undermine the moving power of that vice. This should be the last cure.

In the next part, I shall mention the specific cure for every vice and then explain the opposite virtue of that and what has been said in admiration about that; for it is enormously helpful to know every virtue or good character in order to eradicate its opposite vice. I shall, after describing every virtue and vice, point out to its outcomes or results issuing from human organs. I will indicate first what pertains to the power of intellect, then to the power of anger, next to the power of passion, and after that what pertains to two or all three powers. Thus we will encounter four stations.

