

38) Hypocrisy

One of the factors that make people drive away and dislike someone is hypocrisy which, due to religion and reason, is forbidden. It is reproached both by God and people. Hypocrisy has been strictly prohibited by the Holy Quran and the Sunnah.

Hypocrisy has been blamed in several verses in the Holy Quran: "***So woe to the praying ones, who are unmindful of their prayers, who do good to be seen and withhold the necessities of life.***"¹

In describing the hypocrites, God says: "...***and when they stand up to prayer, they stand up sluggishly; they do it only to be seen of men and do not remember Allah save a little.***"²

In relation to charity, God says: "***O you who believe! Do not make your charity worthless by reproach and injury, like him who spends his property to be seen of men and does not believe in Allah and the last day.***"³

In relation to hypocrisy in Jihad, God says: "***Be not as those who came forth from their dwellings boastfully and to be seen of men, and debar (men) from the way of Allah, while Allah is surrounding all they do.***"⁴

As it can be inferred from these verses, hypocrisy is of different kinds. The late Naraghi has classified it into two categories; either in faith or in religious duties. Hypocrisy in religious duties is classified into three kinds; 1- In the origin of worships 2- In recommendable worships 3- In the description of worships.

Nevertheless, hypocrisy can be classified into other divisions as follows:

1- Physical hypocrisy, like those who pretend not to pay attention to their own physical appearance; to deceive people, they leave their hair disheveled, put a sign of prostration on their forehead, and undergo a diet to lose weight to show that they do not care for the worldly affairs.

2- Hypocrisy in the way they are dressed; they wear ragged and shabby clothes to show their sanctity to people.

3- Hypocrisy in speech; they give lectures on morality, recite verses from the Quran and remember Allah pretentiously to show that they are religious. They show their anger on prohibited act and express regret for people's sins.

4- Hypocrisy in action; performing long prostration and genuflection, putting their hands on their thighs in prayer and doing pretentious act in the Hajj, fasting, charity, Jihad, feeding the poor, and meeting with the Islamic scholars are some of the examples of this kind of hypocrisy. It is well to mention that if we see such behaviors in others, we should not always consider them as hypocrisy. A man with such conducts might be a hypocrite.

Hypocrisy invalidates religious duties and causes God's wrath. It is for the same reason that it has been prohibited, and Taqwa has been recommended.

Imam Sadiq (AS) has reported his father as saying: "The Messenger of Allah (SAW) was asked what salvation on the Day of Judgment would be, and he said: "If you look for salvation, do not act deceitfully, for God will act deceitfully too. Whoever plays tricks on God, God will play tricks on him too and takes away his faith as long as his 'self' plays tricks on Him."

The Holy Prophet (SAW) was asked: "How can one act deceitfully towards God?" The Holy Prophet (SAW) said: "When he acts to what God has ordered but his act is intended for others. Therefore, observe Taqwa and avoid hypocrisy, for it is like associating something with Allah. A hypocrite is called by four names on the Day of Judgment: "O disbeliever!" "O wrongdoer!" "O deceitful!" and "O loser!" It shall be said to him: 'your acts are worthless!' 'Your reward has gone!' 'There is no share for you today. Ask your reward from the one you have acted for!"⁵

Abu Baseer narrated: "I heard Imam Sadiq (AS) say: 'On the Day of Judgment, a God's servant, who has performed prayer, shall be brought. He shall say: 'O Lord! I offered prayers for Your commandment.' It shall be said to him: 'You offered prayers so that people would say: 'how good his prayer is!' Throw him into fire!'

Another servant who has learnt how to recite the Quran shall be brought. He shall say: 'O Lord! I learnt the Quran for Your sake.' It shall be said to him: 'You learnt it so that people would say: 'what a good voice he has!' Throw him into the fire!'

A servant, who has fought in the front, shall be brought. He shall say: 'O Lord! I fought for Your sake.' It shall be said to him: 'You fought so that people might say: 'how brave he is!' Throw him into fire!'

A God's servant, who has given charity, shall be brought. He shall say: 'O Lord! I spent my wealth for Your sake.' It shall be said to him: 'But you have spent it just to be said (about you): how generous he is!' Throw him into fire!"⁶

Imam Sadiq (AS) has been reported as saying: "Whoever does a good deed secretly, it is written

secretly for him and whenever he speaks of it, it will be written openly. If he speaks of it again, it will be omitted and “hypocrisy” shall be written for him.”⁷

There are many traditions on hypocrisy, but the following is a story related by Sayyed Jaza’iri: “Some man, who was used to hypocrisy, said to himself: ‘I would better go to the so-and-so mosque in the outskirt of the city and offer the prayer there, in order not to be seen. When he reached the mosque, he began offering prayer until it got dark. He was offering prayer when he heard the sound of the opening of the door. He became happy saying to himself: ‘Thanks to God, I was seen here while offering prayer.’ He prolonged his prayer until dawn. When it was morning and somehow clear, he saw a black dog that had found refuge in the mosque from rain! He said to himself: ‘Alas! Even one night that I wished to pray for the sake of God, I actually prayed for the black dog.’”⁸

It has been narrated that a worshipper had to re-offer his prayers that he had offered for thirty years. He always attended the congregational prayer in the first row. One day when he failed to take part in the prayer on time, he became annoyed. He came to know that all his prayers had been affected by hypocrisy.

[1.](#) Qur'an, 107:4–7.

[2.](#) Qur'an, 4:142.

[3.](#) Qur'an, 2:264.

[4.](#) Qur'an, 8:47.

[5.](#) Wasa'il al-Shiah, vol. 1, p. 51

[6.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 69, p. 301.

[7.](#) Ibid., p. 324.

[8.](#) Anwar al-Nomaniah, p. 251.

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