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Admonished

Advice by Imam-Al-Khomeini, May I be his Sacrifice, for those who Wish to be Admonished

So, my dear one, look deeply into your affairs and hold yourself to account in each of its deeds. Pull words out of it in every incident, so you may get to know for what purpose it is willing to do good deeds and honorable acts, why it asks about issues relevant to the night prayer, why it recites supplications in the presence of others... Does it intend that we should learn the answers to our questions from it, or does it teach them for the sake of Alleh Almighty?

Or does it want to be known by people as one of those who perform *tahajjud*? Why does it want people to know it is traveling on pilgrimage to sacred places, or even the number of such travels? Why it does not want people to know about its acts of charity which it offered in secrecy, so it resorts to other means in order that talk will pour into the subject of charity, and it will then announce it offers people charity?

If all of this is done for the sake of All®h Almighty, if you want people to emulate you and you will be implied in this statement: "One who leads to a good deed is like one who does it", manifesting your god deed will then be good. Thank All®h, Praise to Him, with your pure conscience and heart, but be alert lest you should be deceived by the *nafs* and by Satan when they both insinuate to you, and do not let them force you to do a pretentious deed in a sacred manner.

If manifesting is not purely for the sake of All®h, abandon manifestation, for it is nothing but fame, and it comes from the foul tree of pretension. All®h, to Whom all favors belong, does not accept such a deed, and He orders its doer to be placed in Sijjeen. We seek refuge with All®h against the plots of the self, the *nafs*, for they are quite minute, and we all know in general that our deeds are not purely for the sake of All®h Almighty.

Had we been sincere worshippers, why does Satan thus fare with our deeds although he had promised All®h, Praise to Him, that he would never intercept the path of the sincere worshippers of All®h nor stretch his hand to their holy field? Our greatest mentor, may his shade prolong, says, "Satan is the dog

that stands at the gate of All®h. A dog does not bark at the friends of the house's owner, nor does he harm them. The dog stands guard at the door; he does not bother those with whom the owner of the house feels comfortable. Instead, he prohibits from entering those whom the owner of the house does not."

If you keep Satan busy about your own self, you must know that your deeds are not purely for the sake of All®h, not for achieving His pleasure. If you were sincerely seeking All®h, why did the springs of wisdom now flow from your heart to your tongue even though you have been for the past forty years doing deeds which you regard as bringing you closer to All®h? This is so although tradition says that if one is sincere to All®h for forty mornings, the springs of wisdom will flow from his heart to his tongue.

So, be informed that our deeds are not purely for the sake of All®h, nor are we even aware of it. Such is the incurable ailment. Woe unto the folks of obedience and adoration, of Fridays and congregations, of knowledge and faith, if they open their minds and see the Hereafter having opened its pavilions! They will then see themselves as being much worse than those who committed major sins, worse even than the apostates and those who associate partners with All®h!

They will see the tablet of their deeds more black than that of those folks! Woe unto one who enters hell on account of his prayers and acts of obedience! Alas for those whose charity, *zakat* and prayers are portrayed in the most ugly form! So, poor soul, you are an apostate... As for the sinners, they are the ones who believe in His Unity though they disobey Him, and All®h Almighty forgives the disobedient ones through His favor if He wills. But He has said,

"Allsh does not forgive one who associates partners with Him" (Qur'sn, 4:48)

if he dies without having repented. In the sacred traditions, according to what I have heard, the Infallible Ones, peace be with them, have said, "A pretender associates partners with All®h; one who shows off his religious prominence, his being an im®m, his having studied and earned knowledge, and his fast and prayers..., generally in his good deeds, so he may earn a status in the hearts of people, associates others with All®h," according to the reports transmitted about the ones who are infallible, peace of All®h be with them all.

Forgiveness is not extended to him, according to the sacred verse above. Would you have been among those who committed major sins, openly declaring your being a debauchee, violating the pure sanctities?! But you believed in His Unity, associating none with All®h!

So, my dear one, now think about your matter, cure your soul, and be informed that fame among people who are worth nothing is worth nothing. Had a sparrow eaten those hearts, it would not have satisfied its hunger; they are worthless, equaling nothing. This weakling creature has no power; power is found only in the divine holy presence, and the Holy One is the only doer, the One Who causes things, while if the creatures want to create flies, they will never be able to do so even if each supports the other in the endeavor.

And if the flies rob them of something, they can never reclaim it. Power belongs to All®h Almighty; He is the One Who bears an impact on all things in existence. So, exert yourself through all types of self-training and perseverance to write with the mind's pen on the heart's sheet that none can bear an impact on existence save All®h; none is a doer in the abode of verification save All®h. Enable your heart through all means of practical unifying, which is the first degree of *tawh®id*, and make your heart a believer, admitting this blessed word.

Stamp your heart with the stamp that there is no god save All®h. Make it the portrait for the *tawh®d* statement. Get it to reach the station of comfort. Attract its attention to the fact that people can neither do any harm nor any benefit to you but, rather, the One Who can benefit or harm you is All®h, Praise to Him. Remove from your mental vision this blindness, for there is concern that you may be among those who will say, "Lord! Why did You resurrect me blind?", that you will be resurrected blind on the Day when the innermost becomes manifest.

The will of All®h supersedes all wills. If your heart becomes comfortable with this blessed statement, so you surrender it to this creed, there is hope your end will be good, the roots of shirk, pretension, apostasy and hypocrisy will all be uprooted from your heart.

Be informed that this faith agrees with reason and tradition. There is no ambiguity in it about obligation, although it is possible that one who is not knowledgeable about its principles and precepts may charge it of forcing obligations. The hearing faculties of those who make such charges are not accustomed to some requirements. It is not linked to obligation essentially. It, then, is *tawh* d, whereas obligation is shirk.

Such is guidance, while obligation is straying. It is not appropriate to explain what obligation and what destiny is, but the topic is clear for those who are apt to it, while others should not get themselves involved in such pursuit. The One Who brought about the Shar® a prohibits entering into such pursuits [for those who are not qualified to do so]. Anyhow, plead to the Merciful All®h in all circumstances, especially when you are in solitude.

Plead to Him with humility, inability, and submission to guide you to the *noor* of *tawh* d, so He may enlighten your heart with the glitter of the unknown, with sincerity in your adoration, so you may be freed from the whole world and you will see everything in it as being trivial. Humbly seek the Holy One's help to make your deeds dedicated to Him, to guide you to the path of sincerity, of love.

If you achieve a good result, remember that you are a weak servant of All®h, the one who is stripped of the truth, who spent his lifetime following his whims and desires, whose heart, because of the impurity of transgressions and heart diseases, no longer accepts any advice, nor can any verse or tradition bear an impact on it, nor can any evidence, proof or sign. If you do so, perhaps you will be guided to a path that bring about salvation through supplication, for All®h does not turn away a believer who goes to His door; He responds favorably to his supplication.

Having reminded you of these requirements, though you, too, knew them, for they are not new..., take your time to cultivate your heart, to examine your deeds and actions, your motion and stillness. Look into your heart's hideouts, and hold your heart to account as strictly as anyone among the folks of this world who holds his partner accountable. Abandon any deed in which there is the doubt of pretension and flattery, no matter how very honest such a deed may be.

If you see that your public acts of adoration are not being performed sincerely, do them privately, although they are recommended to be performed publicly, although rare is the case when pretension agrees in the origin of an obligation but is often in its particularities, in what is commendable, in what is superfluous.

Yet, at any rate, purify your heart from the contamination of shirk through a completely serious effort, through a great deal of exertion, so you, God forbid, may not be removed from this [transient] world while being in this condition [to the Hereafter], hence your status will be bad, and there will be no hope for your salvation, and All®h, Praise to Him, will be angry with you. This is confirmed by a sacred tradition in Was®il al-Sh®a which cites Qurb al-Isn®d which in turn traces it back to the Commander of the Faithful (ع) who said, "The Messenger of All®h (ع) said, 'One who makes himself look good in the eyes of people by doing what All®h loves, while being an opponent of All®h in secrecy by committing what All®h hates, will find All®h angry with him, holding him in contempt."

This tradition carries two possibilities. One of them is when an individual beautifies his good deeds for people while privately committing ugly ones. The other is that he goes out to the public and shows others what he has done while deep down he is only a pretender. At any rate, this tradition contains a reference to pretension because doing what is obligatory and what is commendable, without meaning to make a show, does not incur the wrath of the Lord. Rather, it can be said that the second possibility is more likely because doing ugly deeds publicly is uglier than doing them privately. Anyhow, God forbid that the King of Kings and the most Merciful of those who show mercy should be wrathful with man. I seek refuge with All®h from the wrath of the Clement One.

Here ends his sacred statement, may his shade be prolonged.

Notice:

As we have repeatedly stated, the traps of the *nafs* are numerous; Satan lies in ambush against man in order to rob him of his capital for the Hereafter through countless tricks. But the more familiar with these tricks one is, such familiarity may benefit him in being saved from them. Let us add to the above the following:

It may coincide that one spends the night with his adoring friends who stand up for the *tahajjud* and spend the entire or some of the night praying, and he in his customary case may offer *tahajjud*, but he used to rise close to dawn. So, if he sees them, his energy is fired up in harmony with them, so much so that he performs more than what he is used to, or he may pray although he was not accustomed to

performing the night prayer. Also, he may be among a crowd of fasting persons, so he is energetic in performing the fast. Had it not been for them, such energy would not have been fired up. In cases such as these, a question is put forth: "Is this pretension, so he has to abandon it?"

The answer is: Not at all. Rather, it can be explained in a way wherein some matters are distinguished from others. A believer, since he wishes to adore All®h, performs the night prayer and fasts during the daytime and may be hindered by obstacles, stopped by being busy, overcome by desires and pleasures, overcome by indifference, etc. If he accompanies those who adore, this indifference may abandon him, or the obstacles may be pushed away from his path, or he may not keep himself busy doing anything, so he is energized for adoration.

For example, he may be at home more capable of sleeping, enjoying a supple bed, or enjoying his wife, or talking with his children and relatives, or he may be busy with his daily transactions. These distract him from adoration during the first hours of the night, so he has no energy to stand up for prayers at the end of the night. If he finds himself in someone else's home, all these distractions will be removed from him.

Moreover, he may be manipulated by an impetus for righteousness such as seeing his friends turning their attention fully towards All®h, turning away from the life of this world, adoring their Loved One, feeling the pleasure of addressing Him, so the catalyst of goodness moves within him, prompting him not to be late from the field of worship. He will then compete with them in their endeavor. It is in such doing that the competing ones should compete with each other.

There is no doubt that this has nothing to do with pretension. Or one may be robbed of sleep because of not being used to that house, or for any other reason, so he takes advantage of his sleeplessness. But when he is at home, sleep overtakes him. Perhaps it may be added to the above his being always at home, and his soul does not permit him to always offer *tahajjud* except for a short while. His condition will be a cause for such energy.

The same applies to fast. It may be hard for him to fast at home in the presence of delicious foods, and it is difficult for him to keep himself away from them. But if these foods are not present, the religious impetus to fast takes over. The available pleasures are obstacles and catalysts that weaken one's religious practice. If one is freed from them, the catalyst will be strong. Satan in such situations insinuates to him through pretension and says, "Do not do it, for you will then be a pretender, for you used not to do it at home nor offer more than your [regular] prayers."

He must not pay attention to such insinuation but undertake the deed so Satan and his *nafs* may lose hope and not repeat their insinuation. And his desire and energy may be for the sake of their observing him thus engaged, being concerned about what they may say and the possibility of their accusing him of being lazy, especially if they think that he is among those who offer *tahajjud* and adoration. His soul does not permit him to fall in their eyes. It wants to maintain its status. It is then that Satan, contrarily to

the first possibility, says to him, "Offer your prayers, for you are sincere, and you do not pray for their sake but for that of All®h, since you used to pray every night. And if you do not pray for one night or more, it is due to the abundance of hindrances. Your catalyst tonight is the absence of the obstacles, not for the desire that they see you."

The diagnosis in both situations confuses those who do not have a keen insight. If it is known that the catalyst is to bring the hearts of the public closer, he may either abandon the adoration or not offer anything more than what he used to do, not even one more prostration. If he comes to know that his energy is due to the removal of the obstacles and to compete with others for winning the Pleasure of All®h and His obedience, he must take advantage of the opportunity and keep himself busy worshipping his Lord.

The diagnosis in both situations is tough for all those who do not have a keen insight. If one gets to know that the motive is to attract people's hearts, he must either abandon the acts of adoration or not add anything to what he is accustomed to doing, not even a single prostration. If he gets to know that the catalyst is the removal of obstacles and the competition for achieving the pleasure of and obedience to All®h, let him seize the opportunity and keep himself busy worshipping his Lord. But if the matter is confusing to him and he is unable to diagnose the matter, let him ask himself this question: "If these men see him praying at a place where they do not see me, will I be generous with my prayers while they do not notice me?" If there is such generosity, let him pray, for the motive is right. But if he sees himself as having hardship doing so while they did not see him, let him leave it for its motive is pretension.

Likewise, he may be present during a supplication meeting. He looks at them and is overcome with tears out of fear of Allsh. But had he heard the supplication while being by himself, he would not have wept. Seeing people weak softens the heart; so, this is not pretension. Rather, he may not be able to weep, so he feigns weeping. This feign weeping, too, may not be motivated by pretension; instead, he fears for his heart lest it should be hard when he sees people weeping and when his eyes do not shed tears; therefore, he forces himself to pretend to be weeping. This is commendable.

The mark of truth in this is that he asks himself this: If he heard them praying while they could not see him, will he be concerned about his heart being hard, so he would feign weeping or not? If he does not find tears while being unnoticed by them, his concern is not due to his heart being hard, but it is out of his fear lest it should be said that he is hard-hearted. In this case, he ought to abandon his pretense of weeping. And the cause of weeping may be due to grief, but it is mixed with pretension during the time when he weeps, so he raises his voice and becomes quite vocal in his wailing; this additional enthusiasm is pretension. He first wept for the sake of All®h but then Satan kept him doing so. Pretension may invite him to keep his tears on his face in order to show it.

On the whole, one's *nafs* and Satan have countless tricks. As a tradition states, "Pretension has seventy doors," keeping in mind that "seventy" is an indication of "many", while each door may open up to many other doors. Another tradition says, "Seek refuge with All®h against the pretentious submission." The

meaning of "pretentious submission" is that the organs, the limbs, not the heart, are submitting to All®h, although it could have another meaning. In his supplication, the Master of those who Prostrate [Im®m al—Sajjad (ਣ)] states this: "Lord! I seek refuge with You against my publicly looking good in the eyes of people while looking ugly in Your eyes privately, keeping people feeling pity for me while losing that with which You are more familiar than I am, demonstrating to people my best condition while revealing to You my worst, seeking nearness to people through my good deeds, fleeing away from You through my wrongdoing, hence I will be afflicted with Your contempt, and Your wrath will fall upon me! Do, Lord, shelter me from all of this, O Lord of the Worlds!"

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