

Conceit

Conceit stands for self-importance for a good trait or a noble quality, such as knowledge, wealth, high rank, or righteous deed. The difference between conceit and arrogance is that the previous is to regard oneself highly important without the feeling of being proud, while arrogance is conceit plus feeling of pride. Conceit, however, is a detestable manner implying self-humbleness, narrow-mindedness, and impudence:

“Do not consider yourselves very great. Allah knows best who is the most righteous person (53:32).”

The Prophet (S) said: “Allah knew that sin is better for the believer than self-conceit; lest, He will never let the believers commit sins¹.”

Imam al-Baqir (a) said: “Three things are exterminating: to regard the deeds are very much, to neglect the sins, and to be conceited².”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “The conceited shall perish³.”

“Eblis the cursed said to his troops, ‘If only I could impose three things upon son of Adam, I would not care for whatever he would do then, because his deeds will not be accepted: to regard his deeds as very much, neglect his sins, and be controlled by conceit⁴.’”

“A knowledgeable man asked the worshipper about his prayers. ‘How can a person like me be asked about his prayers?’ said the worshipper. ‘How about your weeping (out of fear of God)?’ asked the knowledgeable man. ‘I weep so heavily that my tears flow on my cheeks,’ answered the worshipper. The knowledgeable commented, ‘To laugh while you are truly fearful of God is surely better than weeping while you are conceited. No single item of the deeds of the conceited will be raised (i.e. accepted).’”

One of the Imams (a) narrated that two men; a worshipper and sinful, entered a mosque. When they went out, the sinful was faithful and the worshipper sinful. The worshipper offered the rites of worship while he was conceited; therefore, his mind was engaged in his conceit. The sinful offered the acts of

worship because he was regretful for his sins; therefore, he was seeking God's forgiveness as he remembered his sins⁵.

It is worth mentioning that the discommended conceit is to consider the good deed as very much. To feel pleased for the good deed along with modesty for sake of God this is not included with the discommended conceit.

Disadvantages of Conceit

Conceit causes selfishness and vanity, which are the causes of people's detestation and humiliation. It turns one's eyes away from noticing his own defects. The conceited forgets his sins and causes himself many damages, since negligence of sins stops against repentance to God and exposes to His wrath.

Treatment of Conceit

Because conceit and arrogance are of the same origin, though they differ in trend, their treatment is the same. It is important for the self-conceited to realize that all virtues that arouse in himself conceit are the graces of God that He grants to whom He wills. Hence, He should be shown gratitude for them.

In the field of avoiding self-conceit, it is related that one of the righteous people, once, left his house after midnight for visiting one of the holy shrines and offering the rites there. In his way, he was controlled by conceit and thought that he was in his way for offering rites of worship in such a cold hour while others were enjoying warmth and sleep in their houses. Meanwhile, he saw one of the hawkers who was selling round rape. He pushed himself towards him and asked how much he would earn from that job. 'Two or three dirhams,' said the hawker. The man then thought with himself, 'Why should I be so conceited? The value of my sleepless and wandering in such an hour is only two or three dirhams.'

¹. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 15/3 (as quoted from al-Amali).

². Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 15 part 3 (as quoted from as-Saduq's al-Khissal).

³. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 151 (as quoted from al-Kafi).

⁴. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 15 part 3 (as quoted from as-Saduq's al-Khissal).

⁵. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 151 (as quoted from al-Kafi).

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