

Practical Treatment for Pretension

Contemplating upon and making plans for the issues which we have stated, though it has a strong effect in treating this disease, ought not suffice to scientifically treat this dangerous ailment. Rather, the disease has also to be practically monitored. The practical medication is that one must accustom himself to hiding his acts of adoration and closing the doors while doing them just as the doors are closed when sins are committed, till his heart is convinced that Allāh knows about and is familiar with his acts of adoration, and his soul does not stop him from seeking anyone to know about them save Allāh.

It has been narrated that a companion of Abū Hafs, the blacksmith, spoke ill of this life and of its people, whereupon Abū Hafs said to him, "You have manifested what you should have hidden. From this day on, do not keep us company." He did not even permit showing this much because in speaking ill of this life there is a sort of invitation to asceticism, and such an invitation often stems out of pretension; therefore, this student made him the object of his teacher's reprimanding

There is no cure for pretension like hiding. This is so even though it, in the beginning, is very difficult to do, but if one perseveres about it by forcing himself, he will be aided by divine acts of kindness, and good success will be his; it will then be easier for him and his burden will fall through support and help from the Almighty.

Let me cite for you, kind reader, some of what has been narrated about the biographies of the Imāms of Guidance who are the doctors of the souls:

Al-Qummi, the narrator of traditions, may Allāh be pleased with him, has narrated saying that Imām Ali son of Imām al-Hussain (peace be with them both) used to come out during the pitch dark of the night carrying a sack on his back in which he placed small bundles containing [gold] dinars and [silver] dirhams, and he might also have carried on his back food or firewood.

He would come to a house door and knock it then hand over something to whoever comes out to open it, covering his face meanwhile so the poor recipient may not know who he is. When his corpse was placed down for the burial bath, his back showed marks of swellings as large as camel humps. He used

to sustain a hundred families from among the poor of Medina.

The son of Aisha is quoted as having said, "I heard the residents of Medina saying, 'We have now lost the secret charity when Ali son of al-Hussain (ع) died.' When he died and was stripped for the funeral burial, they kept looking at the marks on his back. They said that he used to carry flour sacks on his back during the night in order to get them to reach the poor of Medina stealthily, and he used to say that secret charities put out the wrath of the Lord."

The Prophet (ص) has said, "The greatest rewards for an act of worship are for one who hides them."¹

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be with him, has said, "One of the treasures of Paradise are: hiding a good deed, persevering while facing calamities, and hiding hardships."²

The Imams, peace be with them, are also cited as having said, "The distinction of a good deed done in secrecy over one done openly is that the first will be rewarded seventy times as much."³

There are many other such narratives.

¹. Safeenat al-Bihar. Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 15.

². Ibid.

³. I say that the professor, may my soul be his sacrifice, has transmitted this statement from his own great mentor Shah-Abadi (may Allah be pleased with him). But I saw it recorded in the book titled Mirsad al-Ibad by Sheikh Najm ad-Deen, and favor belongs to the one who does a good deed first.

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