

Shunning Conceit

Conceit means to have an exaggerated opinion of oneself, to be pleased with oneself, vanity, egoism; all of these because of some superiority in one's thought or success in one's action. It is a harmful quality and has been condemned and forbidden by religion. The origin of conceit in most of people is ignorance. A conceited man has come up short in knowing about the Lord and His greatness and in realizing his own need and dependence on God. For this reason he is proud of his material and spiritual capabilities and boasts about his successfulness in thought and action. He is unaware of the fact that all kinds of perfection and capacity as well as material favours are from God; and all sorts of good deeds and success in man's life come from Him.

Allah the Most High said: ***“And whatever favour is (bestowed) on you it is from Allah.”***

He also said: ***“Say: ‘Shall We inform you of the greatest losers in (their) deeds? (These are) those whose labour is lost in this world's life and they think that they are well-versed in skill of the work of hands.’”***

He also said: ***“And were it not for Allah's grace upon you and His mercy, not one of you would have ever been pure, but Allah purifies whom He pleases, and Allah is Hearing, Knowing.”***

He also said: ***“Whatever benefit comes to you (O man), it is from Allah, and whatever misfortune befalls you, it is from yourself.”***

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (S) said: ***“Three things destroy man's spirit: following his desires, being greedy and conceit,”***

Imam 'Ali (a.s.) the Commander of the Faithful said: ***“Conceit is a sign of deficiency in one's intellect.”***

He (a.s.) also said: ***“It is enough for a sign of ignorance to be conceited in knowledge.”***

He (a.s.) also said: ***“An evil deed which causes sorrow in your spirit is better in Allah's sight than a good action which brings you conceit.”***

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.) said: *“Two men went into a mosque. One of them was pious and the other was sinful. When they came back the pious man was sinful and the sinful man was pious! The one who was pious boasted about his worship and remembered his good actions; for this reason he fell. The one who was sinful felt shame and sorrow for his evil and bad deeds, remembering his sins and asking forgiveness from Allah; for this reason he was purified.”*

He (a.s.) also said: *“Three things destroy man: magnifying his actions, ignoring his sins and being conceited for some correct ideas,”*

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a.s.) said: *“He who yields to conceit will perish.”*

Imam Musa Al-Kazim (a.s.) said: *“Conceit has degrees. One of them is to decorate evil actions to seem good. In this case, conceit causes man to think he is doing good. Another variety of it comes to a believer when he tries to remind Allah of his belief; while Allah has the right of reminding him of His favours to him.”*

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