

[Home](#) > [Mizan al-Hikmah \(Scale of Wisdom\)](#) > [The Fault](#) > He Who is Ignorant of Something Finds Fault With It

The Fault

The Fault الْعَيْبُ

[Praise for One Whose Own Fault Preoccupies Him from Finding Fault in Others](#)

مَدْحُ مَنْ شَغَلَهُ عَيْبُهُ عَنْ عُيُوبِ النَّاسِ

.. الإمامُ عليٌّ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ): طَوْبِي لِمَنْ شَغَلَهُ عَيْبُهُ عَنْ عُيُوبِ النَّاسِ¹

1— Imam Ali (a.s.) said, ‘Blessed be the one whose own fault preoccupies him from finding faults in others.’[Nahjul Balaghah, Sermon 176]

.. الإمامُ عليٌّ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ): أَعْقَلُ النَّاسِ مَنْ كَانَ بِعَيْبِهِ بَصِيرًا، وَعَنْ عَيْبِ غَيْرِهِ ضَرِيرًا²

2— Imam Ali (a.s.) said, ‘The most intelligent of people is he who is well aware of his own faults and blind to others’ faults.’[Ghurur al-Hikam, no. 3233]

.. الإمامُ عليٌّ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ): مَنْ أَبْصَرَ عَيْبَ نَفْسِهِ شُغِلَ عَنْ عَيْبِ غَيْرِهِ³

3— Imam Ali (a.s.) said, ‘He who observes his own faults is preoccupied from others’ faults.’[Tuhaf al-Uqul, no. 88]

.. الإمامُ الصَّادِقُ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ): أَنْفَعُ الْأَشْيَاءِ لِلْمَرْءِ سَبْقُهُ النَّاسَ إِلَى عَيْبِ نَفْسِهِ⁴

4— Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said, ‘The most beneficial thing for a man is his precedence over others at knowing his own fault.’[al-Kafi, v. 8, p. 243, no. 337]

.. الإمام الصادق (عليه السلام): إذا رأيتم العبد متفقداً لذنوب (الناس) ناسياً لذنوبه، فاعلموا أنه قد مكر به5

5— Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said, ‘When you see a man inspecting other people’s sins and forgetting his own sins, then know that he is deluding himself.’[Mustatrafat al-Sara’ir, p. 48, no. 7]

The Censure of Preoccupying Oneself with Others’ Faults Whilst Flattering Oneself

نمُّ الاشتغالِ بعيوبِ الناسِ ومُداهنَةِ النفسِ

! عيسى (عليه السلام): يا عبيدَ السَّوءِ، تَلومونَ النَّاسَ عَلَى الظَّنِّ، وَلَا تَلومونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ عَلَى اليَقِينِ؟6

6— Prophet Jesus (a.s.) said, ‘O iniquitous servants, you blame others based on what you conjecture about them and do not blame yourselves in that which you know for certain!’[Tuhaf al-’Uqul, no. 501]

- كنز العمال: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ): يُبْصِرُ أَحَدُكُمْ الْقَذَى فِي عَيْنِ أَخِيهِ، وَيَنْسَى الْجَذَعَ - أَوْ قَالَ:7
! الجَذَلَ - فِي عَيْنِهِ

7— The Prophet (S) said, ‘How can you notice a speck in your brother’s eye but overlook the tree stump in your own!’[Kanz al-’Ummal, no. 44141]

- رسولُ اللهِ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ): كَفَى بِالْمَرْءِ عَيْباً أَنْ يَنْظُرَ مِنَ النَّاسِ إِلَى مَا يَعْمَى عَنْهُ مِنْ نَفْسِهِ، وَيُعَيِّرَ النَّاسَ8
بِمَا لَا يَسْتَطِيعُ تَرْكُهُ، وَيُؤْذِي جَلِيسَهُ بِمَا لَا يَعْنِيهِ

8— The Prophet (S) said, ‘The fault that lies within a man’s own self is more than enough to prevent him from prying into other people’s faults, which he himself possesses but to which he is blind; or from blaming others for that which he himself is unable to abandon; or from bothering the one he is sitting next to by prying into matters that are none of his business.’[al-Khisal, p. 110, no. 81]

.. الإمام علي (عليه السلام): مَنْ نَظَرَ فِي عُيُوبِ النَّاسِ فَأَنْكَرَهَا ثُمَّ رَضِيَهَا لِنَفْسِهِ، فَذَلِكَ الْأَحْمَقُ بِعَيْنِهِ9

9— Imam Ali (a.s.) said, ‘The one who pries into others’ faults, disapproves of them, and then adopts them for himself, is truly a fool.’[Nahjul Balaghah, Saying 349]

.. الإمام علي (عليه السلام): أَكْبَرُ (أَكْثَرُ) الْعَيْبِ أَنْ تَعِيبَ مَا فِيكَ مِثْلَهُ 10

10— Imam Ali (a.s.) said, ‘The greatest fault is when one criticises others for the same faults present in oneself.’[Nahjul Balaghah, Saying 353]

Concealing Faults

فَضَّلُ سَتَرَ الْعُيُوبِ

.. رسولُ الله (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ): مَنْ سَتَرَ عَلَى مُؤْمِنٍ خِزْيَةً فَكَأَنَّمَا أَحْيَا مَوْؤُودَةً مِنْ قَبْرِهَا 11

11— The Prophet (S) said, ‘He who conceals a fellow believer’s shameful act is as if he has revived a newborn girl buried–alive⁵⁵¹ from her grave.’[Kanz al–’Ummal, no. 6387]

.. رسولُ الله (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ): مَنْ عَلِمَ مِنْ أَخِيهِ سَيِّئَةً فَسَتَرَهَا، سَتَرَ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ 12

12— The Prophet (S) said, ‘He who knows a fellow brother’s evil deed and conceals it [from others], Allah will conceal his faults on the Day of Resurrection.’[al–Targhib wa al–Tarhib, v. 3, p. 239, no. 7]

! - الإمام الباقر (عليه السلام): يَجِبُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِ أَنْ يَسْتُرَ عَلَيْهِ سَبْعِينَ كَبِيرَةً 13

13— Imam al–Baqir (a.s.) said, ‘It is the duty of a believer towards a fellow believer to conceal seventy of his grave sins!’[al–Kafi, v. 2, p. 207, no. 8]

- تنبيه الخواطر: رُوِيَ أَنَّ عِيسَى (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) مَرَّ وَالْحَوَارِيُّونَ عَلَى جِيفَةِ كَلْبٍ، فَقَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ: مَا أَنتَنَ رِيحَ هَذَا! الْكَلْبُ! فَقَالَ عِيسَى (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ): مَا أَشَدَّ بَيَاضَ أَسْنَانِهِ

14— It is narrated in Tanbih al–Khawatir that Prophet Jesus (a.s.) was passing with his disciples by the corpse of a dog, when the disciples exclaimed, ‘What an awful stench this dog has!’ to which Prophet Jesus (a.s.) retorted, ‘How white are his teeth!’[Tanbih al–Khawatir, v. 1, p. 117]

Conferring Someone's Faults to Them

الْحَثُّ عَلَى إِهْدَاءِ الْعُيُوبِ

.. - الإمامُ عليٌّ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ): مَنْ كَاشَفَكَ فِي عَيْبِكَ حَفِظَكَ فِي غَيْبِكَ، مَنْ دَاهَنَكَ فِي عَيْبِكَ عَابَكَ فِي غَيْبِكَ 15

15— Imam Ali (a.s.) said, ‘He who informs you of your faults will guard you in your absence, whereas he who flatters you with respect to your faults will point the finger at you in your absence.’[Ghurar al-Hikam, no. 8260, 8261]

.. - الإمامُ عليٌّ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ): مَا يَمْنَعُ أَحَدَكُمْ أَنْ يَسْتَقِيلَ أَخَاهُ بِمَا يَخَافُ مِنْ عَيْبِهِ إِلَّا مَخَافَةُ أَنْ يَسْتَقِيلَهُ بِمِثْلِهِ، قَدْ 16
!تَصَافَيْتُمْ عَلَى رَفْضِ الْآجِلِ وَحُبِّ الْعَاجِلِ

16— Imam Ali (a.s.) said, ‘Nothing prevents anyone from among you from disclosing to a fellow brother a fault that he fears in him, except for the very fear that he too will disclose the same fault to him. You are all accomplices in your rejection of the next world and loving this world.’[Nahjul Balaghah, Sermon 113]

.. - الإمامُ الصَّادِقُ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ): أَحَبُّ إِخْوَانِي إِلَيَّ مَنْ أَهْدَى إِلَيَّ عُيُوبِي 17

17— Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said, ‘The most beloved of my brothers to me is he who confers my faults to me.’[Tuhaf al-Uqul, no. 366]

Pursuit of People's Faults

دَمْ تَتَّبِعِ الْعُيُوبِ

.. - رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ): لَا تَتَّبِعُوا عَوْرَاتِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ؛ فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ تَتَّبَعَ عَوْرَاتِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ تَتَّبَعَ اللَّهُ عَوْرَتَهُ، 18
وَمَنْ تَتَّبَعَ اللَّهُ عَوْرَتَهُ فَضَحَهُ وَلَوْ فِي جَوْفِ بَيْتِهِ.

18— The Prophet (S) said, ‘Do not seek to pursue believers’ shameful acts, for verily whoever pursues believers’ shameful acts, Allah will pursue his shameful acts, and whoever’s shameful acts Allah pursues, He will expose, even if it be in the confines of his own home.’[Thawab al-A’amal, v. 2, p. 288, no. 1]

.. الإمامُ عليٌّ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ): تَأْمُلُ الْعَيْبَ عَيْبٌ 19

19– Imam Ali (a.s.) said, ‘Anticipating attentively for a fault [in someone] is a fault in itself.’[Ghurar al-Hikam, no. 4489]

.. الإمامُ عليٌّ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) - مِنْ كِتَابِهِ لِلْأَشْتَرِ لَمَّا وَلَّاهُ مِصْرَ -: وَلَيْكُنْ أَبْعَدَ رَعِيَّتِكَ مِنْكَ، وَأَشْنَأُهُمْ عِنْدَكَ، أَطْلُبُهُمْ 20
لِمَعَايِبِ النَّاسِ؛ فَإِنَّ فِي النَّاسِ عُيُوباً، الْوَالِي أَحَقُّ مَنْ سَتَرَهَا، فَلَا تَكْشِفَنَّ عَمَّا غَابَ عَنْكَ مِنْهَا

20– Imam Ali (a.s.), in a letter he wrote to al-Ashtar when he appointed him governor of Egypt, said, ‘The furthest of your subjects from you, and the worst of them in your view should be the one who is the most eager to pursue people’s shortcomings, because people do have faults and the ruler is the most appropriate person to conceal them, so do not ever seek to discover those faults which are hidden from you.’[Nahjul Balaghah, Letter 53]

.. الإمامُ عليٌّ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ): لَا تَبْتَهِجَنَّ بِخَطَايَا غَيْرِكَ؛ فَإِنَّكَ لَنْ تَمْلِكَ الْإِصَابَةَ أَبَدًا 21

21– Imam Ali (a.s.) said, ‘Do not ever rejoice at someone else’s mistake, for verily you yourself will never be immune to committing mistakes.’[Ghurar al-Hikam, no. 10294]

.. الإمامُ عليٌّ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ): مَنْ عَابَ عَيْبَ، وَمَنْ شَتَمَ أُجِيبَ 22

22– Imam Ali (a.s.) said, ‘He who finds faults will be accused of them himself, and he who insults will be retorted to [with worse].’[Kanz al-Fawa'id li al-Karajiki, v. 1, p. 279]

.. الإمامُ الصَّادِقُ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ): أَبْعَدُ مَا يَكُونُ الْعَبْدُ مِنَ اللَّهِ أَنْ يَكُونَ الرَّجُلُ يُوَاخِي الرَّجُلَ وَهُوَ يَحْفَظُ (عَلَيْهِ) 23
. زَلَّاتِهِ لِيُعِيرَهُ بِهَا يَوْمًا مَا

23– Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said, ‘The furthest a servant can be from Allah is when he associates in a brotherly manner with someone while at the same time making note of all his faults in order to one day shame him.’[al-Kafi, v. 2, p. 355, no. 7]

Covering Up Faults

مَا يُعْطَى الْعُيُوبَ

.. رسول الله (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ): الْعِلْمُ وَالْمَالُ يَسْتُرَانِ كُلَّ عَيْبٍ، وَالْجَهْلُ وَالْفَقْرُ يَكْشِفَانِ كُلَّ عَيْبٍ 24

24– The Prophet (S) said, ‘Knowledge and wealth cover up every fault, whereas ignorance and poverty disclose every fault.’[Kanz al-’Ummal, no. 28669]

.. الإمامُ عليٌّ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ): الْإِحْتِمَالُ قَبْرُ الْعُيُوبِ 25

25– Imam Ali (a.s.) said, ‘Tolerance is the grave of faults.’[Nahjul Balaghah, Saying 6]

.. الإمامُ عليٌّ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ): غِطَاءُ الْعُيُوبِ الْعَقْلُ 26

26– Imam Ali (a.s.) said, ‘The intellect is the coverer of faults.’[Ghurar al-Hikam, no. 6434]

.. الإمامُ عليٌّ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ): مَنْ كَسَاهُ الْحَيَاءُ ثَوْبَهُ، لَمْ يَرَ النَّاسُ عَيْبَهُ 27

27– Imam Ali (a.s.) said, ‘He who covers himself with the cloak of modesty, people cannot see his flaws.’[Nahjul Balaghah, Saying 223]

.. الإمامُ عليٌّ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ): مَنْ كَسَاهُ الْعِلْمُ ثَوْبَهُ، اخْتَفَى عَنِ النَّاسِ عَيْبُهُ 28

28– Imam Ali (a.s.) said, ‘He who covers himself with the cloak of knowledge, his faults remain hidden from people.’[Tuhaf al-’Uqul, no. 215]

.. الإمامُ عليٌّ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ): عَيْبُكَ مَسْتُورٌ مَا أَسْعَدَكَ جَدُّكَ 29

29– Imam Ali (a.s.) said, ‘Your faults will remain concealed as long as your good fortune assists you.’[Nahjul Balaghah, Saying 51]

He Who is Ignorant of Something Finds Fault With It

مَنْ جَهَلَ شَيْئًا عَابَهُ

.. الإمامُ عليٌّ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ): مَنْ قَصُرَ عَنْ مَعْرِفَةِ شَيْءٍ عَابَهُ 30

30– Imam Ali (a.s.) said, ‘He who is incapable of getting to know something will find fault with it.’ [al-Irshad, v. 1, p. 301]

.. - الإمام عليّ (عليه السلام): مَنْ جَهَلَ شَيْئاً عَابَهُ 31

31– Imam Ali (a.s.) said, ‘He who is ignorant of something finds fault with it.’ [Kashf al-Ghamma, v. 3, p. 137]

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