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Sincerity

Sincerity stands for purifying one's deeds from blemishes of ostentation in order to make them purely intended to God Who says:

"Whoever desires to meet his Lord should strive righteously and should worship no one besides Him. (***18:110***)***"***

"Worship Allah and be devoted to His religion. The religion of Allah is certainly pure. (***39:2-3***)***"***

"They were only commanded to worship Allah, be uprightly devoted to His religion, steadfast in prayer and pay the zakat. This is truly the eternal religion (***98:5***)***."***

The Prophet (S) said: "As for anyone who works to Allah sincerely for forty days, Allah will make the springs of wisdom come out of his heart and tongue1."

"Man cannot be full knowledgeable before he considers people as camels with regard to relation with Allah, and considers himself the meanest2."

Amirul-Mu'minin (a) said: "This world is wholly ignorance except the situations of knowledge. Knowledge is wholly ignorance except that which is practiced. All the practices are showiness except those which are done heartily. Sincerity, likewise, is insecure before the end result is realized3."

Imam al-Jawad (a) said: "Sincerity is the best worship4."

Virtue of Sincerity

Values of deeds vary according to their purposes. The measure of decency and acceptance of deeds depends upon the nobility of purpose and purity from blemishes of cheating, defraud, and hypocrisy. In view of the Islamic Sharia, the only incentive is the intention that stirs the deed. Whenever such an intention is heartily provided to God and purified from the blemishes of showiness, it will be honored by the acceptance of God. Conversely, if cheating and showiness is mixed with the intention, the wrath and

refusal of God will befall it. On that account, sincerity is the cornerstone of the beliefs and the factual stipulation that is specified for the validity of deeds. Sincerity, also, frees from inducements and deceptions of the Devil:

"He (the Shaitan) said, 'By Your Glory, I shall seduce all of them (children of Adam) except Your sincere servants among them' (38:82-3)."

Obstacles of Sincerity

Since sincerity is the brilliant lodestar that shows the courses of true obedience and honest worship of God, the Devil has used all snares for inducing people through a great variety of deceptive expectations, such as fondness of reputation and wealth, attainment of glory, and seeking for material desires. Sometimes, the devilish inspirations may come in the form of soft, deceptive whispering. Accordingly, one may practice acts of obedience to God with the intention of sincerity, but if he examines them closely, he will find them mixed with showiness. This is in fact one of the most dangerous slips that nobody can evade except the genuine disciples.

It is related that a man said: "For thirty years, I used to offer my prayers collectively in the mosque in the first row. One day, I was late because of something and I had to join the second row. As soon as I stopped, I felt embarrassed. Only then, I discovered that my previous prayers had been my source of pleasure."

It is also narrated that a worshipper used to fast for forty years without letting anyone, including his relatives, notice so. He used to take his food to give it as alms in his way to the market so that his family member think that he would have his food in the market and the people in the market think that he had his food at home.

How to Obtain Sincerity?

The most important incentive of showiness is to attract people's admirations and obtain their satisfaction. As a matter of fact, the obtainment of people's satisfaction is an unattainable purpose, because people are unable to satisfy themselves; therefore, they cannot be satisfied with others. The only One Whose satisfaction should be sought is God Who possesses the reins of the affairs completely and can do everything. Hence, the true men of reason should direct towards Him and obey Him completely heartily.

Showiness and cheating cannot continue for a long time. They are soon revealed before everybody, and the showy will soon become the subject of loathing and disrespect.

It is narrated that a man from the Israelites decided to worship God so that people would praise him. For a long period, he observed an excessive worship to God, but every individual who passed by him realized that he was ostentatious. One day, he said to himself that he had tired himself and wasted his

lifetime for nothing; hence, he should work heartily from now on. As he did, every individual who passed by him was admired by his worship and said that he was pious man.

1. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 15/87 (as quoted from Ibn Fahad's Oddat ud-Daee).
2. Quoted from al-Wafi; 14/54 (within the Prophet's commandment for Abu Dharr).
3. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 15/85 (as quoted from Al- Amali and at-Tawhid).
4. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 15/87 (as quoted from Ibn Fahad's Oddat ud-Daee).

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