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The Ugliest Degree of Pretension

Imām al-Khomeini, may Allāh prolong his shade, has said, "Be informed that the most serious degree of pretension and the most detrimental, according to the principles of beliefs and theological branches of knowledge, and the one the darkness to the heart of which is the most intense of all other types of showing off is this: If the pretender does not believe in what he shows off, he is still among the hypocrites whom Allāh forewarned of being kept in hell forever. His is perdition and eternal loss, and his torment is the most severe.

And if he believes in that matter, but he does so seeking a status and distinction in the hearts of people, although he is not a hypocrite, such a conduct requires the light of conviction to abandon his heart so it would be replaced by the darkness of disbelief. This is so because this person, although he was initially committing hidden *shirk*, demonstrated to people the divine branches of knowledge and the true beliefs that have to be purely for seeking the pleasure of Allāh, their owner is the true Holy One, the most Glorious, but he let someone else be a partner in them: He let Satan have a hand in dealing with them.

Such an action comes from the heart[1] seeking to please someone else other than Allāh. He (ع) says in a sacred tradition recorded in *Al-Kāfi*, "Every type of pretension is *kufr* (apostasy)." But both this dark inner-self and bad trend drag one to have a heart dedicated to anyone except Allāh. The darkness of this vice becomes a means to gradually get one out of this life having no sound conviction (*imān*). The erroneous conviction becomes an image without a meaning, a body without a soul, a peal with a pith, and it does not qualify it to be accepted by the most Exalted One as referred to in a sacred tradition in *Al-Kāfi* where Ali ibn Sālim is quoted as having said that he heard Abā Abdullāh (ع) saying that the Almighty said, "I am the best partner; whoever brings another partner besides Me in an action, I shall not accept it. I accept what is purely done for My sake."

It is well known that if the inner actions are not purely for the sake of pleasing Allāh, the Almighty does not accept them; He does not look at them; rather, He refers them to the other partner, the one/ones for whom the action was done in order to show off to him/them. Thus, the inner actions will be dedicated to that person, and they get the pretender out of the limit of *shirk* into mere apostasy (*kufr*).

Actually, it can be said that this person, too, is among the group of hypocrites. Just as *shirk* was hidden,

so was his hypocrisy. The poor pretender fooled himself into thinking that he is a believer, but he started as a *mushrik* and ended up as a hypocrite, and he has to taste the torment tasted by the hypocrites. Woe unto one who is dragged into hypocrisy!

1. We will explain, by the Will of Allah, how conviction is an act of the heart [of the innermost].

Explaning how Conviction is not Knowledge

Then Imām al-Khomeini, may Allāh prolong his shade, explained that conviction is not synonymous with knowledge. He said, “Be informed that conviction is not the same as knowledge about Allāh, knowledge about His Unity, about the rest of His fixed attributes of perfection and great negative ones, knowledge about the angels, the books, the messengers and the Last Day, for perhaps one may be knowledgeable about all these matters without being a believer. Satan, too, knows about these levels of knowledge as much as I know, and as much as you know, yet he is *kāfir*.

He also believes in the principle and knows that Allāh is the Creator because he says, "You created me of fire and created him of dust." And he knows about the Hereafter, too, because he says, "Grant me a respite till the Day that they are brought back to life." Yet, despite all these qualities, he is *kāfir* according to the clear Qur'ānic verse that says, "… and he was among the unbelievers." The secret in this is that conviction is an act of the heart. If it is not brought into being, there is no presence for conviction.

If anyone gets to know something according to the dictates of the rational evidence, or according to the judgment necessitated by the creed, the heart has to surrender to such knowledge, so the action comes from the heart as a manifestation of such surrendering and submission, a sort of acceptance, so he may be a believer. One's perfection is feeling comfortable [with such surrendering] as referred to by this sacred verse: ***"'Then do you not believe?' He said, 'Yes, I do! But so that my own understanding may be satisfied'"*** (***Qur'ān, 2:260***).

When the light of conviction in the heart is strong, it is followed by feeling comfortable with it. All of this is different from knowledge. Our minds can realize something through evidence, but our hearts did not surrender to it. Thus, knowledge becomes useless. For example, if you realize through your mind that a dead person cannot harm anyone, even if all the dead in the world get together, they collectively have neither sense nor motion in as much as a mosquito, and that all the physical and spiritual forces have already departed.

But since this meaning does not transcend the limit of knowledge, and since it is not acceptable by the heart, and the heart did not surrender to reason, you cannot spend one night with a dead person in a dark night, and you will be afraid of his corpse. But if the heart surrenders to reason and accepts such a

judgment from reason, you will have no problem sleeping in the company of a dead person. Also, if you do that, and you repeat spending the night with a dead person, the heart will then surrender to reason and will not be afraid of the dead.

It will then be known that surrendering is the line of the heart, and it is different from knowing, which is the line of reason. It is then that man can prove, through rational evidence, the presence of the Maker, the Exalted One, that He is One and Only, that there is an afterlife, in addition to other true beliefs. But conviction is not a description of these beliefs, nor is one who believes in them is counted among the believers; rather, he is in the company of the unbelievers, the hypocrites or the polytheists.

The point is that this day, a covering has been placed on the eye of his heart, and he does not have the angelic vision and the kingly eye, so he does not realize this meaning. But if the innermost is revealed, the truly divine power comes up, nature is rendered into ruin, and the truth stands tall, it is then that you feel you were not a believer in All□h. The said judgment for reason was not related to conviction[1]. So, Dear One, unless you write down the blessed statement saying "There is no god except All□h" with the pen of reason on the tablet of the pure heart, you are not a [truly] believer in the Unity of All□h Almighty.

If this good divine word enters one's heart, the heart's submission will be directly to All□h Almighty. The one who has such a heart does not then see any other human being as bearing any impact on the domain of the Truthful One, nor does he expect any favor or distinction from anyone else. He will not then seek a station and fame among people. The heart will not be pretentious or deceptive. When you see pretension in the heart, be informed that your heart has not submitted to reason, nor has the light of conviction shone in it. You will see someone else other than All□h Almighty as the influential god; you will then be in the company of the polytheists, or hypocrites, or apostates."

Having explained the levels and basic origin of pretension, the Im□m, may his shade endure, states a terse admonishment in which he brings to memory the awful outcome of pretension. In it, there is a reminding for one who has a heart, or who does listen and stands as a witness.

The master of divine sciences, Im□m Khomeini, may his shade be prolonged, says the following: "O pretender who has submitted the true beliefs and divine branches of knowledge to the enemy of All□h, namely Satan, thus giving the matters that are exclusively related to All□h, Praise to Him, to someone else. You have taken out the celestial lights that used to shine in the soul and the heart and were the capital of salvation, eternal happiness, the fountainhead of the divine communion, the seeds for the company of the Loved One in the desolate darkness.

You have permitted yourself to suffer eternal perdition, the capital of the distance from the holy place of the Loved One. You have shunned the meeting with the Almighty, the Truth.... So, be prepared for darkness beyond which there is no light at all, for hardship beyond which there is no ease, for ailments that have no cure, for death that has no life and for a fire that springs out of the depth of the heart and the domain of the soul, burning the domain of the body in a way which neither my heart nor yours can

ever imagine, as Allah Almighty has already informed us in His Revealed Book and which He described in this sacred verse: *"(**It is**) **the Fire of** (**the Wrath of**) **Allah kindled** (**to a blaze**) **which mounts** (**right**) **to the hearts"** (**Qur'an, 104:7-8**).*

The Fire of Allah overwhelms the hearts and burns them. No fire can burn a heart other than Allah's Fire. So, if someone's Unity instinct, which is instilled by Allah, departs from someone and is replaced by polytheism and apostasy, he will have none to intercede on his behalf with the Almighty, and he will be lodged into torment forever. And what a torment it is! It is a torment that originates from the Almighty's subduing and divine wrath.

O dear one! Do not expose yourself to the wrath of the Almighty on account of a false whim and a limited popularity among His weak servants. Such whim has neither any impact nor fruit save regrets and sighs. When your ties are cut off from this world, which is like a shop and a place for gain, and when your deeds come to an end, regrets and sighs will not avail you, and you will not be able to return and retract.

1. It must also be known that committing a group of acts of disobedience to Allah is not in sync with belief in the Hereafter and in the Judgment Day; rather, doing them is not in harmony with the belief that one is in the company of the Truth, the most Exalted One, as referred to often in the cherished supplications. One of the latter exists in the supplication of Abu Hamzah al-Thumali: "If anyone today looks at my sins other than You, I would not have done it. Had I feared the speedy penalty, I would have avoided it." The solution for this confusion is sought in the statement of the imam, may his shade be prolonged, in this regard.

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