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Exhortation

The best form of exhortation is when the words used do not go beyond the limits of truth, and the actions performed do not go beyond the limits of sincerity. The warner and the warned are like someone awake and someone asleep: whoever awakes from the slumber of his heedlessness, opposition and rebellion does good to awaken others from that sleep.

Anyone who travels in the deserts of transgression and engrosses himself in the wilds of misguidance, abandons his modesty because of his love for reputation, showing off and fame, wasting his time with those who wear the garments of the righteous, his outward appearance divulging the substance, of what is inside of him. In reality he is devoid of any substance and his inner destitution is flooded with love of praise and enveloped in the darkness of greed. How seduced he is by his passion! How he leads people astray with his words! As Allah has said,

Evil certainly is the guardian and evil certainly is the associate. (22:13)

But whoever Allah has protected by the light of tawhid, support, and excellent success, his heart is cleansed of impurity. He does not separate himself from gnosis and precaution; he listens to the words of the misguided while he ignores the speaker himself, whoever he is. The wise have said, 'Take wisdom, even if it comes from the mouths of madmen.' In the words of 'Isa ('a), 'Sit with anyone who reminds you of Allah when you see him and meet him, aside from when he talks. Do not sit with someone when your outer being accepts him but your inner being rejects him.' That is someone who lays claim to what he does not have; if you are sincere, then they will yield to you. When you find someone with these three qualities, then seize the opportunity to see him, meet with him, and sit with him, even if it is only for an hour: this will have an effect on your faith, your heart, and your worship,

through his blessing.

If someone's words do not go beyond his actions, whose actions do not go beyond his truthfulness, and whose truthfulness does not contend with his Lord, then sit with him with respect and wait for mercy and blessing. Beware of the proof against you, and make his time in your company pleasant, so that you do not reproach him and lose. Look at him with the eye of Allah's favour upon him, His selecting him and His honouring him.

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