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Second Disease: Hypocrisy

The greatest sin of the heart and the worst disease of the soul is hypocrisy. Hypocrisy totally separates man from humanity. The hypocrite is counted among the Satans. Even in this world he is considered most degraded by Allah and in the Hereafter he shall inhabit the lowest level.

Surely the hypocrites are in the lowest stage of the fire. 1105

Thus the punishment of the hypocrites shall be more severe than that of the infidels. Hypocrisy is actually the worst kind of disbelief.

In order to gain worldly benefits the hypocrite veils his disbelief by the screen of religiousness. He seems to be religious by his words and actions. Whereas his heart is not religious. For example he recites the two formulae of faith (*Kalimah Shahadatain*). He verbally claims to believe in Quran and Day of Judgment. But his heart does not have faith in these things. It denies them.

They say with their tongues what is not in their hearts. 2

Such people also perform good deeds with enthusiasm to gain popularity among the people. They recite prayer, go for Hajj and give charity so that people consider them religious and may praise and trust them.

Thus in addition to disbelief, the hypocrite also suffers from the disease of lying, cheating and ridiculing the faith. The hypocrite lies to Allah, the Prophet and the believers. He resorts to cheating and ridicules the truth. Actually he is lying to himself. He is cheating himself and ridiculing his own self. This is mentioned in detail in the Holy Quran. Read Surah Munafiqoon (Chapter 63) to understand the degradation of hypocrites, their evil traits and the severity of their punishment in the Hereafter. Apart from this, also refer to the verses about hypocrites in Surah Baqarah, Surah Ali Imran, *Surah an-Nisa'* and Surah Tawbah.

Types of Hypocrisy

Hypocrisy means 'double-facedness'. A contradiction between his apparent and hidden self. Apparently he is a believer but his inner self is in disbelief. His outer appearance is good but his internal condition is evil. Hypocrisy is of three types:

1. **Hypocrisy against Allah regarding actual faith**
2. **Hypocrisy with Allah regarding the necessities of faith.**
3. **Hypocrisy with others.**

First Type: Hypocrisy against Allah regarding actual faith

A hypocrite does not sincerely believe in Allah and the Hereafter. However, he shows himself to be a Muslim before other people. His intention is that the Islamic commandments may be in his favor. For example, he may be considered clean or pure in the society. He can marry among the Muslims and he can benefit from inheritance etc.

Such people are mentioned in Surah Baqarah:

And there are some people who say: We believe in Allah and the last day; and they are not at all believers.³

And Quran also says,

And when they meet those who believe, they say: We believe; and when they are alone with their Satans, they say: Surely we are with you, we were only mocking.⁴

This is the worst stage of hypocrisy. Nothing can be considered more serious. The punishment of such hypocrites in the Hereafter shall be worse than infidels. They shall never be able to get salvation. In addition to their degradation and punishment the Quran also states that it is necessary to remain aloof from them.

A large portion of the Muslim community has always consisted of hypocrites. It is obligatory for every Muslim to express immunity from them, whether they are alive or dead. We should curse them. For example the hypocrisy of Yazid Ibne Muawiyah is obvious. Indeed such hypocrites have caused more harm to Islam than infidels.

Dissimulation and its Types

We should know that hypocrisy with Allah is that a person apparently poses as religious while concealing

his infidelity so that he can gain benefits of religiousness. However, dissimulation, which is obligatory according to reason and Shariah, is very much different from hypocrisy. Dissimulation denotes the denial of ones faith from the deniers of truth, so that ones life, honor and wealth remain safe. With the condition that not practicing dissimulation causes no benefit to the faith.

If a believer expresses his faith he shall be subjected to murder, robbery or loss of honor, then in this condition it is obligatory on him to observe dissimulation and conceal his faith.

If the expression of truth will strengthen religion, giving up of dissimulation is recommended. For example the case of Mitham Tammar, or Abu Zar Ghiffari and Hujr bin Adi. These loyal companions did not observe dissimulation.

And whenever there is a risk of the truth being destroyed or harmed, it is prohibited to observe dissimulation. In this case avoiding dissimulation becomes obligatory. That is why the chief of the Martyrs, Imam Husain (a.s.) did not observe dissimulation.

In short, dissimulation is of three types: Obligatory, recommended and prohibited. It is possible that in some cases it could also be permissible (*Mubah*) and detestable (*Makruh*).

Difference between Dissimulation and Hypocrisy

So we realize that when dissimulation is obligatory or permissible (*Mubah*), it is not construed as hypocrisy. It is the opposite. That is when dissimulation is not permitted or obligatory and a person observes it, this shall tantamount to hypocrisy. Whenever dissimulation is obligatory or permissible even intellect says that it is a necessity and is a good thing. When dissimulation is obligatory and the person fails to observe it he is said to have acted against reason. Because he would have wasted his life and died for no just cause. This is nothing but gross foolishness.

The holy law of Islam has permitted dissimulation or the concealment of ones faith only when there is a danger to ones life, honor or property. The following verses of the Holy Quran testify to this: Surah Ali Imran: verse 28, and Surah Nahl: verse 106. The traditions of Ahlul Bayt also greatly emphasize the importance of dissimulation. However it is beyond the scope of this book to quote them here.

Second Type: Hypocrisy with Allah Regarding the Necessities of faith

There is a person whose faith regarding Allah and the Day of Recompense is very weak. Either he does not possess the necessary items of faith or they are deficient and weak. Yet he falsely claims that he possesses all the necessary principles of faith. Such a person may believe in Day of Judgment, Accounting, scales of deeds and Hellfire but he does not fear them at all. Yet he claims, "I fear Allah. I am terrified of the Day of Day of Judgment and Accounting."

The proof of the falsity of his claim is the way he commits sins in an unhindered way. He sins without much ado. If one fears that a particular eatable is poisonous he would not even dare to touch it. In the same way one who is fearful of divine justice and retribution will never commit sins blatantly.

Regarding this is a statement of a learned person: “If you are asked whether you fear Allah, you must remain silent. Because if you say you do not fear Him you will become a disbeliever. If you say: I fear Allah, you would have lied. Because the sign of Allah's fear is flight from sins.”

A Believer is not a Habitual sinner

The fact is that a believer considers Allah as All-seeing and Omnipresent all the time. He remains afraid of His chastisement and is in awe of His justice. That is why he does not commit sins in a blatant manner. He never denies divine punishment. Even if he sometimes commits a sin due to the overpowering of selfish desires, satanic instigation or vanity regarding the divine bounties, he is immediately remorseful and repents for his sin. He seeks forgiveness at once and tries to compensate for his misdeed.

In other words, occurrence of sin is no proof of lack of belief. The proof of disbelief is failure to repent for ones sins.

It is related from Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) that he said, “One who is pleased with his good deeds and remorseful of his bad deeds is a believer.”

Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) says in Dua Abu Hamzah Thumali: “O my God! When I disobeyed I was not denying Your Lordship. And neither did I consider Your command unimportant. I did not consider ineffective Your retribution. I did not belittle Your promise of chastisement. Yet I committed a mistake. My self led me astray. My carnal desires overpowered me. My depravity helped me in this regard. The shade of the freedom that You had given me, made me careless.”

Spending in Allah’s way is a sign of Hope in Allah

Another form of hypocrisy with Allah is that man claims falsely to have hope in Allah, while he has no such hopes or hopes little. He says, “I repose hope in my God.” This is a lie, and its proof is that he is hesitant to spend his life and property in the way of Allah. He considers spending in the way of Allah, a loss. He does not think that Allah will recompense him in the world and the Hereafter. If he had hope in Allah he would not have hesitated to even give his life in Allah's way.

Thus, the proof of having fear of Allah is abstinence from sins and performance of repentance. Abstinence from sins is proof that the person hopes that Allah will reward him for the same. That is why he strives to be obedient. The hard work that human beings put in for worldly affairs indicates that they expect something material in return. What all man says and writes in hope of material gains!

False claim of Piety and Religiousness

Another kind of hypocrisy is that man claims falsely that he is very pious and religious, while in fact his heart is not purified of the love of this world. Though he claims reliance on Allah, professes His love, patience, thankfulness and resignation to Divine will, the actual hope of his heart is reposed in wealth and property. Such a person is not considered as being thankful to Allah for His innumerable bounties. He is unhappy with Allah during difficulties and hard times. To study the details of this please refer to Mulla Naraqī's *Merajus Sadat*.

We should know that this type of hypocrisy is different from the one mentioned before. In the first case there is altogether no hope in Allah or very less hope. However, here even if the faith in the Hereafter is weak it is yet not such a grim situation. If a person falsely claiming piety and religiousness were to die, he shall not remain forever in divine chastisement. After suffering punishment for a certain period he would gain salvation. However, even after this he shall not be able to obtain the grades of the true believers in Paradise.

Hypocrisy with Allah regarding the worship acts

A person can be a hypocrite regarding different types of worship acts, for example physical or monetary, obligatory or recommended etc. Though he performs prayers, fast, Zakat, Khums, Commanding Good and Prohibiting Evil for the name of Allah but along with this he aims to prove his piety to the people. Either he completely performs these acts for show off or he does them for both Allah and the people. Such hypocrisy is also referred to as show off. The aim of such behavior is to earn fame and honor among the people.

Such a person will be called by four nicknames on the Day of Judgment: Traitor, Transgressor, Disbeliever and Loss-Sufferer. Quranic verses and traditions prove that the act of this person is illegal and invalid. He would have to undergo punishment in the Hereafter, unless he repents his past misdeeds. The details of the same are given in our book *Greater Sins*.

Sins that cause Hypocrisy

There are some sins that destroy belief (Iman) and create hypocrisy in the heart. And one who dies without belief can never obtain salvation. One of such sins is show-off. Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says, "One who cheats Allah is himself 'fooled' by Allah and He destroys his belief."⁵

Similarly murder, omitting prayer, not paying Zakat, not performing Hajj, false allegations and other similar sins destroy belief. Some of them are mentioned in traditions. One such sin is to be pleased at the tragedies that befell the chief of the Martyrs, Imam Husain (a.s.).

In *Biharul Anwar* the Holy Prophet (S) is quoted to be prophesizing about Imam Husain (a.s.), "As if I

see the place of the falling down of Husain and the place he shall be buried. As if I see the prisoners astride the camels. In this condition the head of my son Husain shall be presented to Yazid. By Allah! Whoever feels happy to see the head of Husain, Allah will create contradiction in his words and thoughts and would give him a painful punishment.”

The Islam of this person shall be confined to his tongue while his heart will be full of darkness (disbelief).

In the same way one of the sins responsible for creating hypocrisy is non-payment of religious taxes like Zakat and Khums. The Holy Quran says,

And there are those of them who made a covenant with Allah: If He gives us out of His grace, we will certainly give alms and we will certainly be of the good.

But when He gave them out of His grace, they became niggardly of it and they turned back and they withdrew.

So He made hypocrisy to follow as a consequence into their hearts till the day when they shall meet Him because they failed to perform towards Allah what they had promised with Him and because they told lies.⁶

Third Type: Hypocrisy with people

Hypocrisy with people is that a person is double-faced and double-tongued. He praises one person in his presence but behind his back he denounces him and tries to cause pain and harm him. Or that he befriends two enemies and promises each of them his support. That he instigates each of them to increase enmity, and tries to show that he has helped him against his enemy.

It must, however be mentioned that if he keeps in contact with both of them and expresses his solidarity with each without professing enmity of the other and without instigating them for further enmity, this would not be construed as hypocrisy. If one expresses friendship to a mischievous and degraded person without any intention of befriendng him, it is regarded as a kind of dissimulation if one's aim were to remain safe from the mischief of this person. In some cases this type of dissimulation even becomes obligatory.

The worst folks on Judgment Day

A person came to the door of the Messenger of Allah (S) and sought his permission to enter. The Prophet told his companions to allow him entry and also remarked that he was a vile person.

When the person joined the assembly, the Holy Prophet (S) spoke to him so nicely that the companions present therein began to think that the Messenger has got to like this person. When he left, the people asked the Prophet why he had behaved so nicely with him while previously he was having such a

negative opinion? The Messenger of Allah (S) said, “The worst of the folks on Judgment Day are those whom the people are forced to accord respect for fear of their mischief.”

Some companions have reportedly said: We used to meet some people with bowed foreheads while our hearts cursed them.

Difference between Dissimulation and False Praise

As we have mentioned that such a course of action is allowed only to avoid loss. But we see quite often that people indulge in false praise just for greed. They needlessly praise some detestable persons while they do not even have any chance of being harmed by them. Sometimes they indulge in such double-facedness due to their low status and weakness. They term this false praise a good moral behavior. Actually it is hypocrisy, and it is prohibited.

Double-Facedness

Amirul Momineen Ali (a.s.) says, “One of the firm decisions of Allah in the Wise Reminder (Quran) upon which He bestows reward or gives punishment, and through which He likes or dislikes is that it will not benefit a man, even though he exerts himself and acts sincerely. If he leaves this world to meet Allah with one of these acts without repenting, namely that he believed in a partner with Allah during his obligatory worship, or appeased his own anger by killing an individual, or spoke about acts committed by others, or sought fulfillment of his needs from people by introducing an innovation in his religion, or met people with a double face, or moved among them with a double tongue.⁷

Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) says, “How evil is the one who is a slanderer, a defamer. He expresses friendship with one face and enmity with the other.”

It is also quoted from the Messenger of Allah (S) in *Al-Kafi* that, “If a person possesses these three characteristics he is a hypocrite even if he prays and fasts and considers himself a Muslim.

1. One who betrays trust?
2. One who lies?
3. One who goes back on his word?

All three types of actions with the people are considered hypocrisy.

Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) says, “Sins that prevent the acceptance of supplications are the following: Bad intention regarding Allah, an evil inner self and hypocrisy with believing brothers. If it is accompanied with necessary conditions the supplication is indeed accepted. Lack of trust in this regard, delaying prayers from its best time and not making effort to gain Allah's satisfaction by giving charity.

Using foul and dirty language.” This tradition mentions hypocrisy with believers to be one of the sins that prevent acceptance of supplications.

Since we have already discussed hypocrisy in great detail in the chapters of Show-off, Cheating and Backbiting etc. we shall refrain from greater details over here.

Punishment in proportion to Hypocrisy

As we have indicated earlier, hypocrisy towards Allah and the creatures of Allah is of different types and of different grades. The punishment for it depends upon its magnitude. For example the worst form of hypocrisy against Allah is that a person professes belief verbally but harbors disbelief in his heart. If man dies in such a condition he shall remain in Hell forever and his punishment shall be worse than infidels.

The next lower stage of hypocrisy is that man expresses certainty of belief with his tongue while his heart is not in absolute disbelief either, but it is a doubtful state. If this person also dies without belief he shall reside in Hell forever. But his punishment will be less than that of those who completely deny faith in Almighty.

The next grade of hypocrisy is that a person verbally says he is a believer and even has faith in his heart. But with regard to worship acts he makes other people partners to the Almighty. That is he commits show-off. If such a person were to die he will not remain in Hell forever. He shall suffer punishment for some time then due to his belief he will be allowed to enter Paradise. His punishment in *Barzakh* and Hell will depend upon the magnitude of his show-off.

Justice of Allah, Intercession and Repentance

The show-off of a person is related either to obligatory or recommended acts. Either it concerns the actual action or it is related to the condition of that action. For example a person intends to shows that he is steadfast in prayer; he will pray in order to show off. If, however, he wants to show that he is very humble and devoted in prayers, he will exhibit these things in prayer. It is also possible that one shows off in a part of the prayer or he does it in the whole of prayer. Some people are such that their whole life is spent in show-off.

There is no doubt however that Allah will deal with justice. He will punish everyone in accordance with his sin. However, it is possible that Allah may forgive his sins or he may receive salvation through the purified intercession of Muhammad and the Progeny of Muhammad.

Certainly, there is punishment only if one dies without repenting for ones sins. Therefore if a person gets Divine opportunity (Tawfeeq) to repent in the proper manner and he repeats the deeds that he had wasted due to show-off and corrects his mistakes, there shall be no punishment on him. As we have stated earlier, if the person persists in his show-off it would be difficult for him to leave the world with

belief. Same is the case of all those sins that create hypocrisy in the hearts.

We must also mention that the least form of hypocrisy is that man displays utmost humility and baseness in his posture while these things are not of the same intensity in his heart. The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said, “We consider it hypocrisy even if the humility of body is more than the humility of the heart.”⁸

Verbal Repentance

Hypocrisy with Allah with regard to the necessities of faith also has various grades. However, it would be very cumbersome to go into its details. So we shall mention only some grades of hypocrisy with regard to repentance.

When a person says, “I am regretful of my sins and I repent for them,” he is saying this with his tongue but there is no remorse in his heart. Yet he has not further abstained from those sins and he is even happy at them. Such a person is the worst hypocrite with regard to repentance.

Imam Ali Ridha (a.s.) says, “One who repents for a sin but remains steadfast in committing the sin has in fact ridiculed his Lord.”⁹

Heartfelt Regret

The next grade is of a person who although has given up the sin but he is not remorseful for it with his heart. If this person verbally says, “I have repented”, it shall be a lie. The correct repentance is that man should feel regret and should be dejected in the presence of the Lord. If a person regrets doing a sin because it caused him physical or material harm or it earned him degradation or he was punished by the government, imprisoned etc. it shall not amount to be repentance. Rather, it is hypocrisy. If he says 'Astaghfirullah' (I seek Allah's forgiveness), it would be a lie.

After this the next grade is of a person who has given up the sin, he is also deeply regretful of his deed but his regret is not due to his disobedience to a divine command. It is due to the fear of the punishment in the Hereafter. He is in fact regretful due to the loss of divine rewards.

Such a person can be compared to an oppressor who is about to be arrested. The government intends to put him in prison and the only way he can be saved is if the oppressed one forgives him. Thus he is compelled to approach the oppressed person and beg for forgiveness so that he may avoid legal penalty. If there had been no fear of imprisonment and loss of freedom and comfort, he would never have begged forgiveness. This is not a sincere regret and the repentance is not sincere repentance. It is a sort of deceit and a kind of hypocrisy.

Allamah Hilli and Muhaqqiq Tusi have discussed these topics in their books *Sharh Tajreed* and *Tajreedul Kalam* etc. The gist of their discussion is as follows:

One who has committed a sin must feel remorseful of it because he has disobeyed Allah. Otherwise it shall not amount to be repentance. (Just like one who forgoes a sin to save his honor or because it is harmful to his body). It is not repentance even if there is fear of Hell fire. Similarly if one regrets omitting an obligatory act and he regrets it because he has lost the divine rewards or became eligible for divine punishment, it is not repentance. Thus repentance is only correct when one regrets because he has disobeyed the Almighty and he also strives to compensate for his mistake.

Divine Mercy

Though such repentance is not sufficient we must repose hope in divine mercy. Those who repent due to the fear of retribution or loss of rewards and they give up the sin and also intend to compensate for it, it is possible that Allah by His unlimited mercy may consider their regret as proper repentance. They may be saved from Hell fire and sent to Paradise instead.

We have already discussed hypocrisy with people in the chapter of Deceit in the book of *Greater sins*. In brief, we should know that the more is the harm caused by hypocrisy, the more shall be its punishment. Now the most important thing is to find the cure of hypocrisy. How we can root out this disease from the heart?

Cure of Hypocrisy with Allah

A hypocrite, that is a person who apparently seems to be pious and religious but in his heart remains a disbeliever, should know that this kind of behavior is not going to provide any benefit. It is going to be very harmful to him. The Almighty Lord is aware of both the apparent and the hidden aspect. You cannot deceive Allah. The Almighty will not consider you truthful on the basis of your outward appearance. He will send you to the lowest level of Hell due to your inner self. Actually this person has lied to himself and deceived himself:

They desire to deceive Allah and those who believe, and they deceive only themselves and they do not perceive.¹⁰

Deceiving Oneself

If the hypocrites do not make a show of belief they shall be deprived of certain facilities in the Muslim society. For example, they shall not be considered ritually pure. They will not be able to intermarry with the Muslims and they will not become eligible for inheritance. The hypocrites think that if the Hereafter is like this world, there too they shall be considered believers. They shall be respected because of the show-off they made of worship acts in this world and they shall be rewarded for them in the Hereafter too.

Such a notion is absolutely wrong. They consider themselves clever but they are in deception. The state

of the Hereafter will be the state of the emergence of realities and the removal of curtains from the unseen (internal aspects). In that state the hypocrite will not be able to see anything except the gloom of his disbelief and polytheism. He shall see his good deeds that he did to show-off, his charities, prayers etc. that all of them are included among the sins, because a good deed is considered good only if it is accompanied with pure intention. Such an intention is only for Allah, to achieve the satisfaction of Allah.

Respite

Some hypocrites pretend to be Muslims and obtain some worldly benefits. They are able to marry and become eligible to inherit. These are the bounties of their outward Islam. The consequences of hypocrisy and deceit are not very favorable. One who framed the Islamic Shariah (Allah) and the one who announced it (the Prophet) have also kept some rules for hypocrites based on hidden wisdom. One who makes a verbal acceptance of Islam is considered a Muslim. Till his falsehood is not proved he is to be considered ritually pure and he also shares all the facilities of a Muslim society, even though he may be lying and the Muslims may be unaware of it.

Another benefit of professing Islam by hypocrites is that they are able to collect a greater quantity of wealth. Rather, they can acquire government posts and even occupy thrones. But they should know that falsehood is easily exposed and the liar does not recognize his own intention.

For example let us consider the case of the hypocrites of Kufa. They wrote letters to Imam Husain (a.s.) inviting him to Kufa. Their messengers conveyed their invitations to Imam. They used to write: "There is no Imam and guide for us except you. If you do not come we shall complain to your grandfather on the Day of Judgment." But in reality they had no concern for religion in their hearts. Their intention was to gain independence from Yazid and the Syrians and to make Kufa the seat of the Caliphate. In this way they could gather material wealth and obtain coveted posts.

However, when Ibne Ziyad became the governor of Kufa he purchased the loyalties of the people with wealth. He made false promises to enable the Kufans to reach their actual aims. They became certain that they would not be able to fulfill their material desires under the leadership of Imam Husain (a.s.). So they withdrew their support from him. Rather, some of them were so selfish that they joined the army to fight against the Imam. They proved their falsehood. However, they failed to achieve even their material desires.

Another thing is that the hearts of the people are in Allah's control. As far as Allah does not permit, no person can deceive others.

If there is divine wisdom in allowing people to be deceived by a hypocrite he should know that actually Allah is giving him respite so that he could achieve some of his worldly desires. This is a sort of Allah's deception in reply to the deception of the hypocrite. The hypocrite considers this respite to be a windfall. While, this is finally going to harm more.

Loss in the world and the Hereafter

Whatever respite is given to a hypocrite in this world is fully utilized by him to indulge in more hypocrisy and deceit. This increases the gloom of his heart. He continues to increase his punishment in the Hereafter. Even if he is able to obtain worldly wealth due to deceit, the same wealth becomes a bone stuck in his throat. The plots that he had hatched to gain luxury and comfort finally bring him sorrow. Same is the case of an unbelieving rich man. Apparently he seems to be surrounded by all types of comforts but he feels an unseen pressure.

They are always in dread of their adversaries or competitors. The fire of jealousy, greed and miserliness continues to burn them from inside. They continue to have enemies because they do not have belief; in spite of their guards and protective walls they fear the loss of their wealth and property. This is indicated in the Surah Tawbah thus,

Let not then their property and their children excite your admiration; Allah only wishes to chastise them with these in this world's life and (that) their souls may depart while they are unbelievers. 11115

Thus, respite is apparently good but since it causes problems in this world and is the basis of chastisement in the Hereafter the respite for hypocrites is not beneficial to them. In reply to their deceit Allah deceives them too. And the aim of their deceit is to harm others.

For example the Almighty Allah says in *Surah an-Nisa'*,

Surely the hypocrites strive to deceive Allah, and He shall requite their deceit to them, and when they stand up to prayer they stand up sluggishly; they do it only to be seen of men and do not remember Allah save a little. Wavering between that (and this), (belonging) neither to these nor to those; and whomsoever Allah causes to err, you shall not find a way for him. 12

Deceit to Counter Deceit

It is said that there was a person in habit of taking a medicine called 'Gulqand'. This medicine is prepared with equal quantities of rose petals and sugar. He went to a shop to buy sugar and asked for a certain quantity. The shopkeeper said that he did not have that particular weight so he was keeping the same quantity of roses to weigh the sugar.

The deal was struck and the shopkeeper kept certain amount of rose petals in one pan of the balance and went inside the shop to get sugar. The buyer thought that the shopkeeper was not looking and he began to eat the rose petals from the pan. By chance the shopkeeper saw him and delayed coming out with sugar. At last when he came out a good amount of rose petals had being eaten by the customer. The shopkeeper weighed an equal amount of sugar and took the payment for the quantity decided

earlier. The customer left thinking he had eaten free roses petals while the shopkeeper was happy he had to part with less sugar.

In the same way the hypocrites will realize at the time of death that they are the actual losers.

Repentance from Hypocrisy

When the hypocrite realizes the loss that he is going to suffer, his first duty is to repent for his hypocrisy. Hypocrisy destroys faith or weakens it. Thus he should be remorseful of his polytheism and infidelity. He should repent with sincerity. He should acquire faith or he should try to increase it. He should embellish his inward as well as the outward self with belief.

If the outward and inward of a person is same, there is no doubt regarding his salvation.¹³

After describing the punishment of the hypocrites the Almighty Allah says,

Except those who repent and amend and hold fast to Allah and are sincere in their religion to Allah, these are with the believers, and Allah will grant the believers a mighty reward.¹⁴

Conditions for leaving hypocrisy

According to the verse mentioned above there are four necessary conditions of leaving hypocrisy and repenting for it:

First Condition

It is that he should repent. He must forgo his disbelief and polytheism. He should have faith in only One God and he must be prepared to worship Him alone.

Second Condition

He should reform himself. Repentance is not sufficient alone. Its benefit should also become apparent. He should reform his deeds.

Third Condition

He should attach himself to Almighty Allah. Even the apparent reformation of deeds and repentance is not sufficient. His heart should remember Allah all the time. Whatever he does should be solely for Allah.

Fourth Condition

He should devote his religion only for Allah. Attachment to Allah is beneficial only if it is in the way prescribed by Him. If he does something considering it good but it is not so according to Allah, it will not benefit him. It will not be for Allah's sake. It shall be a kind of polytheism, and polytheism is a sin that

cannot be forgiven. Unless all these four conditions are present, one cannot be cured of hypocrisy and it will not be correct repentance.

Cure of Sins related to the Soul

Sins related to the soul are more serious than those committed by ones physical body. That is why their cure is more complicated. For example hypocrisy is a sin related to ones soul. It is more serious than sins like theft and adultery and its cure is also more difficult. Repentance and remorse are sufficient for physical sins and in case of robbery the goods have to be restored to their owner. Repentance is sufficient for lying and as far as backbiting is concerned you have to make the person satisfied. It is obvious that more remorse a person feels the more he shall be purified of the sins.

However, repentance and remorse are not sufficient in case of the sins of heart and soul. Mere remorse is not able to dispel the gloom of the heart. He has to go through the stages described in the 146th verse of *Surah an-Nisa'*. Then ultimately can one get cured of this disease and his heart becomes healthy and perfect.

For example a person has wasted a part of his life in show off. Now the light of Divine mercy has shone on him and he has realized his mistakes. Now mere remorse will not suffice.

He also has to reform his conditions. He must uproot polytheism from his heart. The details of this method are given in the first part of the book of *Greater sins*. Here also we shall mention a few points. We must ponder upon them and pray that Allah illuminates our heart with the light of belief in His Oneness (Tawheed). Till the time we become certain that except for Allah there is no eternal entity having such tremendous power or fury; there is no one who could affect the affairs of this world and influence the course of events.

All the creatures are in need of Him. Even this certainty is not sufficient. We must also seek attachment with Allah in the way specified by Him. One should fulfill the obligatory duties and give up prohibited acts. One should also perform all the worship acts again that one did as show-off. One should compensate for them and perform all worship acts in the future with the sole purpose of pleasing Allah.

Sincerity is the only way

One cannot be cured of the disease of hypocrisy till one does not purify ones deeds by performing them with absolute sincerity. Congregation prayer, obligatory Zakat and Hajj are the worship acts that can be performed openly. There are also some devotional acts that should be carried out secretly. Man can perform them in secret only for divine pleasure. Especially, spending in the way of Allah. No one except Allah should see it. In this way the effects of show-off will disappear from his heart. Then whatever he does shall be solely for Allah. Whether people criticize or praise him is the same. He only treads the path of Allah.

Performing good deeds secretly

Amirul Momineen Ali (a.s.) says, “Some of the treasures of Paradise are these: To conceal ones good deeds, patience in hard times and hiding ones difficulties.”

The Messenger of Allah (S) says, “The reward for a good deed is proportional to its secrecy. A deed performed secretly is seventy times better than one which is performed openly.”¹⁵

The following tradition is mentioned on pg. 595 of the first volume of *Safinatul Bihar*:

The Messenger of Allah (S) said, “Seven types of people shall be admitted under the shade of Allah at the time when there shall not be any other shade: A just Imam, a young man who is brought up in an atmosphere of Allah's worship, a person who though leaves the mosque but his heart remains attached to it till he returns. Two persons who are busy in Allah's obedience whether they are together or separate. A person who weeps, remembering Allah in solitude. A person whom a woman of a respectable family entices him to sin but he refuses saying that he fears the Almighty. One who gives charity in such a secret manner that his left hand does not realize what the right hand has paid.

The following tradition of the Holy Prophet (S) is mentioned in the book *Oddatutdaj*, “One cannot attain absolute sincerity till he even dislikes that he be praised for something that he has done only for Allah.”

The Holy Prophet (S) told Abu Zar: O Abu Zar!). A man cannot attain perfect knowledge of religion till he considers the people as camels while he is worshipping. He does not care for the presence of camels while he is praying. The presence and absence of the camels does not affect his concentration. In the same way even if a camel is nearest to him there will be no difference in his intention of Allah's proximity. He sees his own self in every condition. He himself is the one who debases himself most before Allah.

It does not mean that we should consider people lowly and feel proud of ourselves. We should pray in such a way that their presence or absence does not make any difference to us. That is why at the end of this tradition it is mentioned that such a person considers himself lowlier before Allah than other people consider him.

Imam Sajjad (a.s.) supplicates in Dua Arafah of *Sahifa Sajjadiya*:

And I am lowlier than the lowliest people (in Your realm), more degraded than the most degraded ones. I am like a particle, even lesser than a particle.

Cure for Hypocrisy with people

Another kind of spiritual disease is that when people act hypocritically with each other. When they meet each other their apparent behavior is different from their inner feelings. It is due to the influence of

materialism. The status of humanity is forgotten. It is a result of the absence of sincere faith in Allah. Carelessness of the Hereafter is rampant. Such a Satanic habit has entrenched itself in the hearts of the people. Due to this dirty habit people cause great harm and pain to each other. They cause a great consternation.

Human life should be a cradle of love and attachments. But this life has become a wilderness of terror and hatred against each other. The purpose of society is to garner support and cooperation but the scene today is just the opposite. Selfishness, competition and enmity have become common today. People behave and feel towards each other like animals or rather like wild animals. Each thinks of ways for preying others. Friendship is only outward, like that of the hypocrites and Satans, but in reality they harbor enmity for each other.

Truthfulness, sincerity and loyalty are dead. They are replaced by falsehood, mistrust and non-fulfillment of promises. Selfishness is so rampant that everyone wants to achieve their personal goal at the cost of putting others into trouble. They are prepared to impoverish others so that they can fulfill their own coffers. They are prepared to dishonor others so that they may gain an honorable position.

They forget that human beings are all different parts of one entity. With regard to creation they are components of a monolithic community.

If one limb is in pain the other parts of the body also become restless. If you aren't worried to see others in trouble you do not deserve to be called 'human'. 16

Hypocrisy of States

It is regrettable that major countries claim to be the standard bearers of humanity and human rights. They raise slogans of justice and equity but they keep the weaker countries under their control. The rulers of poor nations are forced to purchase weapons from the powerful countries so that their rule may remain safe. The rich countries fill their coffers by plundering the poor and consigning them to the flames of war. So that in this way more arms and ammunitions can be sold, while apparently they claim to be friends and allies.

If necessity arises they also go back on their words. Such a kind of behavior is termed “diplomacy” in today's parlance. This is a brief view of the hypocritical aspects of today's world.

Hypocrisy is widespread

Husband–wife, father–son, brother–sister and teacher–student, all of them lack mutual trust and good feelings towards each other. There is hypocrisy among relatives and neighbors. The same is the case for shopkeepers and their customers. The foundation of human life is trust and this very foundation has become hollow. Very few believers are found that are absolutely pure from hypocrisy and they too are

sick of the hypocrisy of others.

Thus it is incumbent upon every person to see if he is having some hypocrisy. If he has it, he must try to root it out. First of all he has to purify himself from hypocrisy then he should take steps to reform others.

Worldly Harm of Hypocrisy

One who intends to profit by lying and deceit should know that falsehood is never successful and it is exposed sooner or later. As a result people do not trust him anymore. They do not believe him.

Whatever he does has no value. If his falsehood is not exposed we should know that Allah has given him respite and he may collect how much ever wealth as possible in this world but it is not going to benefit him in the long run. He ultimately has to suffer worldly problems, and in the Hereafter there is a terrible chastisement for him.

He shall be considered an oppressor in the Hereafter. He will have to compensate for all the wealth that he has accumulated by oppressing others and his good deeds will be transferred to those he had oppressed. At last, not a single good deed will remain in his account and the oppressed people shall have no sin remaining in their accounts.

If there is an intention to deceive the people and cheat them, experience tells us that most of the time such actions backfire upon the one who does them and the cheater is the ultimate loser. The oppressor is punished for his injustice in this life also.

And the evil plans shall not beset any save the authors of it.¹⁷

There is a proverb in Arabic: One who digs a hole for others falls into it himself.

There are a large number of stories in Arab and non-Arab literatures. We present below an example from the book, *Mustatraf*.

Result of Jealousy

A poor man came to the court of the Abbasid ruler, Mutasim. Seeing some special qualities in him the ruler made him his close confidante. He became so close to the king that he had the permission to even enter the harem with prior permission of Mutasim. The vizier was a very jealous person. Seeing the Arab so much respected by the king made him very furious. He told himself, "If this Arab remains alive, he will degrade me in the eyes of the ruler and I shall lose my post." Thus he began to be apparently on friendly terms with the Arab.

Till one day the vizier invited him to dinner. He had a dish prepared containing a lot of garlic and served it to the Arab. Later the vizier told him, "Do not go to the Caliph with such smelly breath, he does not like the smell of garlic."

After this he went to the caliph at once and said, "The Arab says that the caliph has a bad breath, so he is having a lot of trouble."

The caliph was very angry and summoned the Arab at once. The Arab came immediately but fearing that the king would smell garlic he covered his mouth with his hand. The caliph thought that the vizier was right because the Arab was behaving in this way and he wrote a letter to one of his executioners saying, "Behead the bearer of this note at once." Giving the letter to the Arab he said, "Go to this person and get the reply of this letter as soon as possible."

The Arab took the letter. While he was leaving the palace the vizier saw him and asked him where he was headed? The Arab replied that he was carrying a letter of the ruler. The vizier thought it must be some letter to receive payments etc. and he persuaded the Arab to part with the letter in return of 2000 gold coins with the condition that he will deliver the letter to the addressee but whatever gain is accrued from this shall belong to the vizier. The Arab agreed and handed over the letter.

The vizier himself took the letter to the executioner and was immediately beheaded. After some days the caliph inquired about the vizier and was informed of his killing. When the Arab was called he related the matter to the Caliph. The Caliph said: May Allah kill jealousy that caused the death of the vizier. After this the Arab was appointed at the post of the vizier.

Spiritual harm of Hypocrisy

Verses and traditions that are recorded with regard to hypocrisy are sufficient to describe the spiritual harm of hypocrisy.

When a person reaches the stage of understanding and can discriminate between good and evil, he finds himself on the crossroads. One road is trodden by animals and quadrupeds, and the other by angels. Now it is the test of his intelligence, which way he chooses. If from the beginning man gives in to his carnal desires and disregards the religious law and reason, it means that he has chosen the path of the beasts. He has ignored the Almighty and the Hereafter.

Now there is no difference between him and animals. The only difference is that animals are restricted to this world only. There is no examination or retribution for them. While, man has to taste another life after this one.

One who submits to carnal desires, the signs of depravity automatically become apparent in him? Greed, miserliness, jealousy, evil, false praise and other vile habits destroy the soul. He becomes involved in worldly difficulties and in the Hereafter he is caught in the claws of chastisement.

One day Abu Basir asked Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.), "What is the superiority of us (your followers) over other people? By Allah we see some of those people in greater comfort and affluence. They are spending life in much better condition than us?"

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) delayed replying to this question till Abu Basir says, they reached the Holy city of Mecca. "We saw that people were wailing and weeping and begging for divine forgiveness." Imam said, "How numerous are the beggars (of forgiveness) and how few are the pilgrims! By the One Who has appointed Muhammad as the Prophet and sent his soul to the Paradise very soon, but for you and your companions, Allah will not accept the Hajj of anyone."

Abu Basir says, "Imam Sadiq (a.s.) moved his hand across my face and I saw that most of the people were actually in the form of pigs, donkeys and monkeys. Very few retained their human shape." The above tradition is found in the section of Imamate in *Biharul Anwar*.¹⁸

All those you see are not humans

Most of them are tail-less cows, bulls and donkeys.¹⁹

Animal Qualities

When a man decides to tread the way of beasts, he disregards reason and Shariah and hurts others with his actions, words and deeds. Troubling people becomes his prime quality. He becomes involved in pride and arrogance. Ridiculing others becomes his habit. The desire to spread mischief and oppression takes root in him. He becomes addicted to foul language, enmity and revenge. A person possessing animal qualities will behave like animals in the Hereafter also.

It is mentioned from the Holy Prophet (S) that he said, "The inmates of Hell shall bark at each other like dogs." And just like stray dogs are chased away they shall be also chased in the same manner. The Almighty Allah shall show them in this very form.

He shall say: Go away into it and speak not to Me.²⁰

Men who are Satans

A person who begins to assume the form of Satans, that is he turns away from the obedience of Allah and His worship. He denies Allah and the Hereafter. He makes pride, arrogance, injustice and oppression a part of his life. He indulges in cheating, deceit and makes betraying trust a part of his character. He is considered as a member of the satanic clan. Like the Satans he thinks of nothing but mischief. So he enters into the army of Satans that resemble human beings. After a time this person is counted as one of the Satans, who are in the form of jinns. The Holy Quran mentions the two groups of these Satans,

The Satans from among men and jinn, some of them suggesting to others varnished falsehood to deceive (them).²¹

And

*O assembly of jinn! You took away a great part of mankind.*²²

Humans have a higher status than Angels

Humans have a higher status than Angels but only when they tread the path of humanity. That is they subject their carnal desires, anger and other qualities to Shariah and reason. They become perfect and qualities like chastity, contentment, piety, shame, valor, charity, magnanimity and forgiveness are nurtured in them.

Oppressing the people or cheating them is also a way of the Satan. While the way of man is worship of Allah, Obedience, recognition, truthfulness, sincerity etc. One who walks the path of humanity is imbued with qualities like knowledge, wisdom, patience and thankfulness, submission and satisfaction, love and friendship, support and well-wishing etc. Till, he reaches the pinnacle of perfection and exceeds the angels. Rather angels are ready to serve him.

Once again I will soar higher than the Angel.

Then I shall become that which cannot be imagined.²³

Mulla Sadi Shirazi says, "The physical body can be called human only if it has signs of humanity."

It is not that the sign of humanity is a beautiful dress.

If man is man due to eyes, tongue, ears and nose then what would be the difference between humanity and the designs on the wall?

This eating, drinking, sleeping, anger and animal desires are all the qualities of animals much less than humans. Become a real human being. Otherwise become a bird that utters only the words spoken by men.

You have seen the bird fly high in the air. Just try to break the fetters of desire. Then you shall realize the flight of humanity.

Why do you remain a prisoner to a demon? Aren't you human? See! Even the Angels cannot reach the status of man.

If the beast in you is destroyed from your nature. You shall live your whole life as a man.

O Man! You reach to a stage that apart from God no one sees.

See what is the lofty position of humanity.²⁴

Truth and Reality

So we realize that hypocrisy is a satanic way and truth and belief is the human way. Man can spend his life in the human way. He can also achieve an exalted status in the Hereafter. He shall live forever in joy and happiness. But what greater mistake man can commit when standing on the crossroads he takes a wrong decision and leaves such a beautiful way.

On the other hand he treads the path of Satan and consequently bears untold difficulties that waylay this path. Even after death he is tied up in the chains and collars of fire, while the severe Angels threaten him. What defect has man seen in a life of truth and piety that he left it? And instead of this way he chose the path of hypocrisy? Such a person is really as mentioned in Quran:

*He loses this world as well as the hereafter.*²⁵129

Giving up Hypocrisy

It must also be emphasized that hypocrisy has many roots and it is of many subtle kinds that are not usually noticed. We must assure that not a single type of it remains. One who intends to be absolutely pure from hypocrisy and become the partisan of truth should study the words and characters of the Most Truthful People (*Siddiqeen*).

The Holy Prophet (S) heads the list of 'Siddiqeen'. We should make their lives as our ideals. We should walk in their footsteps. We should note that these personages were aloof from hypocritical behavior. They did not announce anything unless they had made firm decision to do it. So that there may not be contradiction between their heart and their tongue.

Here we shall be content to mention a tradition as an example:

Some customs that are against Reality

A follower of Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) came to him while Ismail, the Imam's son was also present. He greeted the Imam and sat near him. When Imam arose and left for his house this man also followed till they reached the door of Imam's house. Imam told him to wait outside and he went in with his son. Ismail asked, "O Father! Why did you not just for courtesy sake invite him inside?"

Imam replied, "I did not want him to come inside."

"Even if you have invited he would not have entered." Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said, "My son! I dislike that Allah should consider me a hypocrite."²⁶

So I will not say anything regarding which I have no firm intention.

This is an example of truthful people. Thus one who intends to step into the world of truthfulness and to refrain from even the roots of hypocrisy, he should have complete control over himself. He should not say anything he is not serious about. Thus it is only permitted during dissimulation as we have explained in detail in the preceding pages.

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1. Surah an-Nisa' 4: 145
 2. Surah Fath 48: 11.
 3. Surah Baqarah 2:8.
 4. Surah Baqarah 2: 14.
 5. al-Amali
 6. Surah Tawbah 9:75-77.
 7. Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 152.
 8. Kitab Imam wa Kufr – Usul al-Kafi.
 9. Usul al-Kafi, Book of Dua, Chapter of Repentance.
 10. Surah Baqarah 2:9.
 11. Surah Tawbah 9:55.
 12. Surah an-Nisa' 4: 142-143.
 13. Persian Couplet.
 14. Surah an-Nisa' 4: 146.
 15. Safinatul Bihar Vol. 2, Pg. 404.
 16. Persian Couplet.
 17. Surah Fatir 35:43.
 18. Vol. 27 Pg. 30.
 19. Persian Couplet.
 20. Surah Mominoon 23: 108.
 21. Surah Anam 6: 112.
 22. Surah Anam 6: 128.
 23. Persian Couplet.
 24. Persian Couplet.
 25. Surah Hajj 22: 11.
 26. Biharul Anwar 16:241

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