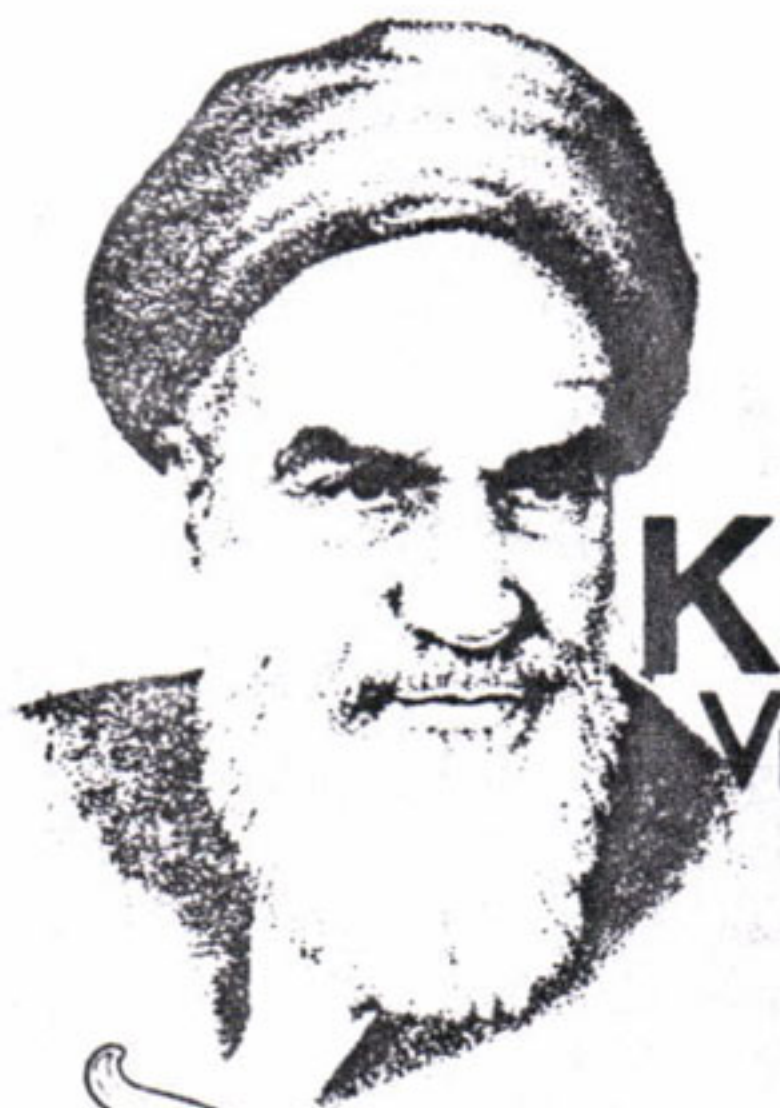


On Hypocrisy (Nifaq)

...*Thiqat al 'Islam Muhammad Ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni, from Muhammad Ibn Yahya, from Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ibn 'Isa, from Muhammad Ibn Sinan, from 'Awn Ibn al-Qalanisi, Ibn Abi Ya'fur, who reports Abu 'Abd Allah (al-Imam al-Sadiq) (A.S.) to have said: 'One who meets Muslims with a double face and a double*



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*tongue on the Day of Judgment he will come with two tongues of fire.'*¹

Double-facedness is the characteristic of the person who assumes an outward appearance and simulates a behaviour which is contrary to his inner state. For instance, one may give an impression of friendship and affection and pretend to be sincere and sympathetic, while in his heart he harbours an opposite feeling. Such a person displays sympathy and friendship in front of people, but acts differently in their absence. Behavioural *nifaq* and verbal *nifaq* are among the prominent and peculiar characteristics of the *munafiqun* (hypocrites).

Degrees of Nifaq:

As with other vices and virtues, there are different degrees and stages of intensity

and weakness of *nifaqun*; the case of any vice, if one does not take steps to cure it and does not persevere in the course of its treatment, it would lead him towards its extreme degrees, for there is no limit to the degree of intensity of vices and virtues. If man leaves his carnal self to its wishes, its innate propensity towards corruption, its instinctive appetite for worldly pleasures, the assistance of Satan and the insinuations of the *Khannas*, all incline it towards evil, and its vices, increasing day by day in intensity, reach the stage when they become an intrinsic, essential and ultimate quality of the soul. Then the regions of one's inner being as well as one's self come under its sovereignty and rule. And if the vice is characteristic of the Devil, such *nifaq* which is an attribute of that cursed being-whom the Qur'an quotes as having said to Adam and Eve:

And he swore unto them saying : Lo. I am a sincere adviser unto you. (7:21)

whereas in reality he was the opposite of what he claimed—the realm of your being will be annexed by the Devil's empire. When that happens, the ultimate form the spirit acquires will be satanic, and its inner essence and substance will also be satanic in nature.

Thus, if man does not try to guard himself from this vice and allows his carnal self to act according to its wishes, within a short time all the means of control will be so thoroughly gone that all his labors and efforts will be put into the service of this vice.

1. *Al-Kulayni, al-Kafi (Akhund), vol.2, p.343.*

Socially, his intercourse and relations with others will become tainted with the vice of duplicity, dissemblance and hypocrisy. He will have no other objective except his own personal benefit, and no goal except self-aggrandizement. Having trampled upon all the values of truthfulness, sincerity, magnanimity and courage, he will employ duplicity in all of his deeds, not abstaining from any indecency or perversion. Such a person is away from the domain of humanity and humanness, and on the Day of Judgement he will be raised as a member of the legions of Satan.

Sometimes one practises *nifaaq* in relation to the religion of God, sometimes with respect to virtues, sometimes in regard to righteous deeds and holy rites, and sometimes in ordinary matters of day-to-day life and common civilities. Also, sometimes one may act with *nifaaq* with respect to the Prophet (A.S.) or the Imams (A.S.), and sometimes with regard to the *awilya*, the scholars and the believers. Sometimes one may behave with *nifaaq* with Muslims and sometimes with God's creatures belonging to other communities and creeds.

Of course, these types of *nifaaq* vary in the degree of their ugliness and indecency, though all of them are similar in that they share the quality of ugliness and indecency and are the buds and leaves of the same vicious tree.

Effects of Nifaaq :

Nifaaq besides being an abominable, ignoble and vicious

quality itself, which no decent person would like to adopt and whose possessor is not only excluded from the human category, but cannot be likened to any of the beasts as well, is a cause of humiliation and ignominy in this world in front of one's fellows and friends, and brings about disgrace and punishment in the Hereafter also.

It is reported in another tradition that the Prophet (A.S.) said that the double-faced person will come on the Day of Resurrection in such a condition that one of his two tongues will protrude from the back of his head and the other from the front, and both the tongues will be aflame, making his entire body ablaze with fire.² Thereupon, it will be announced that he was double-faced and double-tongued in the world. He will be known on that day by this vice of his, the following Qur'anic verse having become applicable to him:

...and sever that which Allah hath commanded should be joined, and make mischief in the earth; theirs is the curse and theirs the ill abode. (13:25)

Nifaaq is a source of many an evil and destructive trait, each one of which may bring about one's doom and eternal damnation. One of them is causing discord and sedition (*fitnah*), which, according to an express text of the Qur'an, is worse than homicide. Another is slandering (*namimah*), which is denounced by al-'Imam al-Baqir (A.S.) in the following tradition:

Paradise is prohibited to slanders who walk on the path
2. *Al-Shaykh al-Saduq, Iqab al-'a mal (Maktabat al-Saduq), p. 319.*

of calumny (i.e. are habitual slanders).³

The sins of slandering others and backbiting are worse than the sin of adultery, according to a statement of the Prophet (S.A.W.), and are equivalent to subjecting a believer to torture, reviling him, and divulging his secrets; each one of which alone is enough to bring about one's destruction.

Let it be known to you that other bad habits which belong to the category of *nifaaq* are: making gestures, allusions, winking, making signals with the eyes and so on-things that some persons do in order to mock others, whereas they pose to be friendly and sincere in front of them. One should be very cautious of his own state and be careful of his deeds and behaviour, because the snares of the self and the designs of Satan are very subtle, and there are very few people who are able to save themselves from them. It is possible that on account of an inappropriate act of beckoning or an improper winking one may be branded as double-faced and double-tongued. Perchance one may possess this bad habit as long as he is alive and imagines himself to be morally healthy, sound and pure. Therefore, it is essential for an individual to take care of his spiritual and moral health and constantly keep an eye on his own deeds and habits, and never fall short of his duty. He should know that none of the diseases of the heart is more concealed and elusive, and at the same time fatal, than this disease, and no nurse should be more sympathetic and kind than an individual to himself. ●

3. *Al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 369