

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ
أَتَابَعُدُّ فَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Du'a for Reading the Book

Read the following Du'a (supplication) before you study a religious book or an Islamic lesson, you will remember whatever you study, **إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ**:

اللَّهُمَّ افْتَحْ عَلَيْنَا حِكْمَتَكَ وَأَنْشُرْ
عَلَيْنَا رَحْمَتَكَ يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ

Translation

O Allah **عَزَّوَجَلَّ**! Open the door of knowledge and wisdom for us, and have mercy on us! O the One Who is the Most Honourable and Glorious!

(*Al-Mustatraf, vol. 1, pp. 40*)

Note

Recite Salat upon Holy Prophet ﷺ once before and after the Du'a.

ریاکار کی علامات

Riyakar ki 'almaat

SIGNS OF AN OSTENTATIOUS PERSON



THIS booklet was written by Shaykh-e-Tareeqat, Ameer-e-Ahl-e-Sunnat, the founder of Dawat-e-Islami 'Allamah Maulana Abu Bilal Muhammad Ilyas Attar Qadiri Razavi دَاعِيَةُ بَرَكَاتُهُمُ الْعَالِيَةِ in Urdu. The **Translation Department of Dawat-e-Islami** has translated it into English. If you find any mistake in the translation or composing, please inform the Translation Department on the following postal or email address with the intention of earning reward [Sawab].

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Signs of an ostentatious person

An English translation of 'Riyakar ki 'alamaan'



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‘This content has been taken from page no. 37 to page no. 68 of the book “Call to righteousness”.’

Signs of an ostentatious person

(The one who shows off)

Du’a of ‘Attar

O Lord of Mustafa! Whoever reads or listens to the booklet ‘Signs of an ostentatious person’, save him from the evils of ostentation.

أَمِينَ بِجَاهِ النَّبِيِّ الْأَمِينِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

Excellence of Durood

The Holy Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ has stated: ‘Indeed, the closest to me among people on the day of judgement will be the one who recites Durood upon me the most.’

(Tirmizi, vol. 2, pp. 27, Hadees 484)

صَلَّى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ

Signs of an ostentatious person

Paradise is Haraam for the ostentatious person¹

The Holy Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ has stated, ‘Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ has declared paradise Haraam for every ostentatious person.’

(Jam’-ul-Jawami’ lis-Suyuti, vol. 2, pp. 242, Hadees 5329)

Dear Islamic brothers! The one departing this life with faith can be forgiven without accountability or be made to enter paradise after being punished for some time, depending upon the will of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ. Therefore, commenting on the part of the Hadees ‘paradise is Haraam for an ostentatious person’, ‘Allamah Muhammad ‘Abdur Rauf Munawi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ has stated, ‘It means that the ostentatious Muslim will not initially enter paradise.’

(Fayz-ul-Qadeer lil-Manaawi, vol. 2, pp. 286, Taht-al-Hadees 1725)

Khataaeyn mayri ‘afw Ghaffar kar day

Riya-kariyon say Tu bayzar kar day

Try to understand ostentation² through this example

Hujjat-ul-Islam, Sayyiduna Imam Abu Haamid Muhammad Bin Muhammad Bin Muhammad Ghazali رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ explains ostentation through the following example: For example, a person stands before the king all day long, as is the practice of servants, but his aim is not to gain the closeness of the king but to look at his maid, then this (i.e. his act of standing there) is

¹ The one who shows off

² Showing off

certainly mockery of the king. So, what would be more hateful and contemptuous than a person who worships Allah ﷻ to impress His weak and helpless bondsman who can (innately) neither benefit nor harm him! (*Ihya-ul-'Uloom, vol. 3, pp. 369; summarized*)

*Ikhlas naykiyon may aye Rab-e-Kareem day
'Aql-e-saleem day mujhay qalb-e-saleem day*

Definition of ostentation

After we have learnt about a few harms of ostentation, let's now learn the definition of sinful ostentation. So, the definition of ostentation is as follows: **'To worship with any other intention besides the pleasure of Allah ﷻ.'** As in the purpose of one's worship is that people become aware of his worship so that he earns money from them or people praise him or think of him as a pious person or people honour him etc. (*Az-Zawajir, vol. 1, pp. 76*)

80 Examples of ostentation

(Although the examples given below are of ostentation, however, the rulings for some of them may change due to the difference of intention.)

11 Examples of ostentation regarding Salah

1. To offer Salah regularly so that people say that he is very steadfast in Salah.

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2. For a Haafiz to recite the Qur`an in Taraweeh Salah for money.
3. To attend the Sunnah-inspiring Ijtima' or offer Salah with Jama'at or call out Sada-e-Madinah (i.e. wake Muslims up for Fajr Salah) on the day of one's marriage or on the occasion of a family bereavement so that people admire and praise him saying: *'Wow! He is performing these virtuous deeds even on such an occasion!'* (Whereas on normal days, he regularly misses these deeds.)
4. To offer Salah calmly with humility and submissiveness in the presence of people to impress them.
5. For a person to stay awake all night at an Ijtima' of Zikr-o-Na'at in any auspicious night or offers Tahajjud Salah on any night and then during the next day to rub his eyes or stretch his arms in front of people so that they come to know that he has not slept at night but rather that he has stayed awake performing good deeds.
6. To offer Ishraq, Chasht, Awwabeen and Tahajjud Salah in the presence of other people so that they regard him as a very keen performer of Nafl Salah.
7. For someone about whom people have a positive opinion that he regularly performs Tahajjud and Nafl fasts (when he actually doesn't) to smile and lower his head when

introduced as someone who has these qualities, with the intention of keeping the image of his piety on them.

8. Upon being blessed with the honour of waking up for Tahajjud, coughing loudly or doing other things so that his wife or other family members wake up and get impressed thinking that *'Wow! He got up for Tahajjud'*.
9. To stay late inside the Masjid after offering Salah so that people consider him a pious person.
10. To offer Salah regularly in the first row of the Masjid so that people praise him and be impressed with him.
11. To express regret in the presence of people for missing the first row or Jama'at so that people consider him very enthusiastic about the first row and Jama'at.

18 Examples of ostentation for preachers

1. To deliver a speech in an Ijtima' etc. so that people praise his speech and call him a good preacher.
2. To say emotional sentences in a loud roaring voice during the speech or to recite couplets in an enthusiastic way so that the audience burst into slogans in order to praise his speech, say ﴿سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ﴾, give him accolades, and call him an inspiring speaker.

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3. To use fancy sentences, complicated words and Arabic phrases during the speech so that people consider him a learned preacher and be impressed with him.
4. To say such sentences at the beginning of the speech as: '*I have been continuously travelling for six days; I had to travel for 13 hours before I reached here; I am very tired, I have not yet eaten anything but have come here to deliver the speech*' etc. so that people consider him a sincere preacher making sacrifices in the Divine path.
5. To say such sentences as: '*I have been travelling in a Madani Qafilah for 25 months; I am Waqf-e-Madinah (i.e. the one who has devoted his entire life for Madani activities); I have been delivering speeches since the very first day; I have been continuously attending Madani Mashwarahs for several days, I have been travelling with two (or four) Madani Qafilah for 3 days every month, I have been travelling with a 3-day Madani Qafilah for these many years,*' etc. intending to earn respect and praise so that Islamic brothers give his examples and consider him making sacrifices for Islam.
6. To deliver 50 or 100 Dars from *Faizan-e-Sunnat* in one day under emotionalism so that people appreciate and praise him in the name of encouragement, and so that the senior Islamic brothers of Dawat-e-Islami pat him on the back and give him gifts.

7. To deliver a speech excellently and eloquently in the presence of a dignitary so that he gets impressed and praises him.
8. To establish relations with some politicians, ministers or renowned dignitaries so that people become aware of it or he himself tells them that so and so dignitary is impressed with me, requests me for Du'as, so-and-so even kissed my hands or so-and-so treats me with immense respect.
9. A preacher trying for some minister or officer to come to his house so that people will come to know that dignitaries are impressed with him, and come to his house for Du'as or to gain blessings.
10. To reform an influential person or point out his mistake, in order to give people the impression that he (the preacher) is not overawed even by influential and powerful people, and that feels no fear in expressing the commandment of Shari'ah before anyone.
11. If a preacher has ever inspired a rich and renowned person to grow a beard or has persuaded a wicked person to repent of his sins, for him to mention this account to Islamic brothers or during his speech so that people get impressed with him, is also an indication of ostentation.
12. To keep the eyes lowered whilst sitting with people, whilst delivering a speech, or whilst making conversation with

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others, so that people get impressed with him considering that he keeps his eyes lowered with modesty and applies the Quffl-e-Madina of eyes (whereas his eyes roam and wander everywhere when he is not with people).

13. To practice offering Salah with humility and submissiveness or keeping eyes lowered in seclusion so that he can do the same when among people too with the intention of impressing them. (This is double ostentation, because the practice done in seclusion is also ostentation and it was not for the pleasure of Allah ﷻ, but for people to consider him a pious person.)
14. To fill in the booklet of Madani In'amaat regularly performing Fikr-e-Madinah and to tell others the number of Madani In'amaat the preacher is acting upon so that people will praise him and mention him as an example to others, saying that so-and-so preacher steadfastly acts upon Madani In'amaat or he acts upon these many Madani In'amaat.
15. To serve Islam, to travel with Madani Qafilahs and to make religious efforts bearing hardships so that people will praise the sacrifices he has made and consider him an active and enthusiastic preacher for religious causes.
16. To travel to various countries of the world in the Divine path so that people praise the sacrifices he has made,

mention him as an example to others and call him an international preacher.

17. To call out Sada-e-Madinah regularly, i.e. wake Muslims up for Fajr Salah, so that people praise him saying things like: *He is not afraid of the dark and dogs, nor can cold and rain prevent him. No matter how late he goes to sleep, he never misses Sada-e-Madinah.*
18. To convey call to righteousness to someone so that people consider him a great well-wisher of Muslims, or prevent someone from an evil so that he impresses people and they utter statements like: *He possess a lot of respect for Islam, as he cannot remain silent seeing evils.* (If only one shows the same approach at his home also and tries to have the privilege of reforming his family members too.)

16 Examples of ostentation for reciters and listeners of Na'at

1. To recite the Holy Quran or Na'at in an Ijtima' etc. so that people will give him money, food and clothes; or will praise his voice, manner of recitation, pronunciation or couplets.
2. To include lots of couplets from *Hadaiq-e-Bakhshish* etc. in the Na'at being recited so that people will praise him saying that he learnt a large number of difficult couplets by heart.

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3. To recite Na'at from memory without looking at the book so that people will praise him saying that he has learnt so many Na'ats by heart.
4. To explain a difficult couplet so that people will consider him an intelligent person and praise the amount of information he has.
5. To recite a unique Na'at or to recite a Na'at in a newly-prepared (or copied tune) in a big Ijtima' on some special occasion, e.g. an auspicious night, so that the audience will get excited saying ﴿سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ﴾, raising slogans and other Na'at reciters will also praise him.
6. To gain expertise in Na'at, recitation of the Holy Quran and speech, etc. so that people call him an expert in all areas.
7. To eagerly attend the Na'at congregation organized by some rich person or to recite Na'at in the presence of some religious personality or a rich person so that they will give the Na'at reciter money, and his Nafs will gain pleasure from the praise given by them.
8. To go abroad to recite Na'at in the congregations held there desiring money and fame so that the title '*internationally famous Na'at reciter*' will be used with his name and printed on the posters.

9. To recite Na'ats (or deliver speeches) on TV channels so that people will treat him with respect, invite him to their religious gatherings, give him VIP treatment, call him a famous Na'at reciter (or preacher) of media or so-and-so TV channel, and so that his VCD can be released, bringing him fame and fortune.
10. For a Na'at reciter (or preacher) to get his CD or VCD released to become famous and to get praise.
11. To pretend to weep or wear a weeping look or blink eyes repeatedly or close them tightly trying to make tears fall from them or to wipe eyes repeatedly whilst delivering or listening to a speech, or making or leading Du'a, or reciting or listening to Munajat or Na'at, so that people will be attracted by him and look at him with praise.
12. To sit at the front in an Ijtima' of Zikr-o-Na'at, sway emotionally whilst Na'at is being recited, say ﴿سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ﴾ loudly or raise slogans so that people will consider him a devotee of the Prophet.
13. To attract the attention of the audience by crying and making commotion whilst Na'at or Munajat is being recited. If a person who had been under an overwhelming state during Na'at or Munajat continues to shake his hands or feet violently despite the overwhelming state dying down, just to avoid such remarks from people as: *How*

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come he became normal so quickly!, this is also an indication of ostentation. Similarly, to fall or writhe around on the floor so that people will feel pity for him or try to bring him to a normal state or give him water, or to make sounds pretending to regain consciousness gradually so that people will consider him a great devotee of the Prophet.

14. To utter the word 'Madinah' repeatedly or weep in the grief of being away from Madinah upon listening to a Na'at so that people will call him 'a devotee of Madinah'.
15. To attend an Ijtima' of Zikr-o-Na'at just to eat the meal served to the attendees.
16. To include one's pseudonym (i.e. pen name) in the last couplet of the Na'at, Manqabat, Munajat etc. one has written so that one will enjoy popularity and appreciation as an excellent poet.

3 Examples of ostentation for those spending money in the Divine path

1. To donate money for religious activities so that people call him a generous person.
2. To distribute charity to the poor so that they will gather round him, begging.

3. To serve and help patients, grief-stricken and flood victims etc. so that people call him a well-wisher of the troubled and a sincere social worker.

32 miscellaneous examples of ostentation

1. To learn the art of the recitation of the Holy Quran so that people call him a good Qaari.
2. To maintain intonation [i.e. the rise and fall of voice] and other rules of recitation during Ijtimaa'at according to the number of attendees so that they will get impressed. (If an Imam does so during Jahri¹ Salah with the same intention, he should also rectify his intention. If only we all would maintain these rules of recitation while offering Sirri² Salahs also.)
3. To use words that show humility for oneself such as *sinful* or *worthless person* so that people will consider him a humble-natured person, praising his humility. (To use such words for oneself without one's heart agreeing to them is also hypocrisy.)
4. To meet people warmly and politely so that people will consider him a sociable and well-mannered person.

¹ Salah in which Imam does loud recitation of the Holy Quran.

² Salah in which Quran is recited in a low voice.

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5. To wipe tears from eyes, when weeping during Du'a etc. in the presence of others, so that people will get the impression that he is wiping tears quickly to avoid ostentation.
6. To utter such statements to impress others like: *I am very fearful of sins, I am in constant fear of losing my faith, ah! What will happen in the dark grave, how will I face accountability on the Day of Judgement!*
7. To utter statements to give the impression of your asceticism¹ and piety like: *I avoid meeting rich and famous people.* (If one utters this statement considering the rich people to be inferior than him, then it will lead him to the sin of arrogance as well.)
8. To have a sad look on the face or to say comforting sentences to those in trouble so that people will consider him a kind-hearted and sympathetic person. (To do so with the intention of comforting a troubled Muslim and gaining the Divine pleasure is an act of worship and reward for the Hereafter.)
9. To hold a rosary [i.e. a string of beads] in a way that makes people see it or recite Salat Upon the Holy Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ and other Wazaif moving the lips or loud enough

¹ Asceticism here means disinterest in the world.

for others to hear, so that people will consider him a pious person.

10. To act upon Sunnah properly, when eating, drinking, standing up or sitting etc. in the presence of others, so that people will consider him a steadfast follower of Sunnah. If only we would develop the mindset of acting upon Sunnah whilst eating, drinking and doing other things in loneliness as well.
11. To eat less, when in a gathering or in the presence of others, so that people will consider him a less-eating person and a steadfast follower of Sunnah. (Sadly, this ostentatious person when eating with his family members or with his close friends, eats even the share of others.)
12. To tell one's own virtuous deeds to someone and then ask him not to tell them to anyone so that he will get impressed and will consider him a sincere person not wanting his deeds to be revealed to others.
13. To use the title 'Haafiz' with one's own name so that people will admire him saying 'مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ', treat him with respect and request him to make Du'a for them. (If there is no intention of ostentation, it is not prohibited for the Haafiz to use the word 'Haafiz' with his name.)

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14. To perform I'tikaf in Ramadan or recite the Holy Quran in the presence of others or make Du'a in an extremely humble manner so that people will consider him a pious person.
15. To perform I'tikaf in Ramadan so that he can eat food for free, at Sahari and Iftari, gifted to Mu'takifeen in the Masjid.
16. To take a prominently active part in the funeral rites of some deceased person including funeral procession and burial so that people, especially the relatives of the deceased, get impressed with him and consider him a pious and cooperative person.
17. To participate enthusiastically in virtuous deeds so that people will consider him very fond of good deeds.
18. To tell one's own religious services to others so that they will consider him an enthusiastic preacher, acknowledging him as a great religious personality. For example, saying such sentences showing his superiority as: *I have been promoting the call to righteousness for fifteen years; I remained in so-and-so position of responsibility in Dawat-e-Islami for a long time; I did Madani activities in many areas or countries; I inspired hundreds of Islamic brothers to grow beards, wear turban and do Madani activities; I trained*

them; I have inspired so-and-so responsible Islamic brothers to join the Madani environment etc.

19. If someone finds a wise and nice piece of advice while studying, and keeps it secret from others for the purpose of relating it to the attendees in a big Ijtima' so that they will raise slogans ﴿سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ﴾, praise him and acknowledge him as a learned preacher, this is an indication of ostentation.
20. To inform others that he performs the duties of Imam or a religious teacher for free so that they will get impressed and honour him.
21. To call Azan very melodiously in Ijtima'at or on a holy night so that people will praise his voice and melody.
22. If a person who is a religious student or a Haafiz of Quran or an Imam or a Muazzin or a preacher etc. expresses his religious status whilst purchasing something or hiring someone for a paid work so that the latter will give him a discount or will not take money from him, this is an indication of ostentation.
23. To include admonitory quotes [i.e. ones containing warning], interesting parables and nice Madani pearls in the book or booklet one is writing, with the intention of being admired and appreciated.

Signs of an ostentatious person

24. To tell people the number of performed Hajj and 'Umrahs, the amount of daily recitation of Quran, all the observed Siyam in Rajab-ul-Murajjab and Sha'ban-ul-Mu'azzam and other Nafl Siyam, Nafl Salah and Salat-'Alan-Nabi recited in abundance so that people will admire him and treat him with respect.
25. To inform others that one has read so many small and big books whether mentioning or without mentioning their names so that they will consider him fond of religious knowledge and will mention him as an example to others.
26. To perform Hajj or let others know that one has performed it so that they will call him Haji Sahib, come to meet him, implore him to make Du'a for them, offer him garlands and give him gifts etc. (If one has no intention of being treated with respect and given gifts but rather he has good intentions such as expressing thankfulness for a Divine bounty etc. there is no prohibition for him to let others know about his Hajj, to hold 'Mahfil-e-Madinah' and to invite his relatives and friends etc. It is an act of reward of the Hereafter for him in this case.)
27. To treat Sayyids [the descendants of the Holy Rasool صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ] with respect kissing their hands so that Sayyids will value him or people will call him an admirer of the family of the Holy Rasool صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

28. To visit the shrines of Awliya or attend their 'Urs prominently so that people will call him a devotee of the Awliya.
29. To mention Sayyiduna Ghaus-e-A'zam رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ repeatedly or arrange Niyaz [reward-donating ritual] on 11th Rabi'-ul-Ghaus or recite his Manqabat enthusiastically so that people will consider him a devotee of Ghaus-e-A'zam.
30. To serve one's Murshid, to mention to people the services one has made to his Murshid and to remain close to him so that people will consider him a close disciple, a favourite and a special servant of his Murshid and will treat him with respect, kiss his hand, offer him a prominent place to sit, implore him to make Du'a for them, give him gifts and money and request him to intercede with the Murshid for them.
31. To eat the leftover of the Murshid quickly in the presence of others so that people will consider him fond of sacred things. (And, when alone, not to even touch it or pass it onto others.)
32. To stay silent or communicate in sign language or in writing in the presence of others so that people will consider him a serious and quiet person and an observer of the Madani lock to the tongue. (But to roar with laughter when in home or with his close friends.)

Ponder over above examples considering definition of ostentation

Dear Islamic brothers! Again look at the definition of ostentation keeping the above examples in your mind. It is stated on page 629 of the 3rd volume of *Bahar-e-Shari'at*: Riya ﴿رِيَا﴾ i.e. performing a (virtuous) deed to show people, and Sum'ah ﴿سُمْعَه﴾ i.e. performing a (virtuous) deed so that people hear about it and get impressed are both very bad attributes which deprive the worshipper of reward and lead him to sin as well as making him deserving of torment. To impress people with worship, desiring praise, fame and respect, or to perform a good deed with the intention of getting clothing, money, food, sweets or any other type of gift are also included in the definition of ostentation. Furthermore, the above examples also indicate a desire for respect and fame, which a big cause of ostentation.

Essential clarification regarding examples of ostentation

Remember! The above examples of ostentation are aimed at motivating the listener and reader to detect ostentation only in their own deeds, not in those of others. Ostentation is in fact related to the heart and not everyone can be aware of the intentions of others' hearts. Therefore, one should never form a negative opinion about a Muslim by suspecting him to be involved in the evils described in the examples. To form a

negative opinion [about a Muslim] is a Haraam act leading to Hell. Similarly, to look for someone's sins, to search for signs of ostentation in him and to reveal his faults to others to defame him are all Haram (i.e. prohibited).

Fear the punishment of ostentation

Please check your virtuous deeds for hidden ostentation as it enters into a good deed even more subtly than the crawling of an ant. The reality is that the pleasure that lies in ostentation cannot even be found in delicious foods and wealth, but refraining from this pleasure is extremely essential because it can lead to Hell. Therefore, if anyone suspects even a bit of ostentation in any of his deeds, he should fearfully repent of it as the Holy Rasool ﷺ has stated, 'Without doubt, there is a valley in Hell from which Hell seeks refuge four hundred times daily. Allah عزوجل has prepared this valley for those ostentatious people from the Ummah of Muhammad (ﷺ) who are Haafiz of the Quran, who give charity for other than Allah, who perform the Hajj of the House of Allah عزوجل and travel in the path of Allah.'

(Al-Mu'jam-ul-Kabeer, vol. 12, pp. 136, Hadees 12803)

If any Islamic brother or sister detects ostentation, in their deeds, described in any of the above examples, they should get it cured, however it should not be the case that they give up

Signs of an ostentatious person

virtuous deeds and blessings altogether, because if a fly sits on your nose, you swat the fly away, you don't cut your nose off!

Bacha lay riya say bacha Ya Ilahi

Tu ikhlas ker day 'ata Ya Ilahi

أَمِينٌ بِجَاهِ النَّبِيِّ الْأَمِينِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

(For details, go through the 166-page book 'Riya Kari' published by Maktaba-tul-Madinah).



صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ
تُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ
صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

Signs of ostentation

Leader of the believers, Sayyiduna 'Ali-ul-Murtada رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ has stated: There are three signs of an ostentatious person:

1. He is lazy in performing virtuous deeds when alone but active when in front of people.

2. He increases his deeds if praised
3. He decreases his deeds if criticized.

(Az-Zawajir 'Aniqtiraf-il-Kabaair, vol. 1, pp. 86)

To condemn oneself before people is also ostentation

Sayyiduna Khuwajah Hasan Basri رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ has stated that the one criticizing himself in front of people (by calling himself a sinner or transgressor or wrongdoer etc.) actually praises himself (because people will consider him a humble-natured and polite person and will praise him). In fact, to do this is also one of the signs of ostentation. *(Tanbih-ul-Mughtarrin, pp. 24)*

Remember! Using the words of humility for oneself with the intention of ostentation is obviously ostentation and a sin. Likewise, if one is apparently using the words of humility in contradiction to the feeling of the heart, this is hypocrisy and also a sin.

Do not ask about fasting

Sayyiduna Ibraheem Bin Adham رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ has stated, 'Do not ask your fellow brother whether or not he is fasting, because his Nafs will get happy if he says 'Yes' and will get sad if he says 'No' and both of these things are signs of ostentation.'

(Tanbih-ul-Mughtarrin, pp. 24)

Signs of an ostentatious person

Let others know of fasting if necessary

There is no harm in letting others know of your fast if necessary as the Beloved and Blessed Rasool ﷺ has stated, ‘When a person is invited for a meal and he is fasting, he should say: *I am fasting.*’ (*Sahih Muslim, pp. 579, Hadees 1150*)

Commenting on the above Hadees, a renowned commentator, a great thinker of Ummah, Mufti Ahmad Yar Khan رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ has stated, ‘Remember that it is better to hide a Nafil fast, however in this case (when going to someone’s house) hiding it will either cause enmity to form in the heart of the host, or sadness and grief. Since it is also an act of worship to please a Muslim’s heart (with the intention of gaining Divine pleasure), the command to inform [the host] about the fast was given.’

(*Mirat-ul-Manajih, vol. 3, pp. 199*)

Getting things cheap due to piety

Describing the forms of ostentation, Sayyiduna Imam Ahmad Bin Hajar Makki Shaafi’i رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ has stated: The form of ostentation more hidden than even the above is that though one does not have the desire to inform people of (his good deeds), nor does he get happy if people get aware of his worship, yet he gets delighted if people make Salam while meeting him before he has made Salam to them, and meet him humbly and politely. Furthermore, he feels happy when people praise him, hasten to fulfil his needs, give him financial benefit

while purchasing or selling anything to him (for example, he expects people to give him a discount or not to take any money from him while he is purchasing anything from them). When he comes to meet people, he expects them to offer him a proper place to sit (implore him to make Du'a for them, keep their voice down and fold their hands before him, and meet him very humbly). If someone treats him against his above expectations even a little, he resents it because he considers his hidden virtuous deeds very great. In other words, his Nafs desires being treated with respect in exchange for worship he has performed; and supposing that if he had not performed those good deeds, his Nafs would not have also desired being honoured. (*Az-Zawajir 'Aniqtiraf-il-Kabaair, vol. 1, pp. 93*)

How the sincere avoid ostentation

He رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ has further stated: Sincere people always fear hidden ostentation. They make efforts to hide their good deeds more than the efforts made by other people to hide their sins. The only reason for this is that they wish to make their good deeds sincere so that on the Day of Judgement, in front of people, they are granted reward by Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ. They know with absolute certainty that Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ accepts only the deeds performed with sincerity. They are also aware that people would be extremely destitute and hungry on the Day of Judgement, and their wealth and offspring will give them no benefit. However, the one brought to the court of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ

Signs of an ostentatious person

with a sound heart (i.e. a heart protected from sins) will get benefit from these things. (*Az-Zawajir 'Aniqtiraf-il-Kabaair, vol. 1, pp. 93*)

صَلَّى اللّٰهُ تَعَالَى عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ

صَلُّوا عَلٰى الْحَبِيبِ

Detect ostentation

Dear Islamic brothers! We should all think whether we are lazy in worship when alone and active when in front of people or not. Do we unnecessarily inform others of our deeds? Do we brag and increase our righteous actions when praised for them? Do we get sad and lazy in performing good deeds if not praised? Do we get pleasure while performing good deeds in the presence of people and get bored when alone? Do we criticize ourselves in front of people (by calling ourselves a sinner, transgressor, beggar, humble and mean person) just to impress them? Taking advantage of our Sunnah-inspiring Madani appearance and preaching, do we purchase things from the shopkeepers impressed by us so that they will give us some discount or sell the thing to us for free? If someone replies to these questions in the affirmative, then he should repent at once, striving to create sincerity in his deeds in case he meets his death before he repents, and is thrown into Hell because of ostentation.

Blessings of repentance from ostentation

A renowned commentator, a great thinker of Ummah, Mufti Ahmad Yar Khan رَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ has stated, 'Remember that

ostentation does not make worship unlawful (that is, offering Salah with ostentation will not be considered as missing it), however, there is a risk of such worship being not accepted. If an ostentatious person sincerely repents of ostentation, it is not Wajib for him to repeat as Qada the worship he performed with ostentation. What one should do is to make Du'a to be protected from ostentation without giving up worship for fear of being involved in ostentation. (*Mirat-ul-Manajih*, vol. 7, pp. 127)

Tayray rahm-o-karam per aas mayn nay baandh rakhi hay

Bari ummeed hay Aaqa! Karam Rauz-e-Jaza hoga

(Wasail-e-Bakhshish, pp. 188)

صَلَّى اللّٰهُ تَعَالَى عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ

صَلُّوا عَلٰى الْحَبِيبِ

Treat the disease of ostentation

Dear Islamic brothers! If we find the signs of ostentation in our heart, we should not delay its treatment after repenting. If we attempt to heal our inner self, our outer self will also get clean. The Beloved and Blessed Rasool صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ has stated, 'One who rectifies his inner self, Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ will rectify his outer self (as well).' (*Al-Jami'-us-Sagheer lis-Suyuti*, pp. 508, *Hadees* 8339)

صَلَّى اللّٰهُ تَعَالَى عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ

صَلُّوا عَلٰى الْحَبِيبِ

Signs of an ostentatious person

10 Cures for ostentation

1. Seek help from Allah **عَزَّوَجَلَّ** by making Du'a.
2. Never get heedless of the harms of ostentation.
3. Remove the causes of ostentation.
4. Create sincerity in deeds.
5. Protect intentions.
6. Avoid satanic whispers while performing worship.
7. Perform deeds in the same manner whether alone or with people.
8. Hide good deeds.
9. Keep the company of the righteous only.
10. Get into a routine of reciting Wazaaf.

Let's now have a look at the details of these cures.

1. Get help from Allah **عَزَّوَجَلَّ** by making Du'a

The Holy Rasool **صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ** has stated: **﴿الِدُّعَاءُ سِلَاحُ الْمُؤْمِنِ﴾**
Du'a is the weapon of a believer.

(Al-Mustadrak lil-Haakim, vol. 2, pp. 162, Hadees 1855)

Make the following Du'a in the merciful court of Allah ﷺ using this weapon in the war against Satan: 'O Lord of Mustafa! Cure me of the disease of ostentation. Fill my empty begging bowl with the immortal wealth of sincerity. I have to face an enemy who sees me, but who is not visible to me. However, You see him. O Allah ﷺ! Protect me from the deception of that enemy. O Allah ﷺ! I seek Your refuge from being considered pious and ascetic by people, whilst I am actually deserving of torment in Your court.'

Mayra har 'amal bas Tayray wasitay ho

Kar ikhlas aysa 'ata Ya Ilahi

(Wasail-e-Bakhshish, pp. 78)

أَمِينٌ بِجَاوِ التَّيْبِ الْأَمِينِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

صَلَّى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ

2. Never get heedless of the harms of ostentation

Dear Islamic brothers! One should never be heedless of the harms of ostentation. Obviously, we like something for as long as it is beneficial to us, but once we become aware of its harms, we avoid it. For example, if some Islamic brother who likes honey because of its sweet taste is informed that the honey he is going to drink has poison mixed in it, he will never

drink it fearing its poison, not even thinking of enjoying its sweet taste. Similarly, when a person informing people of his good deeds is praised; his Nafs certainly gets immense pleasure, even making him bear the hardship of worship easily. But if he is aware and alert to the harms of ostentation that are certainly deadlier than even poison, he will find no interest in this pleasure, but rather will find it easy to avoid ostentation.

Poison causes harm to one's worldly life only, but ostentation can endanger one's afterlife. Isn't it a big loss to be deprived of the reward of the good deed despite performing it with hardship? Imagine! What the condition of the labourer would be who has worked hard all day long but has been denied his wage because of doing it improperly! Alas! Besides being deprived of the reward, the ostentatious person is also deserving of the punishment of hellfire. How unwise the person is who has sold the thing for free by which he could have earned millions! Likewise, how silly the worshipper is who attempts to impress people by means of the worship he has performed instead of gaining the closeness of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ! It is as if such an ostentatious person has wished to gain love of people by disobeying Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, and has desired being praised by people ignoring being condemned by Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ. He has sought the pleasure of people by displeasing Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, and has sold the eternal favours of Heaven in exchange for the mortal world. Furthermore, to keep all people fully satisfied is like

getting blood out of a stone. If some people are pleased with the thing you have done, some others may be displeased with it.

'Ata kar day ikhlas ki mujh ko na'mat

Na nazdeek aaye riya Ya Ilahi

(Wasail-e-Bakhshish, pp. 77)

صَلَّى اللّٰهُ تَعَالَى عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ

Example of ostentatious person

The person performing deeds to impress people is like the one who is going to the marketplace with his pocket full of small pebbles, giving the impression as if his pocket is full of money. When people saw him with his pocket bulged, they began to admire him saying in amazement: Look! His pocket is full of money! In fact, this unwise person will get nothing except being temporarily praised by people. As soon as he takes out the pebbles from his pocket instead of money to pay the price of something to the shopkeeper, he will be humiliated. Similarly, those ostentatious people performing deeds to impress others will get nothing except being praised, nor will they be given any reward on the Day of Judgement.

(Az-Zawajir 'Aniqtiraf-il-Kabaair, vol. 1, pp. 86; amended)

Bari koshishayn ki gunah chhornay ki

Rahay ah! Nakaam ham Ya Ilahi

صَلَّى اللّٰهُ تَعَالَى عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ

صَلُّوا عَلٰى الْحَبِيبِ

3. Remove causes of ostentation

Dear Islamic brothers! Every disease has a cause. If the cause is removed, the disease will also be cured. In the same way, there are basically three causes of ostentation. If these three causes are removed, it will be very easy to avoid ostentation, *إِنْ شَاءَ اللّٰهُ*. The causes are as follows:

1. Desire for fame
2. Fear of condemnation
3. Greed for wealth.

1. Desire for fame

To have a desire for fame and respect is a cause of ostentation. Condemning it, Hujjat-ul-Islam, Imam Ghazali *رحمته اللّٰه عليه* has stated: Fame is aimed at impressing people, and desire for it is the root of all evils. In order to suppress this desire, we should ponder over the harms of ostentation stated in blessed Ahadees. Here are four sayings of the Noble Rasool *صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ* in this context:

1. Avoid mixing obedience to Allah *عَزَّوَجَلَّ* with love for being praised by [His] bondmen in case your deeds get ruined.

(*Firdaus-ul-Akhbar lil-Daylmi, vol. 1, pp. 223, Hadees 1567*)

2. Love for wealth and status increases hypocrisy in the heart of a Muslim as water grows grass.

(Ihya-ul-'Uloom, vol. 3, pp. 286, 342)

3. Two hungry wolves do not cause as much destructiveness to a herd of goats as the destructiveness that is caused by love for wealth and fame to the religion of a Muslim.

(Sunan-ut-Tirmizi, vol. 4, pp. 166, Hadees 2383)

4. To like being praised makes man blind and deaf.

(Firdaus-ul-Akhbar lil-Daylmi, vol. 1, pp. 347, Hadees 2548)

Do Fikr-e-Madinah like this

Try to ponder (performing Fikr-e-Madinah) like this: If I become famous or am praised by people or enjoy their praising looks, though my Nafs will get pleasure from all this, these praising words and looks from people will not help me gain salvation on the Day of Judgement in the court of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ because these praising people would themselves be trembling with fear of punishment. Moreover, the praise given to me by them will neither increase my sustenance nor my life; nor will it enable me to gain any high status on the Day of Judgement. Therefore, it is useless to have a desire for praise from such people. Why should I perform good deeds to impress these people! I will perform worship for the pleasure of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ only, *إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ*.

Signs of an ostentatious person

To like one's false praise is Haraam

On page 597 of the 21st volume of *Fatawa Razawiyyah*, leader of Ahl-e-Sunnah, A'la Hazrat Maulana Shah Ahmad Raza Khan رحمته اللہ علیہ has stated: If (someone) likes his false praise, i.e. desires being praised by people with such attributes he does not have, it is absolutely Haram. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ has said:

لَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَفْرَحُونَ بِمَا آتَوْا وَيُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يُحْمَدُوا بِمَا لَمْ يَفْعَلُوا فَلَا
تَحْسَبَنَّهُمْ بِمَفَازَةٍ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٨٨﴾

Translation of Kanz-ul-Iman: Never think of those who rejoice over their doings and wish to be praised without doing (any good deed); never think that they are far away from punishment; and for them is a painful punishment. (Part. 4, Surah Aal-e-'Imran, Ayah 188)

Aaj banta hoon mu'azzaz jo khulay Hashr may 'ayb

Haye ruswai ki aafat may phansoon ga Ya Rab

(Wasail-e-Bakhshish, pp. 91)

2. Fear of condemnation

Remove fear of condemnation from the heart. Keep in mind that condemnation from anyone would neither cause early death to me nor will it decrease my sustenance. If my Creator عَزَّوَجَلَّ is pleased with me, then condemnation and annoyance of people will cause no harm to me. These are helpless and

powerless people who can bring neither benefit nor loss to themselves, and are not the owner of even their own life and death. Why should I perform or give up any good deed for fear of being criticized by these people? I should fear the wrath of my Creator **عَزَّوَجَلَّ** only.

3. Greed for wealth

In order to get rid of greed for wealth, keep it in mind that Allah **عَزَّوَجَلَّ** has power over the hearts of people as regards giving or not giving money to others. The people I am going to impress with ostentation are quite helpless. It is only Allah **عَزَّوَجَلَّ** who is the Real Provider of sustenance. The person having greed for the wealth of others is disgraced. Even if he manages to gain some financial help from anyone, he has to remain grateful to him. So therefore, when it is not certain whether I will be able to gain money or not by the ostentatious deed, and there is also a high risk of being disgraced, then why should I try to gain money from people by impressing them with good deeds! I will perform worship and all other good deeds just for the pleasure of my Creator **عَزَّوَجَلَّ**, **إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ**.

Peechha mayra dunya ki mahabbat say chhura day

Ya Rab mujhay deewanah Madinay ka bana day

(Wasail-e-Bakhshish, pp. 100)

صَلَّى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ

Signs of an ostentatious person

4. Create sincerity in deeds

The Beloved and Blessed Rasool ﷺ has stated, ‘O people! Perform deed with sincerity for Allah ﷻ as Allah ﷻ accepts only those deeds performed with sincerity for Him, and do not say this (deed) is for Allah ﷻ and for relationship.’ (Sunan Dar-e-Qutni, vol. 1, pp. 73, Hadees 130)

No reward without sincerity

Allah ﷻ has said in Ayah 20 of Surah Ash-Shura, part 25 of the Holy Quran:

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الْآخِرَةِ نَزِدْ لَهُ فِي حَرْثِهِ ۗ وَمَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الدُّنْيَا
نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ نَصِيبٍ ﴿٢٠﴾

Translation of Kanz-ul-Iman: Whoever desires the harvest of the Hereafter, We increase his harvest for him, and whoever desires the harvest of this world, We will give him some of it, and he has no share in the Hereafter. (Part. 25, Surah Al-Shura, Ayah 20)

Here is the commentary of the different parts of this sacred Ayah, taken from the book *Tafseer Noor-ul-'Irfan: (Whoever desires harvest of the Hereafter)* that is, the one who desires the pleasure of Allah ﷻ and His Beloved Rasool ﷺ and does not perform worship ostentatiously. (*We increase the harvest for him*) that is, We will enable him to perform good

deeds, making it easy for him, and will give him countless rewards for his deeds. (*Whoever desires the harvest of this world*) that is, the one who performs good deeds just to earn worldly benefit, becomes a scholar or performs Hajj to earn fame and respect, and participates in Jihad to attain the spoils of war. (*And he has no share in the Hereafter*) because he had not performed deeds for gaining the reward of the Hereafter.

In short the ostentatious person remains deprived of reward. However, the deed he performed is valid by Shari'ah. The Fard of the Salah offered with ostentation will be discharged but no reward will be given. This is the reason why the condition of ﴿فِي الْآخِرَةِ﴾¹ was stated. (*Noor-ul-'Irfan, pp. 774*)

Allah ﷻ makes the deeds of the sincere known

The Greatest Rasool ﷺ has stated, 'If anyone among you performs a deed inside such a boulder that has neither a door nor an aperture [i.e. a small window for light], his deed will still become apparent to the people, regardless of what it is.' (*Musnad Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal, vol. 4, pp. 57, Hadees 11230*)

Commenting on the above Hadees, a renowned commentator, a great thinker of the Ummah, Mufti Ahmad Yar Khan رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ has stated, 'Why do you ruin your deeds by ostentation! Perform deeds with sincerity and in privacy; Allah

¹ (i.e. he has no share in the Hereafter)

Signs of an ostentatious person

عَزَّوَجَلَّ will make people aware of your deeds, causing them to consider you pious from the bottom of their heart. This is very tried and trusted. Some people offer Salat-ut-Tahajjud in privacy but others begin to call them the performers of Salat-ut-Tahajjud. The thing is, the Noor [spiritual light] of every virtuous deed including Salat-ut-Tahajjud appears on the face of the worshipper. This can be observed anytime. People call Ghaus-e-A'zam and Khwajah Ajmayri (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) the Awliya of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ. Why? Simply because Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ has made people call them Wali.' (*Mirat-ul-Manajih, vol. 7, pp. 145*)

Sincere person

Here are four sayings of saints رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ about a sincere person:

1. Sayyiduna Yahya Bin Mu'aaz رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ was asked as to who a sincere person is. He رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ replied, 'When a person is like an infant [i.e. a baby] who neither gets pleased when praised, nor annoyed when criticised, then the person can be called sincere. In other words, when he is indifferent to his praise and criticism like an infant, then he can be considered a sincere person.'

(*Tanbih-ul-Mughtarrin, pp. 24*)

2. Someone once asked Sayyiduna Zunnoon Misri رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ, 'How can a person come to know that he is sincere?' He رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ replied, 'Despite putting his best efforts into good

deeds, if he wishes not to be considered an honourable person.’ (*Ibid*, pp. 23)

3. An Imam was once asked, ‘Who is a sincere person?’ He replied, ‘A sincere person hides his good deeds as he hides his evils.’ (*Az-Zawajir*, vol. 1, pp. 102)
4. Another pious person رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ was asked, ‘What is the limit of sincerity?’ He رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ replied, ‘That you have no desire to be praised by people.’ (*Ibid*)

Yaksan ho madh-o-zam mujh pay kar do karam

Na khushi ho na gham Tajdar-e-Haram

(*Wasail-e-Bakhshish*, pp. 271)

صَلَّى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ

5. Protect intentions

So as to avoid ostentation, it is essential to protect your intentions. Every time you perform an action, ponder what you intend to gain by performing it. If you notice a hint of ostentation, rectify your intention at once, knowing that only the deed performed for the pleasure of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ will be accepted. If someone performs a righteous action to impress people, he will become deserving of the punishment of Hell, let alone his action being accepted. Though Satan will

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use every trick of the trade, it is highly essential to avoid an ostentatious intention and make a good one, removing satanic obstacles. Sayyiduna Nu'aym Bin Hammad رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ has stated, 'For us to get whipped on our back is much easier than making a (good) intention.' (*Tanbih-ul-Mughtarrin*, pp. 25)

Definition of Niyah [intention]

The literal meaning of the word 'Niyah' is a firm intention of the heart. By Shari'ah, the intention of worship is called 'Niyah'. (*Derived from: Nuzhat-ul-Qaari Sharh Sahih Bukhari*, vol. 1, pp. 226)

Here are seven Ahadees highlighting the significance of 'Niyah'.

Seven sayings of Beloved Mustafa صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

1. Deeds depend upon intentions, and for every person is what he intends. (*Sahih Bukhari*, vol. 1, pp. 6, Hadees 1)
2. The intention of a Muslim is better than his deed.
(*Al-Mu'jam-ul-Kabeer*, vol. 6, pp. 185, Hadees 5942)
3. A truthful intention is the most preferable deed.
(*Al-Jami'-us-Sagheer*, pp. 81, Hadees 1284)
4. A good intention will make the bondman enter Paradise.
(*Al-Firdaus bi-Masoor-il-Khitab*, vol. 4, pp. 305, Hadees 6895)

5. Allah ﷻ bestows the world for the intention of the Hereafter but refuses to bestow the Hereafter for the intention of the world. (*Az-Zuhd li Ibn Mubarak, pp. 193, Hadees 549*)
6. A truthful intention hangs from the ‘Arsh; hence when a person makes a truthful intention, the ‘Arsh begins to move and the person is forgiven.
(*Tareekh-e-Baghdad, vol. 12, pp. 444, Hadees 6926*)
7. A virtue will be recorded for the one intending a good deed but could not perform it. (*Sahih Muslim, pp. 79, Hadees 130*)

*Achchhi achchhi niyyaton ka ho Khuda jazbah ‘ata
Banda-e-mukhlis bana, ker ‘afw mayri har khata*

صَلَّى اللّٰهُ تَعَالَى عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ

صَلُّوْا عَلٰى الْحَبِيْبِ

6. Avoid satanic whisper while performing worship

Dear Islamic brothers! Sincerity is the key to the acceptance of deeds. Just as it is necessary to create sincerity in one’s heart before performing the deed, it is also equally important to maintain sincerity during the deed because Satan continues to put his satanic whispers into our heart. Sayyiduna Fudayl Bin ‘Iyaad رَحِمَهُ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ has stated, ‘Someone who is not sharper than a magician with regard to his deeds will certainly fall into the trap of ostentation (laid by Satan).’ (*Tanbih-ul-Mughtarrin, pp. 23*)

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Avoidance from satanic whispers in worship

Three things are necessary to avoid satanic whispers during worship:

1. To detect the satanic whisper.
2. To dislike it.
3. To refuse to accept it.

For example, someone started Salat-ut-Tahajjud with good intentions. During the Salah, Satan put his ostentatious satanic whisper into the heart of the Salah-offering person that people would get very impressed with him when they became aware of it. It is now highly essential for the Salah-offering person to detect this satanic whisper immediately. After he has detected it, he should also dislike it considering the fact that the act of impressing people with the deed performed for the pleasure of Allah ﷻ is like inviting Divine wrath. He should then ignore the satanic whisper. Although difficult, it is not impossible to avoid the satanic whisper in this way. Admittedly, it looks very hard in the beginning, but once a person is steadfast in it having patience for a long time, it becomes easy for him by the blessings and bounties of Allah ﷻ. What we are to do is to make efforts, success is granted by Allah ﷻ. In Ayah 69 of Surah Al-‘Ankaboot in part 21, Allah ﷻ has said:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٦٩﴾

Translation of Kanz-ul-Iman: And those who struggled in Our way, We shall definitely show them Our paths; and indeed Allah is with the virtuous. (Part. 21, Surah Al-'Ankaboot, Ayah 69)

Tu shaytan kay sher say bacha Ya Ilahi

Ho dil waswason say safa Ya Ilahi

Mujhay waswason say bacha Ya Ilahi

Ho shar door shaytan ka Ya Ilahi

أَمِينٍ بِجَاهِ النَّبِيِّ الْأَمِينِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

صَلَّى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ

7. Perform deeds in the same manner whether alone or with people

Sayyiduna Abu Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ has narrated that the Holy Rasool صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ has stated, ‘When a person offers Salah excellently whether he is offering it publicly or offering it privately, Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says that he is a truthful bondman of Mine.’ (Sunan Ibn Majah, vol. 4, pp. 468, Hadees 4200)

Commenting on the above Hadees, a renowned commentator, a great thinker of the Ummah, Mufti Ahmad Yar Khan رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ has stated, ‘That is, he is not an ostentatious bondman but rather he is a sincere one. If he were an ostentatious person, he would offer the Salah excellently when in front of people and in

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a mediocre way when alone. As he has offered the Salah excellently even when alone, it clearly shows that he is a sincere person.’ (*Mirat-ul-Manajih*, vol. 7, pp. 140)

Imam should maintain rules of pronunciation in Sirri (quiet) Salah as well

Dear Islamic brothers! We should try hard to perform deeds in the same way whether alone or with other Islamic brothers. For example, when offering Salah alone, we should offer it with the same humility of the heart and the body we offer it in the presence of people with. Similarly, when leading Sirri Salah (i.e. the one in which recitation is done in a low voice) the Imam should maintain the same rules of pronunciation of recitation as he does when leading Jahri Salah (i.e. the one in which recitation is done audibly). Furthermore, when alone, we should avoid the acts that we dislike to do when among people. The Beloved and Blessed Rasool ﷺ has stated, ‘Do not do the acts in solitude that you dislike to do in front of people.’ (*Al-Jami’-us-Sagheer lis-Suyuti*, pp. 487, *Hadees* 7973)

Bacha mujh ko shaytan ki makkariyon say

Khuda bahr-e-Haydar riya-kariyaun say

أَمِينٌ بِجَاوِ التَّوْبَى الْأَمِينِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

صَلَّى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ

8. Hide good deeds

Dear Islamic brothers! If only we would have the privilege of hiding our good deeds as we hide our sins. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ who bestows reward is aware of our deeds. What else do we need! Therefore, we should keep a careful eye on our Nafs after we have performed good deeds especially the hidden ones, as our Nafs, with a strong desire to reveal worship, may well try to entrap us into revealing to others the worship we have performed. Our Nafs may deceive us into assuming that if we do not reveal our deeds to others, they will not become aware of our high status, and will not follow us and we will not be able to guide them and promote the call to righteousness etc.

If one faces such a situation, he should pray to Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ for steadfastness turning his attention to the eternal favour of Paradise that will be given to him as a reward for the deeds he has performed. He should be scared that the one seeking something from the bondmen of Allah in exchange for the worship of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ faces Divine wrath. Moreover, it is also possible that he gets dear to people because of revealing his deeds to them but becomes disliked by Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, causing his deeds to be ruined. He should also make it clear to his Nafs that he cannot 'sell' his deeds in exchange for praise given by the people who are themselves helpless and powerless, and can neither give him sustenance nor have any power over life and death.

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Hidden deed is preferable

He should also keep in mind the excellence of hidden deeds as stated by our Beloved and Blessed Rasool ﷺ in a Hadees, ‘A hidden deed is preferable compared to an apparent deed.’ (*Shu’ab-ul-Iman, vol. 5, pp. 376, Hadees 7012*)

Situation in which deed can be revealed

The person who is followed by people can reveal his deeds with the intention of motivating them provided he has no ostentation. By revealing his deeds with sincerity in this way, he is deserving of great reward. Here is a Hadees: The apparent deed when followed [by others] is preferable to the hidden deed. (*Ibid*)

Extreme humility

Before one has revealed his hidden deed to others to motivate them or to express gratitude for a Divine bounty, one needs to think deeply about it especially in view of satanic tricks. When revealing deeds to others even with the above intentions, one must be highly cautious lest he falls prey to ostentation. Here is an example of the matchless humility of Islamic saints رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ in this context. Sayyiduna Sufyan Sawri رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ has stated, ‘I consider the deeds performed publicly as not being performed because it is beyond the capability of people like us to maintain sincerity whilst being seen by others.’ (*Tanbih-ul-Mughtarrin, pp. 26*)

Voice of recitation from every street of Basra

Hujjat-ul-Islam, Sayyiduna Imam Abu Haamid Muhammad Bin Muhammad Bin Muhammad Ghazali رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ has stated: There was a time when voices of Zikr of Allah and Quranic recitation would be heard in every street of Basra, inspiring people to these deeds. Coincidentally, a scholar wrote a booklet on 'the subtleties of ostentation' at that time, which resulted in all people giving up loud Zikr and Quranic recitation. Upon this, some people remarked, 'If only that scholar had not written the booklet.' (*Keemiya-e-Sa'adat*, vol. 2, pp. 692)

Ostentation about unperformed deeds

Sayyiduna Fudayl Bin 'Iyaad رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ has stated, 'In the past, people would be ostentatious about good deeds they performed but people today are ostentatious about the things they do not do.' (*Tanbih-ul-Mughtarrin*, pp. 25)

That is, back then, people would perform good deeds to please others but people these days do not perform good deeds; they just have a look of the pious on their faces giving the impression that they are pious. In fact, they are more despicable than even the ostentatious people of the past.

Naykiyan chhup ker karayn aysi hidayat day Khuda

Hum ko posheedah 'ibadat ki Tu lazzat day Khuda

أَمِّينَ بِجَايِ النَّبِيِّ الْأَمِّينَ صَلَّى اللهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

9. Keep the company of the righteous only

It is a great privilege to be blessed with the company of the sincere bondmen of Allah and devotees of Rasool. By virtue of their company and the call to righteousness conveyed by them from time to time, one will be able to treat the disease of ostentation besides gaining many other benefits, **إِنَّ شَاءَ اللَّهُ**. Remember that one should keep the company of the righteous only, and should avoid wicked people like the plague. The Renowned and Revered Rasool **صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ** has stated, “The example of a good and bad companion is like that of a musk-carrying person and the one blowing into a furnace. The musk-carrying person will either give some gift to you or you will buy from him or you will have rich fragrance from him, whereas the one blowing into the furnace will either burn your clothes or you will have foul smell from him.”

(Sahih Muslim, pp. 1414, Hadees 2628)

Changay banday di suhbat yaro jawayn dukan ‘attaran

Sawda bhaawayn mul na layye hullay aan hazaran

Buray banday dee suhbat yaro jawayn dukan lauhaaran

Kapray bhaawayn kunj kunj bayye chingan payn hazaran

Translation: That is, to keep the company of a righteous person is like visiting a perfume shop where you will at least have pleasant fragrance even though you buy nothing, whereas to keep the company of a wicked person is like going to a blacksmith’s shop where sparks will fly up and fall onto your clothes even if you try hard to protect them.