

[Home](#) > [Imam 'Ali's First Treatise On The Islamic Ethics And Education](#) > 20) Commit your self in all your affairs to your God, for you will thus be committing it to a secure Cave and a mighty Protector.

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"وألجىء نفسك في الامور كلها الى الهك فانك تلجئها الى كهف حريز و مانع عزيز

There are two points of view regarding man's fate in this world. One view-point says that man is confronted in this world with a series of causes and effects which work haphazardly to make the fate of man. He has no say here and is like a football or like a broken ship in the torrential sea. Only a favourable wind can rescue this wandering ship: The poet says:

We are in the broken ship, O favourable wind rise,
So that we may meet once again, our friend.

According to the second point of view, all the means and causes for our daily affairs are set by our God who is All-knowing, Beneficent and Merciful. Without His will not a leaf moves. All these means and causes work together to make man prosper. Sa'adi, the Persian poet says:

Cloud, wind, fog, sun and the galaxy,
All work in harmony so that you may use your sustenance wisely;
Everything in Nature is obedient to you,
It is not fair to disobey God, the Almighty.

As soon as man assumes that all the causes and means in this world are controlled by a wise Creator and everything is at His disposal, he then trusts in God and will never encounter any hardship: The poet says

He will never fear the sea waves,
Whose ship is navigated by Noah.

In Islamic ethics, the principle of "*Tawakkul*" or trust and reliance in Allah is used to encourage people to accept the second view–point discussed above. Khwajah Abdallah al–Ansari, in his “Manazil Al–Sa’irin”, says, the truth of the principle of trust and reliance in Allah is:

"التَّوَكُّلُ كُلُّهُ الْأَمْرُ إِلَىٰ مَالِكِهِ وَالتَّعْوِيلُ عَلَىٰ وَكَالَتِهِ"

"to entrust all affairs to its Master and to rely on His trusteeship".¹

This is the way believers are commanded to carry out their affairs.

"وَعَلَىٰ اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ"

"And on Allah let the believers rely"²

When the Prophet (S) asked Gabriel (Jibril) about the principle of trust and reliance in Allah, the latter explained it through a tradition:

"الْعِلْمُ بِأَنَّ الْمَخْلُوقَ لَا يَضُرُّ وَلَا يَنْفَعُ وَلَا يُعْطِي وَلَا يَمْنَعُ، وَاسْتِعْمَالُ الْيَأْسِ مِنَ الْخَلْقِ، فَإِذَا كَانَ الْعَبْدُ كَذَلِكَ لَمْ يَعْمَلْ لِأَحَدٍ سِوَى اللَّهِ وَلَمْ يَرْجُ وَلَمْ يَخَفْ سِوَى اللَّهِ وَلَمْ يَطْمَعْ فِي أَحَدٍ سِوَى اللَّهِ فَهَذَا هُوَ التَّوَكُّلُ"

*"(It is) the knowledge that creatures neither harm nor benefit, neither give nor withhold; and (it is) not resting one's hopes on creatures. When a servant is thus and acts only for Allah and does not hope from, or fear, other than Allah, and does not desire anyone other than Allah, then this is tawakkul."*³

The above principle (*Tawakkul*), however, has different degrees. At one stage we will put our affairs in the hands of a lawyer. The second stage is when a child trusts its mother for protection. In these two cases we deliberately put our affairs in somebody else's hands. A Bedouin Arab had released his camel saying he had trust in Allah. The Prophet (S) told him:

"First tie it and then have trust in God". The poet says:

Said the Prophet aloud,
Bind the knees of the camel, but have trust in God;
If you rely in Allah, have it in your work,
First cultivate, then have reliance on God.

The third phase of "*Tawakkul*" (reliance on God) occurred in Ibrahim's case. It is narrated that when

Nimrod [the king of Babylon who cast Ibrahim into the fire] prepared a big fire and wanted to cast Ibrahim into it with a crane, Gabriel came up to him and asked him if he needed any help. Ibrahim answered: "God bless you, God is the best agent; He will suffice".

Then Michael came, saying he has the stores of rain and water at his disposal, and asked Ibrahim if he wanted him to put the fire out. Ibrahim refused.

Then the angel of wind came, asking for the same thing, but Ibrahim refused once more.

Then Gabriel said: At least ask God to issue the appropriate order. He answered: "His knowledge about me will make my question irrelevant".⁴

This state of absolute surrender to God and to trust everything in Him is the same thing that Imam Kadhim (as) has in mind when he repeats God's statement:

مَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ⁴²⁷"

"And whoever trusts in Allah, He is sufficient for him" [Qur'an 65:3]. And then he explains:

التَّوَكُّلُ عَلَى اللَّهِ دَرَجَاتٌ، مِنْهَا أَنْ تَتَوَكَّلَ عَلَى اللَّهِ فِي أُمُورِكَ كُلِّهَا فَمَا فَعَلَ بِكَ كُنْتَ عَنْهُ رَاضِيًا تَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ لَا يَأْلُوكَ خَيْرًا وَفَضْلًا وَتَعْلَمُ أَنَّ الْحُكْمَ فِي ذَلِكَ لَهُ فَتَتَوَكَّلَ عَلَى اللَّهِ بِتَفْوِضِ ذَلِكَ إِلَيْهِ وَتُثِقَ بِهِ فِيهَا وَفِي غَيْرِهَا

"The principle of reliance on Allah has degrees. One degree of this reliance is that you trust in God in all your affairs. You are pleased with what He does to you, and you know that He will not fail in goodness and bounty to you, and you know that the command for that belongs to Him. Therefore trust in God by leaving that to Him and rely on Him in it and in other matters".⁵

Imam 'Ali (as), too, in his letter encourages his son to rely on this strong stronghold.

¹ . The Commentary on Manazil al-Sa'irin, p.74.

² . Qur'an 5: 11.

³ . Bihar, vol.69, p.373.

⁴ . Safinah al-Bihar, vol.2, p.683; Mi'raj al-Sa'adah, p.599; Jami' al-Sa'adah, vol.3, p.223.

⁵ . Usul al-Kafi, vol.2, p.65.

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