

## Chapter 10: Some Of His Sermons And Wise Sayings

Imam Zayn al-‘Abidin, peace be on him, took great care of preaching to the people. Many sermons were narrated on his authority. With them he preached to his companions and the people of his time. They are still alive, give lessons to people, warn them against arrogance and recklessness, and summon them to the path of truth and rightness. Besides some immortal wise sayings were reported on his authority. They summon man to balance his conduct and to set right his character. In this respect we will mention some of his sermons and wise sayings.

### His Sermons

Before we speak about the sermons of Imam Zayn al-‘Abidin, peace be on him, we’d like to explain the objectives of his sermons and those of all the pure Imams, peace be on them. They aim at:

- A. Educating souls, setting them right, and planting noble inclinations in them.
- B. Removing psychological complexes from man’s soul, and destroying all wicked, corrupt natures, selfishness, envy, and aggression against men.
- C. Putting before men all historical lessons such as destroying the tyrannical, that they may enlighten the way to man and explain to him the aim of his social and individual life.
- D. Directing man to Allah, the Exalted, the Noblest Objective in this world, to save him from all evil things and offenses.
- E. Urging man to do good for the hereafter, which his real, eternal abode.

These are some brilliant objectives in the sermons of the Imams of guidance, peace be on them. Now, we will mention the sermons of Imam Zayn al-‘Abidin, peace be on him.

1. Dispraising the world and warning men against its evil things and delusions, the Imam, peace be on him, said: “Verily, the world has departed and turned the back, and the next world has come. Each of them has children. Hence be among the children of the next world and be not among the world’s children who turn away from the hereafter. Indeed, those who renounce the world use the ground as rug, the earth as bed, water as perfume, and take a very little thing of the world. Surely, he who yearns for the Garden forgets passions; he who fears the Fire refrains from prohibited things; he who renounces the world, misfortunes are easy for him. Truly, Allah has servants who regard the people of the Garden as immortal in the Garden and the people of the Fire as chastised in the Fire. Their evil things are safe, their hearts are sorrowful, their souls are chaste, and their requests are light. They are patient for a few days, and then they will attain a long rest. As for night, they align their legs, plead to their Lord, and strive to release their necks. As for daytime, they are clement, knowledgeable, obedient, and pious. They are like the arrows without heads and blades. Fear of worship has thinned them out. When a beholder sees them, he asks: ‘Are the people sick or have become mentally disordered?’ The people are not sick, but a great affair has mixed with them because of the remembrance of the Fire and what therein.<sup>1</sup>”

The Imam, peace be on him, warned men against love for the world, which is the origin of every sin. He summoned them to follow the ascetics from among the righteous who worshipped Allah and understood the reality of life in this world, which is perishable and transitory. Only a few days man spends in this world, and then he will meet his Lord. Allah will question him about his acts in the world to repay him according to them. If man did good, Allah would repay him good. If he did evil, Allah would repay him evil. Hence the righteous turned to Allah through their hearts and sentiments. They sincerely worshipped and obeyed Him.

2. He, peace be on him, said: “O son of Adam, you are still in good as long as you preach to yourself, reckon it, fear is your underwear, and grief is your outer garment. O son of Adam, you will die, be raised from the dead, be stood before Allah, the Great and Almighty, be questioned, hence prepare an answer.<sup>2</sup>”

The Imam summons man to set up a preacher in his inner self to preach to it and a reckoner to reckon it for its slips and mistakes, for man will be raised from the dead on the Day of Judgment and reckoned for his sins and offenses.

3. Al-Zuhri reported: [I heard ‘Ali b. al-Husayn say:] “He who does not follow Allah’s laws will be sorrowful for the world. By Allah, this world and the next world are like the two scales of a balance, whichever tilts takes away the other. Then he recited these words of Him, the Exalted: When the great event comes to pass (i.e., resurrection), there is no belying its coming—lowering (the enemies of Allah to the Fire), exalting (the friends of Allah to the Garden).”

Then the Imam, peace be on him, preached to a man: “Fear Allah, be moderate in request, seek not that which is not created, for he who seeks that which is not created is out of breath, but does not attain what

he seeks. How can he attain that which is not created?”

The man hurried to say: “How can he attain that which is not created?”

The Imam, peace be on him, answered: “By seeking riches, possessions, and ease in the world in order to take rest therein. Rest has not been created in the world, nor has it been created for its inhabitants. Rather rest has been created in the Garden. Tiredness and toil have been created in the world and for its inhabitants. When one is given a handful of it (the world), he is given a similar (handful) of greediness. Whoever earns a greater (share) of the world is still in need of it, for he is in need of the people to keep his possessions and is in need of every mediation of the world. Hence there is no rest in the riches of the world, but it is Satan who whispers to the son of Adam that there is rest in collecting possessions hence he drives him to tiredness in the world and reckoning will be against him in the next world.”

The Imam added: “The friends of Allah do not tire themselves in the world for the world; rather they tire themselves in the world for the next world. Truly, he who takes care of his livelihood, it is written against him that he must preserve it. Such Jesus Christ, peace be on him, said to his disciples: ‘The world is a mere bridge, hence pass over it and do not build it.’<sup>3</sup>”

In this sermon there is a summons to renouncing this world and moderation in seeking it, for attaining rest is the reason for striving for material things, but there is no rest in the world. This is because there are many cares and a lot of pain in it. Rest has been created in the Garden which Allah has prepared for His pious servants. Therefore, one must seek the next world, not this world.

4. A person asked Imam Zayn al-‘Abidin, peace be on him: “What about you, son of Allah’s Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family?”

He, peace be on him, replied: “Eight demands me: Allah demands my religious duties. The Prophet demands me (to follow) the *Sunna*. The family demands me (to prepare) nourishment. The soul demands me (to follow) passions. Satan demands me to follow him. The two keepers demand me to act sincerely. The Angel of Death demands my soul, and the grave demands my body. Hence I am indebted (to them) for these qualities.<sup>4</sup>”

The Imam carefully considered the dimensions of the world and concluded that they were surrounded by these eight demanders, hence he decided to renounce the world and its vanities.

5. A beggar came to the Imam, peace be on him, and complained to him of his condition, and he (the Imam) blamed him for this, saying: “Son of Adam is miserable. He faces three misfortunes every day, but he does not learn a lesson from them. If he learns a lesson from, misfortunes will be easy for him. As for the first misfortune, it is the day when his span decreases. When his possessions decrease, he becomes grieved. He can return the dirham but cannot return his span. The second misfortune is that he earns his daily bread. If it (his daily bread) is lawful, he will be reckoned for it, and if it is unlawful, he will

be punished for it. The third (misfortune) is the greatest.” The Imam was questioned about the greatest (misfortune): “What is it?” He replied: “When a day passes, his (man’s) departure to the next world approaches. He does not know whether he will (enter) the Garden or the Fire.<sup>5</sup>”

The Imam, peace be on him, urges man to learn a lesson from these three misfortunes which surrounds him. If man carefully considers them, they will hold him back from working for this world and make him work for the next world, which is the abode of mortality and subsistence.

6. He, peace be on him, said: “If men completely knew the virtue of turning to Allah in repentance and norms of *sunna*, they would express all that which came to their minds, and find the coolness of certainty which would free them from need to dispute in all states except their state. Moreover, understanding this would not escape them in the days few in number and thought short in period. However, ignorance has covered them; self-admiration has afflicted them; caprice has turned them away from the door to certitude; and bad customs have distracted them from the bounty of knowledge.<sup>6</sup>”

If man carefully considered the affairs of this universe, he would certainly believe that there was Creator to whose will and decree all things were yielding, that other than Him had neither force nor strength. If man believed in this, he would find the coolness of certainty in himself, and be free from hardships and difficulties that attacked him during his short term. However, he would not do this, for ignorance has covered him; self-admiration has afflicted him; caprice has diverted him from the bounty of knowledge and reaching the truth.

7. The following is among the valuable sermons which the Imam taught to his companions and Shi’ites:

“O men, fear Allah, and know that you will return to Him *on the day that every soul shall find present what it has done of good and what it has done of evil, it shall wish that between it and that (evil) there were a long duration of time; and Allah makes you to be cautious of (retribution from) Himself.*<sup>7</sup> Woe unto you, O heedless son of Adam, while (Allah) is not heedless of you! Your death is the quickest thing toward you. It has swiftly come toward you seeking you, and it is about to reach you as if you finished your fixed term, the angel made you die, you alone went to your grave, your soul returned to you, the two angels Munkar and Nakir broke into (your grave) to question you and to examine you severely.

Truly, they will first question you about your Lord ☞Whom you worshipped☞your Prophet☞who was sent to you☞your religion which you professed☞your Book☞which you recited☞your Imam☞whom you followed☞your span☞in what did you pass it?☞and your property☞Where did you earn it? On what did you spend it? Hence be careful, consider yourself, and prepare the answer before the examination, the question, and the test. If you were a believer having knowledge of your religion, following the truthful, supporting the friends of Allah, Allah would dictated to you your proof and make your tongue say rightness, hence you would answer well, you would be given good news of the Garden and the good pleasure of Allah, the angels would receive you with happiness and bounty. If you were not such (a believer), your tongue would stammer, your proof would be refuted, you would be unable to give an

answer, you would be given news of the Fire, the angels of chastisement would receive you with entertainment of boiling water and burning in the Fire.

“Know, son of Adam, that after this (i.e. the examination in the grave) there will be something greater and more horrible and ache the hearts in a much more painful manner. This is the Day of Resurrection. This is the day when men will be mustered. This is the day which will be witnessed, in which Allah will gather the former and the latter, in which the trumpet shall be blown, and the graves shall be scattered; this is the day of the event when (men’s) hearts will rise up to the throats, and they will be silent. This is the day in which no stumble will be released, nor will a ransom be taken from anyone, nor will an excuse be accepted from anyone, nor will anyone show repentance, except repayment through good deeds and evil deeds. If the believer does an atom’s weight of good, he shall find it, and if he does an atom’s weight of evil, he shall find it.

“Hence, men, guard against sins and acts of disobedience which (Allah) has prohibited in the Truthful Book and the Uttering Explanation. Feel not secure of the planning and destruction of Allah when the accursed Satan summons you to the immediate passions and pleasures of this world, for Allah says:

***Surely those who guard (against evil), when a visitation from the Shaitan afflicts them, they become mindful, then Lo! they see.***[8](#)

Let your hearts fear Allah, remember the good reward Allah has promised to give in your return, and the severe punishment with which He has frightened you. He who is afraid of a thing is careful of it, and he who is a careful of a thing leaves it. Be not among the heedless who incline to the pleasures of this world’s life and do evil deeds, for Allah, the Exalted says:

***Do they then who plan evil deeds feel secure (of this) that Allah will not cause the earth to swallow them or that punishment may overtake them from whence they do not perceive? Or that He may seize them in the course of their journeys, then they shall not escape; or that He may seize them by causing them suffer gradual loss?*** [9](#)

Hence guard against what Allah did for the wrongdoers whom He has mentioned in His Book. Beware of that through which He threatened the oppressive people, and which He has mentioned in His Book. He has made those other than you a lesson for you, so the happy are those who learn a lesson from other than them. He has made you hear in His Book what he did toward the unjust people from among the people of the towns before you when He said:

***And how many a town which was iniquitous did we demolish, and we raised up after it another people. Hence when they felt our punishment, Lo! they began to fly from it. Do not fly (now) and come back to what you were made to lead easy lives in and to your dwellings, haply you will be questioned.*** [10](#)

When the punishment came to them, *they said: O woe unto us! Surely we were unjust.* [11](#)

O men, if you say that Allah meant the polytheists in this (verse), then what do you think about these words of Him:

***And We will set up a just balance on the day of resurrection, Hence no soul shall be dealt with unjustly in the least; and though there be the weight of a grain of mustard seed, (yet) We will bring it, and We are sufficient to take an account.*** [12](#)

“Know, Allah’s servants, that the balances are not set up for the polytheists, nor are the books spread for them; rather they will be mustered to the Fire in groups. The balances are set up for the Muslims, and the books are spread for them. Hence Allah’s servants, fear Allah, and know that Allah does not make His friends love the world’s embellishment, nor does He make them desire for it and its immediate embellishment and its manifest beauty. He created men in the world to try which of them would do good deeds for his (life in) the hereafter. B

y Allah, examples have been given to you in the Qur’an, and the verses haven been given as examples to those who understand, hence, O believers, be of those who understand, and there is no strength save in Allah. Renounce the world, may Allah make you renounce the immediate things of the life in the world, for Allah saysﷻand His words are trueﷻ:

***The likeness of this world’s life is only as which We send down from the cloud, then the herbage of the earth of which men and cattle eat grows luxuriantly thereby; until when the earth puts on its golden raiment and it becomes garnished, and its people think that they have power over it, Our command comes to it, by night or by day, Hence We render it as reaped seed–produce, as though it had not been in existence yesterday; thus do We make clear the communications for a people who reflect.*** [13](#)

Incline not to the world, for Allah said to Muhammad:

***And incline not to those who are unjust, lest the fire touches you.*** [14](#)

Incline not to the world and what is therein the inclination of him who takes it as stability and as an abode of settlement, for it is the abode of departure, end, and deeds. Hence supply (yourselves) with good deeds, before its (the world’s) days scatter, and before the permission from Allah (is taken) to destroying it, hence He Who originated it will destroy it and inherit it. I ask Allah to help you and me to supply (ourselves) with fear (of Him) and to renounce this world. May Allah place you and me among those who renounce the life in this world. Peace and Allah’s mercy and blessings be upon you. [15](#)”

This sermon is full of fearful descriptions about the sights of the Day of Resurrection when no stumble will be released nor a ransom will be taken from anyone; rather men will be repaid according to their deeds, good for good (deeds) and evil for evil (deeds). On this day nothing will save man from the terrible chastisement except his good deeds.

The Imam, peace be on him, warned men against committing offenses and sins and following passions which resulted in great evil. Also he, peace be on him, warned them against following the way of the unjust whom Allah punished severely, and whose houses He destroyed.

There is another important thing in this sermon; it is that the balances of justice and fairness will be set up for Muslims and the books spread for them only. As for the unbelievers, they will be driven to the Fire in groups.

8. The following is another example of the Imam's valuable sermons:

“May Allah protect you and us from the wrongdoers, the aggression of the envious, and the oppression of the tyrannical. O believers, let not the tyrants and their followers deceive you, for they desire for the world, admire it, cling to it and its vanities. Guard against the world as long as Allah has warned you against it. Renounce it as Allah want you to renounce it. Incline not to it the inclination of those who have regarded it as an abode and station. By Allah, the world's embellishment and changes are proofs for you. It raises the lowly up and pushes the noble down, and will make groups of people enter the Fire tomorrow. In this there is a lesson, a test, and a restraint for the mindful. The affairs which come to you by day and night<sup>۹</sup> such as, dark discords, new events, unjust laws, the calamities of time, the terrors of the sovereign, the evil thoughts of Satan<sup>۱۰</sup> hold back hearts from their intentions, make them forget the Being of guidance and the people of the Truth<sup>۱۱</sup> except few from among those whom Allah has protected, and who follow the way of reason and moderation.

Hence seek the help of asceticism against all of this, make use of the lessons and refrain from them, renounce the immediate delight of the world, turn away from its pleasures, wish for the permanent bliss of the next world and strive for it, beware of death, and hate life with the oppressive people. In this manner you are able to look at what is in the world through the brilliant eye whose sight is sharp and to understand new discords, misleading innovations, and the tyranny of the oppressive kings. By my life, in the bygone days you turned the back to the past affairs from among the heaped up afflictions and absorbed in them. You can produce them as evidence of turning away from the errant and the men of innovations, aggression, and corruption in the earth without truth. Therefore, seek the help of Allah, return to obeying Him and those who are worthy of obedience.

“Be very weary of (the world) before remorse, regret, meeting Allah and standing before Him. By Allah, when people disobey Allah, they expose themselves to His punishment, and when they prefer this world to the next world, their outcome and fate will be evil. Recognizing Allah and acting according to obedience to Him are two harmonious companions. He who knows Allah fears Him, and fear urges him to act according to obedience to Allah. (Religious) scholars and their followers know Allah and wish for Him, hence Allah said: *Those of His servants only who are possessed of knowledge fear Allah.* [16](#) Accordingly, seek nothing of this world through disobeying Allah; work in this world through obedience to Allah, make us of the world's days, strive for that which delivers you tomorrow from Allah's chastisement, for this is the least in outcome, the nearest to excuse, and the most hopeful for deliverance. Prefer

Allah's command, obedience to him, and those whose obedience He has made obligatory to all things. Prefer not the affairs which come to you through obeying the tyrannical and admiring this world to Allah's command, obedience to Him and to the rulers from among you. Know that you are Allah's servants, and we are part of you. The Dominant Lord will judge between you and us tomorrow; He will make you stand and question you; therefore prepare an answer before questioning and standing before the Lord of the worlds, on the day when none will speak except with a permission from Him.

Know that Allah will not believe a liar, nor will He accuse the truthful of lying, nor will He refuse the excuse of the meritorious, nor will He pardon those who have no excuse. Rather Allah has arguments over His creatures; they the prophets and the trustees (of authority) after them. Hence fear Allah, and set right yourselves. Obey Allah and those whom you follow, that a person may remorse for neglecting Allah's rights. Ask Allah for forgiveness and turn to Him in repentance, for He accepts repentance, forgive evil deeds, and knows what you do. Beware of making friends with the disobedient, helping the unjust, and neighboring the dissolute. Be weary of their temptations and go far away from their courtyard. Know that he who disobeys Allah's friends, professes a religion other than Allah's religion and obeys a command other than the command of Allah's friend will enter a burning fire which will destroy the bodies whose souls are absent from them and which are controlled by wickedness. There for, learn a lesson (from this), O you who have intellects, thank Allah for guiding you, and know that you cannot leave Allah's power to that of those other than Him. Allah will see your acts, and you will be mustered before Him. As a result, take advantage of this sermon and follow the noble moral traits of the righteous. [17](#)"

This sermon is one of the Imam's excellent sermons. It is not confined to summoning people to renounce the world and to act for the next world; rather it includes political and social affairs, such as:

Warning men from following the tyrannical and their followers, who admire the world's embellishment and delight. This is because these people always oppose social reform, spread oppression and corruption in the earth.

Dispraising the world and criticizing its qualities of which is the following:

- A. It raises the lowly up.
- B. It pushes the free and the noble down.
- C. It drives groups of people to the Fire, for it deviates them from the truth.

As the world leads men to vices and prevents them from good deeds, they should renounce it, turn away from its pleasures, and strive for attaining the bliss of the next world.

3. Showing grief for the community who faced in his time various kinds of black afflictions, new innovations, unjust laws made by the Umayyads, who drowned the country in oppression, discords, and

tyranny. Those events had strong influence on the community, for they held back the hearts from their intentions and deviated them from the path of truth and reason.

4. Summoning men to obey Allah and the Imams of truth and guidance, who make them walk on the road of deliverance, and guide them to the straight path, who represent the will and awareness of the community and accomplish to it its mightiness and dignity. He, peace be on him, also summoned men to disobey the tyrannical leaders and not to help them.

5. Urging men to fear Allah and to obey Him, for man's life is prosperous through these two deeds, and his conduct is righteous through them.

These are some contents of this sermon full of religious and political affairs.

9. The following is another example of the Imam's sermons. In it he spoke about the qualities of the ascetics:

“One of the qualities of those who renounce the world and wish for the hereafter is that they oppose every friend who does not want what they want. Truly he who works for the reward of the next world renounces the immediate embellishment of the world, urges (himself) to do good deeds, prepares himself for death, for Allah, the Great and Almighty, says: *Until when death overtake one of them, he says: Send me back, my Lord, that I may do good in that which I have left.* [18](#)

“Live in this world the life of him who will be returned to it, and remorse for the good deeds which he neglected therein, and which he will need on the day of his neediness. Know, Allah's servants, that he who fears the sudden attack of the authority of the people of the earth by night will turn away from pillow, refrain from sleeping, and abstain from eating and drinking. Woe unto you, son of Adam! Do you not fear the Almighty Lord's sudden punishment coming by night? One finds neither sanctuary nor refuge nor escape from this sudden punishment. Hence, believers, fear Allah's sudden punishment coming by night with the fear of the pious, for Allah says:

***And most certainly We will settle you in the land after then; this is for him who fears standing in My presence and who fears My threat.*** [19](#)

Therefore, guard against the embellishment, deception, and evil of the life in this world. Remember the ill consequence of the inclination to it, for its embellishment is a trial, and love for it is sin.

“Woe unto you, son of Adam! Know that the severity of indigestion, the nature of inclination (to the world), intoxication of fullness, and the mightiness of supreme power hold back (men) from working, make them forget the remembrance (of Allah), and distract them from the approach of death, hence the one who is afflicted by love for the world behave madly because of the intoxication of drink. He who knows Allah and fears Him trains himself and accustoms it to hunger, lest it should not yearn for fullness, in such a manner horses are made thin to gain bet.

“Hence, Allah’s servants, fear Allah with the fear of him who hopes for His reward. Fear His punishment, for Allah, the Exalted, has excused you, warned you (against His punishment), filled you with desire (for His reward), and frightened you (with punishment), yet you do not yearn for his generous reward nor do you fear His severe punishment, while He has told you about this in His Book:

***Therefore whoever shall do of good deeds and he is a believer, there shall be no denying of his exertion, and surely We shall write (it) down for him.*** [20](#)

Then He has given you examples of verses in His Book, that you may guard against the embellishment of the life in this world. He said:

***Your possessions and your children are only a trial, and Allah it is with Whom is a great reward.*** [21](#)

Therefore, fear Allah as far as possible, listen and obey. Fear Allah and learn a lesson from Allah’s admonitions. I know that the outcomes of sins have exhausted many of you, yet they do not guard against them, and harmed their bodies, but they do not hate them. Do you not hear Allah’s call concerning belittling the world:

***Know that this world’s life is only sport and play and gaiety and boasting among yourselves, and a vying in the multiplication of wealth and children, like the rain, whose causing the vegetation to grow, pleases husbandmen; then it withers away Hence that you will see it become yellow, then it becomes dried up and broken down; and in the hereafter is a severe punishment and (also) forgiveness from Allah and (His) pleasure; and this world’s life is naught but means of deception. Hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and to a garden whose extensiveness is as the extensiveness of the heaven and the earth; it is prepared for those who believe in Allah and His messengers; that is the bounty of Allah: He gives it to whom He pleases, and Allah is the Possessor of the great bounty.*** [22](#)

And He said:

***O you who believe, fear Allah, and let every soul consider what it has sent on for the morrow, and fear Allah; surely Allah is Aware of what you do. And be not like those who forgot Allah, Hence He made them forget their own souls: it is these who are the transgressors.*** [23](#)

As a result fear Allah, servants of Allah. Consider carefully (Allah’s creatures) and work for that which you were created for, for Allah did not create you vainly nor will he leave you in vain. He has made you recognize Him, sent for you His messengers, and sent down upon you His Book in which there are His lawful and unlawful things, His arguments and His exemplars. Fear Allah, for your Lord has an argument over you when He said:

***Have We not given him two eyes, and a tongue and two lips, and guided him to the two ways.*** [24](#)

Fear Allah as far as possible, for there is no strength save in Him, put trust in none except in Him, may Allah bless Muhammad and his Household.[25](#)”

This valuable sermon contains the qualities and inclinations of those who renounced the world. Truly they were among the chosen creatures of Allah. The world did not deceive them with its embellishment and pleasures, for they turned toward the next world and sought nearness to Allah. Because of their behavior, their good deeds, and their sweet conversations, they became a good example for those who followed them.

10. The following is one of the Imam’s sermons in which he preached to his companions:

“The most lovable of you with Allah is the best of you in work. The greatest of you in work with Allah is the greatest of you in desire for that which is with Him. The safest of you from the chastisement of Allah is the most intense of you in fear of Him. The nearest of you to Allah is the amplest of you in noble moral traits. The most pleasing of you to Allah is the best of you in spending lavishly upon his family; the most honorable of you with Allah is the most fearful of you before Him, the Exalted.[26](#)”

The Imam, peace be on him, ordered his companions to cling to the noble moral qualities and stored deeds. He guided them to that which delivered them from the chastisement of Allah in the next world. He urged them to:

A. Wish for that which is with Allah, which is among the greatest stored things. As for wish for that which is with other than Allah, it leads to disappointment and loss.

B. Fear Allah, for fear of Allah prevents man from committing sins and crimes, plants in his soul virtue and dignity, and make him honorable among the members of society. It has been mentioned in the tradition: “The most honorable of you with Allah is the most fearful of you (before Him).[27](#)”

C. Adopt noble moral traits, for man is distinguished from other than him by them. If he loses them, he loses his humanity.

11. The following is another example of the Imam’s sermons. In it he preached to his companions, saying:

“There is a garden between night and day. Those who obey Allah and fear him enjoy the garden. May Allah have mercy upon you, reciting the Qur’an at the beginning of night, plead (to Allah) and ask (Him) for forgiveness at the end of it. When daytime comes, do good within it through refraining from committing degrading sins. May Allah place you and us among those who are happy when they understand the Qur’an and avail themselves of its knowledge.[28](#)”

The Imam, peace be on him, urged his companions to obey Allah and to worship Him by the darkness of night and the brightness of day. He warned them against committing sins and offenses which lead man to the places of destruction when he will quickly separate from this world and meet Allah, Who will repay

him for his deeds, namely good for good (deeds) and evil for evil (deeds).

12. The following is another example of the Imam's sermons. When man reads it, he will shake with fear. In it the Imam addresses himself, saying:

“O my soul, how long will you trust in the world and incline to its embellishment? Have you not learned a lesson from your bygone ancestors, your intimate friends whom the earth has concealed your brothers of whom you are bereaved and your companions who have been transferred to the earth? They are now inside the earth while they were on it. Their beauties therein have become decayed and effaced.

“Their abodes have become empty of them, their courtyards have become deserted of them, and the decrees (of Allah) drove them toward death.

“They left the world and their gathering for it; the pits (graves) and earth have hidden them.

“The hands of death have perished many generations! The earth changed, through its decay, and concealed many of your associates. You carried them to their graves and returned to the work of those who are void of every good.

“You are engaged in the world competing (with others) for it; therein you are craving and vying with others for many possessions. You walk in danger and rise in the morning for amusement. Do you know, if you understand, what you expose to danger? He who always strives for this world and forgets the next is a loser without doubt.

“How long will you cling to the world and be engaged in its pleasures? White hair and the warner have come to you, while you are inattentive of what is wanted from you, and you are engaged in your present and future pleasures. You have seen the people who followed passions when they changed and calamities befell them.

“Remembering the terror of death, the grave, and decay holds back one from amusement and pleasures. Will you look for (pleasures) after the approach of the forty (of age) and be obstinate, while white hair is a warner? It seems that you intentionally take care of that which harms you and that you are deviated from rightness.

“Consider carefully how the succession of days abducted bygone communities and perished kings and how death surprised them, hence their traces have become effaced from the world, their stories have remained therein, and they have become decayed (bones) in the earth until the Day of Resurrection and Return.

“They have become decayed (bones) in the earth, their assemblies have become void of them, as if they were gamblers who departed (from the world). They have inhabited an abode in which they cannot visit each other, and how can the inhabitants of the graves visit each other? You see nothing except that they

have dwelled in flat graves over which the wind raises and scatters (the dust).

“Many were those who possessed mightiness, authority, soldiers, helpers, were powerful in their world. Therein they attained what they desired, built palaces and places for drinks and amusement, collected possessions, stored things, (had) beautiful slave girls, and noble women.

“The stored things do not turn away death from them when it suddenly comes upon them. The strongholds which they build and surround by rivers, amusement and drink places do not repel (it) from them, nor do stratagems fight against it for them, nor do the armies beseech defending them.

“Allah sends down upon them what nothing can repel. His decree, which nothing can keep back, befalls them, hence Exalted is Allah, the King, the All-compeller, the All-sublime, the Almighty, the Subduer, the Breaker of the tyrannical, the Destroyer of the arrogant, before whose force all things are lowly, and Who annihilates the subduers.

“The King, the Almighty, whose decree nothing can repel, the All-wise, the All-knowing, whose command is in force, the Subduer, toward whose mightiness of face all the almighty are humble. How many an almighty one is lowly before the All-dominating! The tyrannical kings are lowly and humble toward the mightiness of the Possessor of the Throne.

“Hence be quick! Be quick! Be wary, be wary of the world, its stratagems, the traps which it has set up for you, the ornament with which it has adorned itself for you, the beauty which it has shown for you, the pleasures which it has displayed for you, the destruction and catastrophes which it has concealed from you!

“(My soul), summon (men) to repulse the world’s other disasters and enjoin (them) to renounce (the world). Act seriously! Be not heedless! Be careful, for the inhabitant will soon leave the abode! Be ready (for the hereafter) ! Flag not, for your span will remove, and you will go to the Abode of Permanence. Seek not the world, for its bliss—though you have obtained some of it—is a harmful outcome for you.

“Therefore, do the intelligent crave for the world? Will they be pleased with it, while they are sure that it will perish? Will they sleep at night, while death is sudden? Will they incline (to the world) while they expect death at any moment?

“Except to Allah (one’s soul inclines), but we deceive our souls, and pleasures distract us from what He has warned us. How does one enjoy this life, while he will be ordered to stand in the standing-place of justice on the day when the secrets will be tried? It seems that we think that there will be no resurrection, that we are in vain, and that we will not return after death.

“What does one attain from the world’s pleasures, beauties and various wonders, while he suffers sudden tragedies, maladies, troubles, and pain?

“Do we not see the world’s changes come and go by day and night? The world lends us nothing but

blights and worries. How long does the borrower stay therein? He is not happy and safe in his world, nor does he prevent himself from its demands.

“How many a person inclines to the world, but it deceives him. It knocks down him who devotes himself to it, but it not releases him from his stumble, nor does it save him from being knocked down, nor does it heal him from his pain and malady, nor does it save him from his disgrace.

“Rather it leads him, after honor and strength, to evil outcomes which none can repel. When he sees that there is no salvation, and that his carefulness will not rescue him from death, he shows remorse, but it does not profit him, and weeps for his great sins.

“He weeps for his bygone sins, and regrets for what has escaped him in this world. He asks Allah’s forgiveness, but forgiveness does not profit him, nor does apology rescue him from the terror of death and the coming of the trial.

“Grieves and worries encompass him, and he is sad when his strength is feeble. None will relieve him from death, nor does anyone support him against it. His soul becomes agitated out of fear of death, but the uvula and the throat return it to him.

“Hence his visitors and his family decrease, and they leave him alone (with death). They despair of this invalid one. They close his eyes with their own hands, and stretch out his legs when his soul takes leave. Then the affectionate friends leave him.

“How many a painful, distressed one weeps for him, seeking patience, but he is not patient, saying: To Allah we belong and to Him is our return, supplicating Allah for him sincerely, numbering for him all what he remembers. How many a person gloats over his death, but he will die shortly after his death.

“Hence his womenfolk tear their garments; his slave girls strike their cheeks; his neighbor laments for losing him; and his brothers feel pain for his disaster. Then they undertake preparing him for burial, and set out to bring him out, as if he was not among them dear and ransomed, nor was he the preferable, beloved one.

“His loving people and relatives send someone to wash him and shroud him in two garments. Meanwhile they send someone to dig a grave for him. Then his brothers and his clans come together to escort him to his final resting place.

“If you see the youngest of his children—when sadness controls his heart, (men) fear for him out of impatience, tears make his eyes red, he laments over his father and says: Woe! Alas!—you will see an ugly sight of death, of which a beholder is afraid and terrified. When the youngest children forget him, the oldest ones become agitated. His womenfolk are impatient for him, and tears run down their faces.

“Then he is carried from his wide palace to his narrow grave. When he rests in his grave, his acts terrify him, his offenses encompass him, and he is unable to stand before what he sees. Then they power

down sand on him with their own hands, weep and lament over him very much. Then they stand beside him for an hour. When they despair of looking at him, they leave him as hostage to his deeds.

“They turn the back (to him), lamenting over him, and all of them are careful of death. They are like the sheep which graze safely, (and then) they become frightened and stop pasturing when someone bare-armed suddenly appears before them (holding) his knife.

“When fear turns away from them, they return to their pasture, and forget this. Do we follow the acts of cattle and put their customs into effect? Return to the remembrance of him who is carried to the Abode of Trial. Learn a lesson from his place under the earth. (Learn a lesson from) him who is pushed to the terror of what you see.

“Only he has rested in his grave; his children and sons-in-law have distributed his inheritance (among themselves). They have divided his properties (among themselves), but none of them have thanked or praised him.

“O you who lives in the world and strives for it, O you who feels safety from the changes of time, how do you feel security from this state, and certainly you will reach it? How do you satisfy yourself of food, while you wait for your death? How do you enjoy your desires, while they are the mount of blights?

“You have not prepared yourself for the departure which has approached, and you are about to travel. Alas! How long will I delay my repentance, while my span will come to an end, and death awaits me? My deeds have been written on the pages, and the One Who is Just and Powerful in judgment will repay (me) for them.

“How long will you patch your life in this world with your life in the next, mount your seduction and caprice? I think that you are weak, O you who prefers this world to the religion! Has the Compassionate (Allah) commanded you to do this? Has the Qur’an been sent down for this? Do you not think that there will be a severe reckoning awaiting you? Do you not consider the state of those who collected (money) and invested (it), raised buildings up and decorated (them), and lived long? Have they not become waste, and their graves become their abode?

“You destroy that which will subsist, and build that which will perish, though it is neither ample nor inhabited. Have you an excuse before Allah when death surprises you, and you have earned no good deed? Are you content that your span comes to an end, while your religion is deficient and your property is abundant?[29](#)”

This sermon is over. It describes the reality of this world’s life and man’s departure from it. It shows that man craves for this world, adorns it, and clings to its pleasures, while he knows that he will leave it for a narrow, dark grave where his organs cut off, and his stories die down. Nothing will stay with him except his deeds. If they are good, he will be intimate with nothing except with them. If they are evil, he will fear nothing save them.

I (the author) do not doubt the meanings of this sermon, but I doubt some weak words therein, especially as it concerns the lines of poetry. This is because such words do not agree with the eloquence of Imam Zayn al-‘Abidin, peace be on him, who was the most eloquent in the Arab and Islamic world, and who composed al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiya, which is the purest and most eloquent book in Arabic literature.

13. The following is another example of the Imam’s valuable sermons. In it he warns (mankind) against the world. He, peace be on him, said: “Beware of the world and what therein, for it is the abode of vanishing and change. It changes its inhabitants from state to another. It perished the past generations and bygone nations, who had properties more than you (have), lived longer than you, and had houses more than you (have). The world annihilated them as if they were not its inhabitants. The earth has absorbed their flesh, removed their beauties, scattered their organs, and changed their colors. The hands of time have milled them. Then will you crave for subsistence after them? Far be it! Far be it! Surely, you will meet (Allah). You wasted your past span. Hence do good deeds in the remaining part of your span, before your fixed terms terminate, and your expectations cut off. You are about to be taken from the palaces to the graves, sad not happy. By Allah, how many a sinner who shows perfect remorse. How many a powerful person who falls into the paths destruction. Remorse will not profit him, nor will anyone help him against wrongdoing. He will find his past deeds and take what he has supplied himself with. *They found what they did present, and your Lord does not wrong anyone.* They are in the abodes of death, and are silent in the camp of the dead, awaiting the cry of the Resurrection and coming of the Day of the Calamity, *that Allah may repay those who do evil with what they have done, and repay those who do good with goodness.*[30](#)”

With this we will end our speech about the sermons of Imam Zayn al-‘Abidin, peace be on him. They are indeed some of the greatest spiritual sources and the most successful medicine for curing psychological diseases that abase man and throw him into total ignorance in this life.

## **His Wise Sayings and Teachings**

Imam Zayn al-‘Abidin, peace be on him, stated many valuable wise sayings and noble teachings that resulted from his full experience in the reality of life, his deep understanding of social affairs, and his knowledge of the conditions and affairs of men. The following is part of what it has been narrated on his authority.

### **Dispraising Haughtiness**

The Imam, peace be on him, dispraised haughtiness. He blamed the haughty for their evil qualities, which are the door to all evil deeds and vices. The haughty think that other than them do not deserve life, hence they wrong men and show enmity toward them. The Imam, peace be on him, said: “I wonder at him who shows haughtiness and vainglory, while was as a sperm yesterday and will be a carrion tomorrow.”[31](#)”

If the haughty carefully consider their beginning and their end, they will not show haughtiness and vainglory toward men, nor will they boast of their children and properties.

From their Safe Place, the Careful are surprised.[32](#)

An example of his immortal wise sayings is these golden wonderful words. He, peace be on him, said: “From their safe place, the careful are surprised. The intelligent are content with the inspiration of speech. Explanation turns away from the ignorant one’s heart. He does not avail himself of words, though eloquent, when he badly listens (to them).[33](#)” As for the meanings of these pure words, they are as follows:

1. ‘From his safe place, the careful are surprised,’ means that kings and rulers employ guards in order to protect them; nevertheless the guards themselves sometimes kill them.
2. It is the intelligent who understand affairs through the inspiration of speech and the contexts of states. In other words, they are in no need of wordiness.
3. Explanation turns away from the ignorant one’s mind, for ignorance has covered it and turned it away from understanding affairs.
4. He who badly listens does not avail himself of pure, wise words, but he who carefully listens makes use of them.

### Warning against Disputes

The Imam, peace be on him, warned (the Muslims) against the dispute which leads them to overcoming and haughtiness, and not to the truth. He, peace be on him, said: “Dispute corrupts past friendship and unties strong knots, for it leads to overcoming which is among the strongest reasons for estrangement.[34](#)” Dispute is a key to evil deeds, moves enmity and hatred among men, and causes to them many hardships and difficulties.

### Rejoicing over Sins

Rejoicing over sins indicates that the person goes to extremes in crime, hence the Imam, peace be on him, said: “Beware of rejoicing over sins, for rejoicing over sins is greater than committing them.[35](#)”

### Kinds of Sin

The Imam speaks about the kinds of sin which bring about Allah’s wrath and chastisement. He warns man against them, that he may lead sound religion and world. He, peace be on him, said:

“The sins which alter blessings are: aggression against men, turning away from good habits, affected charity, showing ingratitude toward blessings, and leaving thanksgiving. Allah, the Exalted, said: **‘Surely,**

***Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change their own condition.'***

“The sins which bring about remorse are: murdering the soul which Allah has made unlawful (When Cain killed his brother Abel and was unable to bury him, Allah said: ***Hence he became among the remorseful.***), leaving tightening bonds of kin until they are free from need, leaving the prayers until their times pass, leaving will and complaints, refraining from giving *zakat* until death comes and the tongue stops.

“The sins which draw down diversities are: disobeying the knowledgeable, showing insolence toward men, and ridiculing them.

“The sins which repel blessings are: displaying poverty, sleep during noon and evening prayers’ times, disdaining blessings, and complaints against Allah.

“The sins which tear apart safeguards are: drinking wine, playing gamble, chatter and joking which make men laugh, mentioning the defects of men, and sitting with the people of doubt.

“The sins which draw down tribulations are: leaving relieving the grieved, leaving helping the wronged, refraining from enjoining the good and forbidding the evil.

“The sins which empower the enemies are: declaring oppression and dissoluteness publicly, making the prohibited permissible, showing disobedience toward the good, and following the evil.

“The sins which hasten annihilation are: cutting the ties of the womb, sinful oath, false words, fornication, obstructing the path of the Muslims, and claiming the Imamate without right.

“The sins which cut off expectations are: despair of Allah’s repose, desperation of Allah’s mercy, trust in other than Allah, and denying Allah’s promise.

“The sins which make air black are: magic, soothsaying, faith in the stars, denying (Allah’s) decree, and showing disobedience to parents.

“The sins which remove the covering are: borrowing a loan without intention to repay it, spending lavishly on falsehood, showing stinginess toward family, children, and the blood relations, misconduct, the paucity of patience, employing boredom, and disdaining the people of religion.

“The sins which hold back supplication are: evil intention, wicked inner self, showing hypocrisy toward brothers, leaving giving truthful answer, delaying the obligatory prayers until their times pass, leaving nearness to Allah through charity and alms, employing obscene words, untruth, concealing witness, refraining from giving *zakat*, loan, and food, displaying curliness toward the poor and the needy, oppressing orphans and widows, scolding and repelling the beggar at night.[36](#)”

The Imam, peace be on him, warned (men) against committing these sins and crimes, which deviate

man's behavior from the right path and make him far from his Creator. He has mentioned their mean results in this world and the next. This is indeed one of the traditions of the pure Imams, peace be on them, who spared no effort to educate man's soul.

## **The Reality of Death**

The Imam, peace be on him, described the reality of death of believers and unbelievers with these words of him: "The death of a believer is like taking off dirty garments and replacing them with excellent ones. It is like riding the lowest mounts and untying heavy fetters. The death of an unbeliever is like taking off excellent garments and replacing them with the dirtiest and most coarse ones. It is like moving from intimate houses to lonely ones.<sup>37</sup>"

Many traditions have been narrated on the authority of the Imams of guidance. They say: "The world is the prison of a believer and garden of an unbeliever." When the believer is about to die, he finds no difficulty in death. He finds the greatest comfort; for he will soon move to Paradise. When the unbeliever faces death, he finds it unhappiness and tribulation. He faces it with regret and pain; for he will move from a garden to a lasting chastisement in a prison.

## **The Most Important Degrees of Asceticism**

A person questioned Imam Zayn al-'Abidin, peace be on him, about asceticism, and he replied: "Asceticism is of ten degrees: The highest degree of asceticism is the lowest degree of piety. The highest degree of piety is the lowest degree of certainty. The highest degree of certainty is the lowest degree of satisfaction.<sup>38</sup> Asceticism is in one verse of Allah's Book: Hence that you may not grieve for what has escaped you, nor be exultant at what He has given you.<sup>39</sup>"

This tradition contains some gnostic realities. They are as follows:

- A. The highest degree of asceticism does not equal the lowest degree of abstaining from the things which Allah has made unlawful. Abstaining from such things results from setting right soul and controlling it.
- B. Piety is the highest degree of faith (in Allah), yet the highest degree of it is the lowest degree of certainty of Allah, the Exalted.
- C. Certitude is the essence of faith, yet the highest degree of it is lowest degree of satisfaction with what Allah has apportioned.
- D. The Holy Verse includes the reality of asceticism. It warns man against grief and sorrow for the interests which escape him in this world. Besides it warns him against rejoicing over the pleasures he earns.

## The Best Deeds in the View of Allah

The Imam, peace be on him, was asked about the best deeds in the view of Allah, and he answered: “After recognizing Allah and His Messenger, the best deed in Allah’s eyes is detesting the world. This has many branches. Disobedience has also many branches. Self–admiration was the first act of disobedience. It made Satan refuse to (prostrate himself for Adam), show haughtiness, and unbeliever. Envy was the sin of Adam’s son. It made him kill his brother. From this branched love for women, the world, presidency, ease, words, superiority, and wealth. They have become seven qualities and come together in love for the world. After recognizing these qualities, the prophets and the scholars said: “Love for the world is the root of every sin, and the world is an abode of tribulation.[40](#)”

Surely, love for the world is the foundation of tribulation, source of discords and dangers which befall man. It leads man to sins and offenses and throws him into great evil. The Imam, peace be on him, has mentioned the blights which result from love for the world. Some of them are as follows:

1. Self–admiration.
2. Envy.
3. Love for men and presidency.
4. Love for ease.
5. Love for words (which do not concern and mean the person).
6. Love for superiority over the others.
7. Love for wealth.

These blights deviate man from the right path, and throw him into sins.

## Recognizing Justice

The following tradition is one of the Imam’s wise sayings. In it the Imam defines man’s justice and reliability. He, peace be on him, said: “If you see a man show good appearance and guidance, goes too far in his words, and pretends obedience through his movements, then be slow, let him not deceive you. Many are those who are incapable of obtaining the world and committing the unlawful therein. As he is frail in body, abased, and fainthearted, he sets up religion as snare for himself. He is still deceiving men through his appearance. When he is capable of an unlawful thing, he plunges into it. If you see him show chastity toward unlawful property, then be slow, let him not deceive you. For the desires of the creatures are various.

Many are those who affect refusal toward the unlawful, though be it much. He carries himself on an ugly,

ill-omened horse, and commits an unlawful thing through it. If you see him in such a state, then be slow, let him not deceive you, until you see the firmness of his intellect. Many are those who leave all of this, then they do not return to firm intellect, hence what they corrupt through their ignorance is more than what they set right through their intellects. If you find his intellect firm, then be slow, let him not deceive you, until you see whether his caprice overcomes his intellect or his intellect overcomes his caprice, whether he loves false presidency or abstains from it.

For some people leave the world for the world. They think that the pleasure of false presidency is better than that of lawful properties and blessings, hence they leave all of this and seek presidency. When it is said to him, fear Allah; pride carries him off to sin; therefore hell is sufficient for him; and certainly it is an evil resting-place. He behaves at random. His first falsehood leads him to the utmost loss. His farfetched demand take him to what he cannot accomplish through his tyranny. Hence he makes lawful what Allah has made unlawful. He makes unlawful what Allah has made lawful. He pays no attention to his religion when it escapes him, as long as he assumes presidency, for which he has tired himself. Then, it is those with whom Allah has become angry, whom He has cursed, and for whom He has prepared a painful chastisement.

“However, the best man is he who makes his caprice follow Allah’s command, uses his abilities according to Allah’s decree, regards abasement during the truth as nearer to immortal glory than false glory, and knows that its little ordeal, which he bears, leads to permanent bliss in an abode which does not perish nor does it run out, whose plentiful joy will follow him. When he follows his caprice, it leads him to a chastisement which does not cease nor does it remove. Hence cling to this man, follow his *sunna* (practices), and seek access through him to Allah, for his supplication is not refused nor does his demand fail.[41](#)”

This tradition of the Imam, peace be on him, aims at recognizing justice, which is among the greatest psychological talents, for through it man becomes sublime, and gets free from material things and pleasures to the extent that evil inclinations will have no power over him. Some jurists depend on this tradition when they say that the general authority should be the most generous one.[42](#)

The tradition clearly indicates that recognizing the just man, perfect in piety and Allah-fearingness, should stand on an exact test and full experience, not on a quick glance of which is the following:

- A. Good appearance, for it is not proof for justice and Allah-fearingness.
- B. Displaying righteousness, it also is not proof for justice, for he may be a deceiver and hypocrite, using the religion as means to obtain his objectives, his ambitions, and his desires after he has become unable to obtain them through other means.
- C. Abstaining from unlawful properties, this also is not proof for Allah-fearingness, for he may force himself to prevent from this in order to accomplish his objectives and purposes, which have no relationship with the religion.

As for the qualities through which perfect piety and reliability are recognized, they are as follows:

- A. Man should overcome his caprice and desires through his intellect.
- B. He does not show love for false presidency; he should renounce it, for this is among the most reliable proofs for justice and Allah-fearingness.
- C. He should follow Allah's commandments and yield completely to Him, the exalted, to the extent that he employs all his abilities to attain Allah's good pleasure and nearness to Him. This is indeed a just man, whose justice results from thanksgiving, contemplation, and faith.

### **The Qualities of Hypocrites and Believers**

The Imam, peace be on him, stated the following tradition, explaining some qualities of hypocrites and believers. He said: "The hypocrite prohibits (men from doing evil deeds), but he does not (refrain from them). He enjoins (men to do good deeds), but he does not do (them). When he stands for prayers, he objects (its legislation). When he bows down (in prayer), he shows laziness. When he prostrates himself (in prayer), he pecks (i.e. he performs prostration as quick as bird peck at the corn). When he enters into evening, his concern is dinner. He does not fast. When he rises in the morning, his concern is sleep. He does not stay awake at night.

"As for the believer, he mixes his knowledge with his clemency. He sits in order to learn and listens in order to be free (from faults). He does not tell anyone about trust even his friends. He does not conceal witness for those far. He does not do any of the truth for dissimulation nor does he leave it out of modesty. When men praise him, he is afraid of their words. He asks Allah's forgiveness for what they do not know. Those who ignore him do not harm him.<sup>43</sup>" This tradition of the Imam, peace be on him, includes the most prominent qualities of hypocrites and believers. As for the qualities of hypocrites, they are as follows:

- A. The hypocrite forbids (men) from doing evil deeds, but he does not abstain from doing them. He enjoins (men) to do good deeds, but he himself does not do them. This is because he does not believe in such deeds. He forbids (men) from the evil and enjoins (them) to do the good in order to deceive and mislead them and in order to show himself as a good person.
- B. When he stands for prayers, he opposes its legislation. Besides, when he bows down in prayer, he kneels down as sheep do. When he prostrates himself in prayer, he is restless. He is like bird when it pecks at the corn.
- C. He is like the cattle whose concern is fodder. In this manner he rises in the morning and enters into evening, and has no concern except food.

As for the qualities of the believer, they are as follows:

- A. His character is composed of two elements: knowledge and clemency. Hence he is scholar and clement. He who has these two qualities reaches the highest degree of perfection.
- B. He does not sit with any person except those from whom he takes knowledge and wisdom. He never joins useless amusement and unemployment assemblies.
- C. He listens to men in order to save himself from their wickedness and enmity.[44](#)
- D. He conceals deposits; he does not tell anyone about them even his friends.
- E. He gives witness; he never conceals it.
- F. When he does any of the truth, he does not do it for dissimulation or reputation; rather he does it for the sake of Allah, the Most High.
- G. When men praise or describe him with some noble qualities, he is afraid of being void of such qualities. Hence he asks Allah to forgive them.
- H. He pays no attention to those who ignore him and regards them as not important. These qualities indicate that the believer has an exalted soul and perfect character.

### **Some excellent Pieces of Advice**

The Imam, peace be on him, gave his companions these excellent pieces of advice: “You have no right to sit with whomever you like, for Allah (the Blessed, the Exalted) says: And when you see those who enter into false discourses about Our communications, withdraw from them until they enter into some other discourse, and if Satan causes you to forget, then do not sit after recollection with the unjust people.[45](#) You have no right to say whatever you like, for Allah, the Exalted, says: And follow not what you have no knowledge of. [46](#) And for Allah’s messenger, may Allah bless him and his family, says: ‘May Allah have mercy on a servant who says good (words) and wins (them) or he keeps silent and is safe.’ You have no right to listen to whatever you like, for Allah, the Most High, says: Surely the hearing and the sight and the heart, all of these, shall be questioned about that.[47](#)”

If Muslims put into effect these excellent pieces of advice, they will earn immense good and be safe from evil.

### **Help and Beneficence**

Imam Zayn al-‘Abidin, peace be on him, urged his companions and followers (Shi‘ites) to aid each other and to show beneficence toward one another, for such an act is the best guarantee for their unity. Many traditions in this respect have been handed down from him. The following is some of them:

1. “The highest of you in degree, and the best of you in palaces and buildings (i.e. in the Garden) are

those who respond to the believers and help their poor ones. Allah brings near those who say good words to their poor brothers, though they are from among those who will be chastised in the Fire. Therefore, disdain not beneficence to your brothers, for it will profit you when nothing replaces it.<sup>48</sup>” The Imam, peace be on him, urged (Muslims) to aid the poor and to show beneficence toward them. He mentioned the ample reward Allah prepared for good-doers. He regarded good words as beneficence, for they spread love and brotherhood among the Muslims.

2. He, peace be on him, said: “He who passes night full and there is in his presence a hungry believer, Allah, the Exalted, says to His angels: Bear witness against this servant. I ordered him, but he disobeyed Me and obeyed other than Me, hence I charged him with his work. By My mightiness and majesty, I will never forgive him.<sup>49</sup>”

This tradition and others<sup>50</sup> which have been handed down from the members of the House (*ahl al-Bayt*), peace be on them<sup>51</sup> regarded as among the basic elements of social solidarity, which Islam has established, and which certainly put an end to poverty and deprivation.

3. He, peace be on him, said: “He who has an extra garment, knows that there is in his presence a believer who needs it, and does not give it to him, Allah will throw him down in the Fire.<sup>50</sup>”

Islam regards poverty as a destructive social disaster, hence it urges Muslims to spare no effort to save society from it.

4. He, peace be on him, said: “I feel shame of my Lord when I ask Him for the Garden, while I do not give a dirham or a dinar to one of my brothers. It will be said to me on the Day of Resurrection: ‘If the Garden belonged to you, you would be stingier with it.’<sup>51</sup>”

This tradition shows that the Imam, peace be on him, took great care of the affairs of charity and beneficence, that he urged the Muslims to take care of them.

5. He, peace be on him, said: “He who gives food to a believer until he becomes full, he will get a wage of which neither an angel brought nigh nor a prophet sent out know except the Lord of the worlds.” He added: “Among the things which make forgiveness obligatory is giving food to a hungry Muslim.” Then he read these words of Him, the Exalted: “*Or the giving of food in a day of hunger to an orphan, having relationship, or to the poor lying in the dust.*<sup>52</sup>”

In this tradition there is summons to giving food to a hungry person and to save him from hunger. Islam urges Muslims to give food to the poor and regards giving food as a necessary act. It indicates that a Muslim will be questioned about it, especially when the poor person is in urgent need of food.

6. He, peace be on him, said: “He who accomplishes his brother’s need, Allah will grant him a hundred needs. He who relieves his brother’s sorrow, Allah will relieve his sorrow on the Day of Resurrection, whatever it may be. He who helps his brother against a wrongdoer, Allah will help him pass *al-Sirat*

when legs shake. He who strives to fulfill his brother's need and pleases him with fulfilling it, he pleases Allah's Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family. He who gives water to his brother to quench his thirst, Allah will let him drink of a pure drink which is sealed (to others). He who gives food to his hungry brother, Allah will let him eat from the fruits of the Garden. He who clothes his naked brother, Allah will make him wear silk and brocade. He who clothes his unnaled brother, Allah will guarantee him as long as there is a thread of the garment on (the body of) the clothed one. He who removes his brother's worries, Allah will make youths serve him. He who carries his brother on a she-camel, Allah will raise him from the dead on one of the she-camels of the Garden for which he will vie with the angels. He who shrouds his brother when he dies, Allah will clothe him from the day when his mother borne him until he dies. He who marries his brother to an intimate wife, Allah will make him intimate in his grave with the most beloved of his family. He who visits his sick brother, the angels will surround him and supplicate for him until he leaves, and they say: *'You are agreeable, and the Garden is agreeable for you.'* By Allah, accomplishing a need is more lovable with Allah than fasting successive months in the Sacred Months.<sup>53</sup>

These excellent teachings of the Imam, peace be on him, bring about the solidarity of the Muslims, spread affection, mercy, and sympathy among them.

7. He, peace be on him, said: "Men will be resurrected naked, hungry, and thirsty. Hence he who clothes a believer in this world, Allah will clothe him in the garments of the Garden. He who gives food to a believer, Allah will give him food of the fruits of the Garden. He who gives a believer a drink of water in this world, Allah will let him drink of a pure drink that is sealed (to others).<sup>54</sup>"

Islam spares no effort to put an end to poverty and deprivation, hence it guarantees to give ample repayment to those who aid their Muslim brother and show beneficence toward them.

8. He, peace be on him, said: "He who gives food to a hungry believer, Allah will give him food of the fruits of the Garden. He who gives water to a thirsty believer, Allah will let him drink of a pure drink that is sealed (to others). He who clothes a naked believer, Allah will cover him over and protect him as long as there is a rag of the garment (on the body of the clothed one).<sup>55</sup>"

These principles of the Imam, peace be on him, represent the essence and reality of Islam. If Muslims put them into practice, they will be the masters of nations and peoples.

### **Tightening the Bonds of Kin**

The Imam, peace be on him, urged the Muslims to tighten the bonds of kin and warned them against cutting them off. He, peace be on him, said: "He who wants Allah to prolong his span and give him a plentiful provision, let him tighten the bonds of kin, for the womb relatives will say with eloquent tongues on the Day of Resurrection: 'O Lord, tighten him who tightened us, and cut him off who cut us off.' One will be seen on the good path. If the womb relatives, whom he cut off, come to him, they will descend

him to the bottom of the Fire.[56](#)”

Many authentic traditions have been handed down from the Imam of guidance, peace be on them, about tightening the bonds of kin. They indicate that such bonds prolong man’s span, increase his provision, double his reward in the hereafter, strengthen society, and spread affection among the Muslims.

### **Love for the Sake of Allah**

The Imam, peace be on him, summoned the Muslims to love each other and to show affection toward one another for the sake of Allah, not for this material perishing world. He, peace be on him, said: “When Allah bring together those first and last, men will hear a caller ask: ‘Where are those who loved each other for the sake of Allah?’ Some people will stand. It will be said to them: ‘Go to the Garden without reckoning.’ The angels will receive them and ask them about the work through which they enter the Garden. They will answer: ‘It is we who loved one another for the sake of Allah.’ The angels will ask them: ‘What was your act?’ They will reply: ‘We loved those who loved Allah, and hated those who hated Him.’ Hence the angels will say to them: ‘Excellent is the reward of the workers!’[57](#)”

Love for the sake of Allah unifies Muslims; it does not divide them. It brings them together and does not scatter them, for it results from firm faith in Allah.

### **Supplication for Believers**

The Imam, peace be on him, urged the believers to supplicate for their Muslim brothers when absent, and to praise them. He, peace be on him, said: “When the angels hear a believer supplicating for his absent brother, they say: ‘What an excellent brother for your brother you are! You supplicate for him with good when he is absent, and remember him with goodness. Allah has given you two likes of what you supplicated for him, and praised you two likes of what you praised him. You did him a favor.’ When they hear him mention his brother with evil and supplicate against him, they say to him: ‘What a bad brother for your brother you are! Refrain from this, O you whose sins and defects have been covered! Take care of yourself! Praise Allah who has covered you over! Know that Allah knows His servant more than you!’[58](#)

These noble moral traits strengthen the unity and solidarity of Muslims, spread affection and brotherhood among them.

### **Repayment of the Virtuous**

The Imam, peace be on him, urged his companions to show virtue toward men as well as he summoned them to be patient and to help each other. He, peace be on him, said: “A caller will call on the Day of Resurrection: ‘Let the virtuous stand!’ Some people will stand before reckoning. It will be said to them: ‘Go to the Garden!’ The angels receive them and ask them where they go. They reply: ‘To the Garden.’ When the angels ask them about the work through which they deserve the Garden, they answer: ‘When

men showed ignorance toward us, we showed forbearance toward them. When they wronged us, were patient. When they mistreated us, we pardoned them.’ Hence it will be said to them: ‘Enter the Garden! Excellent is the reward of the workers.’

Then a caller will call: ‘Let the patient stand.’ Some people will stand. It will be said to them: ‘Go to the Garden!’ The angels receive them and ask them as they ask the first group, and they reply: ‘We habituated ourselves to obey Allah, and we habituated them to refrain from disobeying Him.’ Hence the angels will say to them: ‘Enter the Garden! Excellent is the reward of the workers.’ Then a caller will call: ‘Let the neighbors of Allah, the Great and Almighty, stand!’ Some people will stand. It will be said to them: ‘Go to the Garden!’ The angels will ask them about the work through which they deserve the Garden and about their neighborhood to Allah, the Great and Almighty. They will reply: ‘We visited each other for the sake of Allah. We sat with one another for the sake of Allah. We exchanged (gifts) with each other for the sake of Allah.’ Hence the angels will say: ‘Enter the Garden! Excellent is the reward of the workers.’<sup>59</sup>”

In this tradition the Imam, peace be on him, summons Muslims to have noble moral traits and the most excellent qualities which lead them to honor and perfection.

### Summons to Religion

A man came to the Imam, peace be on him, and asked him about the summons to the religion, and he, peace be on him, answered: “Summon (men) to Allah, the Most High, and His religion through two ways: Make them recognize Allah, and work for the sake of His good pleasure. As for the recognition of Allah, it is that you make (them) know that Allah is One, Compassionate, Merciful, knowledgeable, Powerful over all things, eyes attain Him not, and He attains eyes, and He is the All-subtle, the Expert, that Muhammad is His servant and messenger, what he brought was the truth from Allah, the Exalted, and that other than them is falsehood. If they accept this, they will have rights just as those of the Muslims, and there will be rights against them just as those against the Muslims.<sup>60</sup>”

The summons to the religion and embracing it depend on recognizing Allah, the Most High, faith in His Unity, and confessing the prophecy of the greatest Messenger, may Allah bless him and his Household. He who follows these two affairs will be treated according to the Islamic rules, such as refraining from shedding his blood, safeguarding his properties, and treating him in the same manner in which Muslims are treated.

### Warning against some Unlawful Things

The Imam, peace be on him, warned (the Muslims) against committing some unlawful things, for they send man away from his Lord and throw him into great evil. He, peace be on him, said: “Guard against all the unlawful things. Know that backbiting your believing brother—who is among the Shi’ites of the House of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his Household—is more unlawful than eating (meat) of

the dead (animals). Allah, the Most High, said: ‘...nor let some of you backbite others. Does one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? But you abhor it.[61](#)’ Drinking blood is less unlawful for you than informing an unjust sovereign of your believing brother, who is among the Shi’ites of the House of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his Household.

For you perish yourselves, you believing brother, and the sovereign. Eating the flesh of a pig is less unlawful for you than your honoring those whom Allah has belittled, naming them with our names, the Ahl al-Bayt, and giving them our nick-names, while Allah has named them the sinners, and given them the nick-name of the licentious. (The animal) over which any other (name) than (that of) Allah is invoked is less unlawful for you than making a marriage contract or performing a congregational prayer with our enemies, who have usurped our rights, unless you practice precautionary dissimulation. Allah, the Most High, says:

***‘...but whoever is driven to necessity, not desiring, nor exceeding the limit, no sin shall be on him.[62](#)’***

***If someone is obedient to Allah, but necessity forces him to practice one of these unlawful things, no sin shall be on him.[63](#)***

The Imam, peace be on him, warned (the Muslims) against committing all the unlawful things, and he especially stressed refraining from the following unlawful things:

A. Backbiting, for it divides Muslims, spreads hatred and enmity among them. It is certain that he who has firm faith in Allah turns away from it. In many of his pieces of advice, the Imam, peace be on him, warned (the Muslims) against it. A man said to him: “Someone accuses you of misguidance and innovation.” The Imam blamed the man for this and said to him: “You did not conform to the right of sitting with the man when you informed us of his words, nor did you conform to my right when you told me about my brother what I had not known. Death includes all of us. Resurrection will be the place of our gathering. The Day of Judgment will be our appointment, and Allah will decide among us. Beware of backbiting, for it is the food of the dogs of the people of the Fire.[64](#)”

B. Informing an unjust sovereign against a believer: It is a serious offense, for it leads to an inclusive destruction.

C. Giving the noble nick-names of the Ahl al-Bayt, peace be on them, to those unjust who spread tyranny and corruption in that time.

D. Communicating and working with the unjust: They strengthen their position and raise up their importance. These are some contents of the words of the Imam, peace be on him.

## Warning against Craving

The Imam, peace be on him, summoned to freedom from the abasement of craving. He, peace be on him, said: “I have seen all good come together in cutting off craving for what is in men’s hands. He who beseeches not men for a thing, and entrust all his affairs to Allah, Allah will respond to him in all things.[65](#)”

Dangerous blights result from craving. They lead man to destruction and throw him into great evil. The Imam summoned man to free himself from craving, that he might be perfected and sublime.

## Showing Gratitude toward Good-doer

The Imam, peace be on him, underlined the necessity for showing gratitude toward good-doers, that good deeds may not be lost. He, peace be on him, said: “Allah, the Most High, loves every sad heart and every grateful servant. On the Day of Judgment, He will say to His servant: ‘Did you thank so-and-so?’ The servant will say: ‘I thanked You, my Lord.’ Allah, the Glorified, will say to him: ‘You did not thank me because you did not thank him.’”

After this the Imam added: “The most grateful of you (to Allah) is he who thanks the people.[66](#)”

Giving thanks to a benefactor or a good-doer is a pressing Islamic necessity, that people may continue kind acts.

## Enjoining the Good

Enjoining the good and forbidding the evil are two of the most prominent Islamic principles. Islam has positively adopted them, that social justice may spread among men, that no evil deed, no aggression, and no oppression may stay in the general life of people. In this connection many authentic traditions have been handed down from the Imams of guidance, peace be on them. Imam Zayn al-‘Abidin, peace be on him, said: “He who leaves enjoining the good and forbidding the evil is like him who leaves Allah’s Book behind him, unless he shows precautionary dissimulation.” The Imam was asked about precautionary dissimulation, and he answered: “(He practices it) when he is afraid of a tyrannical ruler.[67](#)”

Fear of a tyrannical ruler makes it not incumbent on person to enjoin the good and forbid the evil. The jurists have mentioned in their practical treatises the conditions of performing this Islamic, important obligation.

## Speech is better than Silence

A person asked the Imam, peace be on him: “Which is better– speech or silence?” “Each has blights,” answered the Imam, “when they are sound of blights, speech is better.”

Another person asked him: “How is this, son of Allah’s Apostle?”

The Imam, peace be on him, replied: “Allah, the Glorified, sent the prophets and the trustees (of authority) to speak, not to keep silent. (They did not) deserve the Garden through silence; rather through speech. I cannot equate the sun with the moon.[68](#)”

### **The Happiness of Man**

The Imam, peace be on him, talked about the things which made man happy in the world. He said: “One is happy when his daily bread is in his homeland, his friends are righteous, and has a son through whom he seeks help.[69](#)”

Indeed, he who has these things wins all the good of the world, and is therein among the happy.

### **Mutual Teachings among Religions**

A man asked the Imam, peace be on him: “What are the common teachings among religions?” “Saying the truth, ruling with justice, and fulfilling promise,” replied the Imam. Heavenly religions share these three items, which are the foundation of social life, and for which all the prophets and messenger sacrificed their lives.

### **Noble Traits**

The Imam, peace be on him, spoke about some noble qualities by which the Muslim should be distinguished, and through which his Islam is perfect. He, peace be on him, said: “He who has four (traits), his Islam is perfect, his sins are forgiven, and he will meet his Lord, the Great and almighty, and He is satisfied with him: sincerity to Allah, the Great and almighty, through fulfilling men’s rights against him, telling men the truth, shame of everything ugly in the view of Allah and of men, and showing good manners toward his family.[70](#)” He who has these outstanding traits is indeed a believer, has perfect faith, meets Allah, and He is satisfied with him.

### **The Qualities of a Believer**

The Imam, peace be on him, said: “The qualities of a believer are five.” Tawus al-Yamani asked him: “What are they, son of Allah’s Apostle?” He replied: “Piety in privacy, alms during paucity, patience toward misfortune, clemency during anger, and truthfulness during fear.[71](#)” These five qualities display the faith of a believer.

### **Good Words**

The Imam, peace be on him, urged his companions to say good words to men, and mentioned the profits which resulted from them. He said: “Good words increase property, develop provision, delay

death, make men love each other, and lead to the Garden.”

This tradition of the Imam, peace be on him, contains the outcomes of good words, of which is the following:

A. Property is developed, and provision is plentiful. This can clearly be seen through manufacturers, workmen, and traders. Men deal with those who treat them with good words, and such a treatment increases one’s income. They hate those who treat them with obscene words, hence this treatment brings about business stagnancy and narrow provision.

B. Death is deferred. This is when one saves a believer from wrongdoing or does him a favor. In this state Allah repays him through prolonging his span in this world and increasing his wage in the next.

C. One is beloved and dear with his family and his relatives, for souls incline to the owner of good words and perfect moral traits.

D. Attaining the Garden. This is when good words are employed to settle enmity, to enjoin the good, and to forbid the evil.

## **The Classes of Men**

The Imam, peace be on him, told Zarara b. Awfa about the classes of men. He said to him: “O Zarara, the men in our time are six classes: Lions, wolves, foxes, dogs, pigs, and ewes. As for the lions, they are the kings of the world; they like to overcome each other. As for the wolves, they are your traders, who dispraise (commodities) when they buy them, and praise (them) when they sell (them). As for the foxes, they are those who eat through their religions, and describes through their tongues what is not in their hearts. As for the dogs, they are those who shout at people through their tongues, and men honor them out of fear of their evil tongues. As for the pigs, they are the womanlike, who respond to every atrocity when they are invited to it. As for the ewes, they are the believers whose hair is cut, whose flesh is eaten, whose bones are broken. What do the ewes do toward the lions, the wolves, the foxes, the dogs, and the pigs?<sup>72</sup>”

The Imam, peace be on him, carefully considered the society in which he lived, classified it into six classes, and mentioned the appropriate characteristics of each class.

## **Humbleness**

As for humbleness, it is among the noble moral traits through which man becomes exalted. The Imam, peace be on him, urged (the Muslims) to follow this trait. He said: “A Qarashi or an Arab has no lineage save through humbleness. There is no nobility but through Allah-fearingness. There is no act except through an intention. The most detestable of men in the view of Allah, the Great and Almighty, is he who follows an Imam’s sunna (words), but does not follow his practices.<sup>73</sup>”

## Quoting Wisdom

The Imam, peace be on him, summoned (the Muslims) to quote wisdom even from hypocrites, for it is among the sources of thought and awareness which Islam develops. He, peace be on him, said: “Disdain not the precious pearl which you bring out of mean sweepings, for my father related to me, he said: ‘The wise word frequents in the hypocrite’s chest, disputing (with him for going) to those who understand it, until he says it. When a believer hears it, he takes it, and hence is worthier of it.’[74](#)”

## The Clay of Believer and Unbeliever

In a tradition of his, the Imam, peace be on him, spoke about the clay of a believer and an unbeliever. He said: “Allah, the Great and Almighty, created the prophets’ hearts and bodies from the clay of ‘Illin (the highest place). He created the hearts of believers from this clay, and created their bodies from clay other than this. He created the bodies and hearts of unbelievers from sijjin. Then He mixed the two (kinds of) clay. Hence the unbeliever (woman) bears a believer; the believer (woman) bears an unbeliever. From here the unbeliever may do a good deed. The hearts of believers and of unbelievers yearn for the clay from which they were created.[75](#)”

There are many traditions concerning that Allah, the Most High, created man from clay. Allah, the Exalted, said: “*It is He who created you from clay.*[76](#)” He, the Exalted, said: “*And He began the creation of man from clay.*[77](#)” He created the prophets and believers from the most sacred clay, hence they saved and freed man. He created the unbelievers from the meanest and dirtiest clay, hence they hindered the progress and development of man’s social life. Through His wisdom, Allah, the Most High, decreed to mix these two kinds of clay with each other, and they produced opposites. The (wives of) the prophets and believers borne some wicked and unbelieving children. An example of is Noah, Allah’s Prophet, whose wife gave birth to a son who deviated from the right path and disbelieved in his father’s message. Allah drowned him along with the unbelievers. Noah felt pity for him and whispered to his Lord, and He, the Exalted, answered him: “*Surely he is not of your family; surely he is (the doer of) other than good deeds.*” (The wives of) the unbelievers may give birth to believing, righteous children. This is among the outcomes of the mixture of the two kinds of clay, as the Imam, peace be on him, said.

## Patience

The Imam, peace be on him, urged (the Muslims) to be patient. He said: “(The position of) patience in faith is like that of the head in the body, and he who has no patience has no faith.[78](#)”

The greatest thing which man uses as weapon against events and misfortunes is patience, entrusting affairs to Allah, the Most High, and pleasure with what He decrees, for this is the essence of faith.

## Some Morals of Believer

The Imam, peace be on him, spoke about the noble moral traits through which a believer is exalted. He said: “Some of a believer’s morals are: He spends (on his family) according to (his) narrow provision, gives (them) generously according to (his) plentiful provision, treats men with justice, and is the first to greet them.<sup>79</sup>”

Some of a believer’s morals are that he is economical—he does not spend when in narrow provision and spends generously when in plentiful one—he treats men with justice even against himself, for this is a proof for his piety, and is the first to greet them, for this shows his good manners.

## Fanaticism

The Imam, peace be on him, was asked about fanaticism, which was among the manners of those who lived before Islam, and he replied: “The fanaticism through which one commits sin is that one regards the wicked from among his people as better than the good of other people. It is not an act of fanaticism that one loves his people, but it is an act of fanaticism is that one helps his people do wrong.<sup>80</sup>” The Imam, peace be on him, has wonderfully defined foolish fanaticism through which one commits sin. It is that one considers the wicked and criminal from among his people better than the good and righteous, that he helps them do wrong and show aggression and enmity toward others. In this manner one denies the truth and destroys values. As for one’s love for his people, it is not fanaticism.

## Guarding against Telling Lies

The Imam, peace be on him, warned his children against telling lies, and said to them: “Guard against telling lies, whether small or great, during seriousness or joking, for if one tells a lie about small things, he is ready to tell a lie about great ones. Did you not know that Allah’s Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family, say: ‘As long as the servant tells the truth, Allah writes him truthful, and as long as he tells lies, Allah writes him untruthful.<sup>81</sup>”

The Imam, peace be on him, warned (the Muslims) against telling lies about all things, for lying is among the ugliest and most detestable crime in the view of Allah. He also ordered them to tell the truth, for it is the source of all virtues which lead to honor and dignity.

## Certainty of Words

The Imam summoned his companions to be sure of their words and have knowledge of what they said, whether good or evil. He said: “One should not say good or evil words concerning another unless he has knowledge of him.<sup>82</sup>”

## **Chastity**

The Imam, peace be on him, urged his companions to be chaste, and regarded chastity as the best of all the acts of worship. He said: “The best act of worship is the chastity of stomach and private parts.[83](#)”

## **Content**

As for content, it is one of the excellent qualities. If man follows it, he will be free from worries. The Imam, peace be on him, said: “He who is content with Allah’s apportionment is the richest of all the people.[84](#)”

Content is a treasure which never comes to an end. He who is satisfied with Allah’s apportionment is the richest of all the people, the greatest of them in rest, and the least of them in worry.

## **Some Qualities deliver the Believer**

The Imam, peace be on him, mentioned some qualities which saved the believer. He said: “Three (qualities) deliver the believer: He should withhold his tongue from backbiting men, busy himself with that which profit him in this world and the next, and weep very much over his sin.[85](#)”

## **Some of the Prophets’ Norms and Wise Sayings**

The Imam, peace be on him, told his companions about some of the prophets’ norms, wise sayings, and affairs, that they might follow them and enlighten themselves with their behavior. The following is some of what has been handed down from him:

## **Al-Khidr’s Commandments to Mu’sa**

Al-Zuhri reported that Imam Zayn al-‘Abidin, peace be on him, said: “At last al-Khidr commanded Mu’sa, saying: ‘Blame not any person for sin. The most beloved affairs with Allah, the Great and Almighty are three: moderation when rich, pardon when powerful, and gentleness toward Allah’ servants. When one is kind to others in this world, Allah, the Great and Almighty, will be kind to him on the Day of Judgment. The head of wisdom is reverential fear of Allah.[86](#)”

How wonderful the meanings of this wisdom are! How wonderful its objectives are! It contains all the commandments which make man felicitous and sublime.

## **Some of Allah’s Revelations to Mu’sa**

The Imam, peace be on him, related to his companions some of Allah’s revelations to His prophet Mu’sa, peace be on him. He said: “Allah revealed to Mu’sa: ‘Make My creatures love me, and make me love my creatures.’ Mu’sa asked: ‘O My Lord, how shall I do (this)?’ Allah replied: ‘Remind them of My boons and favors, that they may love me. Repel not any fugitive from my gate or a straying one from my

courtyard. This is better for you than a hundred year's worship, when one fasts by day and stands in prayer by night.' Mu'sa asked: 'Who escapes from You?' Allah answered: 'The disobedient one.' Mu'sa asked: 'Who is straying from Your courtyard?' Allah replied: 'It is he who is ignorant of the Imam of his time, absent from him after he has recognized him, and ignorant of the laws of his religion. Teach him the laws (of his religion), through which he worships his Lord and reaches His good pleasure.[87](#)'

In this tradition the Imam, peace be on him, urged those who summoned (men) to Allah to spare no effort to save them from the acts of disobedient to Allah, to make them beseech obeying Him, and not to repel them from this. He told them that their work in this way was the most beloved worship and act of obedience to Allah.

### **A Wisdom in the Bible**

The Imam, peace be on him, reported to his companions a brilliant wisdom from the Bible. He said: "It has been written in the Bible: 'Seek not the knowledge of what you do not do until you do what you come to know. If knowledge is not put into practice, it increases its possessor nothing except unbelief and remoteness from Allah.[88](#)'"

The Imam, peace be on him, summoned (his companions) to put knowledge into effect. It is not an act of truth that man gets knowledge and does not put it into practice, for this increases him nothing save remoteness from Allah.

### **Mu'sa and a Worshipper**

The Imam, peace be on him, related to his companions the story of Mu'sa with a worshipper. He said: "Mu'sa passed by a worshipper. The worshipper was raising his hands toward the heaven and supplicating Allah, the Most High. Mu'sa spent seven days, and then he returned to the worshipper. He saw him raising his hands toward the heaven. Hence he said: 'O Lord, this is Your servant, who has raised his hands toward You and asked You for forgiveness for seven days, while You have not responded to him.' Allah revealed to Mu'sa: 'O Mu'sa, if he supplicates me until his hands fall down and his tongue is cut off, I will not respond to him, unless he comes to me through the gate which I have commanded him to.[89](#)'"

As for this tradition, it summons man to turn his face toward Allah, and to seek nearness to Him through the doors which He has assigned.

### **Mu'sa with Allah**

The Imam, peace be on him, said: "Mu'sa bin 'Umran asked his Lord: 'Who are Your people whom You will shade with the shade of Your Throne on the day when there is no shade save Your shade?' Allah, the Glorified and Exalted, revealed to him: 'Those whose hearts are pure, and whose hands are covered with earth, who remember My majesty, are content with obeying Me as the little (baby) who is content

with milk, go to My mosques (masajid) as birds go to their nests, and become as angry as the tiger when (men) make lawful what I have made unlawful.’<sup>90</sup>”

These people, who have faith in their lord, are the best of creatures in the purity of hearts, the soundness of minds and intentions. They turn their hearts and feelings toward Allah; they see nothing except Him, and believe in nothing save Him. Hence Allah will recompense them for this when he shades them with His shade, includes them in His gentleness, and single them out for His bounty.

### The Death of the Prophet

The Imam, peace be on him, narrated the death of his grandfather, Allah’s Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family, and the events which accompanied it. The text of his narration is as follows: Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq, peace be on him, reported on the authority of his father Abi Ja’far, who said: “Two men from Quraysh came to my father ‘Ali b. al-Husayn, peace be on him, and he asked them: ‘Shall I tell you about Allah’s Messenger?’ ‘Yes,’ they replied. He said: [I heard my father saying:] ‘Gabriel came down to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, three days before his death, and said to him: ‘O Ahmed, Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, has sent me to you in (showing) preference and specialty toward you. He is asking you about what He knows better than you: ‘How do you find yourself?’ ‘I find it grieved, O Gabriel!’ replied Allah’s Messenger. On the third day, Gabriel, the Angel of Death, and seventy thousand angels came down (to the Prophet). Gabriel was ahead of them and said: ‘O Muhammad, Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, has sent me to you in (showing) honor, preference and specialty toward you. He is asking you about what He knows better than you: ‘How do you find yourself?’ ‘I find it grieved, O Gabriel!’ replied Allah’s Messenger.

“At the door the Angel of Death asked for permission, hence Gabriel said: ‘O Ahmed, the Angel of Death is asking you for permission. He had never asked any person for permission before you, and will never ask anyone for permission after you.’ The Prophet said: ‘Give him permission.’ Gabriel permitted the Angel of Death, and he walked toward the Prophet, stopped before him, and said to him: ‘O Ahmed, Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, has sent me to you, and commanded me to obey you in what you command me. If you command me to seize your soul, I will do. If you hate this, I will leave.’ The Prophet asked: ‘Will you do this, O Angel of Death?’ ‘Yes,’ answered the Angel of Death, ‘I have been commanded to obey you.’ Hence Gabriel said: ‘O Ahmed, Allah has yearned for meeting you.’ The Prophet said: ‘O Angel of Death, carry out (Allah’s) command.’ ‘O Ahmed, this is the last time for me to come down to the earth,’ answered Gabriel, ‘You were my objective in this world.’

“When the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, passed away, a consoler came to his family. They heard his words, but did not see his person. He said to them: ‘Peace, Allah’s mercy and blessings be on you, *every soul shall taste of death, and you shall only be paid fully your reward on the Day of Resurrection.*’<sup>91</sup> Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, is comfort against every affliction, and replacement of perishable things. Hence, trust Allah, hope for Him! The one suffering an affliction is he who is deprived from reward, peace, Allah’s mercy and blessings be on you.’ Ja’far said: [My father said: Ali said: ‘Do

you know who is this? This is al-Khidr.<sup>92</sup> With this we will end our speech about the prophets' norms, and wise sayings, which Imam Zayn al-'Abidin, peace be on him, related to his companions and students.

### Friendship toward Ahl al-Bayt

The Imam, peace be on him, emphasized the necessity of showing friendship toward the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them. He regarded this friendship as one of the elements of Islam. He, peace be on him, asked Abu' Hamza al-Thumali: "Which place is the best?"

Abu' Hamza was perplexed, not knowing what to answer, hence he said: "Allah and His Messenger better know."

Then the Imam, peace be on him, answered: "The best place is that which is between the corner of the Kaaba and the standing place of Ibrahim. Noah lived among his people for 950 years. If a man lived as long as Noah did, fasted by day, stood in prayer by night in this place, and met Allah without showing friendship toward us, he would not avail himself of these things.<sup>93</sup>"

In this connection many authentic traditions have been handed down from the Greatest Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family, and his trustees (of authority), peace be on them. They indicate that showing friendship toward the Imams is an Islamic obligation about which the Muslim will be questioned on the Day of Resurrection. Some scholars think that showing friendship to them is one of the conditions of a correct act, not of its acceptance. It is not one of the conditions of the correctness of the obligations.<sup>94</sup>

Anyhow, in another tradition, the Imam, peace be on him, has mentioned the plentiful reward which those who love the *ahl al-Bayt* attain in this world and the next. Some Shi'ites visited the Imam and asked him:

"How are you, son of Allah's Apostle?"

The Imam answered them with gentleness:

"I am well. I praise Allah for this. What about you all?"

"We love you, the *ahl al-Bayt*."

He gave them good news of that Allah would plentifully repay them, saying:

"He who loves us for the sake of Allah, Allah will make him enter a very shady place on the day when there is no shade except His shade. He who loves us for reward, Allah will cause him enter the garden. He who love us for this world, Allah will provides him from where he thinks not.<sup>95</sup>"

## [The Prophet's and 'Ali's Rights against the Muslims](#)

In a tradition of his, the Imam, peace be on him, has mentioned the great rights of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, and of his trustee (to authority), the gate of the city of his knowledge, Imam 'Ali, the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, against this community. He, peace be on him, said: "Though parents' have great rights against their children because of their kindness to them, the kindness of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his family, and of 'Ali to this community is greater, hence they are worthy of being its two fathers.[96](#)"

The Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, and his trustee (of authority) have rights against this community greater than those of parents against their children, for they have freed the will of this community, saved it from bondage and the darkness of ignorance, and granted it a free, noble life. Unfortunately, this community did not show gratitude toward them for their favors. Rather it removed the pure family (of the Prophet) from the offices of government and leadership. Besides its ruler intentionally destroyed this family at the Battle of Karbala'. Imam Zayn al-'Abidin, peace be on him: "Allah's Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family, was kind to Quraysh, the Arabs, and non-Arabs. Who was kinder than him (to them)? Yet they were ingratitude to him. Besides they are ingratitude to us, the *ahl al-Bayt*.[97](#)"

## [The Mastership of the Ahl al-Bayt over Men](#)

A man asked the Imam, peace be on him: "What is the excellence which has made you the masters of the people?"

The Imam replied: "Know that all the people are one of three: Either a man became a Muslim through us, hence he is our friend. His friendship belongs to us, therefore we are his master, or a man whom we fought against and killed, hence he went to the Fire and his property has remained as booty for us, or a man from whom we have taken poll tax, and he is lowly. There is no fourth (man). Therefore, which merit and honor have we not won?[98](#)"

I (the author) think that the Imam mentioned the tradition for a man who did not confess the outstanding merits of the members of the House (*ahl al-Bayt*), peace be on them, nor did he believe in their absolute mastership over this community. It is worth mentioning that the *ahl al-Bayt* have countless outstanding merits and talents. It is sufficient for them that Allah took away uncleanness from them and purified them thoroughly, made it incumbent on the community to show friendship toward them, that the Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family, united them with the Firm Revelation (the Qur'an), appointed them as ships of deliverance and security for mankind.

## [Short, wonderful and Wise Sayings](#)

As for the short, wise sayings of the Imam, they represent creation, the development of thought, and the

originality of opinion. They show the summary of the experiences the Imam got during his lifetime. They are not confined to a certain side of life; rather they include all its sides. The wise Imam carefully and inclusively considered all the affairs of man and gave decisive solution to them. The following is some of his outstanding, wise sayings:

1. He, peace be on him, said: “He whose soul is noble, the world is easy for him.[99](#)” How wonderful these words are! They show the reality of those free who regarded the world as insignificant. They were noble and exalted, hence they did not yield to abasement and disgrace. At the head of these people was (Imam al-Husayn), the Father of the free and Lord of the martyrs. He felt that his soul was noble, hence he disdain the world. He did not flatter the unjust, nor did he yield to their tyranny. He carried the banner of dignity until he was martyred.

2. He, peace be on him, said: “All good is in man’s safeguarding his soul (against sins).[100](#)”

If man safeguards his soul against acts of disobedience, sins, and offenses, he will get good throughout his life.

3. He, peace be on him, said: “I never like the believer who is well in the world, in his soul, and in his property, while no affliction befalls him.[101](#)” When afflictions befall a believer in this world, they decrease his sins and increase his good deeds. If the believer is not befallen by afflictions in this world, he will be deprived of these good deeds in this world.

4. He, peace be on him, said: “He who has no clement one to guide him gets straying, and he who has no impudent one to help him gets lowly.[102](#)” If man has no clement one to guide him during his important affairs, he does not behave well toward the obscurities of this life, and if he has no impudent one to help and defend him, he will expose himself to abasement and disgrace.

5. He, peace be on him, said: “Woe unto him whose units surpass his tens.” Hisham b. Salim asked Imam al-Sadiq, peace be on him, about the meaning of this tradition, and he replied: “Have you not heard that Allah, the Great and Almighty, saying: *‘Whoever brings a good deed, he shall have ten like it, and whoever brings an evil deed, he shall be recompensed only with the like of it.*[103](#)’ If he does a good deeds, ten good deeds shall be written for him, and if he does one evil deed, one evil deed shall be written for him. We seek refuge in Allah from him who does ten evil deeds on one day, and does no good deed, hence his evil deeds surpass his good deeds.[104](#)”

6. He, peace be on him, said: “The enemies take the properties of the ignoble one, *and that which is evil produces nothing but evil.*[105](#)”

The ignoble withhold from spending their properties on the poor and the needy. Hence Allah, the Exalted, empowers their enemies over them to enjoy their properties and to deprive them of them.

7. He, peace be on him, said: “If the body does not become ill, it becomes ungrateful, there is no good in

the body which become ungrateful. [106](#)”

If man always enjoys good health, and diseases do not attack him, he shows ingratitude (toward Allah’s favors), and there is no good in such a body.

8. He, peace be on him, said: “You should return the things deposited with you (to their owners). By Him who sent Muhammad a prophet with the truth, if the killer of my father al-Husayn deposited with me the sword with which he killed him, I would return it to him. [107](#)” Returning things deposited is among the most prominent Islamic obligations, hence he who does not return things deposited is not a Muslim.

9. He, peace be on him, said: “The best worker in Allah’s eyes is he who puts the Prophet’s sunna into practice. [108](#)”

He who puts the Prophet’s sunna into effect applies Islam in his life, and the method of his conduct. It is normal that such a work is among the best works in Allah’s view and the most beloved one with Him

10. He, peace be on him, said: “He who is the first to thank you enslaves you through affection. [109](#)” He who is the first to thank for a good deed enslaves the heart of the good-doer through friendship and love.

11. He, peace be on him, said: “The friend is not a friend unless he cuts off a piece of his religion for his believing brother, and patches it with asking Allah to forgive him. [110](#)”

The honest friendship in Islam depends on affection and brotherhood for the sake of Allah. Among its necessities, according to this tradition, is that the friend asks Allah to forgive his friend.

12. He, peace be on him, said: “I assure (you) before my Lord that he who begs with out neediness will some day begs out of neediness. [111](#)”

Begging without poverty is evidence for the poor, weak soul. Allah, the Exalted, will afflict such a beggar with depravation and poverty, and he is forced to beg others.

13. He, peace be on him, said: “Beware of that for which you apologize. [112](#)”

The Imam, peace be on him, warned (the Muslims) against doing any work which forces them to apologize to others. It is normal that such a work is ugly.

14. He, peace be on him, said: “Allah, Great be His Majesty, says: ‘By My might, My tremendousness, My beauty, My radiance, My exaltedness, and the loftiness of My place, if a servant prefers My desire to his desire, I will make him take care of his life in the next world, his riches in his heart, protect him from loss, make the heavens and the earth guarantee his provision, and make the world come to him. [113](#)’”

Allah, the Exalted, loves the believing servant who prefers His obedience to all things, and does not yield to his caprice and psychological wishes. He, the Exalted, shows him gentleness and favor in this world

and the next.

15. He, peace be on him, said: “There may be one conceited and fascinated (by the world). He rises in the morning for playing, laughing, eating, and drinking. He does not know that he may expose himself to Allah’s displeasure through which he shall be burnt in the Fire. [114](#)”

The Imam, peace be on him, warned (the Muslims) against vainglory, playing, and indifference to disobeying Allah. Allah, the Exalted, is displeased with the person who has such qualities and writes him as one of the people of the Fire, which is a miserable, permanent life.

16. He, peace be on him, said: “Glory be to Him who has made gratitude toward His favors praise; glory be to Him who has made confessing incapability of thanking Him thanksgiving. [115](#)”

Acknowledging Allah’s favors and gentleness is the reality of praise as well as confessing incapability of thanking Him is the reality of thanksgiving.

17. He, peace be on him, said: “Seeking needs from men degrades life, takes away modesty and respect, and is the present poverty. The lack of seeking needs from men is the present riches.”

It is certain that yielding to men and seeking what is in their hands bring about abasement and disgrace, and take away modesty. They is evidence for the poor, weak soul. The noble person is he who safeguards himself and his dignity, and seeks need from none except his Lord.

18. He, peace be on him, said: “He who admonishes time, his admonition lengthens.”

Indeed, he who admonishes time, his admonition lengthens. That is because many misfortunes, disasters, and tragedies occur in time, and they successively befall the free and rudely treat them.

19. He, peace be on him, said: “If one is free from need to men, men will be in need of him.” He who is free from need toward men through his property or knowledge, men will be in need of him.

20. He, peace be on him, said: “The noble one rejoices at his excellence, and the ignoble one boasts of his possessions.” These words show the reality of both noble and ignoble ones. As for the noble one, he rejoices at and boasts of his excellence and kindness toward men. As for the ignoble one, he boasts of his perishing properties, for he has no noble quality or inclination to boast of.

21. He, peace be on him, said: “Feel shame before Allah because of your nearness to Him.” The Imam, peace be on him, summoned (men) to fear Allah, the Most High, for He, the Exalted, has power over His servants, all beings and creatures are yielding to His will, and are in his grasp. He moves about in them according to His desire.

22. He, peace be on him, said: “Show not enmity toward anyone, though you think that he will harm you.” It is not an act of wisdom or logic that man shows enmity toward someone, even though he thinks

that he will harm him. The wise one is he who inclines hearts toward him, and never makes anybody harbor malice against him.

23. He, peace be on him, said: "Abstain not from making friends with anyone, though you think that he will not profit you, for you know not when you will hope for your friend."

It is an act of wisdom and perfect reason is that man must not refrain from making friends with anybody, for he will someday be in need of his support and help.

24. He, peace be on him, said: "He who relies on the best

which Allah chooses never desires other than the state He chooses for him."

It is an act of true faith is that one trusts in the best which Allah chooses and is satisfied with His decree. He who believes in this and puts it into effect is the happiest of people and the most of them in rest and tranquillity in his psychological worlds.

25. He, peace be on him, said: "You must accept the apology of those who apologize to you, even though you know that they are liars." Among the noble moral traits is that you accept the apology of the evildoers, treat them not tit for tat, for, through this, you unite (the Muslims) and save them from disunity.

26. He, peace be on him, said: "The defects of men should be few on your tongue." Among the highest Islamic morals is that you should purify your tongue from mentioning the defects of men; you should mention nothing except their good deeds.

27. He, peace be on him, said: "Seek help against speech through silence, for speech has harmful states."

The wise Imam counseled (the Muslims) to keep silent, and not to speak about anything except the affairs of their religion and world. This is because speech sometimes leads to destructive, harmful states.

28. He, peace be on him, said: "He who accuses men of what they have, they will accuse him of what he does not have." He who mentions the evil deeds of men, though they have them, they will charge him with evil deeds, though he does not have them.

29. He, peace be on him, said: "The best beginning of affairs is truthfulness, and their best end is faithfulness." The Imam, peace be on him, underlined the importance of both truthfulness and faithfulness, for they are two of the qualities through which man is exalted.

30. He, peace be on him, said: "To bear witness that there is no god save Allah is the nature (*fitra*)." To believe in Allah and to confess His Unity are two natural qualities in man, but man swerves from them through misguiding education and corrupt environment.

31. He, peace be on him, said: "Performing the obligatory prayers is the creed." Performing the

obligatory prayers is confessing and adopting the creed of Islam, and is the identifying mark between Muslims and unbelievers.

32. He, peace be on him, said: "To obey Allah is preservation."

To obey Allah, the Most High, and to refrain from acts of disobedience to Him are preservation from Satan and purity from defilement and sins.

33. He, peace be on him, said: "The believer does not perish out of three qualities: Bearing witness that there is no god but Allah, the Alone, who has no associate; His ample mercy, and the intercession of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his family."

These three qualities bring the believer, when he adopts them, near to Allah and take him to His plentiful mercy and good pleasure. As for confessing the Unity of Allah, it takes him out of the dark shadows of unbelief. As for His ample mercy, it embraces all things, to the extent that the disobedient (to Him) hope for it on the Day of Resurrection. [116](#) As for the intercession of the Messenger, may Allah bless him and his Household, it saves the believer from the Fire.

34. He, peace be on him, said: "If you affect toil for men, you are the most seducing of them."

He who pretends to work for men and accomplishing their needs, not for seeking nearness to Allah, is the most seductive of men and the most ignorant of them.

35. He, peace be on him, said: "I wonder at him who protects himself from harmful foods, but does not protect himself from harmful sins."

Protection from sins and offenses is better than protection from harmful foods, for sins lead to chastisement and misery in the next world, which is the abode of immortality and subsistence.

36. He, peace be on him, said: "When you perform the prayers, perform the prayers of one who bids farewell (to this world)."

The Imam, peace be on him, summoned (the Muslims) to perform the prayers sincerely as if they bid farewell to this life.

37. He, peace be on him, said: "Everything has fruit, and the fruit of hearing is good words."

Good words are the most valuable thing of hearing. They are its fruit; rather they also are the fruit of life.

38. He, peace be on him, said: "Insistence is accompanied by ignorance." Insistence in affairs results from ignorance toward the realities of affairs which are in Allah's grasp.

39. He, peace be on him, said: "Humbleness is the means to exaltedness." If man is humble and gentle, his standing is high, and through this he is the master of those other than him.

40. He, peace be on him, said: “All of you will become story, hence he who is able to be a good (story), let him do (this).

Ibn Durayd composed poetry about these golden words, saying:

*One will be the account of those who will come after him,*

*hence be good account for those who understand.*

41. He, peace be on him, said: “The envier attains no honor, and the malicious one dies of grief.”

Envy is an evil malady, and throws men into great evil. He who is afflicted by it loses the highest moral traits, and parts from all noble qualities. Besides he dies of sadness and rage when he sees Allah bestowing favors upon men.

42. He, peace be on him, said: “Losing the beloved is loneliness.” Losing the beloved is among the most painful disasters which attack man and make him lonely among pain and worries.

43. He, peace be on him, said: “Satisfaction with the detested things caused by (Allah’s) decree is the highest degree of certainty.”

He who is satisfied with what Allah has apportioned for him is patient, brave, and calm. He is among the Allah-fearing who entrust their affairs to Him, the Exalted, and are content with His decree.

44. He, peace be on him, said: “It is an act of worship that the believer looks at the face of his believing brother for love and affection.”

Islam has urged the Muslims to show love and affection toward each other. It has made difference and division unlawful. If the believer looks at the face of his believing brother with love and affection, he strengthens the ties among the Muslims. Hence such an act is among the best kinds of worship in Islam.

45. He, peace be on him, said: “If the two merchants are truthful and kind (to men), (Allah) will bless (their work). If they are untruthful and disloyal (to men), (Allah) will not bless (their work).”

Truthful dealings and kindness to men are among the things that make commerce grow. If the merchant has such qualities, Allah will bless his work and increase his provision. If he swerves from them and follows crooked ways, he will have nothing except loss.

46. It was said to the Imam, peace be on him: [Al-Hasan al-Basri said:] “I do not wonder at him who perishes and how he perishes; rather I wonder at him who escapes danger.” The Imam replied: “I do not wonder at him who escapes danger and how he escapes danger; rather I wonder at him who perishes and how he perishes, while Allah’s mercy embraces (all things).”

Allah’s mercy embraces all things to the extent that Satan craves for it. The Imam knew and understood

this better than al-Hasan al-Basri and other than him.

47. He, peace be on him, said: "If the servant is sincere to Allah in secret, Allah shows him his evil works, and he busies himself with his own sins and (leaves) men's defects."

If man fears Allah in secret and turns aside from acts of disobedience to Him, Allah bestows upon him His favors, of which is that He shows him his evil works and distracts him from men's defects, that he may save himself from the ill outcomes of backbiting, which is among the ugliest sins.

48. He, peace be on him, said: "If the servant becomes angry, he draws himself nearer to Allah's wrath."

Anger destroys man and throws him into great evil. For example, it makes him commit crimes, hence he exposes himself to Allah's wrath and detest.

49. He, peace be on him, said: "The pack-animal has six rights against its owner: He should give fodder to it when he dismounts it. He should lead it to water when he passes by it. He should not lash it but in right. He should not load it more than its ability. He should make it walk freely. He should not ride it at the time between two times of milking."

In this tradition, the Imam peace be on him, has declared the rights of an animal against its owner. These rights are full of mercy, pity, and care of animals. The organizations which have been founded to treat animals kindly have not legislated such rights yet.

50. He, peace be on him, said: "When you are powerful over your enemy, then regard pardon as thanksgiving for power over him, for pardon out of power is a kind of generosity."

Pardon due to power is evidence for the honor of soul and its ample clemency. It is a kind of generosity and munificence. As for revenge, it results from ignobility, meanness, and the narrowness of soul.

51. He, peace be on him, said: "Beware of making friends with the disobedient (to Allah), and helping the unjust."

The Imam, peace be on him, has warned (the Muslims) against making friends with the disobedient (to Allah), for it has bad effects on their behavior, and deviate them from the right path. The sociologists said: "The members of society affect each other." Besides the Imam has warned them against helping the unjust, for such help spreads tyranny and oppression.

52. The Imam, peace be on him, was asked about the most important person, and he replied: "It is he who does not regard the world as important for him."

The most right of all men in opinion and the best of them in determination and awareness is he who regards his soul greater than the world. He does not sell his life in the next world for this world; rather he turns his face toward Allah. He works for his life in the hereafter and prepares good deeds for it.

53. He, peace be on him, said: “The lawful provision is the nourishment of the chosen.”

The lawful provision is the nourishment of the good and chosen who are very careful of their earnings, eat nothing except the good, lawful things, and refrain from what Allah has made unlawful.

54. He, peace be on him, said: “Men have taken three (qualities) from three (persons): They have taken patience from Ayyu’b (Job), thanksgiving from Nu’h (Noah), and envy from the children of Ya’qu’b (Jacob).”

Men has quoted these traits from these persons, who have established their principles, and built their foundations in life.

55. He, peace be on him, said: “You have no right to say whatever you like, for Allah, the Exalted, says: *And follow not what you have no knowledge of.* You have no right to listen to whatever you like, for Allah, the Great and Almighty, says: *Surely the hearing and the sight and the heart, all of these, shall be questioned about that.*”

Islam has limited the permissible words which man uses to manage his affairs. As for the words which man uses to spread falsehood and to speak the untruth, they are unlawful. If man uses such words, he will be questioned about them (on the Day of Judgment). Islam has also limited the words which man hears. It has ordered him to listen to good words and prevented him from listening to backbiting and obscene words. It has ordered him to question himself about his evil thoughts.

56. He, peace be on him, said: “I admire the man who is clement during his anger.” The Imam, peace be on him, summoned (the Muslims) to adorn themselves with clemency, that they might get rid of hardships and misfortunes.

57. A man said to the Imam: “O Son of Allah’s Messenger, I love you very much for the sake of Allah.” Hence he, peace be on him, said: “O Allah, I seek refuge in you from that I love (men) for Your sake, while You detest me.”

The Imam, peace be on him, sought refuge in Allah, the Exalted, from that he loved (men) for Him, while He detested him. This indicates that the Imam denied himself, sought protection in Allah, devoted himself to Him, and hoped for His pardon and good pleasure.

58. He, peace be on him, said: “The act (that results) from Allah-fearingness is not little. How can be little that which is accepted?”

If work results from Allah-fearingness, it is not little. How can it be little, while Allah, the Exalted, accepts it?

59. He, peace be on him, said: “If the people of the heavens and the earth came together to describe Allah’s mightiness, they would not be able to.”

All those who are in the world of existence are unable to describe the mightiness of Allah, the Exalted. How can the possible being, limited in mind and abilities, describe the Necessary Being, Who originated all things, and Whom no understanding can encompass?

60. He, peace be on him, said: "Courage is undertaking war, patience toward affliction, and defending brothers."

Courage is among the most prominent qualities of men. Some aspects of courage are undertaking war, patience toward affliction, and defending brothers.

61. He, peace be on him, said: "The eloquent make no use of words during bad listening."

One's eloquence is in vain when men do not listen to him or turn away from him.

62. He, peace be on him, said: "Man should moderately spend (his money), and give the surplus (to the poor) for the sake of his life in the next world. This safeguards his blessing, brings him nearer to Allah (the Exalted), and makes his final result useful."

The Imam, peace be on him, advised (the Muslims) to spend their money moderately and to spend the surplus of it on the poor and the general serves of the country. This results in the subsistence of blessing, nearness to Allah, the Most High, and winning an honorable final result.

63. He, peace be on him, said: "Beware of wronging him who finds no helper against you except Allah."

These valuable words have been handed down from the members of the House (*ahl al-Bayt*), peace be on them. They show that the Imams were merciful and affectionate, so that they detested all kinds of injustice and aggression against men, especially as it concerns the weak who find no helper save Allah, hence aggression against them is one of the worst kinds of oppression.

64. He, peace be on him, said: "How bad is the brother (friend) who takes care of you when rich and abandons you when poor!"

The Imam, peace be on him, dispraised the person who flattered his friend during riches and deserted him during poverty. This shows that such a person is opportunist, and has neither honor nor dignity.

65. He, peace be on him, said: "Know the affection (toward you) in your brother's heart through the affection toward him in your heart."

If you want to test your friend's love, you must look for his love for you in your heart, for you love him as much as he loves you.

66. He, peace be on him, said: "He whose concern is the next world, Allah spares him the concern of this world."

He who works for the next world and fears Allah, Allah spares him the affairs of this world and its difficulties.

67. He, peace be on him, said: “The generous are the masters of men in this world, and the Allah-fearing will be their masters in the next.”

Without doubt, the generous are the masters of men in this world. However, the master of men in the hereafter will be the Allah-fearing and the righteous.

68. He, peace be on him, said: “ If Allah, the Great and Almighty, sent down a book in order to chastise a man, I would expect that the man was I, or in order to have mercy on a man, I would hope that the man was I, or in order to chastise me certainly, I would increase (myself) nothing but diligence, lest I should return my soul with blame.”

The Imam, peace be on him, expressed his reverential fear of Allah, the Most High, and his hope for Him. If Allah decided to chastise him, he would increase his soul nothing but diligence in obeying and worshipping Him, lest he should cause blame to himself.

With this we will end our speech about some of the Imam’s short, wonderful, wise sayings.

- [1.](#) Usu’l al-Kafi, vol. 2, p. 132. Al-Nu’ri, Ma’alim al-‘Ibar.
- [2.](#) Al-Durr al-Nazim, p. 137. Al-Ya’qu’bi, Tarikh, vol. 3, p. 46.
- [3.](#) Al-Khisal, pp. 64–65.
- [4.](#) Ibn al-Shaykh, al-Amali, p. 410.
- [5.](#) Al-Ikhtisas, p. 338.
- [6.](#) Al-Bayan wa al-Tabyyin, vol. 1, p. 84. Zahr al-Adab, vol. 1, p. 102.
- [7.](#) Qur’an, 3, 29.
- [8.](#) Ibid., 7, 200.
- [9.](#) Ibid., 16, 45–47.
- [10.](#) Ibid., 21, 11–13.
- [11.](#) Ibid., 21, 14.
- [12.](#) Ibid., 21, 47.
- [13.](#) Ibid., 10, 24.
- [14.](#) Ibid., 11, 113.
- [15.](#) Tuhaf al-‘Uqu’l, pp. 249–252. Al-Am’li, al-Tu’si, p. 301. Roudat al-Kafi, p. 160. Al-Sadu`q, al-Amali, p. 356. Ibn Waram, Tanbih al-Khawatir, p. 225. Al-Bihar, vol. 17, p. 17, first edition.
- [16.](#) Qur’an, 35, 28.
- [17.](#) Tuhaf al-‘Uqu’l, pp. 252–255. Al-Mufid, al-Amali, p. 117. Roudat al-Kafi, p. 138.
- [18.](#) Qur’an, 23, 100.
- [19.](#) Ibid., 52, 14.
- [20.](#) Ibid., 21, 94.
- [21.](#) Ibid., 64, 15.
- [22.](#) Ibid., 57, 20–21.
- [23.](#) Ibid., 59, 18–19.
- [24.](#) Ibid., 90, 8–10.
- [25.](#) Tuhaf al-‘Uqu’l, pp. 272–274. Al-Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 17, p. 312, first edition.

- [26.](#) Roudat al-Kafi, p. 158.
- [27.](#) Ibid.,
- [28.](#) Al-Durr al-Nazim, p. 137.
- [29.](#) Al-Bidaya wa al-Nihaya, vol. 9, pp. 109–113. Ibn 'Asakir, Tarikh.
- [30.](#) Qur'an, 53, 30.
- [31.](#) Balaghat al-Imam Zayn al-'Abidin, p. 27, quoted from Nasikh al-Tawarikh, vol. 1, p. 484.
- [32.](#) The pre-Islamic people knew this proverb.
- [33.](#) Ibn Hamdu'n, Tadhkira, p. 26.
- [34.](#) Zahr al-Adab, vol. 1, p. 102.
- [35.](#) Al-Durr al-Nazim, p. 173.
- [36.](#) Al-Sadu`q, Ma'ani al-Akhbar, p. 78.
- [37.](#) Ibid., p. 136.
- [38.](#) Usu'l al-Kafi, Chapter on Dispraising the World.
- [39.](#) Qur'an, 29, 23.
- [40.](#) Usu'l al-Kafi, Chapter on Dispraising the World.
- [41.](#) Tafsir al-Imam al-'Askari, p. 19. Tanbih al-Khawahir, p. 316. Al-Ihtijaj, vol. 2, p. 175.
- [42.](#) Safinat al-Najat.
- [43.](#) Tuhaf al-'Uqu'l, p. 280. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 17, p. 315, first edition. Some of this tradition has been mentioned in Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 11, p. 272.
- [44.](#) This means that he keeps his tongue, refrains from entering all conversations, refrains from the situations of suspicions, and turns aside from sitting with corrupt people.
- [45.](#) Qur'an, 6, 68.
- [46.](#) Ibid., 17, 36.
- [47.](#) Ibid.,
- [48.](#) Tafsir al-Burhan, vol. 1, p. 44.
- [49.](#) 'Iqab al-A'mal, p. 30.
- [50.](#) Al-Barqi, al-Mahasin, vol. 1, p. 97.
- [51.](#) Musadaqat al-Ikhwān, p. 34. Siyar A'lam al-Nubala', vol. 4, p. 239. Tahdhib al-Kamal, M7/Q2, p. 338.
- [52.](#) Qur'an, 90, 14.
- [53.](#) Thawab al-A'mal, p. 81.
- [54.](#) Imam Zayn al-'Abidin, p. 194.
- [55.](#) Al-Husayn b. Sa'id al-Ahwazi, al-Mu'min, p. 19, one of the manuscripts of the Library of al-Sayyid al-Hakim, serial, 196. The School of al-Imam al-Mehdi checked and published the book in Qum, in the year 1404 A. H. It also checked and published the book al-Tamhis by Shaykh Abi 'Ali Mohammed b. Hammam al-Iskafi, died 336 A. H. This tradition has been mentioned on page 159. no. 63.
- [56.](#) Al-Bihar.
- [57.](#) Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 11, p. 432.
- [58.](#) Usu'l al-Kafi.
- [59.](#) Hulyat al-Awliya', vol. 3, p. 159. Al-Ya'qu'bi, Tarikh, vol. 3, p. 46.
- [60.](#) Al-Tu'si, Tahdhib, vol. 2, p. 47.
- [61.](#) Qur'an, 49, 12.
- [62.](#) Ibid., 2, 173.
- [63.](#) Bihar al-Anwar (first edition), vol. 7, p. 331.
- [64.](#) Mishkat al-Anwar, p. 291. Al-Tubrisi, al-Ihtijaj, p. 172.
- [65.](#) Usu'l al-Kafi, Chapter on Freedom from Need to People.
- [66.](#) Usu'l al-Kafi, Chapter on Thanksgiving.
- [67.](#) Hulyat al-Awliya', vol. 3, p. 140. Ibn Sa'd, al-Tabaqat, p. 2135.
- [68.](#) Al-Tubrisi, al-Ihtijaj (first edition), p. 172

- [69.](#) Al-Khisal, p. 245.
- [70.](#) Ibid., 203.
- [71.](#) Ibid., p. 245.
- [72.](#) Al-Khisal, p. 308.
- [73.](#) Ibid., p. 19.
- [74.](#) Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar (first edition), vol. 1, p. 95.
- [75.](#) Usu`l al-Kafi, vol. 2, p. 2.
- [76.](#) Qur'an, 6, p. 2.
- [77.](#) Ibid., 32, 7.
- [78.](#) Usu`l al-Kafi, vol. 2, p. 89.
- [79.](#) Ibid., p. 241. Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 11, p. 149.
- [80.](#) Usu`l al-Kafi, vol. 2, p. 308.
- [81.](#) Ibid., 223.
- [82.](#) Ibn Qutayba, 'Uyyu`n al-Akhbar, vol. 1, p. 275.
- [83.](#) Al-Ikhtisas, p. 223.
- [84.](#) Ibn al-Sabbagh, al-Fusu`l al-Muhimma, p. 187. Jamharat al-Awliya', vol. 2, p. 74. Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 11, p. 304.
- [85.](#) Al-Durr al-Nazim, p. 174.
- [86.](#) Al-Khisal, p. 106. Al-Ghayat (manuscript), p. 19.
- [87.](#) Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar (first edition), vol. 1, p. 71.
- [88.](#) Usu`l al-Kafi.
- [89.](#) Imam Zayn al-'Abidin, p. 202.
- [90.](#) Ibid.
- [91.](#) Qur'an, 3, 185.
- [92.](#) Yousif al-Tali, al-Tashawiq ila Rijal al-Tasawuf, pp. 31-32.
- [93.](#) Imam Zayn al-'Abidin, p. 202.
- [94.](#) Shaykh Akhwand, Kifayat al-Usu`l.
- [95.](#) Ibn al-Sabbagh, al-Fusu`l al-Muhimma, p. 192. Al-Sirat al-Sawi, p. 193.
- [96.](#) Imam Zayn al-'Abidin, p. 202, quoted from al-Mahasin by al-Barqi.
- [97.](#) Al-Wafi, vol. 3, p. 133.
- [98.](#) Al-Daylami, Ghurar al-Athar wa Durrar al-Athar (manuscript), p. 80, al-Sayyid al-Hakim Library, serial 549.
- [99.](#) Tuhaf al-'Uqu`l, p. 278.
- [100.](#) Ibid.
- [101.](#) Abi 'Ali Mohammed b. Hammam al-Iskafi, al-Tamhis.
- [102.](#) Al-Ithaf bi Hub al-Ashraf, p. 75.
- [103.](#) Qur'an, 6, 161.
- [104.](#) Al-Shaykh al-Sadu`q, Ma'ani al-Akhbar (Manuscript), al-Sayyid al-Hakim Library.
- [105.](#) Al-Husayn Mohammed al-Halawani, Nazhat al-Nazir, p. 32.
- [106.](#) Hulyat al-Awliya', vol. 3, p. 134. Tadhkirat al-Huffaz, vol. 1, p. 71.
- [107.](#) Al-Nu`ri, Dar al-Salam, vol. 2, p. 140.
- [108.](#) Al-Wafi, vol. 1, p. 67. Imam Zayn al-'Abidin, p. 219.
- [109.](#) Nihayat al-Irab fi Funu`n al-Adab, vol. 21, p. 331.
- [110.](#) Bahjat al-Majalis wa Uns al-Majalis, vol. 1, p. 685.
- [111.](#) Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 6, p. 305.
- [112.](#) Kashf al-Ghumma.
- [113.](#) Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 11, p. 222.
- [114.](#) Tuhaf al-'Uqu`l, p. 282.
- [115.](#) Ibid., p. 283.
- [116.](#) In this connection, it has been mentioned in the Holy Tradition: "On the Day of Resurrection Allah will have mercy

toward which Iblis will crane his neck.” We have mentioned that when we have commented on the tradition no. 46.

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