

Chapter 13: Masabeeh, The Lamps

Condemning Pride

The Satan was the first to commit this sin when he refused to prostrate to Adam expressing his pride that he was made of the superior fire and Adam (as) was made with the lowly soil.

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen (as) has said in his Sermon (*Qutba al-Qasa-aa*) after a thousand praises to Allah Who Has given great importance to His Traits of Respect and Greatness. He has kept these traits only for Himself. And made *haram* (taboo) for others creatures of His. Whosoever from His creatures assumes these traits, he will be the accursed!

In the first instance Allah tested the angels. He said, "I am creating a human with the lowly soil. When I put spirit in the creature, you must all prostrate to him in respect!"

All the angels prostrated before Adam (as) as commanded by Allah, barring the proud Satan. He said, "Adam (as) is made of soil and you have made me with the superior fire!. Therefore, I am superior to him!" By the Creator of all beings! Satan became the leader of all the pride and conceited beings in the universe! He became the accursed of Allah forever by this attitude! If Allah wished, he could create Adam (as) with such a light that even the angels would be put in a shade before him! For Allah doing such a thing was very easy, but He wished to put the angels to test! If the angels were awed by Adam (as)'s *noor* (light) and prostrated, then it would be the prostration under the influence of the light and, perhaps, not in obedience to Allah's Commandment.

Allah wanted to test the angels, and test them in such a way that the obedient and the disobedient were clearly distinguished from each other. Therefore, *Iblees*, who spent six thousand years in supplication to Allah, was turned into Satan for his disobedience and turned away from the Heaven. He was the first proud creature who misled *Qabeel* to act against Allah's Commandment and kill his *Mu'min* brother *Habeel* only out of jealousy and pride.

Therefore, one must abstain from pride. People should take a lesson from those who are buried under

heavy loads of soil. They were those who were very proud and never considered anyone equal to them. If pride was considered by Allah a desirable trait in humans,, He would not have kept his Prophets (as) devoid of it. The Great Allah likes his *Abd al-Zaleel* (the lowly creature) to prostrate their foreheads on the dust as a test of their Obedience.

Wealth and pelf are great evils and penury and piety the supreme tests. Allah tests the proud people through these weak and insignificant creatures.

Prophet Musa (as) and Prophet Haroon (as) reached the court of the Pharaoh wearing coarse wollen raiment and carrying a staff. They told Pharaoh that if he wished to have permanent respectability and desired to rule for long, then he should embrace Islam. Hearing this Pharaoh laughed and told to his courtiers that the two mendicants who neither had good dress nor pompous appearance, hold a beggar's staff in th hand, offer him eternal life and respectability! If they have so much power, then why they are not rulers and kings? They even don't wear bracelets of gold!

It became evident from the talk of the Pharaoh that in his consideration wealth, pelf and bracelets etc were signs of respectability and power. If Allah has attached any importance to these things, he certainly would have provided all these to His Prophets (as) But the Intention of Allah was to test the proud, conceited rulers of the world through His Prophets (as) who were the paragons of simplicity and humility. If the prophets were rich and powerful, people would have respected them for their outward pomp. But Allah wished to see who were his sincere creatures. Similarly Allah built His House with ordinary stones and sand. It was possible for Him to Order it to be made with gold, silver and precious stones. That would perhaps have put the pride of the world to a shade! But the Creator wanted people of all shades of power and pride to bow down to His Humble Abode!

The philosophy of *Salah* too is the same. Proud and conceited persons prostrate their foreheads on the dust in acknowledgement of the Greatness of Allah. Wealthy persons fast in the Holy month of Ramadhan to earn the Goodwill of Allah!

They take out and distribute the *Zakat* thinking that Allah has gifted them with wealth and it must be shared with the needy. Although the *House of Allah* is in an isolated and desolate place, but since it is related with the great Creator, people have to respect the Black Stone (*Hajr al-Aswad*) in obedience to His Commands!

The Types Of Pride

The proud consider themselves big and powerful. There are several categories of these men of pride

The pride that touches the borders of infidelity when the proud person belittles the prophets, the men of piety, the scholars and the abstemious. Such proud persons build grand mansions for themselves, wear expensive raiment and ride on pedigree steeds to make a show of their wealth to the people. They will

have a fleet of slaves and servants hovering around them. All these things are the concomitants of the pride of the person.

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) has said that the man of false pride is one who has no knowledge of the truth and belittles and looks down upon the men of truth.

One person asked the Imam (as), "Ya Imam! I live in a decent house, eat good food, I use a horse for my traveling and a slave accompanies me on my visits out. Are all these the signs of pride?"

The Imam (as) asked him, "Are you doing all this to show-off to the people?" "Definitely not!" The man replied. The Imam (as) rejoined, "Then it is not pride! Pride is that which makes one forget the truth and makes him belittle the truthful ones. If a person has this pride to the extent of the size of a sesame seed, he will not be able to enter the precincts of the Heaven!"

The Prophet of Allah (S) once passed through a place where lots of people were gathered. He enquired why such a large assemblage of people had gathered there. He was told that a mad person lived in the neighborhood and people have come out of curiosity to see him. The Prophet (S) said: He is neither mad nor deranged. The person is sick. In fact, mad are those people who think that others are abnormal and make a curiosity out of them. Making a jest of such sick persons, they are ridiculing God's will!

In another tradition the Prophet of Allah (S) says, "When my *Ummat* walks in misplaced pride, and walks with a proud gait with the slaves from Persia and Rome in attendance, then there will appear war and fighting amongst them."

Then the Prophet (S) added, "The fragrance of the Heaven will travel to a distance equal to the length traveled in one thousand years, but those who are disobedient to their parents, who deny others' rights, who are adulterers, who have their coat tails trailing behind them in pride, who harm others with cunning, who brag about small mercies shown to others and who are victims of avarice will not be able to smell."

In another tradition the Prophet of Allah (S) says, "One who has constructed grand mansions more than necessary for his use, just to make the show of his riches to others, Allah will convert these mansions as a fiery ring and tie to the neck of the proud person. Then the person will be consigned to the Hell with the fiery ring around his neck."

The prophet then said, "A person who shows off wearing expensive raiment, Allah will keep him in the lower echelons of the Hell in the company of Qaroon. Qaroon was the first person who expressed pride over his wealth and was interred into the land!"

A person who beats a beggar or considers him inferior, Allah will raise him on the Day of Judgement in the size of an ant and consign him to the Hellfire!

The Cure For Pride

The cure for the ailment of pride is that one always keeps in view his beginning, the inevitable end, his weaknesses, his failings, failures, illnesses and hardships faced during the lifetime.

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) has said that he wondered at the person born out of insignificant seed, destined to die and putrify in the end, behaves during the lifetime with a huge degree of pride!

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen (as) has wondered over the person who started in the form of a drop and ends up with the final funeral bath! His body throughout his life serves as a container for urine and feces. Even then the person behaves with a high degree of pride. One who wishes to banish the trait of pride from himself, he should eat his meals with his servant, milk his goats with his own hands, sit in the company of beggars and abstain from the company of the affluent!

Reforming The Esoteric Self (Batin)

Man should search his inner self while he tries to mind his external appearances. The aim should be to ensure that both his outward and inward self is pure and good. Like the *Sufis*, spoiling one's outward appearance in consonance with the condition of the esoteric self is haram or taboo. Committing a sin in the open is worse than doing it in private. Confronting a superior will bring more of his displeasure than privately planning against him and talking ill of him at his back. The Islamic Shariah doesn't permit such acts. It is said that Allah doesn't like criticizing anyone on his face or in the open. But the oppressed can criticize the oppressor."

Wearing The Woolen Blankets

Using wollen blankets as raiment has received lots of praise in the Sunni literature. In certain Shi'a traditions this practice is condemned and in certain others it has been praised. Perhaps the traditions praising this practice has an element of *Taqiyyah*. If the raiment of woolen blanket is worn at the time of prayer, or to manifest one's humility, or to prevent oneself from the effect of the cold weather, then there is no problem. But always wearing such dress as a personal mark of identification is not proper.

It is narrated from Amir'ul-Mu'mineen (as) that one should wear dress made out of cotton. This was the preference of the Prophet of Allah (S) and the *Ahl-ul-Bayt* (as). The Prophet (S) never wore leather headgear unless it was absolutely necessary due to the weather conditions.

The Prophet of Islam (S) has said, "I shall not abandon five things till the time of my death that they remain as part of my *Sunna*: 1. Sitting on the floor and eating my meals with the slaves. 2. Riding on the long eared mules with stirrup and halter. 3. Milking the goats with my own hands. 4. Wearing the raiment made of wool. 5. Taking precedence in wishing the children."

“O Abu Dharr! In the last days of this world people will wear wollen raiment both during the warm and cool seasons as a mark of status. However, the angels on the land and in the Heaven will curse them for doing this. The people deserving of the Heaven will be in dusty dresses, disheveled hair and getting scant attention from those around them. If these persons pray to Allah for anything, Allah shall grant their wish.”

The Prophet of Allah (S), being in the know of the hidden things said that after him there will be people who will adopt stealth and deceit and involve others in hypocrisy and waywardness. Therefore the Prophet (S) said, “People who adopt that garb are the accursed. Don’t be misled by their subterfuge!” This is also one of the miracles of the Prophet that he had forecast the doings of the group before it appeared on the scene and condemned it. One who denies the fact of the group of *Sufia* being wayward, will deserve the curse of Allah and his Prophet (S). It is not only the wearing of the blanket that is a curse for them, but the main cause is their interference with the *Shariah*. Their wont is to adopt the ways of infidels and heretics (*Zanadeeq*) and abandoning the *Shariah*. With their innovations they divert the people from the right path.

There are several other traditions that condemn the group of *Sufia*. The Shi’a scholars have always condemned the *sufi* cult. Some have even written treatises on the condemnation of these sects. For example, ‘Ali bin Babawiyah, whose letters on the matters of *Shariah* used to reach *Saheb al Asr (a.j.)* and he used to receive prompt replies too. Also his son, Muhammad bin ‘Ali bin Babawiyah, who is the doyen of Shi’a traditionists, has received the commendation of *Saheb-ul-Asr (a.j.)*. He has written a voluminous book reproving the *Sufi* cult.

Sheik Toosi, Mulla Hilli and Sheik Shaheed too have written tomes in condemnation of the cult. Sheik ‘Ali has written a book, *Mataan Mujramiah*, condemning the *Sufi* cult. His son Hasan too wrote his book, *Umdat al Miqaal*, on the same subject. Jaffar bin Muhammad Dooresti in his book, *Aeteqaad*, has convincingly dealt with the *Sufi* cult. Bin Hamza and Sayed Murtada Raazi too have written extensively on the subject. Maulana Ahmed Ardbeel has condemned the sect very convincingly in his writings.

Friends! Why do you rate this sect well? This, despite the Prophet (S) and the Ahl-ul-Bayt having condemned them in very clear terms. Will you claim that you are a follower of Hasan Basri? He was a person who has been the butt of many an authentic tradition! Or you will term yourself the follower of Sufian Suri who was a mortal enemy of Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as). Or will you toe the line of Ghazali who was an outright *naasibi*. He writes in his book that the way in which ‘Ali Murtada (as) is an Imam, he too is one in his own right! He writes that whoever curses Yazid is a sinner. He has written several books against the Shi’as in the genre of *‘Al Mutaqaddameen az Zalaal*. Or will you project his brother, Ahmed Ghazali, as proof that he believes the accursed Satan is amongst the chiefs of the pious (*the aulia*)! Or will you adopt maulana Rumi as your intercessor that he says Amir’ul-Mu’mineen Amir’ul-Mu’mineen (as) will intercede on behalf of the accursed Ibn al-Muljim and guide him into the Heaven? He says that Bin Mulji has not committed any sin and that what he had done was the destiny!

There is no page of the *mathnavi* of Maulana Rumi on which he has not written about the futility of prayer and the depraved beliefs. His followers believe that hearing to tambourine, harmonica and fiddle is a type of prayer.

Will you make Mohiuddin Arabi your symbol that who has given pride of place to meaningless beliefs in his book. He says that the saints (*Aulia*) are a group of people to whom the *Rafizis* look like pigs. He also says that when he went for the *Meraj* he found that the status of 'Ali (as) on the Firmament was lesser than that of Othman, Omer and Abu Bakra! He says that when he came back, he told to 'Ali (as) that he claimed in the world that he was better than the other three then how is it that his status in the Firmament was lesser than the three of them!

There are several other such canards, writing about them will unnecessarily lengthen the narrative. Therefore, one should not be misled by their talk. What all they have done is to get worldly benefits. These people claimed that they visit the Firmament ten times in a night but are incapable of throwing light on simple questions of *fiqh*!

It is narrated from Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) that the sign of an imposter is that he will give you news about the firmament, the east and the west lucidly. But when asked about the legitimate (*Halal*) and taboo (*Haram*) he will draw a blank! He claims that he has understood the intricacies of *Wahdat al Wajood* (the Unity of God) that other erudite scholars have not been able to! But he has not understood a simple fact that has been explained to him umpteen times. These people say that *kashf* (manifestation) and *kufr* (infidelity) are not antithetical and can be always clubbed together! They believe that there have been practitioners of *Kashf* amongst the non-believers in India. Suppose their *kashf* is a reality and not a hypocrisy, then what superiority they have achieved by adopting it!. They have remained infidels and shall be infidels till the Day of Reckoning!

It is written in the *Ehtejaaj* of Tabrisi that once Amir'ul-Mu'mineen (as) passed through the place of Hasan Basri. The person was performing the ablution. Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) said, "O Hasan! Do the ablution properly!" He said, "Ya Ameer al Mimineen! Yesterday you have killed the persons who used to do the ablution thoroughly! Today you are asking me to do the ablution properly!" The Imam asked him, "Why didn't you turn up to help them?" He replied, "By Allah! In the morning I took bath. Rubbed camphor on my body and took my arms that I hadn't the slightest doubt about opposition to Ayesha is infidelity.

On the way I heard a sound saying, 'Where are you going! Return back! Those who kill and get killed will all go to the Hell!' I was scared of that herald and returned home. The next day again I got ready to go to the help of Ayesha. I again heard the same voice and returned home!" The Imam (as) said, "You are telling the truth! Do you know who the person was who called you?" Hasan said, "No! I don't know!" The Imam (as) said, "He was your brother, the Satan! He has told you the truth that the those who kill and also those who get killed from the troops of Ayesha will go tto the Hell!"

In another tradition it is narrated from Amir'ul-Mu'mineen Amir'ul-Mu'mineen that he said to Hasan Basri, "Every time there is a *Samiri* (magician) and you are the *Samiri* of your time!"

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) has said: O Hasan Basri! Whether you go the East or to the West, you will not acquire any knowledge! The only source of knowledge are we the *Ahl-ul-Bayt!* "Remember, this Hasan Basri is the same person who is the chief of the Sufis. The Sufis associate themselves with him very ardently. They mostly quote from him. They narrate that one big sheik was Ibad Basri. He used to ridicule Imam Zain-ul-'Abidin (as) and used to criticize him in the matter of Jihad.

Once a group consisting of Ayub Sajistani, Saleh Marni, Utba, Habib Farsi, Malik bin Dinar, Abu Saleh aami, Ja'far bin Suleiman Rabia and Saadana started from Basra for the Haj. Those days there was scarcity of water in Mecca. The entire gathering in *Khana al-Kaaba* prayed for rains. But the prayers were not answered. In the meantime, Imam Zain-ul-'Abidin arrived there with a sad mein. After circumambulating the Kaaba he asked everyone assembled there to move away from the Kaaba. Then he prostrated near the Kaaba and prayed. Before his prayer was over, the clouds gathered and rained so hard that the scarcity turned into plenty! Remember, the names of the persons from the group of Basrans are all the chiefs of the *Sufi* cult! They were not the adherents of the Imam (as) of the time! One of the group was Tawoos Yamani whose debates with Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) are well known!

Sheik Toosi writes in his book, *Ghaibat*, that some people falsely claimed the vicegerency of *Saheb al Asr (a.j.)*. They were discredited and ridiculed. If they were really the vicegerents of the Imam (as) then they could have shown miracles as did the *Saheb al Asr (a.j.)*. The first such imposter was *Shariyi* who got ridicule after making the claim. *Saheb al Asr* issued an edict refuting his claim. The Sheik says that *Talakbari* said that it became evident to people that the imposter was an infidel. First he used to spread canard about the Imam (as) to attract the ignorant people. Progressing in his foul acts in this manner he progressed into believing in the *Hallajia* cult in the manner of persons like Abu Jaffer Shalmafani. The Sheik adds that besides other imposters, Husayn bin Mansoor too was prominent amongst them.

It is narrated from Hibtullah bin Muhammad Katib that Sahl bin Ismail Naubhakti, who was an ardent Shi'a, sent word to Mansoor Hallaj that he would become his follower on condition that he should show a miracle by making his hair permanently black. He said that he had to perforce dye his hair every Friday for the purpose of visiting his slave girls and the exercise was very tedious for him. When Hallaj heard this, he said that Sahl has made a mistake asking him to perform such a miracle. Sahl used to repeat the story everywhere and make people laugh at Hallaj!

It is mentioned in *Ehtejaj* of Tabrisi that the edict of *Saheb al Asr* was issued through Husayn bin Rooh condemning the group that was headed by Husain bin Mansoor Hallaj. Such people were always adversarial to the *Ahl-ul-Bayt*. The Shi'a chroniclers in that period, and the period following immediately after that, always expressed dislike of the group and gave sufficient proof of their infidelity. Even then if some people abandoned the rightful path of the *Ahl-ul-Bayt*, the sin definitely goes to their account!

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