

## Chapter 7: The Traits, Qasail

### The First Trait: Pride Over One's Piety

Being proud about ones own piety is a major sin. This pride can make all the prayers and supplications void. If a person understands the Greatness of Allah, then he will not be proud and vain at his exertions at prayer. The endowments of the munificent Allah are so great that it is impossible to count His Blessings.

Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) says, "O Son! Don't delay in offering your prayers. Nor should you be over-confident of the acceptance of your prayers and feel proud of your efforts at piety. We cannot offer prayers and obedience to Allah commensurate with His Blessings."

Imam Ar-Ridha' (as) says that a pious person from Bani Israel offered intense prayers for forty years. Then he offered a sacrifice to Allah that was not accepted. The person was disconsolate with sadness for his failure. He cursed his psyche blaming it for his failure. He received a Revelation that blaming his psyche and accepting the shortcomings pleased Allah more than the prayers spread over the long period of forty years. For this reason Allah accepted his long years of penance.

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) says that two persons entered the mosque. One was pious and the other a transgressor. When they emerged from the mosque after the prayer, the transgressor was pious and the person with piety had turned a transgressor. The reason was that the pious person came out of the mosque with pride at his piety and the transgressor was penitent at his past misdeeds.

For the benefit of the readers, the translator is digressing here with a tale:

One day Prophet Musa (as) was passing through a barren hill. He noticed a pious person busy in prayer sitting in a cave of the hill. Prophet Musa (as) felt the urge to meet and talk to the person. He went near and greeted him. The pious person asked disinterestedly, "Who are you?" Prophet Musa (as) said, "I am Musa (as)!"

The person asked, "Are you the prophet Musa (as)?"

Prophet Musa (as) said, "Yes!"

The person said, "Then ask Allah to Grant my wish!"

Prophet Musa (as) asked, "What is it that you want?"

The person said, "Since the last one hundred years I am sitting here praying to Allah. I don't do anything other than the Prayer. Ask Allah, what He will give me for my efforts?"

Prophet Musa (as) said, "I shall find about it immediately." He immediately climbed up the hill and called aloud, "O Sustainer Allah! This person wants to know about the reward for his prayers! Tell me, what shall I inform him?"

He heard the sound, "O Musa (as)! Tell him, we shall inform him about his reward tomorrow."

Prophet Musa (as) went to the person and conveyed the message to him

The pious man said, "It's fine! Tomorrow is not much of a time!" The pious person was in the habit of going to a nearby canal early every morning for bathing and fetching some water for his use. Therefore, the next morning too he started for the canal but he lost his way and reached somewhere else. Because of the sun's heat he became very thirsty and tired. He sat on a lonely boulder and started thinking about his death. In that time he found a person coming from the other direction. He waved to the person to come to him. When the person came nigh, he asked him to help him with some water.

The man said, "Where is any water in this wilderness? Whatever little I have is only for me."

The pious person started crying. The other person said, "Fine! What will you give me if I give you a tumbler of water?"

The pious man said, "I don't have anything. I have been busy in the cave praying for the last one hundred years."

The man said, "If you agree to transfer to me the Rewards for your prayers of one hundred years, I shall give you a tumbler of water."

The pious man thought, if he lived, he could pray for a further period to get the Reward from Allah. He said, I am ready to transfer to you my reward for the hundred years' of my prayers. The man gave him a tumbler full of water and the pious person returned to his cave.

In the morning Prophet Musa (as) got a Revelation that the pious person transferred his hundred years' prayers to another person in exchange for a tumbler of water. Ask the man to settle the value of the tumblers of water that he had been drinking during the last hundred years!

Therefore, Prophet Musa (as) went to the cave and told to the person that he had a message for him

from Allah.

The man said: O Prophet (S)! I have already sold my hundred years of penance!

Prophet Musa (as) said, “Yes! I know. But Allah has said that when the value of one hundred years of prayer is one tumbler of water, then he must settle the value of the water he had been drinking over the last hundred years.”

When the pious person heard this, he was shocked and shouted, “O Prophet (S)! Recommend to Allah to forgive my sins! Allah is Beneficent and Merciful!”

Prophet Musa (as) got the Revelation, “Tell the pious person! Your penitence of this moment pleased us more than your prayers of a hundred years and we have given to you rewards for a thousand years of prayers!”

## **The Second Trait: Thankfulness For The Bounties**

Among the human virtues, one prominent virtue is gratitude for the bounties received. The opposite of this virtue is ingratitude and thanklessness. Gratitude for the Bounties can be the forerunner of more Bounties coming the person’s way.

Ingratitude or taking the Bounties for granted might be the cause of reduction in the Bounties bestowed on the person.

The Prophet (S) has said, “Offering thanks to Allah after a meal has the same reward as for having fasted during the month of Ramadhan.”

A person expressing his thanks to Allah for a comfortable life is the same as another person thanking the Creator after relief from his difficulties! A rich person expressing gratitude to Allah is the same as a poor, contented person thanking Allah for the square meal he has received!

Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) says that one must say ‘*Alhamdulillah*’ for every good thing he experiences. Thankfulness to Allah on acquisition of wealth is giving a part of it to the needy and the deserving. Thankfulness to Allah for endowing the power of speech is expressing His Praise (*Hamd*) and Encomium (*Sana*). Similarly, thanking Allah for endowing other senses and making their use in furthering the causes dear to Him.

The biggest Bounty Allah has bestowed on humanity is the Delegation of Muhammad (S) as the Prophet and his Holy Progeny (as) as the Vicegerents to guide the humanity on the Right Path. The only way for expressing gratefulness in this regard is to implicitly follow the norms of do’s-and-don’ts laid down by them. When a person thinks of the uncountable Bounties of Allah, he spontaneously utters, ‘*Alhamdu lillahi Rab il Aalameen– Praise be to the Creator Lord of the worlds.*’ If one thinks over a morsel of food

he is in the process of eating, he will realize that Allah has, in the creation of that small morsel, bestowed so much care.

Imagine the steps involved in the production of the insignificant morsel of food! The ironsmith and the carpenter made the plough, the farmer and the draft animals ploughed the land, sowed the seed, watered the seedlings, the rain spurred up the growth of the plants, the sun provided light and warmth to the crop, the crop matured and was harvested. The produce went through the process of conversion to flour in the mill. The flour was made into dough and then it was made into bread on the oven. At last the morsel, in the hand of the person, was about to enter his mouth!

It is a matter for conjecture that when the morsel went into the mouth, what all processes took place thereafter. The hands, mouth, teeth, tongue, intestines, the faculty of digestion, the power of retaining food in the body played their part to convert the morsel into energy and blood to circulate in the system to provide him life and sustenance. Does the person have the faculty and capability to thank Allah for designing such a wonderful cycle of production for sustaining and prolonging the human existence on the earth!

Imam Muhammad Taqi (as) narrates that one day Salman Farsi invited Abu Dharr Ghiffari over a meal. He put dried bread dipped in water before Abu Dharr. Abu Dharr said, "*Subhan Allah*, such good bread! How much I wish if there was some salt too!" Salman mortgaged his piece of cloth and fetched some salt. Abu Dharr ate the bread with the salt and thanked Allah for bestowing on him the trait of contentment. Salman Farsi said, "If you had practiced contentment, my piece of cloth wouldn't have been mortgaged!"

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) has said, "Allah has exhorted Prophet Musa (as) to Thank Him, that thanking Him is the right thing by Him." Prophet Musa (as) said, "O Creator! How could I fulfill the duty of thanking and praising you that the faculty of doing it has also been endowed to me by you!"

## **The Third Trait: Penitence and Crying For Mercy**

For the people of the Faith of Prophet Muhammad (S), Allah has termed penitence (*Tawbah*) as a major Bounty or Endowment. He has made the task easier by allowing it to be routed through Muhammad and his Holy Progeny (as). The process of penitence and cries for mercy (*Tawbah wa astaghfar*) for the people of the earlier prophets had to pass through a very difficult route.

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) narrates that the Prophet of Allah (S) has said, "If a person plans to do a good act and, for some reason is not able to do it, even then Allah will enter it in the account of his good deeds! If the person performs one good deed, ten are entered in his account! When a person plans a foul deed, it will not be entered to his account till he has practically committed it! Then Allah asks the angels for awaiting expression of penitence (*Tawbah wa astaghfar*) by the sinner and when he performs some good deed, it is accounted in place of the sin he had committed."

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) says, "It is better a person abstains from sinning. But Allah considers such sinners his friends who do penitence and cry for mercy (*Tawbah wa astaghfar*) for their faults."

## Penitence From Sinning

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) says that Allah sent a Revelation to Prophet Dawood (as), "O Dawood (as)! Go to Daniel (as), My Creation, and tell him that he had been disobedient to Me. I forgave him, he again transgressed, I pardoned him! Warn him that if he transgressed a fourth time, I shall not forgive him!" When Prophet Dawood (as) conveyed this message to Prophet Daniel (as), he said, "O Prophet of Allah (as)! You have conveyed the message from Allah, the Creator! You have fulfilled your duty." When it was dawn, Daniel (as) got busy in his supplications. He said, "O Allah! Your Prophet Dawood (as) conveyed Your Orders to me! By your Greatness and Majesty! If You don't prevent me from sinning, I shall sin the more!"

It is narrated by an authentic source that the Prophet (S) has said, "If a person is penitent one year prior to his death, he will be pardoned." Then he said, "One year is too long a period, if the person expresses penitence for his sins one-month prior to his demise, he shall be pardoned!" Again the Prophet (S) said, "One month too is a long period, if he is penitent a week before his death, the person will get forgiveness!" The prophet (S) again uttered, "One week is rather much, if the person expresses his regret for the sins a day before his death, he will be pardoned!" Finally the Prophet (S) said, "One day too is a longtime, if the sinner is penitent before witnessing the events of the Day of Judgement, he will be pardoned!"

It is said that as there is a remedy for pains and aches, so is there a remedy for sins in penitence and crying for forgiveness (*Tawbah wa astaghfar*).

Prophet Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) says that a person commits a sin and then expresses penitence after a lapse of twenty years. His penitence is accepted and he is pardoned. An infidel forgets about his sins as soon as he commits them." Then the Imam (as) said, "Whoever says '*Astaghfar Allah*' everyday his seven hundred sins will be pardoned. By Allah, although it is not humanly possible to commit seven hundred sins during the span of a day!" The Imam (as) also added, "Prophet 'Isa (as) passed through a place where a group of people were busy lamenting and crying. He asked someone the reason of the sorrow of those people. They said, 'The people are penitent over their past sins!' The Imam (as) said, 'They must instead stop sinning to deserve Pardon from Allah'"

The Prophet of Allah (S) has said, "No person is closer to Allah than the one who was a sinner and had expressed penitence over his past acts!"

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) said, "I wonder at the person who loses hope in the Munificence of Allah. It is the person who has the means to erase the sins!" Someone asked, "O Master! What is it?" Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) replied, "Crying for forgiveness! "Perfume oneself with penitence and cries for

forgiveness (*Tawbah wa istafghar*) that the foul smell of sins does not pervade you.”

It is narrated that Maaz bin Jabl went to the presence of the Prophet (S) and started crying. The Prophet (S) asked about the reason of his crying. Maaz cried the more and said, ‘At the threshold of the mosque there is a handsome youth who is crying as if he has lost a son! He wishes to come to your presence!’ the Prophet (S) said, “Bring him along to me.” When the youth came to the Prophet (S) and greeted him, the Prophet (S) asked him the reason for his crying. The youth said, “Why shouldn’t one cry whose only sin is sufficient ground for consigning him to the Hell?” The Prophet (S) asked the youth, “Have you termed anyone a partner to Allah?” The youth said, “No!” The Prophet (S) then said, “Allah will forgive your sin even if it is as huge as a mountain!” The youth said, “My sin is larger than any mountain!”

The Prophet (S) said, “Allah will pardon your sin even if it is greater than the earth and all that is contained in it!” The youth said, “O Prophet of Allah (S)! My sin is even greater than that!” The Prophet (S) said, “Allah will forgive your sin even if it is greater than the entire universe and all its contents!” The youth continued to cry and said, “My sin is much more than all that!” The Prophet (S) got angry and said, “Tell me! Allah is Great or your sins are great?” The youth started rolling on the floor in shame and penitence. He said, “O Prophet of Allah (S)! My Allah is the Greatest! But my sin is sufficient for His punishing me!” The Prophet (S) said, ‘Tell me, what is your sin?’

The youth said, “For seven years I committed thefts of the shrouds of the dead from their graves. Yesterday a pretty girl died. As usual I dug up her fresh grave by night and removed the shroud from her body. I had gone a little distance when I was empowered by the Satan. I thought why I should leave such a pretty body. Therefore I returned to the grave and committed copulation with the cadaver. I must have gone a little distance after the foul act that a voice said, ‘O ill-fated brute! What have you done! When we both go to the Presence of Allah on the Day of Judgement, I shall be in this unclean condition! Allah will inflict on you the worst Retribution!’”

The Prophet (S), after hearing this, stood up and told to his companions, “Remove this transgressor from my sight lest the lightning of retribution burns us along with him!” The youth left the presence of the Prophet (S) and hopelessly wandered in the hills of Medina. For full forty days he expressed intense penitence and cried for forgiveness. He cried and appealed to Allah that if his penitence deserved pardon, He must send a Revelation to the Prophet (S) about it. The Revelation came to the Prophet (S), “O Muhammad (S)! My creature came to you and expressed his penitence and cried for forgiveness! You sent him away d’Isappointed! Where would he go in appeal! Who can pardon him but Me!” Then a verse was revealed, the purport of which was that “those who are penitent of their sins and don’t perpetuate sins again, the pardon of such persons is the concern of their Creator.” When this verse was revealed, the Prophet (S) smiled, came out of his house, and inquired about the whereabouts of the youth, whose name was Bahlool.

The Prophet (S) approached Bahlool along with his companions and found him crying inconsolably and saying, “O Sustainer Allah! I am a penitent sinner! O Munificent Allah! If you have Kindness on me,

communicate Your Pardon to me through the mouth of your Prophet (S)!” The Prophet (S) went near him and held his hands. Then he communicated to Bahlool the good news of his Pardon. Bahlool’s life thereafter was one of great piety.

Therefore, the sinners should know that it is never too late to mend. Penitence with the resolve not to sin again can be the cause of one’s Deliverance!

## **Types Of Sins**

The sins from which the believers must express penitence are:

### **The First Type**

They are the sins that have no punishment prescribed other than the Retribution on the Day of Reckoning. The example of such sins is men wearing raiment made out of silk. It is sufficient that the person is penitent and shuns use of the dress for the rest of his life.

### **The Second Type**

These are the sins for which there is retribution in the Hereafter and punishment in this world too. For some of these sins the person has either to free a slave or give alms to the poor and deserving in addition to expressing penitence for the sin committed. There are certain Rights of Allah (*Huqooq Allah*), for the transgression of which there are Juristic (*Sharaee*) punishments prescribed. For example, if a person has taken intoxicating beverages. Till the Jurist (*Hakim al-Shara*) doesn’t know about his act, the person has to approach him to confess his sin and express his penitence. But it is better he abstains from revealing his act and silently expresses his penitence to Allah.

If in his sin, he has deprived men of their rights, he must first make amends for that. If there is no monetary rights of others involved in his act but he has encouraged some other person(s) to emulate him in committing the sin, then he should make efforts to set the person(s) right. Then he should express his penitence. If, while committing the sin he has become liable for *Qasaas* (punishment for causing physical injury), all the jurists agree that he must first inform those who have a right for the *qasaas*. He must tell them that he is liable to be executed or pay the *Qasaas*.

The persons who have the right for the *Qasaas* have the option to pardon or to charge the man. Then the sinner should express his penitence and take an oath to refrain from such act in the future. The sins for which the *Sharia* has prescribed punishment, for example, the sin of abusing someone, the subject of such abuse has the right either to punish the person or pardon him. If the subject doesn’t know about the abuses heaped on him, some jurists opine that the perpetrator of the abuses should not inform the person and quietly express his penitence over the act.

The jurists say that the prescriptions for the punishments are there irrespective of whether penitence

expressed by the sinner or not. If these conditions are not fulfilled, there will be Retribution in the Hereafter. Some traditions indicate that fulfillment of these Juridical conditions are the precursors of the pardon for the sinner in the Hereafter. Complete penitence is total abstinence from the sin for the rest of the life of the person.

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) says, "A person said '*astaghfar Allah*' in the presence of the Prophet (S). The Prophet (S) said, 'What do you know about asking forgiveness (*astaghfar*)? The *Astaghfar* has six parts to its meaning:

First: penitence over the past sins,

Second: firm commitment to Allah for not sinning again,

Third: Paying the rights of people from one's own assets,

Fourth: Fulfilling the mandatory duties that were not performed in the past,

Fifth: Shedding the weight that was gained during the period one was sinning,

Sixth: Busying oneself in prayers with the same intensity with which the person indulged in the acts of sin.

One should say '*Astghfar Allah*' if he abides by these conditions."

## **The Ways of Asking For Sustenance**

The Prophet (S) has said, "O Abu Dharr! One who is sluggish in seeking sustenance, the other person will not be able to grab his share. To the contrary one who is avaricious in his search and makes undue efforts may not get more than Allah has allocated for him."

"One who has the inclination of doing a good turn, that has Allah's approval and when the person abstains from committing foul deeds, he must be thankful to Allah for His Help."

Many verses of the Qur'an and traditions of the Prophet (S) and the Imams (as) go to prove that the things essential for sustenance of life are the gifts of Allah. The jurists differ about the *Haram* (illegitimate) acquisition of the means by some having Allah's approval. It is a fact that Allah has apportioned *Halal* (legitimate) sustenance for everyone. If a person, in his greed does not use illegitimate means to acquire his needs, he can certainly get them through fair means.

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) narrates that the Prophet (S), on the day of *Hajjat al Vidha* (the Last Pilgrimage), had said, "Jibrael has told me that no living creature dies till it uses the quota of food apportioned by Allah for its lifetime. O people! Have fear of Allah! Adopt equity! Don't make haste in acquiring means of sustenance. If there is delay in getting the food, don't use illicit means to get it. Don't

earn Allah's ire by recourse to foul means.

Allah has promised fair sustenance to everyone. When one waits patiently and makes fair trials, he certainly gets his needs. One who uses cunning and stratagem to acquire and hoard more than his needs, Allah might reduce what he has been allocated to receive legitimately. Further, on the Day of Judgement, one will have to account for the use of the sources of livelihood in his lifetime. It is wrong to think that there is no need to strive to acquire sustenance when Allah has promised the daily bread to all. There are certain means of livelihood that reach a person only with sincere efforts. There are certain other things that a person gets without trying for them. Some other can come through sincere prayers to Allah.

It is narrated from Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) that a true Muslim is one who doesn't displease Allah to gain favor with men. He should also not blame others for what Allah has not given to him. Avarice need not enhance the means of a person or abhorrence of the means of livelihood decrease it in any way. If a person runs away from the means of livelihood as one does from death, even then he will continue to live till the appointed time.

## **Making Supplications To Allah**

It is reliably narrated from Husayn bin Alwan that he, along with some other students, was on a journey. On the way they ran out of the money for the expenses. One of his friends asked him, "Whom do you expect to come to our rescue in this time of need." Husayn bin Alwan mentioned a person's name. The other student said, "By Allah! You will not succeed in getting the help!" He asked, "How are you so sure about it?"

The other student said, "I have heard from Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) that Allah has observed in one of His Books, 'I shall shatter the hopes of the person who expects help from anyone other than Me! I shall make him wretched and miserable in the eyes of his friends. I shall deprive him of My Bounties! I shall not allow him to come near Me. He expects to find succor from others when everything is in My Power! He is knocking at others doors when the keys to all the doors are with Me!

All the doors are locked and My Doors are always open for those who supplicate to Me! When did this person approach me in times of difficulty and I refused him help! Peoples needs and wishes are with me! I grant them whenever required! Are they not happy in My Protection! My Firmament is full of beings that busy themselves in My Prayer! I have ordered them to keep the doors of My Bounties open. Then why people don't believe in My Munificence? Don't they know that when a calamity comes, none other than Me can avert it for them! Why is man so forgetful of Me! I have bestowed on him lot of Bounties without asking for them!

Then why is he stretching his hand before others for help! Does he think that I would not give him what he asked for! Am I miserly? Is not Generosity My trait! Am I not the Provider of the needs of all the

creations? Aren't those who expect help from others afraid of Me! If all the inhabitants of the earth and the skies demand fulfillment of their wishes at one time, I can grant them instantaneously! This will not make the difference equal to the size of an ant in My Possessions! How unfortunate is the person who disobeys Me and has no fear of Mine!"

## **The Company Of Scholars**

It is narrated from Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) that it is better to sit with a learned person in his poor and untidy surroundings than in a posh saloon with an uneducated person.

The prophet of Islam (S) has said, "Prophet 'Isa was asked by his disciples, 'O Prophet of Allah (S)! What sort of people one should sit with?' He said, ' Sit with persons who remind you of Allah! Their talk should enhance your knowledge and their actions remind you of the Hereafter!'"

It is narrated that Prophet Luqman (as) advised his son, "O my son! Judge people before you make them your friends and companions! If you find persons who always remember Allah, do sit with them! If you are learned, your learning will benefit you. If he is more learned than you, then you will derive benefit from his company. The Blessing that Allah bestows on him, you might get a share of that! Don't sit with those who do not remember Allah. If you are learned, your learning may not benefit them. If you are ignorant, your ignorance will enhance in the company of such persons. The curse that comes to them from Allah, you will be receiving a part of it!"

## **Do Not Belittle Sin**

Man should not think that a minor sin to be a trivial thing not to worry about! However small a sin, its consequences might be very grave! When one commits minor sins, Satan emboldens and makes the person perpetuate sinful acts in the future. A time comes when the person thinks that the major sins too are trivial. Therefore not repenting minor sins is in itself a major sin. Some times sins assume the shape of infidelity and hypocrisy! Therefore one should treat a sin as a sin, however small or minor it might be. Therefore Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) has said, "A thing, howsoever small, that can benefit a person on the Day of Reckoning, is not small. Similarly a small thing that can bring retribution to the person on the Day of Judgement cannot be termed small."

Imam Ar-Ridha' (as) has said, "The minor sins are the way to commitment of the major sins! The person who commits minor sins, might indulge in major sins also! Even if Allah had not created the Heaven and the Hell, as incentive and disincentive respectively, for acts fair and foul, he would even then have made it mandatory for men to pray. His disobedience would even then be punishable because He has endowed man with lot of Blessings to thank about!"

The Prophet of Allah (S) has said, "Don't consider sin minor, however insignificant that might be. Don't also rate your virtues high, however significant they might be! The major sins can be condoned with

*Astghfar* (Craving mercy from Allah) but repetition of minor sins might render them major!”

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) says, “One of the sins that may not be condoned is one saying, ‘I wish there is no retribution for my sins other than this!’”

Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) has said, “Forty sins of a person will remain hidden under forty curtains. Once he completes the forty sins, the curtains get torn and the angels responsible for recording the sins of men submit to Allah, ‘All the curtains hiding the sins of the person have gone up!’ Allah asks them to hide the sins with their wings. The person continues to commit more sin and keeps bragging with his compatriots. The angels tell to Allah, ‘O Allah! This person doesn’t abstain from any type of sin! We feel ashamed of watching him commit sins!’ Then Allah asks them to remove the cover of their wings. Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) added, “Now the person starts showing antagonism to us, the *Ahl-ul-Bayt*, and Allah makes him the subject of ridicule on the earth and in the Heavens. The angels then tell to Allah, ‘This creature of Yours was protected for long and is facing much more ridicule now! Then Allah will say, ‘If I had noticed any virtue in him, I wouldn’t have asked you to lift the cover of your wings from his sins!’”

It is narrated that the Prophet of Allah (S) has said, “It is easier to avoid sinning than being penitent after committing them. A moment’s emotion can become the cause of shame for long. Death does not leave any time for the person to make amends for his wrong acts.”

Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) says, “When Allah wishes a person well, He involves him in severe hardship after he commits a sin. This hardship makes the person repent and do penance. If Allah finds no ray of virtue in the man, then He removes the desire for penitence and regret from the sinner’s mind to remain in his own world of sin and abuse. Allah says in His Holy Book, ‘*We test them in a way that they don’t feel that they are being tested. They indulge, more and more, in sins and We keep sending bounties to them (that they don’t think of penitence for their sins.)*.’”

## **Tawbah Wa Istaghfar: Penitence and Asking Forgiveness**

Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) has said “Allah keeps friends with such persons who are penitent after committing sins and pray for His pardon. Allah doesn’t like a person who commits minor sins and remains oblivious of his faults.” Then the Imam (as) added, “Fear very much the minor sins that you might commit. Beware, these minor sins may not be condoned!” Someone asked the Imam (as), “What are those sins?” The Imam replied, “When a person says after committing a sin, ‘how I wish I had not committed any other sin than this!’”

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) says that when a person asks for a boon from Allah and just before his prayer is answered he commits a sin; Allah orders the Angels to defer the grant of his wish. Then the Imam (as) added, “In certain years some places receive little rainfall. Wherever Allah wishes He sends the rain. When the people of a nation are involved more in sin, the share of rainfall for them is reduced

and it is shifted to the high seas and the mountains. While the people of the area are punished for their sins, even the animals and plants suffer for no fault of theirs.” Then the Imam (as) added, “O people with wisdom! Take warning from this!”

Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) says, “Sometimes because of the ill effect of sins a person veers away from the mandatory prayers.” The Imam (as) added, “A person thinks of a sin and commits it thinking that there are many others that do the same. Allah says in this regard, *By My Majesty and Honour! I shall never pardon him!*”

The Prophet of Allah (S) has said, “On the Day of Judgement some people will be incarcerated for a hundred years only for committing one sin! Looking at the comforts enjoyed by the inmates of the Heaven these sinners will feel repentant.”

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) says, “Allah has decided that He will not take away the bounties from a man till he has not committed any sin.”

Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) has said, “There is no pain more severe for a man than that of sin and there is no fear for him more than the fear of death. For a reminder taking lesson from the experience of the forbears is sufficient.”

Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) says, “The sin that causes reduction in the bounties is pride and disobedience of Allah. The sin that brings repentance to a man is the murder of a human being. The sin that brings retribution of Allah is cruelty to others. An example of a sin that is hidden is consumption of intoxicants. The sin that affects the means of livelihood is adultery. The sin that reduces the longevity of a person is depriving the rights of others. The sin that obstructs acceptance of prayers is ill treatment and disobedience of the parents.”

The Prophet of Allah (S) has said, “Allah will torture the tongue more than any part of human body on the Day of Judgement. The tongue will submit, ‘O Allah! Why are you giving more punishment than to the other part of the body?’ Allah will say, ‘O tongue! One word came from you and traveled all through the east and the west. Innumerable disputes and fights raised their heads because of this and caused unfathomable damage to men and material!’

## **The Superiority Of Prayer**

Abu Dharr(r.a.) relates from the Prophet of Allah (S), The light and coolness of my eyes is prayer (*Salat*). The prayer is as dear to me as a hungry person wanting food or a thirsty person wanting to have water. The hungry and the thirsty person are sated when their need is fulfilled but my desire for prayer is never satisfied. I am not born in celibacy (*rahbaniyat*). I love women and the fragrances. But the pleasure for my eyes is in prayer. A person who offers twelve optional prayers in addition to the mandatory prayers everyday, will compulsorily find a place in the Heaven. When a pious person stands up for prayer,

blessings will be showered on him from the Firmament.

Man should be thankful of the bounties of Allah and keep doing penitence for his faults. He should strive to earn legitimate livelihood that Allah has promised him. Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) says that at the time of the last Haj, the Prophet (S) had observed that a person doesn't die till he has consumed the last morsel of sustenance earmarked for him. Striving for livelihood is necessary for every person but he has to be contented that Allah is providing the sustenance to him. This is the sign of strong Faith. One should have a firm belief on, "*As sayee minni wa itmam min Allah.*" (This will be like the modern time adage; man proposes and God disposes.) One should thank Allah for His bounties. If someone is an agent for providing this sustenance, the person should also be thankful to him but it is very essential to always be thankful to Allah for providing the daily bread essential for living. It is in fact His blessing that he makes another person the agent for providing livelihood to him.

The Prophet of Islam (S) has said, "O Abu Dharr! If a person understands that he is the worshipper of the Greatest Allah, then there is no question of his committing any sins whether the minor ones or the major. O Abu Dharr! In the world my dearest thing is prayer. If man knows that he is prostrating to the Greatest he will never bring up his head from the prostrated position." As an explanation for this a few brightnesses (*Lamaat*) are discussed in the next chapter.

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