

Chapter 9: The Fruits

The First Fruit: About Fear And Hope, Khauf Wa Raja

A *Mu'min* is recognized by two essential traits—he has fear of Allah and hopes for His rewards in moderation. The *Mu'min* neither spends all his life in acute fear of Allah's retribution, nor has he excessive hopes of rewards! One has to bear in mind that both these excesses are sins!

Ruja means carrying hope of Allah's Mercy. A person who expects *ruja* but continues with his sinful acts will be a hypocrite of the highest order. This will be tantamount to not planting the saplings in the soil and expecting to reap the fruits.

Imam Zain-ul-'Abidin (as) says, "O my Lord! When my attention goes to my sins, I become fearful of retribution, but I am also hopeful of Your Mercy and Forbearance!"

Luqman (as) advised his son, "O my son! Even if your good deeds are more than those of all men and jinn put together, you must fear Allah that you might attract His retribution. Even if your sins are more than all the sins of men and jinn, you must hope that Allah will have mercy on you! But hoping for rewards, one must strive to earn them! The faith of a *Mu'min* is not complete unless he develops the twin traits of *khauf and ruja* in himself!"

Allah is just and He cannot do injustice to His creatures. The rewards therefore will be commensurate with the good deeds of the individual. It is believed that Allah will reward a person ten times more than his good deeds. Allah will punish a person who is proud of his piety and reward a pious person who is humble in his piety!

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) said, "O Ishaq! You must have fear of Allah as if you are in His presence! If you are not seeing Him, certainly He is seeing you! If you have a doubt that Allah is not seeing you, you are an infidel! When you have the conviction that Allah sees you all the time and even then continue with your sinful acts, then it will be tantamount to feeling that He is the weakest in whose presence you can commit sins with impunity!"

Another tradition says that people fear him who fears Allah. He who has no fear of Allah, is afraid of everything else around him! The conscience of one who has fear of Allah will not be attracted towards the worldly things.

The Prophet of Islam (S). has said, “One who is attracted towards sin and lechery but shuns them because of the fear of Allah, then he will be pardoned by Allah and saved from the Hellfire!”

The Second Fruit: Some Tales

Muhammad Yakub Kulaini quotes from Imam Zain-ul-’Abidin (as) that some people were sailing in a boat when it toppled in a storm. Only one woman survived by hanging on to a wooden plank that kept afloat. She landed in an island where she met a sinful person. When he saw the woman the evil desires rose in his mind. The woman cried and begged him to spare her the ignominy. The man told her why she was so scared of anyone in that lonely place.

The woman raised her hand towards the sky and said, “I am afraid of my Allah!” The evil person asked her, “Have you never done such an act?” The woman replied, “By Allah! I have never committed such a sin!” The man thought that the woman was chaste and he had himself committed umpteen sins. Therefore he thought that he must be more fearful of Allah. With this thought he left the woman unmolested and went away in one direction.

On the way a hermit joined him on the journey. The heat of the sun was excessive and the hermit asked him to pray that a cloud shadowed their heads to provide them some relief from the sunlight. The man said that he had been sinner all his life and his prayers may not be answered! The hermit said that he would himself pray and the man should say, ‘Aameen!’

The hermit therefore prayed and the sinner said, ‘Aameen’. The prayer was answered and a cloud appeared over their heads. After a while they reached a place from where the hermit had to go in a different direction. When the hermit went his way, the cloud followed the sinner giving him the shade! The hermit said, “O youth! What is it that my prayer was not answered and your prayer was?” The man recounted his experience to the hermit. The hermit said, “Allah is pleased with you! Try to earn His pleasure in the future!”

Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) narrates that there was once a courtier of a king of the Bani Israel. The king was very kind on this person. The king once told him that he wanted a wise and judicious person to be deputed to another kingdom for some important errand.

The courtier had a brother whose spouse was very pretty. The courtier had an evil eye on the woman and was looking for an opportunity to molest her. He told to the king that his brother would be ideal to perform his errand. The king liked the suggestion and called the person to his presence. The courtier told his brother that it was the best chance for him to earn the king’s favor by performing his important

task. The brother mentioned about the matter to his wife who happened to be a scion of a prophet (S)'s family. She was a woman of piety and objected to remaining alone in the absence of her husband. She asked her husband to make an excuse to the king and refuse the assignment. But the man didn't agree and went away on the king's errand.

The courtier took advantage of the loneliness and helplessness of his brother's wife and started to seduce her. The woman was adamantly chaste. The courtier said that if the woman didn't respond to his advances, he would involve her in a false case of adultery and get her killed by public stoning. Even then the woman didn't budge an inch. The courtier went to the king and appealed to him to punish the woman for adultery. The woman was stoned and was given for dead.

But the woman was, in fact, not dead. The whole night she remained at the ground where she was stoned. In the morning she managed to reach herself to a nearby hermitage. The hermit took pity on her, gave her food and treated the wounds. The woman recovered completely. The hermit had a son whom he loved dearly. The woman was entrusted to take care of the son. The hermit had a slave who got enamored of the woman. Despite all his overtures, he was unable to win over the woman. When all his subterfuges failed, he killed the hermit's son and put the blame for the murder on the woman. The hermit was very sad. But he was a kind person. Instead of punishing the woman, he gave her some money and ordered her out of the hermitage.

The woman was travelling forlornly in her loneliness when she found some persons cuffing a man. She went near them and asked the reason for the punishment. They said that the man owed them some money and was not paying it back. The woman took pity on the person and settled his debt from the money the hermit had given her. The man was therefore released and he accompanied her on the way. They were going along the bank of a river when they noticed some people sitting at a distance.

The man asked her to wait for a while that he would go and inquire about them. He went to the persons and found that they were itinerant traders. He told them that he had a very pretty slave girl for sale. One of the traders went with the person to the woman and liked her. The deal was struck for the sale. The man took the money and left the woman with the traders. However much the woman tried to convince the men that she was not a slave, they didn't agree. Looking at the fair appearance of the woman, every trader claimed that she would be his companion.

At the time of departure they had two boats. They decided that they would board one boat and the second would carry their merchandise and the woman. They therefore set sail. On the way they came across a storm and the boat carrying the men sank with all the merchants aboard. The other boat, with the woman and the merchandise, reached a place on the coast safely. The woman found that the place had a beautiful garden that had no human being on it. There was also a well-appointed mansion in the garden, as if ready to receive its inmates. The pious woman started living there and busied herself in prayers.

The prophet (S) of the time was ordered by Allah to go to the king and ask him to seek the pardon of a person living at a particular garden in an island for the unjust punishment inflicted on her. The king reached the place after some search. He found that it was a beautiful garden and the woman was busy offering prayer in seclusion. The king told her that he was asked by a prophet (S) of the Bani Israel to approach her and seek her pardon for the unjust punishment inflicted on her. The woman said that she had a condition for pardoning him. She asked him to bring certain persons to her presence.

The king came back to the woman with the persons she had asked him to bring along. She told him that he should make a promise that he wouldn't order stoning of anyone in future without fully establishing the reason for such a harsh punishment. The king was repentant and was therefore pardoned.

Then she asked the courtier, her husband's brother, to seek Allah's pardon. He shed tears of remorse and she forgave him. She pardoned the hermit's slave too. She called the man who sold her as a slave and forgave his fault. In the end she called her husband and told him her experiences. She told him that from that day neither she was his spouse nor he her husband. She indicated to him that a boat full of riches was on the coast. She also told him that since he had avarice for riches, he could take all that and go his way. She asked him and the rest of the party to leave her alone to her prayers!

Imam Zain-ul-'Abidin (as) narrates: In the tribe of Bani Israel a person was known as a thief of the shrouds of dead persons. One of his neighbors got seriously ill and was afraid that when he died, the person will dig his grave to steal the shroud. He called the person and presented to him a shroud and requested him not to open his grave for the purpose. In the beginning the thief was a little reluctant. But ultimately he yielded and took one of the two shrouds. After some days the neighbor died.

The thief thought that the person is already dead and there is no chance of his knowing that he had stolen his second shroud. Therefore in the darkness of the night he entered the graveyard. After sometime the thief too was seriously ill. He now had pangs of remorse that he had broken a serious promise made to his neighbor. He called his sons and told them that when he was dead he should be burnt to the last vestige of the bones and the ashes thrown into the river. This way he would be spared of presenting himself before Allah on the Day of Judgement. The person died and his son fulfilled his last wish.

Allah issued orders for the man's ashes to reassemble and come back alive. Thus the thief was alive once again and Allah asked him about why he took such a step as to getting his cadaver burned? The man replied that he did that out of Allah's fear. A herald called, "Your penitence has earned you pardon!"

Bin Babawiyah narrates that the Prophet of Islam (S) was sitting one day in the shade of a tree. A person then came, and removing his robe from his body started rolling on the ground. The man repeatedly lamented, "O Conscience! Taste this hardship! The hardship of the Doomsday shall be much more severe." The Prophet (S) looked at him and said, "What is it that is forcing you to behave the way you are behaving?" The man said, "It is only the fear of Allah and the call of the conscience!" The

Prophet (S) said, “Allah is praising you for this act to the angels and has pardoned all your past sins!”

It is narrated from the Prophet of Allah (S) that three persons were travelling together. On the way they took shelter in a cave because of cyclonic rain. With severe rain and wind a big boulder slid down the hill and blocked the mouth of the cave. The persons were very worried. They knew that there was no escape for them and that they should pray for Allah’s help recalling their best acts of virtue.

One of the three persons raised his hands to the Heaven and said, “O Sustainer of people! I engaged a worker fixing a measure of rice for his labors. He finished the work but left without taking the wage. I sowed that quantity of seed, took the crop and bought cows from the proceeds. When the worker came claiming his wages, I offered him the cows. He refused to accept them and said that he wanted the measure of rice agreed to between them. I told him that the cows were bought from the returns obtained from his measure of rice. With difficulty the worker agreed to take the cows. I did all this with Allah’s fear in my heart. If this act of mine is acceptable to Allah, He will remove the boulder from the mouth of the cave!” The boulder moved a little.

The second traveler said, “O Allah! You know well that one night I took food for my parents when they were already asleep. I thought it well not to disturb their sleep and abided near them all the night. If this act of obedience and love of my parents is acceptable to you, please remove the boulder from the mouth of the cave!” The boulder moved away a little more from the mouth of the cave.

The third person cried and said, “O Allah! It happened one night. I was deeply in love with a cousin of mine. When I expressed my wish to her, she demanded a huge sum of money from me in return. When I gave her the sum and the time for fulfilling my desire came, she said, ‘O cruel person! You are not afraid of Allah! You are trying to open a closed door without permission! ‘When she said this, I had pangs of remorse and refrained from the nefarious act. O Allah! If you have liked my remorse, repentance and compunction, do remove the boulder from the mouth of the cave!’ No sooner the person completed his prayer, the boulder slid away from the mouth of the cave!”

Klein narrates from Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) that one day Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) was sitting with his companions when a person came and said, “O Amir’ul-Mu’mineen (as)! I have committed a foul act with a boy. Please make a pronouncement against me!” Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) said, “Go away from here! Are you mad!”

The man was adamant and raised the same call four times. Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) said: You are a self confessed criminal! The Prophet (S) has ordered three punishments for such crimes!) 1) Beheading with a sword. 2) Tying of the limbs with rope and throwing from the top of a hill. 3) Burning the person. Now tell me which of the punishments you would prefer. The man asked, “Which punishment is the most severe!” Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) said, “Getting burnt alive is the most severe!” The man cried and said, ‘I would like to be burnt alive!’ A fire was lighted in a ditch and the man went crying toward it. Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) too cried in sympathy with the man and said, “You have made the angels in

the Firmament cry for you! Allah in his Munificence has pardoned you!”

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) narrates that in the tribe of Bani Israel there was a girl so pretty that some youth said that the determination of the most pious person of the time would falter setting eyes on her. The woman wanted to prove if the young men were right. She went to the pious person’s house and knocked at his door. When the person saw it was a woman, he didn’t permit her to enter the house. She bluffed him saying that if he didn’t give her shelter, she might be molested by some youths chasing her. Hearing this the pious man allowed her to enter the house. The woman removed her shawl from her face. He raised his hand towards her and immediately drew it away in remorse. There was a cauldron on fire lit for cooking something. The pious man put his hand into the fire. The woman ran out crying, “The pious person is burning his own hand!” Men came running but the man had already burnt his hand!

Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) narrates that a woman was a guest at the place of a pious person. In the night the Satan misguided the pious man. In order to control his desire the man burned one of his fingers. When the foul desires cropped up again, the man burnt another finger of his. By the morning the pious persons burnt all his fingers. Then he told to the woman, “Go now! May Allah save me from a guest like you!”

The Lament Of Prophet Yahya

It is narrated from The Prophet of Islam (S) that Prophet Yahya (as) had propensity for piety from his very childhood. He used to go to the *Bayt al Muqdis* and look at the hermits in prayer, wearing dress made of hair and wool tying their locks to the pillars of the building. He asked his mother to make for him similar dress that he could join the other people in prayer.

The mother asked Yahya (as) to be patient till his father, the prophet Zakaria (as) arrived, that they consult him before arranging the ceremonial dress for him.

When Prophet Zakaria (as) arrived, he was consulted. He told to Yahya (as), “You are still a child! Why do you have the intention of joining the ranks of hermits?” He replied, “O father! You are observing, death doesn’t spare even children younger than me. How could I wait for what I wish to do?”

Prophet Zakaria (as) told to his wife, “Give the child what he wishes to have!”

Therefore Yahya (as)’s mother got a dress and topee of hair made for him. Wearing these he went to *Bayt al Muqdis* and busied himself in prayer with the other hermits.

One day Yahya (as) noticed that his body was bruised with the rubbing of the dress made of the hard hair. He cried.

The voice of a herald came, “O Yahya (as)! Are you crying because your body is bruised and has become emaciated? By My Glory! If you set eyes on the Hell you might condescend to wear the dress of

steel!”

Hearing this, Prophet Yahya (as) cried so much that his cheeks became gory, the flesh fell and the teeth were exposed. When his mother heard about his condition, she came running to him and asked, “My son! What condition you have rendered yourself to?”

Then his father said, “Why are you doing like this? I had offered special prayers to Allah to get a son! But I find that you are trying to depart from me.”

Prophet Yahya (as) said, “O father! Once, while delivering a sermon you had said that between the Heaven and the Hell there is a ravine. Only those who cry in remembrance of Allah will be able to successfully negotiate safely through that ravine.”

Prophet Zakaria (as) said, “No doubt, it is true! But you are still a tender child! One certainly has to put in lot of effort in praying to Allah. You too are under obligation in this matter as the others are!”

His mother said, “If you wish I can make two cushions for your cheeks that the pain to the wounds is subdued and your teeth remain covered. The tears too will be absorbed by these cushions.”

Yahya (as) replied, “O mother! You are at liberty to do what you wish to do!”

Therefore his mother prepared two soft cushions and tied them on the cheeks of Yahya (as). Then she noticed both the sleeves of the dress were drenched in tears. When she squeezed the sleeves, water fell through her clenched fingers.

Noticing this, Prophet Zakaria (as) raised his arms towards the Heaven and said, “O Allah! This son I had prayed to you for giving me! You are the Most Beneficent Lord! Be kind on him!” Afterwards, whenever Prophet Zakaria (as) gave a sermon, he used to ensure that Yahya (as) was not around. In his presence he refrained from talking about the Heaven and the Hell!

One day Prophet Zakaria (as) was busy delivering a sermon when Yahya (as), wearing a shawl came and sat with the congregation. Prophet Zakaria (as) was not aware of his presence. He said that Jibrael had informed him that there is a mountain in the Hell that is called *Sukran*. There is a valley at the foot of this mount called *Ghazban*. In this valley there is a well the depth of which is equivalent to travelling for a full hundred years. In the well there are sarcophagi of fire. In these sarcophagi there are chests of fire. In these chests there are dresses of fire, collars and chains of fire that would be put round the necks and bodies of the sinners on the Day of Judgement!

Hearing this, Prophet Yahya (as) shouted, “*Wa agfalnaaho*” and took a deep sigh! Then he rose and quietly walked away to the forest. Prophet Zakaria (as) returned home after the sermon was finished. He told to Yahya (as)’s mother: Go and search for Yahya (as). After hearing me talk about the Hell he has gone into the forest.’ The mother came out crying and asked people if they had seen her son. After traversing a long distance she met a shepherd. He said a youth of the description given by her was seen

by him sitting in a cave and crying. He had cried so much that his feet were covered in tears. The shepherd said that the youth was crying, “O Allah! I shall not drink cool water until You show me my place of rest in the Hereafter!”

Yahya (as)’s mother reached that cave and embraced Yahya (as). She told him, “O son! Remove this dress of hard hair that there are bruises on your body. Wear soft dress of *Pashmina wool*.”

Prophet Yahya (as) agreed to change his dress. The mother cooked lentils for him. He ate his fill and slept. He slept so long that the time for the obligatory prayer was past. A voice then called, “O Yahya (as)! You like this abode more than ours! You want a better neighbor than Us?”

Yahya (as) rose from his sleep suddenly and looked towards the sky. He said, O Creator! I don’t consider any place more than the *Bayt al Muqdis!*” Then he asked his mother to give to him the dress of hair, wore it and prepared to go to *Bayt al Muqdis*. He didn’t stop, however much his mother persuaded him not to go.

Prophet Zakaria (as) told to the mother of Yahya (as), “He will not stop with your persuasion! Let him go. The curtain has been removed from his heart! The comforts of this world are nothing for him!”

Prophet Yahya (as) reached the *Bayt al Muqdis* and got busy in his prayers!

The Prayer of The Chief of Imams, Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali

Bin Babawiyah has quoted from Urwa bin Zubair that one day they were assembled in the Prophet (S)’s Mosque. The topic of discussion was the prayers of the people of *Badr* and *Baiath al-Ridhwan*. Abu Darda said: Gentlemen! I am telling about an august personality who had less worldly wealth than other Companions of the Prophet (S) but was the most superior in piety and prayer. The gathering wondered who could this personage be?

Abu Darda then said, “It was ‘Ali bin Abi Talib (as)!” Hearing this they turned away their faces! From the group of Ansar a person said, “Why did you broach a discussion that no one here likes?” Abu Darda said, “I have said what I had seen! One night I went to the oasis of Bani Najjar. There I heard that behind the trees someone was saying prayer in a tone full of pathos, ‘O Allah! You are so Merciful that despite seeing the innumerable sins of your creatures You have bestowed on them uncountable Blessings! We humans commit such unpardonable misdeeds but You don’t shame us! O Allah! The entire life was spent in difficulties.

Our List of Deeds (*Nama al-Aamaal*) is predominantly filled with mention of the sins committed! Now we seek Deliverance from You! We don’t seek anything other than Your Pleasure!’ Hearing this I moved closer. I noticed that it was ‘Ali Bin abi Talib (as). I kept watching his supplication. After the supplication he offered several genuflections(*Rakaat*) of prayer. He then continued his beseeching to Allah,

‘When I look at Your Great Deliverance, the sins of humans appear trivial to me! When I look at Your Stringent Retribution I feel that the men have committed gravest of sins! Oh! We humans have forgotten lot of sins committed by us. But You have the exact account of everyone’s deeds! With Your Orders the angels would review them! What will be the position of men who will not have the assistance of their next of kin, they will not be able to hear the pleadings of these men! What severe fire will be there that it would burn the very entrails of the persons! In the Hell it would be like a river of fire!’

Saying this Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) cried with intensity and then his voice choked. I thought that it was late night and he might have fallen asleep. When it was almost time for the *Fajr* prayer I went near him to wake him up for the prayer. I called him several times but didn’t get any reply. I touched him and found his body as motionless as the dry timber. Reciting *Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi rajeoon* I rushed to Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as)’s house. I told Lady Fatima (as) about her husband’s condition.

She said, ‘O Abu Darda! Don’t be astonished! Abul Hasan (as) will be in such a state many a time when he supplicates to Allah!’ I took some water to where Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) was lying and revived him with a few splashes of the water. He said, ‘O Abu Darda! Why are you worried and crying?’ I said, ‘I worried seeing your condition!’ He said, ‘What will be your condition if you see the angels take you for accounting of your deeds in front of Allah and surrounded on all sides by the angels with ferocious faces. No friend will come near you at that time. The people of the Firmament will take pity on you! O Abu Darda! Only the Allah’s favored persons will have pity on you!’ Abu Darda says, “By Allah! I never saw any other Companion of the Prophet so intense in prayer and fearful of Allah!”

The Third Fruit: Confronting The Psyche

One’s baser self (*Nafs al-ammara*) is more damaging than even the influence of the Satan! One who is able to control his baser instincts for the fear of the Day of Judgement, will be eligible for entry to the Heaven. On the Day of Judgement Satan would tell those who were misguided by him: Was I your monarch that you obeyed my orders? Why do you blame me? Blame your own baser self! Fighting with Satan and *Nafs al-Ammara* is more than confronting mortal enemies in Jihad! The Jihad of the psyche (*Mujaheda al-nafs*) is keeping away from the baser urges of the mind for doing things that are contrary to the norms of *Shariah*.

Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) narrates that the Prophet of Islam (S) sent his men for Jihad. When they returned, he said, “I am happy, you have accomplished the *Minor Jihad*. Now you have to make the *Major Jihad!*” The people asked, “What is the Major jihad?” The Prophet (S) said, “The biggest Jihad is the struggle against one’s baser instincts (*Jihad al-Nafs*).”

Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) narrates that the Prophet (S) said to Abu Dharr, “O Abu Dharr! Allah has not created any Prophet (S) but for teaching his people to be honest, pious, righteous, truthful and punctual in offering prayers. But the most important thing for them is their behavior with the fellow human beings. If they are right in this, they will earn their place in the Heaven. When a person entrusts his valuables to

another, Satan will have an opportunity to influence the mind of the person who has the trust of the valuables! If the man resists Satan's temptations, it is *Jehad al-Nafs*! This Jihad is more valuable than the Jihad with weapons!"

"O Abu Dharr! If a person tortures his own psyche by doing undesirable things harmful to his own person, Allah might punish or forgive him! But the injustice that a person does to other humans is not at all pardonable in the eyes of Allah!" "O Abu Dharr! There are three types of tyranny (*Zulm*). The first type is pardonable in the eyes of Allah. Here a person inflicts it on himself because of his baser instincts. The second type of tyranny is that which Allah never forgives. Here a person adopts polytheistic tendencies. The third type of tyranny or injustice is that which is caused by a person to fellow human beings. This sin is not pardonable in the eyes of Allah!"

The Fourth Fruit: Censuring The World

Any person with average intelligence knows that this transient world is not worth getting attached to! But Satan presents the world to people with false embellishments and puts curtains on their eyes that they are not able to see the actual facts. Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) had said that Allah has accumulated all the virtues in a vault and its key is in the hands of piety. Whoever wishes to be virtuous, he must adopt piety.

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) has said that if a person wishes to acquire the Rewards of the Hereafter, then he must shun the world. The pious (*Zahed*) should be aware that by shunning the world it doesn't mean that there will be any reduction in the rightful blessings that are in store for him. In fact, however much a person seeks the world, there will not be any increase in the worldly benefits that are his destiny.

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as), during a journey, passed by a mosque. The time for prayer was nigh. Therefore he dismounted from his horse. One person was standing there. He asked him to hold the reins of the horse for the time he offered prayer and returned. When Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) came out after the prayer he found that the horse was standing alone and the man had gone away with the rein. He put back the two dirhams in his pocket that he had in his hand to give to the man. He mounted the horse and returned home. He gave two dirhams to Qambar, his slave, and asked him to buy a set of reins.

Qambar went to the saddler and was surprised to see their own reins hanging in the shop. When he inquired how the reins came there, he was told that a person came there and sold it for two dirhams. Qambar gave two dirhams to the shop owner and retrieved the reins. When Qambar reached home with the reins, Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) told him, "From where you got this and how much you paid for it?" Qambar replied that he got it from the saddler on payment of two dirhams. Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) said: How unfortunate was the person who left behind the legitimate benefit and ran away with illegitimate!

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) narrates that the Prophet (S) was sitting in the mosque one day in slightly disturbed mood. At that moment the angel came with a message from Allah, "O My friend and Messenger! Take these keys to the riches of the world. Spend as much of them as you wish! The treasures of the world have no value when compared to your happiness!" The Prophet (S) told the angel, "Tell Allah on my behalf that the world is for those who don't have a home in the Hereafter!"

In another tradition it is said that the Prophet (S) was once walking on the street when he noticed a dead lamb rotting on a garbage dump. He asked his companions, "What will be the value of this animal?" They replied, "If it was alive, it wouldn't be worth more than a dirham." The Prophet (S) said, "By Allah! The world for me is not worth more than that dead lamb!" "Think of the world as an inn where you are stopping for a little time. The worldly wealth is like a dream. When the eyes open, there would be nothing around to see!"

Abu Dharr(r.a.) said, "O seekers of knowledge and wisdom! Don't be attached to wealth and your off-springs! One day you will have to leave them behind! You are like a guest in this world. You are here today and your destination will be different tomorrow!"

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) said, "Don't seek more riches. Excess of riches will result in excessive sins. A clever person is one who distinguishes the difference between the transient and immortal. Shun the transitory world. Love for the world will make one forget his duties to Allah. O seekers of the world! You are running after it, but it will throw you out! Those who are proud of the worldly gains, will be soon engulfed with difficulties. Those who have gone from here, have never returned! Those who remain, never know when they will depart. It's pleasures and pains are uncertain. Don't count on your age, every thing will transit sooner or later! When it gives fame to a person, it can soon give him infamy! It has caused ridicule to it's monarchs! The life in this world is always awaiting death! Have you not heard of the people before you?.How rich and respected they were in their days! Some were the kings and others were courtiers! But when the time to depart came around, none could help them! Do you love such a place and the people inhabiting it!? Don't attach your hearts to the world!"

Bin Babawiah narrates that whenever the Prophet (S) returned from his journeys, he would first go to the house of Lady Fatima (as). Once when he returned from a trip and went to Lady Fatima (as)'s house, he noticed an expensive curtain hanging on the door. He also saw two earrings adorning her daughter's ears. The Prophet (S) suddenly departed without talking to her. Lady Fatima (as) understood why her father was upset. She removed the curtain from the door and sent along with the earrings to the Prophet (S) requesting him to sell them and give away the proceeds in charity. Seeing the ear-rings and the curtain the Prophet (S) said thrice, "My daughter! May your father be sacrificed on you! You have gauged the feelings of your father! The world is not for Muhammad (S) and his progeny! If the world was worth a fly's feather in Allah's eyes, he wouldn't have given a gulp of water from it to the infidels!"

It is narrated from Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) that one day he was irrigating an orchard when a very beautiful woman came and said, "O son of Abu Talib! If you consent to marry me, I shall give you the

secret treasures of the world that you will be spared of the hard labor that you do!” Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) asked, “Who are you and what is your name?” She replied, “I am the world!” He said, “Run away! This implement I hold in my hands is worth much more than all your treasures!”

Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) said that the love for the world is the root of all the troubles. One who doesn’t value the world very much, is the man of wisdom!

The Fifth Fruit: What The World Means

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) says, ‘A person who seeks the world is like the silk-worm which becomes more and more incarcerated inside the cocoon the more silk it winds around and dies inside it. A seeker of the world is like the sheep that ventures into the grassland to feed. It fattens, and the same fattening becomes the cause of its death under the butcher’s knife! Remember, when you go before Allah, four questions will be asked:

- How did you spend your youth?
- What work you did during your lifetime?
- From where you acquired the riches?
- Where did you spend your wealth?

Prepare your replies to these questions.

The more you seek the world, the more will be the desire to have it. It is like the thirsty drinking the water from *Dariya al-Shor* (a river). The more he drinks the water, the more thirsty he feels!.

The exterior of the world is very attractive and in fact it is very destructive! It looks pretty like a snake, soft and cuddly! But its nature is venomous! The wise keeps an eye on its venom and escape from it. The gullible plays with it like a child!

This world is transient! The Prophet of Islam (S) has said, “The world is like a tree for men to have a respite under it’s shadow and depart!”

About The Ungratefulness Of The World

Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) narrates that the world came one day, smartly dressed, to Prophet ‘Isa (as) and said, “O ‘Isa bin Maryam (as)! Marry me!” Prophet ‘Isa (as) said, “Did you ever marry anyone else?” It said, “I married thousands!” Prophet ‘Isa (as) asked, “Did they all divorce you?” It said, “No! I killed them all!” Prophet ‘Isa (as) said, “Who will marry you that you have killed thousands of your husbands!”

The Way To Get Relief From The World

Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) narrates that Luqman (as) advised his son that the world is a deep ocean that has drowned thousands. Therefore, seek the way of deliverance. Prepare the boat of piety and fill it with good deeds. Make contentment the sail of your boat. Make your wisdom the navigator, knowledge the guide and patience the anchor!

Futility Of The World

Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) said, "This world is like a building that has a very low roof. If one raises his head, he gets hurt. If one keeps his head low, he will pass away peacefully!"

The Sad End Of The World

The Prophet of Islam (S) has said, "The world is like a delicacy. When consumed in excess, it causes pain in the tummy!"

The World And The Hereafter Cannot Come Together

The Prophet of Islam (S) has said, "A man of the world is like a person who walks on water and wants that his feet don't get wet!"

To highlight the defects of the world we narrate in some detail:

The Tale of Balohar and Yuzasaf

Bin Babawiah narrates from Muhammad bin Zakaria that in the realm of India there was a king who had sway over large areas and populations! He was fond of all carnal pleasures. He preferred the company of sycophants. He hated those who gave sound advice. But, despite all these, he excelled in governance and control of the affairs of the state. All his subjects were obedient to the last man. With power and pelf, his psyche was flying high! He was fully engrossed with his world of sins and pleasures! The praises of the sycophants had made him more conceited! The king lacked only one thing. He had no son and successor to his crown!

The Satan, taking pleasure from the ways of the king, egged him on to the heights of sinful ways! He hated the pious persons. Idolatry was rampant in his realm. One day he asked people about a person who was considered the wisest in the realm. He asked them about the activities of the person and told that he had an important task for the person. He was told, "Your Majesty! The person is so sick of the world that he never stirs out of his house!" Hearing this, the king was very angry. And ordered his men to bring the man urgently to him.

The king, when the man was brought to him, tried much to convince him to agree to adopt the ways

desired by the king. When the man refused to acquiesce to the king's suggestions, the king asked him, "Who has advised you to be a recluse?" The man replied, "My conscience!" The king said, "Your conscience has killed you! I therefore want to give a punishment to your conscience that is meted out to a murderer!" The man said, "I have very high expectations from your wisdom that you will not make a verdict between us by yourself but you will appoint a sagacious judge whose verdict would satisfy me!" The king asked, "Tell me! Who could that judge be?" The man said, "I can depend on your own wisdom for a fair judgement!" The king now said, "Tell me, what you wish to say!"

The man said: I have heard a wise person say that a foolish person thinks that a useless thing is very valuable and neglects the things that have real value. Then he acquires and adopts the useless things. When I heard this, I started running away from the most worthless thing, this world! Now, in my view life is in death! Every thing including property, health, illness, fame, power and self is just a transit towards death. O King! This world is to be pitied! It makes a person the master and makes the same person a servant! It makes a person smile and the very next moment forces him to cry!

O King! You have said that shunning the world I have hurt my conscience and caused hardship to my dependents! It is, in fact, contrary to what you think. It is for their love that I have put away wrong desires and wishes. Now I can identify friends from foes!

O king! Among the horde of sycophants around you, none is your loyal friend! Everyone is after power and riches! If this realm, the wealth and power is not with you, then you will not get any response from them. The way I live, all the inmates of my surroundings are my friends. Whatever I do, they follow suit. Whatever I say, they say too. I have not shunned the world at the spur of a moment! I have done it after deep thought!

I hope, O King, you will also benefit from my humble thoughts. The king was furious hearing this advice from the man. The king ordered the person to be exiled from his kingdom. He said that the person was misguided and was also misleading his subjects in general.

Around that time a male child was born to the king. He was so overjoyed that he was close to dying with happiness overwhelming him! He was convinced that the child was the reward for his idolatry. He spent the entire wealth in the treasury on pomp and show. He ordered general celebration in the realm for one year. He named his son as Yuzasaf. He ordered all the astrologers in the country to the court and to make their predictions about the child's future. Excepting one astrologer, the rest predicted that the child would be superior in wealth and fame in comparison to all the children born in that period. But the only astrologer, who was held in very high esteem by the king for his expertise, predicted that the child will not only be superior in his wisdom but he will excel in nobility and piety. In fact he would be the chief of pious people in the realm.

Hearing this, the king became a little sad. He started planning to keep the child away from getting exposure to piety. He ordered a big mansion to be constructed where the child would live with a selected

few companions. It was strictly ordered that there should not be any talk of death or the Hereafter in his presence. He was not to hear anything about religion or piety. To ensure the risk of his getting exposed to piety, all the pious persons from the realm were banished to other countries.

One of the ministers of the king was very wise and tactful. The king used to depend on his advice in important matters. The other courtiers were jealous of this minister for the favor he received from the king. One day the king went out hunting. The minister too was in his company. On the way the minister noticed a grand old man lying severely injured on a boulder. On inquiry, the old man said that the wild animals had mangled him. The minister took pity on his condition. The man said to the minister that if he saved his life, he too would be of help to him sometime in the future. The minister said that even if the man was unable to help him in the future, it was his own humane duty to come to the rescue now. The minister however asked him what sort of great help he was capable of rendering in the future. The man said that he had the skill to mend affairs that go wrong and bring back things into control. The minister didn't pay any heed to what the man said. However, he brought the man home and got him properly treated and restored to health.

A time came when the envious and jealous courtiers colluded with one another and devised stratagem to put down the minister in the consideration of the king. One envious courtier told to the king in confidence, "Your Majesty! You must exercise care in dealing with the minister! He is bestowing so much attention and gifts on the subjects that he is very popular with them. The secret behind this tactic is that he is planning to overthrow you and occupy the throne. If you wish to test him, call him and seek his opinion that you wish to leave the crown and take to the life of an ascetic. Then decide for yourself the course of action after knowing his mind whether he wants to get rid of you or not!"

One day the king talked to his favorite minister in confidence, "You know what condition I was in before I ascended the throne. I might again fall back to the same condition in the future! Therefore, what is the use of a kingdom that is transitory! I wish to entrust it to some capable person and go into ascetic seclusion. I need your advice in this matter." The minister cried hearing what the king told him. He said, "Your Majesty! Getting a permanent thing with difficulty is preferable to getting transitory materials without any effort! Your desire is noble and the Almighty will endow you with blessings of both piety and worldly wealth!"

Since the king's mind was already poisoned, he didn't like what the minister suggested. The wise minister saw the changed expression on the face of the king and thought that the monarch was not happy with the advice given to him. He recalled the old man whom he had saved sometime ago. He called the man and recounted to him what transpired between him and the king. The man said, "I have reached the depth of the matter! Before anything happens wear the attire of a minstrel and go to the king and tell him that you are renouncing the world before the king adopted asceticism."

The minister did as the man advised him. When the king saw his minister in the garb of a beggar, he realized that the envious courtier had poisoned his mind to harm the minister. Otherwise the minister

would not have abandoned his ministry before he himself went out as an ascetic.

The next day the king ordered all the pious persons out of the kingdom. After a few days he got information that two pious persons were hiding in the kingdom. He got them rounded up and burnt alive. There were no pious persons left in the realm. Some of the pious persons, at great personal risk to themselves and their supporters, remained hidden in the hope that at the appropriate time they would propagate the virtues of piety in the country.

Yuzasaf, the king's son, was a youth now. He had grown into a wise and sagacious person. He was not worried by the thought that why he was cloistered with a small group of persons. He started wondering about his seclusion and wanted to investigate the reason thereof. He also thought of asking his father about the reason for his segregation. Then he thought it discreet not to ask his father because it was he who had ordered all the arrangements! In the group of learned persons, who were with him, was a man who took special liking to the prince, for his wisdom and cleverness.

One day Yuzasaf told him, "I feel instinctively attracted towards you and consider you as my father. I know, I shall be succeeding my father as the king. At that time either your status will be either very high or you will be reduced to nothing!" The man asked, "Why is there a chance of my status becoming so inferior as you say?" The prince said, "I have a question to ask you. If you don't give me the correct reply, I shall give you the maximum punishment that will be in my power!" The man was very scared hearing what the prince said and found conviction in the youth's tone. Therefore he confided with the prince about the predictions of the astrologers, incarceration of the child in a lonely mansion and keeping the prince ignorant about matters of piety. The prince thanked the man profusely for making him wise about the affairs concerning him and congratulated him for a glorious future in store for him.

When the king visited the prince thereafter, he greeted him respectfully and said, "Your Majesty! I haven't been able to understand why I am incarcerated in this lonely mansion? Why am I forbidden to go out in the open? Is it a punishment for any crime that I have committed? If the reason is to keep me ignorant of the matters of life and death, then how long I could be kept in such ignorance? One day the world will itself inform me of all this! I seek your permission to let me go out. Otherwise the curiosity will kill me one day!"

The king understood that the secret of keeping the prince in seclusion has somehow come into his knowledge. He ordered the special retainers to take the prince out in a procession of horses.

Yuzasaf stirred out in great pomp and pageantry. It was like a festival in the entire realm. From that day Yuzasaf used to go out in the city occasionally. One day he noticed two men. One had a swollen and yellowish face. The other was blind. He asked people about the condition of the persons.

They said, "The person with swollen body suffers from pains that have caused his present condition. The other person lost his sight because of an ailment of the eyes!" Yuzasaf asked them if they were the only two sickly persons or there were any more of them?

People said several persons fall ill.

The prince was affected learning about the suffering of the people.

He went out on an excursion on another day. He saw a feeble, old person. His hair was grey and his back was bent forward that made it difficult for him to walk.

He asked people, "Is the old man the only of his type or there were many more such persons?"

The people said, "Everyone reaches this stage in his advanced age!"

The prince asked, "In how many years a person becomes like the way the old man was?"

They said, "About a hundred years of age!"

The prince asked, "what happens to them, thereafter?"

They said, "The person dies or goes to the other world!"

The prince was much affected hearing all this.

He called the person from his companions in the mansion, who was his confidante. and asked him, "If this world is not the permanent abode of men, and the Hereafter is really the final abode, then why people are so much enamoured of the world!?"

The man related to the prince all the reasons in detail as to why the king wanted to keep him in seclusion.

The prince asked, "Are there any men of God who are not attached to the world?"

The man said there were many such persons in the realm but they have been banished to other countries by the king. It might be possible that a few are still there hiding themselves from the fear of the king's anger and punishment. They must be awaiting the end to this tyrannical rule to be able to freely preach the people.

From that day onwards the prince became very pensive and contemplative. It was the talk of the town that the prince has turned his mind towards piety. At this time there arrived from the island of Sarandeeep a man of piety, Balohar by name, and he got wind of the interest of the prince in piety. Balohar had come to the kingdom by boat and had met the courtier close to the prince in the guise of a merchant. He told them that he had a miraculous medicine that can bring back sight to totally blind persons. It can also give the faculty of hearing to persons who are totally deaf.

The medicine also had, he said, power to cure any incurable ailment. It can give strength to the physically weak, it will make the mentally weak into wise and can give the possessor control over his

mortal enemies. He told them that he wanted to show the medicine to the prince. that he thought he was the right person to own it. He requested them to get an audition from the prince for him. The courtier first wanted to see the medicine before he could seek an appointment from the prince. The man said that none other than the prince could bear to look at the medicine.

Hearing this from Balohar, the courtier went to the prince and recounted what transpired between him and the merchant. The intuition of the prince gave him a feeling that he could learn something interesting from the merchant newly arrived from Serendeep. He wanted Balohar to meet him privately in the quiet of night. The prince treated him with due respect and courtesy. Balohar said, "I never thought that your highness would give such respect to a total stranger?" The prince said, "The secret that I wish to unravel, seems possible of solution through you!"

Balohar said: I am deeply grateful to you for the kindness you have for me! I wish to tell you a tale. There was a king in a certain country. The king was well known for his good nature and kindness to his subjects. One day while he was riding for pleasure, the king noticed two persons dressed in tattered garments. The king dismounted his steed, greeted them and talked to them with respect. He shook hands with both the persons. The courtiers accompanying the king didn't like the gesture. They couldn't tell anything to the king but went to his elder brother and complained about what they thought was the indiscretion of the king. The brother went to the king and admonished him. He heard his elder brother with respect and patience.

The next morning the king deputed the 'messenger-of-death' to his elder brother's house. It was a custom there that the king used to have an official messenger-of-death who would call on the person the king ordered to be executed.

Hearing about the visit of the messenger-of-death everyone started crying at the residence of the king's elder brother. The elder brother, in a funeral procession, came to the court. Seeing the condition of the brother, the king said: How ignorant and foolish a person are you that for no cause of capital punishment, just for getting a visit to your house from the messenger-of-death you are so worried and disconsolate! Don't you think of the day when the herald from Allah will call you and question about the treatment you meted out to Adam's progeny like you, who are as much your brothers as your own brothers are! What reply will you give? My courtiers misled you. They were themselves misled by the shabby and tattered apparel of those two pious persons! They were in fact men of deep piety and knowledge!

Saying this, the king ordered four big chests to be brought. First two were smeared with coal tar and filled with jewels and locked. The other two chests were filigreed with gold and silver. But he got them filled with garbage. Now he called the courtiers who had complained to his brother. And asked them to tell which of the chests were more valuable. They said that the chests with golden filigree are valuable and those with covering of coal tar are not of any value.

The king ordered the chests covered with coal tar to be opened. The jewels inside there illumined the court premises. The king said, "These chests are like those two wise persons in tatters! You considered them with least respect seeing their exterior appearance! You have said that the chests with covering of gold are valuable. They are like those hypocrites who dress in costly garment and pretend to be wise and pious. Such persons, with all their external finery, are full of garbage and trash as are these golden chests!"

Hearing the story, the prince was very much impressed with Balohar. He caught hold of his hand and said, "O wise person! Tell me some more story of wisdom!"

Balohar narrated another story replete with lesson of piety to the prince:

Every tiller of the soil sows seeds in the land. In that process some seeds fall on the corners of his holding that are consumed by the birds. Some seeds fall on stones and wither over a few days. Some of the seeds fall on thorny bushes that don't allow them to grow and flourish. The seeds that fall on properly prepared and maintained soil, grow and yield a plentiful crop. O Prince! Excepting the seeds that drop on the properly prepared soil, the rest are just a waste for the farmer. Similarly words of virtue can only prosper and come from one who has a pure heart!

The Prince said, "O wise person! The contentment that my heart is getting from your words of wisdom cannot be expressed! Relate to me some tale that reflects on the futility of the world!"

Balohar said: It is said that once an elephant chased a man. The man ran scared and the elephant chased him the more! On the way there was a well. Near the parapet of the well grew a tree. The man, in desperation, hung to a branch of the tree. He saw that at the base of the tree there were four snakes and under these snakes a python was lying with its mouth wide open! When he looked up, he found white and black mice cutting away the branch on which he was precariously hanging. He noticed that there was honey on a branch within his reach. He started licking the honey oblivious of the hazards around him. O prince! Life in the world is full of hazards and hardship. The four snakes are the strong passion, bile, phlegm and blood. Any excess or shortage of these in the body of a person can be the cause of his death. The two mice, white and black, are the day and night in the life of a person that are busy cutting short his life. The python with mouth wide open is the death. But the man thinks that the world for him is sweet like the honey! The sweetness of the honey makes him oblivious of the hazards around him!

Yuzasaf said, "O wise man! Tell me some more fables like this."

Balohar continued: It is said that a person had three friends. He used to love one of them very much. Whatever the person asked him to do, he would do with alacrity. The second friend too he loved dearly, but not as much as he liked the first. The third friend received little attention from the person.

One day the person was summoned to the king's court on account of a complaint made by someone

against him. He was much scared. He went to the first friend and told him of his worry. He asked him for help. The friend said, "I have got a special raiment made for you that you can wear and go to the court." The man was much disappointed with the reply. He went to the second friend and told him about his problem. He replied, "I have so much work on hand that I cannot give you any time or attention. I can only walk a few paces with you on the way to the king's court!" The man was d'Isappointed with the second friend too, and came away from him crestfallen. He went to the third friend and begged his pardon that he had always neglected him. But he explained his problem to him. The friend said, "Don't be afraid! Your repentance at this time has come to your rescue! I shall come with you to the court and help you!"

Balohar continued, "O prince! The first friend was wealth that promised to give him a shroud for his coffin, if required. The second friend was his child who agreed to walk a few paces on the way to his grave. The third friend was his good deeds that would keep company with him even after his death."

Hearing the parable, the prince said, "O wise person! Please tell me some more tales like this!"

Balohar said: A kingdom had a very strange custom. Whenever the kings place fell vacant, they would catch the first traveler coming their way, they would catch and crown him king! They never told him how long he would remain the king. Then they would remove him from the throne after a year and get another stranger as the king. They used to leave the previous king to roam around the town as a beggar. Once, a stranger, when put on the throne, thought about the strange practice of the place and wondered how long he could remain in power! The people were strangers for him and he expected no sympathy from them. He therefore searched a person from his own town and told him about the strange manner in which he was crowned the king. The man advised him to transfer some wealth to another place for use in time of need. The king did follow the advice.

Balohar said, "O prince! You are that king who acted on the advice and I am the friend who proffered the advice!"

Yuzasaf said, "O wise Balohar! Whatever you have said about the futility of the world has affected me so much that I don't need any further advice. I wish now to hear from you about the Hereafter!"

Balohar said: O prince! Shunning the world itself is the key to the Hereafter! Whoever rejected this transitory world, got the kingdom of the immortal hereafter. This world involves man in seven types of hardship:

1. Affluence.
2. Thirst.
3. Summer heat.
4. Winter cold.

5. Pains.

6. Fears.

7. Death.

The prince asked Balohar, “The king banished many persons, he burnt alive many more. What happened to the people that they did not rise to help the sufferers at the hands of the king?”

Balohar said, “O prince! When the dogs discover a carcass, then one dog fights with the other to grab a major share of the feast. One wants to eat the complete carcass and the other barks and bites to ward it off. In the meantime if a person arrives there, the dogs leave the carcass and try to attack the person, although the person may not be a claimant of the carcass lying there. Similar is the condition of men in this world. Like dogs they fight over the transitory benefits of the world. When a wise person arrives to guide them about the futility of the world, they go to attack and maul him as did the dog to the intruding person!”

Yuzasaf said, “O Balohar! I have heard your parables and have learnt about the futility of the world! By nature I am not interested in worldly things. I am very grateful to you for your words of wisdom! Now, tell me how could one prepare well for the Hereafter?”

Whatever I have narrated to you so far are also the keys to the doors of virtue and the protection against evil. They are the elixirs of life that make one immortal. They are potions that eliminate the need for any other treatment. It is the rope of God holding which one will never go astray.

Yuzasaf said, “Why people don’t derive benefit from this knowledge of wisdom?”

Balohar replied: Wisdom and knowledge is like the sun that gives its light to everyone. It is for the people to make good use of the light. If people don’t want to derive benefit from the sun, is it any fault of the sun that distributes its light equitably!

Similarly knowledge and wisdom are for people to make use of. Those who strive to acquire them, they get them in plenty.

Knowledge and wisdom is like a bright sun. Those whose hearts are receptive, they acquire the light. Those whose hearts are blind, they see no need for striving to acquire knowledge. Of those who see the light of knowledge, there are some whose psyche turns them towards evil use of knowledge and wisdom.

Yuzasaf asked, “Are there any people who initially don’t accept the truth but come to the right path later on?”

Balohar said, “Yes! These are people whose hearts enlighten after long spells of darkness.”

Yuzasaf asked, "Hasn't any wise person ever told the words of wisdom to my father?"

Balohar said, "It is possible that your father might not have been motivated by the talk of wise persons and was guided by persons of other type!"

There used to be a king whose vizier was a person of wisdom and knowledge. But to please the king, the vizier too was indulging in idolatry. Out of the fear of the king, he never tried to guide him to the right path. One day the king went hunting. The vizier too was with him. On the way they passed through a ruin from where some light was coming. They went inside and found an ugly looking, ill clad mendicant sitting in a dirty corner. The man had stinking feces all around him. In front of him there was an earthen pitcher full of some beverage. The man had a musical instrument with him. He was playing the instrument. The man had an ugly woman with him. She would give the drink to the man from the pitcher and dance to the tune of the instrument played by him. Both of them appeared so contented and happy that, perhaps, none else in the world would be as happy as they were! The king told to the vizier, "Perhaps both of us have never been as happy as they are!" They are contented despite all the filth around them." Vizier thought that it was a good opportunity for him to talk to the king. He said, "There is a group of virtuous people who, when they look at us, feel the same way as we are feeling on setting our eyes on these wretches!"

The king asked, "Who are those people?"

The vizier said, "They are the people who are the ardent followers of the True Faith! They are aware of the Kingdom of the Hereafter!"

The king asked, "What is the Kingdom of the Hereafter?"

The vizier said, "It is the place where richness is not aware of penury, where happiness doesn't know sadness, where health is never affected with sickness where life knows not death, where monarchy never falls! Allah has removed from the inmates of the Hereafter all pain, illness, thirst and death!"

Yuzasaf said, "O wise sage! I have heard from you about the Realm of Hereafter and about the Almighty King. Now, tell me what is your age?"

Balohar said, "Twelve years!"

The prince was surprised to hear this. He said, "To me you appear to be at least sixty years of age!"

Balohar said, "Your guess is right. It is sixty years ago that I was born. But my real life is that during which period I got enlightened about the knowledge of the Hereafter. The other years spent in transient worldly activities I don't consider as a part of my life."

Yuzasaf asked, "O wise man! Will you be happy if you meet with death tomorrow?"

Balohar said, "Why tomorrow! Even if I die now and here, I shall be achieving the greatest happiness!"

The prince asked, "If death is such a good thing, will it be right to commit suicide? Give me an example to illustrate to me the matter."

Balohar said, "A person had a garden. He spent all his time tending the garden. One day he noticed a bird sitting on a branch nibbling a fruit. He was furious and caught the bird in a net. When he wanted to kill the bird, it spoke with Allah's consent, " If you eat me, what is the use. I cannot be more than a morsel for you. If you free me, I shall give you counsel that would be more than any riches that you can think of!"

He asked the bird, "What is that advice?"

The bird said, "If you promise to free me, I shall tell you three very invaluable things."

The man gave her his word.

The bird said, "Listen and remember well:

Don't mourn over what is dead and gone.

Don't believe in the impossible.

Don't try to get things that are out of your reach.

Hearing these words from the bird, the man released it.

The bird flew to the top of the tree and said, "By releasing me you have suffered such a big loss that you can never make good!"

Worried, the man asked, "What loss have I suffered?"

If you had slaughtered me, you would have found in my innards a pearl as big as the egg of a swan. Its value would have made you rich and contented for life!

The man felt very sorry on hearing what the bird said. He told to the bird, "Let bygone be bygone! Come with me to my house where I shall keep you happy!"

The bird replied, "I know what fate would come to me if I go with you! You fool! Awhile ago I told you not to regret over what has passed! Don't believe in the impossible! Don't try to acquire what is not in your reach! Now you are regretting over what has passed! You believe on the impossibility that there is a big pearl inside my body! Have you not thought that I am myself not as big as the swans' egg."

Balohar said, "O prince! These people of the world have made the idols with their own hands and believe that the idols have made them! They protect the idols and believe that the idols protect them!

They approve of all things that are physically impossible! They too are foolish as the owner of the garden!”

Yuzasaf asked, “O sage! Tell me who is the biggest tyrant and who is the most magnanimous?”

Balohar said, “The biggest tyrant is one who considers his tyranny is just! The most just is one who delivers justice to everyone without fear or favor.”

Yuzasaf asked, “What are virtues and vices?”

Balohar replied, “Virtues are truth and righteousness and bad intentions are the vices!”

Yuzasaf asked, “What are good intentions?”

Balohar replied, “Good intentions are equity in thoughts.”

Yuzasaf asked, “What is the most likeable characteristic?”

Balohar replied, “Hospitality, humility and speaking softly with men of piety.”

Yuzasaf asked, “Which trait in a man is most likeable?”

Balohar replied, “Love for the men of truth!

Yuzasaf asked, “A king has been an idolater from his childhood, has been leading a life of lechery and debauchery, has harmed and killed men of piety and not done any good deed in his life. Is there any chance of his reforming himself in his twilight years for a better life in the Hereafter?”

Balohar said, “I fully understand who you refer to. It is your father that you are concerned about! It is natural that you love your father and wish to earn a pardon from the Almighty for his Hereafter! There is always a chance of pardon if a person repents his past acts and refrains from them during the rest of his life.

Listen to one tale:

There was once a king who treated his subjects kindly and with justice. The subjects were very loyal and dedicated to him. The king died. He did not have any male issue. One of his wives was pregnant once and the astrologers had predicted that she would bear a male child. Therefore, a male child took birth. There was general celebration in the realm. For a full year it was like a perpetual festival in the kingdom. The pious and religious persons warned the people against the unnecessary pomp and pageantry. They said that the people were expressing their thanks to their Creator and were indulging in the ways of the Satan. The people took cognizance of this advice and spent one year in prayer and supplication. The astrologers predicted that the prince would adopt bad ways but reform himself later on.

It did happen accordingly. When the crown prince was of age thirty-two, he assembled his ministers and courtiers in a grand mansion. In the grounds adjoining the palace there was the congregation of the kingdom's troops. The prince was delirious with happiness. To have a look at his happy face, the prince ordered a mirror to be brought. He noticed in the reflection of his face that there was a grey hair in his black beard. He cried at this sight. He thought that his youth had departed him. He thought that the grey hair was the messenger of death for him. He cried and descended from his throne. He told his courtiers, "What sort of a king I was for you?" In one voice they said, "We have no words to express our gratefulness to you! We are your faithful subjects! Give us orders and we shall sacrifice our lives for you!" The prince said, "One enemy of whom I am much concerned has entered the court and none of you is aware of it! No one comes to my help!"

The courtiers cried in unison, "O king! Who is that enemy?"

The prince said, "It is a pity that I have always been thinking that you are all my friends and well-wishers! I showered wealth and riches on you! I did all that for the single reason that you would come to my help in times of need! But the enemy has arrived and you remained oblivious of the fact!" The courtiers said, "Please show us who that enemy is? We shall instantly destroy him!" The king replied, "The enemy is the messenger of death who is reminding me that the days of monarchy, rest and pomp are over for me and I must prepare myself for the final journey!"

The courtiers said, "O King! There is no remedy for death! Every person, howsoever powerful, will be helpless in front of death!" The prince said, "I was under a deception so far! Satan duped me! I was falsely depending on your help in all matters! Now I am determined to shun the love and friendship of the worldly friends and spend the rest of my life in the love and friendship of one who will help me in the Hereafter! I shall have nothing to do with this throne and the crown!" Hearing this, the concourse cried. They pleaded with him not to abandon them. They took a resolve that if the king abdicated, they would, like their monarch, have nothing to do with worldly pleasures from that day. The king acquiesced to their wishes and ruled thereafter for 32 years.

Yuzasaf said, "O wise sage! Hearing this tale, I have felt happiness in my heart! Tell me some more tales like this that would increase my knowledge and understanding!"

Balohar continued: It is said that there was once a king. He was very fond of pomp and pleasure. He was engulfed in carnal sins. The subjects were unhappy with his neglect of the matters of state. The enemies were raising their heads because of the weak administration in the kingdom. The subjects were getting fed up of the raids of the enemies on their lives and property.

One of the sons of the king was very pious and noble. He used to advise the people to be pious and God-fearing. When his father died, this prince ascended the throne. With his pious and noble attitude, the kingdom was able to subdue all the enemies. Peace and tranquility prevailed in the realm. Everything in control, the king turned his attention towards worldly pleasures. His depravity went to the

extent that if he found anyone offering prayers, he would slay the person. The depravity went to such an extent that the people started considering the king as a god! Power went so much to his head that his eyes were totally closed from the truth!

Amongst the courtiers of the king there was a man of piety. He used to feel very bad at the state of affairs in the kingdom. He wished to remind the king of his ways that he adopted prior to ascending the throne. He was waiting for an opportune time to open the eyes of the monarch without offending his ire. The man had no other person in the court that could have assisted him in his design. But there was one pious person in the capital, living in a lonely place on the outskirts. One day the pious courtier took a bold step to open the eyes of the king to the reality. He wrapped the skull of a dead person in a scarf and brought to the court. He unwrapped the scarf in front of the king and started kicking the skull with his feet. The skull cracked and the bones scattered on the floor. The king was very angry at seeing all this.

All the courtiers were stunned at what they saw. Seeing the anger writ on the face of the king, the executioners came close to the courtier with swords unsheathed ready to pounce on him at the slightest indication from the king. But in those days the kings had a custom not to order executions at the spur of the moment. They used to deeply consider the matter before pronouncing the final judgement. The king too controlled his anger and did not order the slaying of the courtier.

The courtier repeated the same act on the second and the third day. The king did not say anything. On the fourth day the courtier had tied up a skull on one side and a quantity of sand on the other. He also carried a weighing balance to the court. He kept the skull in front of him. In one pan of the scale he put a coin and in the other he put the sand. When both the pans were balanced he started putting the sand through the mouth of the skull and also through the holes of the eyes.

The king was very puzzled with this strange behavior of the courtier. He said, "What is the reason for your mad behavior in my presence? Have you gone bold that I respect and honor you much! Explain, what you mean by this strange act?"

Hearing this, the courtier got up and touched the feet of the king. He said: O monarch! I have to tell you something! If you give me a patient hearing I wish to tell you some words of wisdom! You know that the words of wisdom are like an arrow that pierces a soft thing and doesn't affect a stone! Good advice is like the rain -water. When it falls on good soil, it brings forth flowers and fruit, on a rocky soil it does nothing! Human beings have innumerable wishes and therefore it will be a constant struggle between wisdom and the desires. If desires dominate, good advice has no effect! When wisdom prevails, good advice has its effect and the person comes to the right path! Now, I shall explain the purpose of my actions!

From childhood I am fond of acquiring knowledge and skills! I used to spend lot of time in search of knowledge. When I acquired knowledge, I started doing experiments. One day, during my researches, I happened to enter the royal graveyard. This soiled skull was lying near an old grave. Because I have

great admiration for the kings, I picked up the skull and brought it home. At home I cleaned it and wrapped it in a silk scarf. I used to wash it with rose water and keep it at a prominent place in my house. I thought that if it is a king's skull, it might revive to its original condition and the king might come back to life! I did the exercise for many days but I noticed no change in the skull. Then I thought that perhaps the skull belongs to some poor mendicant. I trusted it to a poor person to take care of it. He kept it in a shabby and dusty place. But no change came about in the skull.

When all my efforts brought about no change in the skull I visited some wise people. They too were unable to satisfy me. Now I thought that the king is the wisest person in the realm and I must present my problem before him.

I have adopted this stratagem of the demonstrations to seek your help in solving the problem. I wish to know if the skull is that of a king or of a pauper! I have seen that the kings are never satisfied of their possessions! Even if they capture the entire world, they think of capturing the skies! I measured sand equal to the weight of a coin and the eyes of the skull were filled. Similarly I put a handful of sand into the mouth of the skull and it was full. Although I have never seen the mouth of a king being sated any time! If I imagine that the skull belongs to a pauper, then what was it doing in the royal graveyard. How did the poor man reach there? I want to solve this mystery! If the skull belongs to a king, it must have once enjoyed pomp and power as you do now!

O my king! I cannot bear to think that one day you might be rendered to this helpless stage! Your majestic skull trampled by strangers! Your delicate body consumed by the vermin in the grave! Your body transiting from spacious palaces to a grave of two metres! These well-appointed palaces falling into the hands of strangers! When your subjects cry for your help, you are unable to provide it!

The king shivered hearing all this. Tears started rolling down his cheeks. When the courtier saw that his stratagem had an effect on the king, he told many more things in support of the argument. At last, the king came to the right path! He quit pomp and pleasure and adopted piety in his life. In the entire realm there was talk of virtue and piety. Many men of learning arrived in the realm and the people benefited from their company.

Yuzasaf said, "O wise person! My heart is not satisfied with your wise talk! Relate to me some more tales!"

Balohar said, "Listen, o prince!"

In the olden days there was a king who was fabulously rich and powerful. The only thing he lacked was an heir to his crown. He tried all the possible ways to have a son but he grew old in this expectation. However in his twilight years Allah gave him a son. There was great jubilation in the realm. The child was brought up with great care. He grew up, started to crawl, walk and also learned to talk. One day, while he was playing, he took one step and said, "*Mi'ad* (Resurrection) is bound to come and you are committing injustice!" The child took another step and said, "You will grow old!" The child took the third

step and said, "Then you shall die!" Now the child busied himself in play. The king who was observing this, was much amazed at the talk of the little prince.

The astrologers were summoned and informed of the precocious utterances of the little prince. They were ordered to investigate the matter and give their report. The astrologers drew up their charts but were unable to predict anything significant. One astrologer made a wild guess and said that the child would be very pious and kind of nature.

Hearing this, the king was very angry and kept the prince in isolation. He appointed his trusted men to look after the child. When the prince reached his youth, went out of the palace giving a slip to his guardians. He was passing through the bazaar when he saw a funeral procession going. He asked someone, "What is this?" He was told that the people were carrying a dead person to the graveyard. He asked, "What is the reason for the death of the person?"

He was told that the man had grown old and feeble and it was time for his death. The prince asked, "Was he earlier like us, young and healthy?" They replied that in his younger days the man was very healthy and an adept at wrestling! The prince went a little further and noticed an old man. He asked, "What sort of a person is this? Why he looks so weak?" The reply was, "He is much advanced in years, his limbs are weak and all his faculties too are weak because of old age!"

The prince asked, "Was this man ever a youth like me?" They replied, "Yes! He was first a child, then grew into a youth, and adult and is now an old man!" The prince went further up and found a sick person. He asked, "How was this person earlier?" They said, "This man was healthy and strong earlier. His ailment has rendered him weak!" Hearing this the prince stood brooding for a long while and then said, "By God! If whatever has been told to me is true, then the people are foolish that they keep happily moving around. They are mad imbeciles!"

Now the prince turned back and quietly returned to his palace and lay down on his bed. He stared into the roof for sometime. Then he called a servant and asked him, "Have the rafters of the roof been in the same way as they are now or they had some other shape?" The servant replied, "The seedlings grew into huge trees in the soil. Then they were cut into timber that was finally shaped into the rafters that have been fixed on the roof!"

Around the same time the king sent his vizier to inquire about the progress of the prince and to ascertain what he talks about. When the vizier met the prince, he too was asked similar questions. The vizier went to the king and told him that the prince speaks like an abnormal person. The king called for the astrologers and discussed the matter with them. The astrologers felt that the remedy for the prince would be to get him married. The king liked the suggestion and gave orders for arranging a suitable match for the prince. Men of wisdom and discretion were sent to the neighboring kingdoms to search for a girl of exceptional beauty as the consort for the prince.

Therefore, they selected a very pretty princess to be the bride of their prince. Preparations for the royal

wedding were afoot. The city was decorated grandly. Arrangements were made for feasts, songs and dances. People from far and near started coming to witness the pageant. The prince started wondering why there was so much commotion in the city. He asked one of the servants about the state of activity in the capital. The servant said, "Preparations are going on for your wedding! You must be very happy for that!" Hearing this, the prince kept quiet.

Alas, an auspicious day was fixed for the wedding. One day the king called the bride-to-be and told her that she was chosen to consort the heir apparent of the crown. He told her that the prince was his only son and dearer to him than his own life! He asked her to speak with the prince in a manner that he got attracted to her.

When the wedding took place, the princess took good care of the prince. She tried her best to create love for her in the heart of the prince. When food was served, the bride took beverages as was her wont. The drinks intoxicated her and she went to sleep. The prince got the opportunity to slip away from the palace. He started going round the city. In a lane he found a youth of his own age and made friends with him. He made the youth wear his expensive clothes and himself wore the ordinary garments of his friend. With mutual consent they went out of the city and early morning hid themselves in a secluded place.

When the bride woke from her sleep of intoxication, she found the prince missing. When she didn't find him anywhere in the palace, she sat down losing all hope. At dawn all the servants started searching for the prince in the entire city. At sunset the prince started on his journey with his friend. In this manner they were hiding themselves at dawn in a secluded place and start their onward journey around dusk. They arrived in the capital of another king. The king had a daughter who was a very pretty lass. The king had made a resolution that he would marry his daughter to anyone she personally liked. He had constructed a separate palace for his daughter to live with the husband of her choice. There was a balcony in the palace towards the main thoroughfare from where the princess could watch the youth passing by and make her choice of the consort.

The princess was watching from the balcony when the prince and his friends passed that way. She noticed the youth with majestic manners dressed in the garments of ordinary people. She took instant liking to him. She sent word to the king that she wished to marry the youth. The king was very happy to hear this and rushed to the youths in a disguise. He asked, "Who are you, and from where you are coming?" The prince said, "I am a poor wayfarer. What work you have with me?" The king said, "You look strangers in this city. Tell me about yourself in detail!" The prince said, "I am not poor and needy! What is the need for you to inquire about me?" However much the king tried to ask him, the prince didn't respond. He returned to the palace and briefed some men to make full inquiries about the youths.

When the agents of the king failed to extract any information from the prince, the king sent his men to bring the youths to his court. He asked the men, "What work has the king with me? Neither I know the king nor do I have to seek any favors from him" When the prince adamantly refused to go along with the

king's men, they forcefully took him to the court. The king was very delighted to see the youth and treated him with affection and respect. He offered him a chair to sit in the court. The king's wife and daughter too were watching him from behind the curtain.

The king said, "O youth! I have summoned you for a noble purpose. I wish that you agreed to be my son-in-law! I have no dearth of wealth. You will live your entire life in luxury! Your respect and honor will be like that of kings!"

The prince replied, "O noble king! I have no wish for these things! If you permit me, I shall narrate a tale in this connection." The king gave permission. The prince said, "There was a prince. Some of his friends arranged a banquet for him. After the food, the friends had a round of drinks. They all got intoxicated and slept as the party was in the night. The prince woke up sometime in the night and started alone for his palace.

In a state of intoxication he forgot the way to the palace and reached the graveyard of the place. He found one fresh grave dug up. He thought he had reached home and fell into the grave. He got the smell of the dead body. He thought that his servants had put the fragrance of rose in his room. He also thought the coffin of the dead man was the bed sheet. The prince thought the dead body as his beloved that she had slept after waiting long for his return from the party. He slept there the whole night and periodically kissed the dead man gently.

With dawn he awoke and found himself with the dead body in the grave. He felt very scared and ran towards the city. He felt very ashamed of his condition. Reaching the palace he took a bath of cleanliness, wore fresh clothes and applied perfumes to his body and the garments. He thanked God that he reached the palace safely." The prince now asked the king, "Having committed the mistake, will he ever repeat the blunder?" The king said, "No! Never!" The prince replied, "My condition is just like that of the prince!" The king turned to his wife and daughter and told them, "You have heard what the youth said! How can we expect to change his decision?"

The queen said, "Perhaps, if our daughter's qualities are mentioned to him, he might reconsider his decision!" The king said, "O youth! My wife wants to meet you and talk to you. In the past she has never come out to talk to any strange males." The prince said, "I have no objection if the queen wishes to talk to me." The queen came out in the court, sat near the prince and said, "O my son! Don't refuse to marry my daughter. It is a Blessing of God! You will benefit a lot. If you know my daughter's beauty of face and character, then you will certainly consider yourself lucky to find such a match. You will thank God for blessing you with such a consort!" The prince said: O queen! I shall tell you a tale in this regard. Kindly listen with attention:

"There was a king whose treasury was filled with immense wealth. He had innumerable wonders from all corners of the world in that treasury. The thieves planned to plunder the king's treasure. They entered the treasury by drilling into the wall of the building. The thieves might not have seen such wonders even

in their wildest dreams. They saw a barrel made of gold and thought that it must be full of valuable treasures. They thought that the things stored in a container of gold must be more valuable than the gold.

The thieves happily picked up the barrel and escaped from the treasury. When they reached the forest, they were curious to look at the contents and divide the booty. They all assembled around the mouth of the barrel and tried to remove the lid. When they lifted the lid, many poisonous snakes came out of the barrel. With the bites of these snakes all the thieves fell dead in the forest. O noble queen! Would a person who knows this tale dare to take a share of the treasure?!" The queen said, "Definitely not!" The prince replied, "Then how could I accept your proposal!"

The princess told to the king, "If you permit me, I would personally like to speak to the youth?" The king consented and the princess came out into the chamber of the court walking gracefully and sat near the prince, She said, "O youth! Tell me frankly if ever you have seen any female so well endowed with beauty as I am! But I am interested in consorting you. If you refuse, you will certainly repent!" The prince said, "Listen to a tale that I wish to relate and then we shall talk further:

The king had two sons. During a battle, the enemy captured one of the princes. He was incarcerated in a very small, dark room. He also issued orders that whoever passed that way should throw stones at the prince. When many days elapsed, the other prince had pangs of affection for his lost brother. He asked his father, the king, to permit him to go and try to get his brother released through some clever stratagem." The king said, "It is a noble design! Prepare for the journey and start without any loss of time!"

The prince took with him lot of merchandise for trading and also a group of dancing girls to give an impression that he was a trader. When this group reached the ramparts of the city of the enemy king, word reached the monarch of their arrival and he asked his men to fetch the trader into the city with full respect.

The servants gave due respect to the travelers. They entered the city, unpacked the merchandise and the slaves of the prince were ordered by him to go to several vantage spots in the city and sell the products at low prices. He particularly asked them to go to the bazaar closer to where his brother was confined.

Therefore the slaves made a beeline to the bazaar near the spot where the prince was held. Their prices were so down to earth that the entire population rushed to buy the wares. The prince crept nearer to the place his brother was incarcerated. He picked up a pebble and threw it on the place to ascertain if his brother was still alive. When the pebble hit him, the prince started shouting. The guards rushed to him and said, "Every day the people throw pebbles at you but you never shout as you have done today? Why are you so distraught today?" He said, "Every day when people throw stones at me I feel that they are strangers and may have no sympathy for me. But today when I was hit by the pebble, I felt as if

someone close to me has thrown it!” The men were surprised to hear what the prince said.

The next morning the prince sent his men with more valuable things to sell at the same spot. He sent along with them the dancing girls to entertain the crowds. The men started selling and the women sang and danced. The entire populace got busy with the entertainment. The prince stealthily entered the place of confinement of his brother, cut away his chains and brought him out. He hid him in the house where his group was staying. The wounds of the prince were properly dressed.

When the prince was slightly improved, he was mounted on a fast steed and sent away. He was instructed that on the way, at a certain place a boat waited on the bank of the river to take him safely home. The prince proceeded in the direction where he was told the boat awaited him. Unfortunately, after some time, he lost the way and reached a dense forest. On the way he fell into a well. There was a python in that well. When he looked up, he found several fierce looking bandits with swords in their hands. With great difficulty he emerged from the well and ran from there. After many days of wandering he found a road. Fortunately he was able to reach the boat and sailed safely to his city.”

The prince now asked the princess, “Would a person who had undergone so much hardship, be willing to get involved in further danger?” The princess said, “No! Never!” The prince said, “I am in a similar predicament!”

Hearing all this, the king, the queen and the princess were d’Isappointed. The prince’s friend, the youth, whispered in his ears that if he was not interested in marrying the princess, he could recommend him to the king for the match!

The prince told to the king: If you approve of my friend here, he would be willing to accept the princess as his bride. But his example will be like a group of people who boarded a boat that sank in the middle of a river. All the passengers were drowned but for a sole survivor who held to a small plank of wood and reached an island. There he started looking around the scenic place. The island was inhabited by devils. One she–devil fell in love with the man. She came to him in the shape of a very beautiful woman and took him with her. The whole night they had fun.

In the morning she killed him and gave his flesh to the children to eat. After some days–another person chanced to land in the island. The she–devil saw him. She took him along, spent the night with him and at dawn she wanted to kill him when he escaped from her clutches and ran away. He went to the shore and found a boat approaching. The man started shouting for help. When the sailors noticed him, they came near the shore and took him on board. The man reached home safely. The devils in the island thought that the she–devil had eaten the man herself without sharing with the others. They asked her to search the runaway and bring him, otherwise they would kill and eat her flesh!

In her searches, the devil reached the house of the man. She went there in the form of a young woman. She told him that she was the same she–devil he spent a night with on the island and had come to take him there! The man started crying and begging her to spare him. The she–devil took pity on him and

agreed to free him. The man took her to the king of the place. The king asked them, "Tell me, what is the problem between you two?" The she-devil said, "O King! I am his wife. I love him very much. But he dislikes me. He refuses to come to me. I seek justice from you!"

The king fell head over heel in love with her good looks. He thought of acquiring her for himself. He took the man in privacy and said, "If you don't like the woman, you divorce her. I shall marry her!" The man said, "I agree to your order! I am divorcing her!" With the king's orders the woman was admitted to the harem. In the night he slept with her. At dawn the she-devil cut the king into pieces and took them to the island and distributed to the devils to eat."

The prince said, "O king! Will the one who has experienced all this ever dare to visit the island of the devils again?"

Hearing this the friend of the prince said, "Now I cannot consent to be the king's son-in-law. I shall not abandon the company of my friend!"

Therefore, they both took leave of the king and went their way. They wandered through cities and realms and kept learning lessons from the experiences they had during the journeys. They busied themselves in piety and supplication. They continued giving instruction to people about virtues of piety. Lots of people reformed under their instruction. The prince became very famous throughout the world for his wisdom and piety.

Yuzasaf was very sad when Balohar went away. But he busied himself in prayer. When he attained the status of a pious person, he thought of travelling to other countries and propagating the truth. Allah sent an angel to him. The angel came to him in the human form and said, "Allah sends you His blessings and praises. You are amidst the humans like a human being amongst the wild animals! I have been sent by Allah to instruct you about piety and the Hereafter. Remove the worldly attire and shun the worldly wishes! Abdicate the worldly monarchy that always ends in shame and ruin. Try to acquire the kingdom that has no decline! Adopt truth in talk and actions! Tread the path of justice! Allah has made you the leader of the pious and guide for the multitudes!"

Hearing this, Yuzasaf prostrated. The angel ordered him to guide the people and told him that he must travel to other lands to spread the message!

Therefore, Yuzasaf determined to commence his journeys. He didn't inform his people about his intentions. At the appointed time the angel appeared again. Yuzasaf took his courtier, his confidante, along. When he mounted the steed, a handsome nobleman held the rein and asked, "Where are you going leaving your subjects behind?" Yuzasaf tried to calm him down saying, "God is with you!" Yuzasaf started on his journey. After riding for sometime, he sent the courtier back to the city along with the horse. He wanted to journey on foot! The courtier said, "O prince! The king would definitely execute me!" Yuzasaf handed over his expensive raiment and the ruby to the courtier and asked him to convey his greetings to the king. When Yuzasaf proceeded further he found delicious fruits in the forest. He thought

they were the tidings of prophethood. He received from Allah the knowledge and information about the realm of the spirits.

Yuzasaf expressed gratitude for Balohar and riveted his attention to the cause of reforming his loving father. He thought that bringing his father to the right path was the first step towards achieving the blessing of the Hereafter!

Therefore, he sent a messenger to his father with fondest greetings and said that his beloved son was abandoning the transitory wealth and pomp to prepare himself for the immortal Hereafter. He desired that his beloved father too adopted the path to righteousness. He told him that it was his first duty to bring one who loved him the most to the right path!

The king heard the son's message. He asked him to visit him. He got motivated to accept the path of piety. Yuzasaf then traveled from city to city preaching the path of truth and piety. He reached Kashmir in the end and motivated the entire population to the right path. It was there that he breathed his last.

The messages that Yuzasaf communicated to the people were not the thoughts of a philosopher but were the truths about piety, the Hereafter and straight forward and attractive instructions. May Allah give the pious people opportunity to benefit from these facts.

The Sixth Fruit: What The World Means

There are some people who portray the world as something undesirable and are themselves involved in iniquitous practices. They portray such practices as virtuous and ask people to follow them. Therefore the world that has been censured by the *Shariah* must be critically studied to ascertain what is good and what is evil.

The meaning attached by people to the world is erroneous. Shunning the world doesn't mean totally abandoning it and considering it as a sworn enemy. In fact craving for death and praying for death is tantamount to refusing the bounties of Allah. Craving for the transient worldly goods is contemptible. Such people become totally oblivious of the fact of death and keep themselves busy running after worldly benefits and laurels. They think that they have a long life ahead of them and there is still time to crave Allah's indulgence for the wrongful acts committed by them. They spend their lives acquiring worldly riches and grandeur and commit all the evil acts thinking that they are beneficial for them. Otherwise, the world and the life in the world provide people the opportunity to excel in knowledge and piety. If the world were not there, how the pious people would perform their duty of offering prayers to their Creator!

Imam Zain al Abedeen (as) says in one of his supplications, "O Allah! Give me more years of life that I spend it in your obedience and prayer! And if this period is to be spent by me in evil (Satanic) deeds, then hasten my death that I don't become liable to Your Retribution!"

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) says, "O Men! Why don't you take lesson from your forbears? Consider their deaths to visualize your own demise! This world is a very becoming place for those who take a lesson. This is the place of safety for the wise. How can one hold the world with contempt when it is a kind Warner! It keeps telling man that it is not a place for one to live forever! The day of final journey is nigh! If not today, tomorrow one has to depart from here! One who was rich yesterday, is poor today! He who was healthy then, is weak and sickly now! One who was alive yesterday, is dead and gone today. The world is thus trying to awaken the forgetful man from his sleep!

Similarly all the riches of the world are not contemptible. The contemptible wealth is that which makes one forget Allah and use it for selfish and ignoble purposes. The wealth that is equitably used for personal comforts and also in the way of Allah for the betterment and uplift of one's fellow beings will make one deserving of the benefits of the Hereafter. This type of acquisition and use of wealth is venerable."

The Prophet of Islam (S) has said, "Affluence is venerable if it is made the source of achieving piety and righteousness."

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) was asked by a person, "O son of the Prophet (S)! I have love for the world and its riches! I also wish that people in this world look towards me with respect! "The Imam (as) asked, "Why do you have such a wish?" The man replied, "I have these desires because I want to benefit myself, to benefit my kith and kin, relatives and other needy persons. I have also a strong desire to perform my duty of the *Hajj*." The Imam (as) said, "This is not craving for the world! This is your step toward acquiring the benefits of the Hereafter!"

Similarly eating delicious food, wearing expensive garments acquiring valuable artifacts is not only the sign of being worldly, but it also depends on the intentions and the acts of the person who uses such things. Otherwise, Prophet Sulaiman (as)'s monarchy would have been termed worldly. To the contrary what he did was the best for the Hereafter.

In short, everything that keeps one away from Allah and the Hereafter is due to worldly avarice and that which is the cause of nearness to Allah and harbinger of the benefits of the Hereafter is venerable. Every hypocrite act that appears like prayer and devotion is nothing but an act to show off to the people of the world.

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) says that piety is not abdicating one's wealth and making legitimate (*Halal*) things taboo (*Haram*) for oneself. But piety is having more faith in Allah than on one's own wealth and power. The true piety springs from the knowledge of the Qur'an, the *Sunna* and acting on them. It is also subject to following the Holy Imams (as) and fulfilling all the duties made mandatory by Allah for his creatures. A pious person has to drive away all worldly desires from his heart and every step he takes must be in consonance with Allah's dictates!

The Love For Worldly Gains

Generally mendicants surpass others in the avarice for worldly gains. They are definitely not pious persons. It proves the fact that the seekers of the world may not be identifiable from their outward appearances. The pious are those who implicitly follow the norms and tenets of the faith. These may include the entire gamut of activity viz.: prayer (*Salat*), fasting, trading, marriage, managing a household etc. If these activities are carried out contrary to the norms set by the Faith, then they will be termed contemptible. They are of three types:

(1) *Haram*: One deserves Allah's punishment if he perpetuates illegitimate (*Haram*) acts like offering prayers, intercourse and other worldly acts against the norms of *Shariah*.

(2) *Makrooh*: Perpetuating acts that have not been termed *Haram* by Allah, but are considered *Makrooh* or undesirable. For example: avarice for wealth, acquiring property more than necessary. These activities divert one's attention from Allah.

(3) *Mubah*: This is drawing pleasure from the legitimate blessings bestowed by Allah on the people. This may sometime also fall in the second category if a person tends to the side of excess. Sometimes a person does these acts considering them as an act of prayer and worship. Then, to attain that status, at other times, in his ignorance, a person avoids legitimate and essential activities assuming that he is doing it to please Allah. His acts would be tantamount to innovation (*Bidaah*), that is a sin!

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) says, "A man of piety is one who removes big desires from his heart. He thanks Allah for His Bounties and abstains from taboo activities."

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) was asked the meaning of *Zuhd* (*Piety?*) by someone. He said, "It is shunning activities that have been termed taboo (*Haram*) by Allah."

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) said: Men are of three types: the *Zahed* (*Pious?*), *Saber* (Patient and contented) and the *Ragheb* (Inclined). *Zahed* is one for whom the pleasures and pains of this world make no difference. He is not over delighted to receive worldly gains nor is he very sad for the sufferings he undergoes. *Saber* is one who has worldly desires, but keeps a check over his desires despite achieving worldly gains. The transient nature of the worldly things creates dislike for them in his heart. *Ragheb* is a person who endeavors to achieve worldly gains without giving a thought to his desires being legitimate or illegitimate. The *Ragheb* are people who are caught in the whirlpool of the world and keep trying to achieve their ends despite getting drowned in it.

The Prophet of Islam (S) said, "O Abu Dharr! Allah has not ordered hoarding of wealth. He has sent a Revelation asking people to remember Him, talk about Him and spend their lives in His way. He wants to be thanked for the Bounties He has endowed to the people. O Abu Dharr! The wealth and the fame of this world destroy a person. These are two wolves that enter the flock of sheep and devour them overnight! Man keeps sleeping in the search of wealth and pelf and when he awakes he finds the angel

of death calling him. He then realizes that everything has turned topsy turvy? and he will have to go empty handed!”

It is narrated by Abdallah bin Abbas when the coinage was first started, Satan felt very pleased and jumped in joy that he had a tool in his hands to lead men astray.

Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) says that three things are the cause of trouble for men

Love for women: This is the sword of the Satan.

Intoxicants: This is the web of the Satan.

Love for Dinar and Dirham: This is the Satan’s arrow.

One who indulges in the love for women, he cannot abstain from taboo actions.

One who takes the intoxicants cannot enter the portals of the Heaven.

One who treats the Dinars and Dirhams as his friends is a creature of the world.

The First Trait

Avarice in accumulating wealth is the worst of traits. A person with this trait will be tyrannical and proud and would commit big sins in his pursuit for wealth. A human being cannot have love for more than one entity. If he has love for amassing wealth, he will not have love for Allah. This, in other words, is called Mammon Worship! The cure for this ailment is that the person rivets his attention towards Allah and broods over the futility and transience of the world. Then the realization will come to him that all the wealth accumulated by him would be of no use. If he spent it in the way of Allah, he would get rewarded in the Hereafter.

He should think that efforts for acquiring knowledge of the Faith and offering prayers to Allah would be for his good in this life and the Hereafter. He should not spend all his time running after acquisition of riches. He should bear in his mind the Retribution for amassing illegitimate riches. Even for the legitimate riches, one will be accountable on the Day of Judgment! If he spent his wealth in the way of Allah, he will get rewarded many times over!

This reward will come to him when he will find himself forlorn and helpless on the Day of Reckoning! The sustenance of man is the responsibility of Allah. Man should trust Him!

Wealth is not such a thing that one can put complete trust in! Pitiably fact is that those who accumulated vast wealth have left everything behind and departed for the other world empty handed! Such persons neglected preparation for the Hereafter. They have a heavy burden on their necks. Contrary to these, the persons who spent their lives in Allah’s love and prepared for the Hereafter, had always been happy and contented during their lives in this world and have departed contentedly for the Hereafter!

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) said, "One who has faith in the Day of Resurrection will not strive to accumulate wealth." He further said, "Once Bani Israel faced a severe famine. People started eating the cadavers of their own men. One day, a person dug up a grave. A tablet was retrieved by the man from the grave. It was inscribed on the tablet that he was a certain prophet (S) and that his grave would be dug up by a Nubian. The tablet also had inscribed on it, 'O people! Be informed that whatever I sent ahead of me, I got rewarded for it! My efforts at prayers have been answered! Whatever I left behind has gone waste!"

Prophet 'Isa (as) said: Wealth is the ailment of the faith and the learned are its healers. If you find a healer suffering from the same ailment, then don't consider him righteous! A learned person who has avarice for wealth, should not be trusted. One should understand that when such a person cannot benefit himself, how could he be of benefit to others.

The Futile Beliefs Of The World, The Second Trait

The evil effects of the love for the world are more severe than that of the love for wealth and riches. This love remains latent within the person. Some wrongly believe that they don't have this failing in them. But on deep reflection one realizes that this trait is engrained in their natures.

In fact this defect is the root of all the defects in a person. This involves a person in grave difficulties. A person becomes selfish and he starts liking sycophancy. The faith in Allah's Greatness diminishes in his heart Trust on the worldly things strengthens and goes to the extent of making a person infidel. The only remedy for this is that a person must turn his attention towards Allah and should understand that the ultimate profit or loss from any activity rests with the Almighty's Wish. The benefits derived from the world by any person are transient. They will dissipate fast. They should take lesson from the lives of those who ruled the world for a while and death brought them Retribution for all the power and pelf enjoyed by them. In contrast to this, knowledge and action of a righteous person remain in perpetuity.

Someone asked Imam Zain ul Abedeen (as), "O Master! What action is most valuable in the eyes of Allah?"

The Imam (as) replied, "After the obedience of the Prophet (S) and the Imams (as), the most valuable act of a person in the eyes of Allah is his aversion to the world!"

The first sin ever committed by a creature has been pride. It was Satan's pride that made him refrain from prostrating to Adam (as) and thereby rendering himself an infidel.

The second sin ever was avarice. Adam (as) and Hawwa (as) committed this sin by eating the forbidden fruit. This has created the instinct of avarice in the progeny of Adam (as).

The third sin was jealousy that was first perpetrated by Qabeel. Feeling jealous of his brother Habeel, he assassinated him.

Now the sin of desire for women commenced. This extended to love for power, love for comforts, love of evil thoughts, love of superiority over others, love for wealth and riches. All these seven evil instincts in man have their root in the love for the world. The prophets (as) and wise men have condemned these instincts in man.

The worldliness is of two distinct types. The first type of worldliness limits one to be contented with what one achieves. The second type of worldliness is because of the instinct of greed and avarice in the person. This worldliness is abhorrent. Man should keep away from pride, avarice and jealousy. Pride is only for the Creator, man has to be humble and down-to-earth. Because of the humility of man, he has been endowed with the wealth and immeasurable bounties of the Earth! Allah has made the earth the repository of invaluable jewels. He has made man from the very soil of the Earth! He has given the singular privilege to the man that He ordered the Angels to prostrate to Adam (as)!

The fire, which had the instinct of rebelliousness was used by Allah to create Satan. Therefore man must necessarily be humble and docile for the very reason that he has been made from the soil!

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) has said that a polite person should not look for a vantage place when he attends a meeting. He should always try to be in a place that is slightly lower than his own status in the society. He should take precedence over others in greeting them. If he is better informed in any matter, he should abstain from giving an impression that he is more knowledgeable. He should avoid debate to prove his own point of view.

The Seventh Fruit: Superiority Of Humility

Humility is the best of all the human traits. One should always bear in his mind that Greatness is all for Allah only. The more humble a person, the more he shall be endowed with the bounties of Allah. The earth in its humility is a repository of the jewels and other invaluable resources, it helps in the production of innumerable fruits and flowers. Similarly, man, who has been made from the humble soil, had the privilege of the angels prostrating to him and is endowed with an intellect superior to all the creations. Because the fire is rebellious by instinct, Satan has been created from it.

Man should therefore adopt humility and patience in all circumstances. He should refrain from pride and prejudice craving for ascendancy over others. He should never brag about his pedigree. He should always bear in mind that his beginning has been as tiny as a drop of the semen. For many months the menstrual fluids in the womb of his mother sustained him. He should know that he carries impurities in his body like the blood, phlegm and feces. Whenever he throws out any of these impurities, he himself feels revulsion.

After death man gets reduced to such a state that nothing else in the world can be more repulsive. If a cadaver of a dead person is left to rot, it will be infested with such vermin that no other dead animal would attract. One who has to face all these eventualities, has to adopt an attitude of humility in his

lifetime. The more a man is wise and learned, the more likelihood of his adopting humility in his attitude to life. Man attains superiority over his fellow human beings by being humble and considerate in his approach to them. This is evident from the lives of the Prophets (as) of yore and their Vicegerents.

Because Greatness is all for Allah, man has to be humility personified. The more a person shows humility in his attitude, the more acceptable he will be to Allah. If a person endeavors to assume false greatness, he will fall the more in the abyss of depravity!

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) says that Allah has appointed two angels whose function is to elevate the persons who adopt humility in their lives and to degrade those who strive to achieve superiority through proud and selfish motives.

Allah sent a Revelation to Prophet Dawood (as), "O Dawood (as)! While I endow those who supplicate to Me in humility, I humiliate those who are proud!"

It is mentioned in the traditions that Prophet Musa (as) received a Revelation from Allah, "O Musa (as)! Are you aware why I have made you superior over others and termed you *Kaleem* (a friend)?" Prophet Musa (as) said, "I know not, why?" Allah replied, "I have observed all your people, but I found none equal to your humility and modesty of nature. O Musa (as)! While prostrating to Me, you rub your cheeks on the ground! I have liked this attitude of yours!"

It is narrated through a reliable source that Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) has said, "It is high humility not to mind sitting at a place not commensurate with one's status at a meeting of men! It is humility in the disposition of a person that makes him take precedence in greeting others and avoids quarreling with people even if they are wrong in their stand. A person with humility doesn't feel flattered hearing praises from others.

Imam Ar-Ridha' (as) defined humility in a person as the habit of discharging the rights of others as he would have his own rights fulfilled!"

Someone asked, "What is the gauge for humility? When can we term a person as humble?" The Imam (as) said, "There are several degrees of humility. One is that a person doesn't rate himself more than what he is worth. He avoids pride and prejudice. He treats others the same way as he expects them to treat him. Even if he receives ill-treatment from others, he treats them with kindness. He suppresses anger and is generous to a fault. Allah considers such humble persons His friends!"

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) noticed a person in Medina carrying something he had bought. The man was taken aback when he saw the Imam. The Imam said, "You have made some purchases for your family and are carrying home the burden. yourself! If I had not cared for the stares of the people of this town, I should, like you, have carried my purchases home myself!"

One day Imam Zain-ul-'Abidin (as) was riding on his way. He noticed some persons engaged in having

their meal. The men asked the Imam (as) to join them in the fare. He said, “If I was not fasting, I would certainly have partaken of your food!” When he arrived at his house the Imam (as) ordered preparation of delicacies for the persons he met at the roadside. He sent for them and shared the repast with the persons.

It is narrated that Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) advised Imam Hasan (as), “Adopt humility. It is best of all supplications!”

The Prophet of Islam (S) said, “One who adopted humility and modesty Allah will endow him with respect and nobility.”

Imam Zain-ul-’Abidin (as) used to say that no Arab and Qureish has any superiority if he is not humble in his demeanor.

The Humility of Najashi

Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) narrates that when Ja’far Tayyar (r.a.) bin Abi Talib was at the court of Najashi, he was once called by the monarch to his presence. He found that the king was seated on the bare ground. Ja’far At-Tayyar (r.a.) felt awed finding the monarch sitting the way he did.

Najashi said, “Thank God that He gave victory to your Prophet (S) over his enemies! My greetings to you on this occasion!”

He asked, “Your majesty! How you came to know of this?”

Najashi said, “My agents have brought this news to me. They also informed the names of the persons who have been taken captive. The place where the battle took place is called *Badr*. At that place lots of *Salvadora Persica?* trees are growing. I feel as if the place is in my view!”

Ja’far At-Tayyar (r.a.) asked him, “Why are you squatting on the ground?”

Najashi said, “O Ja’far! Of the Commandments that Allah gave to Prophet ‘Isa (as), one is that when people receive a fresh endowment from Him, they should express humility and modesty. Now that Allah has endowed this Blessing, about which I have just informed you, It is imperative on me that I manifest humility in my action!”

When the Prophet (S) was informed about what transpired between Ja’far At-Tayyar (r.a.) and the king of Abyssinia, he said, “Humility enhances respect! Be humble and submissive before Allah! Charity begets prosperity! Do lot of charity, that Allah bestows kindness on you! Forgive the mistakes of others, it will enhance your respect! If you are generous to a fault, Allah will enhance your respect!”

Imam Hasan Al-’Askari (as) says that a person who recognizes the rights of a *mu’min* and respects him, Allah will enhance his respectability. One who adopts an attitude of humility with a *Mu’min*, will be

counted by Allah among the *As-Sadiqeen* (the truthful ones). He will be recognized as a *Shi'a of the Ahl al-Bayt*.

Humility and Lowliness

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) told to Imam Husayn (as) that in the eyes of Allah the best supplication is humility and no pedigree is of any value but the humility of a person.

Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) says that when Prophet Nooh (as) boarded the ark and other things were loaded, they set sail. At this moment Allah addressed the mountains that He wished to land the boat on any one of them. Every mighty mountain thought that it would have the privilege of the landing of the Ark. But the *Mount Judi*, the smallest of the mounts, that was in the vicinity of *Najaf Ashraf*, thought that it was insignificant when compared to the other mighty mountains and had no chance of being a part of such an important event. Allah liked the humility of *Mount Judi* and the Ark landed there!

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) was visited by one of his companions one day. The Imam (as) treated him with much courtesy and attention. He ordered *Qanbar*, the Imam (as)'s attendant, to arrange a repast for the guest. *Qanbar* laid the table and brought water for washing the hands and a towel for drying them. Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) took the pitcher of water from *Qanbar's* hand and wanted to help the guest wash his hands. The guest said politely, "O Master! How is it possible that the slave makes the master do this service!" Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) said, "What if my Master and Creator gets pleased if I do this service for you!?"

Hearing these words the guest was obliged to get his hands washed by Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as). After helping the guest wash his hands, Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) addressed his son, *Muhammad bin Hanafiah*, to help the guest's son wash his hands that the status of the father and the son was not equated. He also added that if the father was not with the son, he would himself have helped him wash his hands.

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) once went to a shop and asked the vendor to show some cloaks. The man asked, "O *Amir'ul-Mu'mineen (as)*! What quality of cloaks you desire to buy?" Hearing this, Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) moved away from the shop. The reason was that the man addressed him as *Amir'ul-Mu'mineen (as)* and that he was aware of the status of the visitor. Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) now went to another shop. At that moment the owner of the shop was away and his young son was attending to the customers.

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) asked the young man to give two cloaks. He bought one for two and the other for three Dirhams. Now Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) asked *Qanbar(r.a.)* to take the cloak worth three Dirhams and kept the inferior garment for himself. *Qanbar(r.a.)* said, "O Master! Please take the better garment for your own use!" Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) said, "It is always the youth who deserve to use better things. You must therefore use the better cloak of the two! The Prophet of Allah (S) has

verily said, 'Provide to the slave the type of garments you yourselves wear and give them the food that you eat!'

The sleeves of Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as)'s cloak were slightly longer than his arms. He got them cut to size and said that the cloth would be useful for making caps for some needy persons.

After a while the owner returned to his shop and learned that *Amir'ul-Mu'mineen (as)* had purchased the cloaks from there. He went to the presence of Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) and said, "O *Amir'ul-Mu'mineen (as)*! My son didn't recognize you and has derived a profit of two Dirhams from you in the bargain! I therefore request you to kindly take back these two Dirhams." Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) said, "We agreed to the price he quoted! The deal was struck! Also, bear it in mind that we are the *Ahl al-Bayt* (people of the Prophet (S)'s Household)! Whatever we give, we never take back!"

The Humility Of The Prophet Of Islam

It is narrated from an authentic source that Muhammad bin Muslim went one day to the presence of Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as). He was partaking of his meal at the time. The Imam (as) asked the visitor to join him over the fare. After finishing the lunch the Imam (as) said, "O Muhammad! My Grand Father, the Prophet of Islam (S), from the day he was ordained the Prophet (S) till his last breath, never reclined on a bolster during his meals. By Allah! He never took support of anything while eating food.

Never did the Prophet (S) eat bread made out of wheat for three consecutive days! From the day he was ordained the Prophet (S) he never ate his fill of wheat bread! I don't mean to say that it was not within his means to afford good food! He used to give away hundreds of good camels in charity! If he wished, he could have ordered the best of victuals for himself! In fact *Jibrael* came thrice to offer to the Prophet (S) the keys to the treasures of the world and said that if he accepted the wealth his status on the Day of Reckoning would not change a wee-bit!

But the Prophet (S), in absolute humility, refused to accept the offer every time it was made to him! The Prophet (S) always tried his best to take care of the needs of persons coming to him for help. If at any time he did not have the means, he would tell the person in absolute humility that he would attend to his needs as soon as he could! Whenever he was endowed with any bounties, he never hoarded them. Many a time he used to vouch Heaven to his visitors and Allah acceded to his wish!"

The Humility Of Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) used to feed meat and wheat bread to the poor. But at home he used to eat dry barley bread with olive oil. He always preferred hardships for himself. During his 25 years of Vicegerency, he never lived in a house made of properly tempered bricks. He never held a small piece of land for his own use. He did not leave behind any property as legacy for his children. He had no savings other than the 700 Dirhams that he kept for buying a slave girl to serve the womenfolk at home! None other could offer supplications as he did. Imam Zain-ul-'Abidin (as) used to keep aside the book

of Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as)'s Supplications expressing his inability to act on them!

It is narrated that *Fidda (r.a.)*, Lady Fatima (as)'s slave-girl, brought a sealed bag to Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as). He opened the seal and brought out dry bread and crusts from it. *Umro bin Harith* was with Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) at that time. He told in a sad tone to *Fidda (r.a.)*, "It would have been better if you had sieved the crusts!" *Fidda* replied, "The reason for putting on the seal is that no such thing was done by anyone to the contents of the bag!"

It is narrated authentically that *Suwaid bin Ghafila* came to Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) on the day of Eid. He noticed that there was some flour and dry bread in a bowl soaked in milk. He asked, "O Master! You eat the same food even on festive occasions?" He replied, "Eid is for one who is sure of pardon for his past sins!"

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) narrated that Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) used to carry the firewood and containers of water for his home on his own shoulders. He used to sweep the house every day. Lady Fatima (as) used to grind the flour and knead it herself for baking the bread.

It is narrated that one day Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) bought fresh dates in Kufa. He tied the fruit in the lapel of his shawl and was proceeding towards his home. Some companions met him on the way and offered to carry his burden. The Imam (as) said, "The right of carrying the family's burden rests with the head of the family!" Then he added, "If a person of distinction carries the weight of his family's requirements, his distinction doesn't diminish in any manner whatsoever!"

It is recorded that Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) used to walk bare-footed on five occasions. On these occasions he used to carry his footwear in his left hand. He would go to the Mosque barefooted on *Eid-al-Fitr*, *Eid-al-Adha* and the *Friday Congregations*. The Imam (as) would also go barefooted when he visited a sick person. He also went with bare feet while attending the funeral procession of a dead person. He used to say that one has to be barefooted while attending to Allah's tasks!

It is narrated that Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) used to visit the market place all alone. During these walks if he found a stranger who had lost his way, the Imam (as) would guide him. When he noticed old and feeble persons on the way, he would offer his help and support to them. If he noticed any person reciting the Qur'an incorrectly, he would guide the person to recite it correctly. Then he would himself recite a verse which says, "We have apportioned the abode in the Hereafter for those who do not want dissension and aggrandizement in the land; for the virtuous good awaits in the Hereafter."

Ibrahim bin Abbas narrates that he did not meet a humbler person than Imam 'Ali ar-Ridha' (as). He was never harsh to anyone. He would never interrupt a person till he completed his talk. He would never turn down the request of a needy person. The Imam (as) never sat with his feet stretched towards any person and also never reclined on a bolster while meeting people. He never reprimanded his slaves and servants. The Imam (as) was never seen laughing loudly. He used always to share his food with his servants and slaves. He slept little and used to be busy praying in the nights. The Imam (as) used to fast

on most days. He was very charitable and generally he would do this in the silence and darkness of the nights that people did not know who their benefactor was!

The Eighth Fruit: Penury, Both Contemptible and Praiseworthy

The Prophet of Islam (S) has said that the first to enter the Heaven will be the *faqirs* or the impecunious persons. When they are admitted to the Heaven, people will wonder why they were allowed to enter without any questioning. Then the *faqirs* would say that they needed not to render any account that they were neither king nor had any high ranks in the world. They had no wealth to be responsible for apportioning it. They were busy in the world supplicating to Allah and awaited their call.

One should know that *faqr* or penury is of two types. One is *Faqr il Allah* or Penury in the way of God; the other is *faqr il annaas* or penury to impress and take advantage of people and ask for alms. This *faqr* is despicable. This *faqr* makes a person avaricious. As people earn reward for expending their wealth in Allah's way, similarly there is reward for those who spend their lives with patience and forbearance while in penury. The reward, in fact, is greater for such persons than for the rich and charitable. Because riches generally take one towards evil and mischief but *faqr* keeps a person's attention riveted towards the remembrance of Allah. If Allah had not created *faqr* in the world, then the superior trait of patience and resignation would never have been practiced.

The question of *faqr* is very delicate to answer. Why Allah had to create *faqr*? Why has He given people the tendency to commit sin? If the instinct of sin was not there, then how would one get the reward for shunning sins? It is advisable not to delve in these thoughts. Even the Prophet (S) and the Imams (as) have advised people not to delve too deeply in the matter.

Penury and Opulence

It is narrated from Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) that the pious men of penury will see the Heaven forty years ahead of the pious opulent persons. The Imam then cited a simile that the impecunious and opulent persons will be like two boats anchored on a wharf. One boat laden with merchandise and the other void of anything. The person on the empty boat would walk away without paying any duties and taxes and the master of the boat with merchandise will have to give account of the goods carried on board before he is allowed to go ashore!

The Prophet of Islam (S) has said that man hates two things. One is the thought of death and the other is the scarcity of wealth. This, despite the fact that death relieves the person of all the cares of the world and the scarcity of wealth makes one less accountable on the Day of Reckoning!

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) has said, "Two things kill a person. First, the fear of poverty and indigence and secondly, the desire for status and recognition."

Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) said: Don't belittle the *faqirs* amongst the *Shi'as* of 'Ali (as). On the Day of

Judgment each one of them will intercede for so many persons that the number will be equal to the population of the two big tribes of *Rabiah* and *Mudar*.

It is narrated from Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) that "The hardships in this world are the Endowments of Allah. For the pious Allah has stored penury in His Treasury!"

One tradition says that penury is a trust from Allah. One who keeps his penury to himself, he will get reward equivalent to one who has fasted on all days and prayed throughout the nights all his life. One who expresses his impecunious position to a person who is capable of ameliorating his situation, but fails to do it, it will be tantamount to killing the person. It will not be killing someone with a sharp lethal instrument, but it will be killing him by way of hurting his psyche.

The stronger the faith of a person, the more his means of livelihood will decrease. The Imam (as) said: If men were not pleading with Allah with humility, even then He would have made it difficult for people to make the ends meet. Allah has created the world as a place of warning and trial for people to face hardships with equanimity.

In another tradition it is said, "Allah has not apportioned the false wealth for our *Shi'as*. He has provided sustenance for their maintenance. They shall not receive more than that. However much they travel in the West and the East."

Then said, "On the Day of Judgment, Allah will give attention to our impecunious *Shi'as* as if He is commiserating with them."

In another tradition it is recorded that the way a brother makes excuses to another brother, Allah too will commiserate with the people saying, "I have not made you impecunious in the world that I considered you inferior beings. You shall now see how I endow you! Whoever has been kind to you in the world, you may catch hold of his hand and lead him to the Heaven!" At that moment a *faqir* would say, "O Allah! The worldly people were enjoying themselves in the world. They were marrying pretty damsels, they were riding pedigree steeds, they ate sumptuous food, wore expensive apparel. Bestow upon us the same privileges now!" Allah will say in reply, "O *faqir*! You and your friends shall be endowed seventy times more than those people enjoyed!"

The Tale Of A Faqir and An Opulent Person

It is narrated that a rich person dressed in expensive garments and visited the Prophet (S). Then came another person dressed in much worn clothes and sat near the first person. The person wearing expensive garments drew together his cloak and moved a bit away from the new arrival. The Prophet (S) noticed this and asked him, "Are you scared that the person's penury would overpower you?" The man replied, "No!" The Prophet (S) asked, "Are you afraid that the person's soiled apparel would soil your expensive clothes?" The Man replied, "No!" The Prophet (S) asked, "Are you afraid that the person would snatch away your opulence?"

The man replied, "O Prophet (S)! Not at all!" The Prophet (S) now asked, "Why then, you behaved the way you did?" The man said, "I have one very bad companion! That is my subconscious ego! It says that all my faults are virtues! As a penance I now bestow on the *faqir* half my wealth!" The prophet (S) asked the *faqir*, "Do you accept this offer?" He replied, "No!" The rich person asked him, "Why do you refuse my offer?" He replied, "I am afraid the wealth might inflict me with the same ailment that you suffer from!"

It is narrated in the traditions that Prophet Musa (as) received a Revelation from Allah, "O Musa (as)! When penury comes to you, welcome it as a trait of the virtuous! When opulence comes to you then ask it whether it is the punishment during the worldly life for the wrong deeds you had committed earlier!"

Muhammad bin al Husayn Khazar says that Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) told to him, "O Muhammad! When you visit the market, you see good quality fruits and vegetables on sale and you realize that you don't have the means to buy them. Do you get a craving to purchase them?" He replied, "O Imam (as)! I do feel the desire to buy those good things!" The Imam (as) said, "For everything that you wish to have, and don't get, an entry will be made in your account of good deeds for the Day of Judgment!"

Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) said, "Allah observes, I have not made the affluent poor because they are contemptible in My eyes. I have not made *faqirs* rich because they are dear to me.' The rich should brood over this fact. The *faqirs* are the instruments of test for the affluent. If the impecunious people were not there in the world, the rich would not have qualified for going to the Heaven."

Imam Zain-ul-'Abidin (as) narrates that one day the Prophet (S) was travelling. On the way a person with a flock of camels met him. The Prophet (S) asked him to give some milk. The man said, "The milk that is in the container is for the use of my family in the evening and that which is in the udders of the camels is for use in the morning!" The Prophet (S) offered a prayer for the welfare and prosperity of the man.

After a little distance the Prophet (S) came across a man with a flock of sheep. The Prophet (S) also asked him to give some milk. The man presented the quantity of milk available with him, and arranged for milking some more animals, instantly. He also presented a sheep to the Prophet (S). He then asked the Prophet (S) if he wished anything else from him. The prophet (S) prayed for him thus, "O Allah! Bless the man with the livelihood he requires!" The companions asked the Prophet (S), "O Prophet of Allah (S)! The man who refused to comply with your request, you prayed for increase in his wealth and progeny. We too wish to be blessed in the same way.

But the man who complied with your request, you prayed for him differently, that we didn't like." The Prophet (S) said, "Lesser the worldly benefits for one is always the better! It is fine if the needs of a person are fulfilled. But if he gets riches in excess, they might make him forgetful of Allah!" The Prophet (S) then prayed, "O Allah! Give sustenance to Muhammad and his progeny sufficient for their upkeep. Give them the capability to refrain from *haram* (illegitimate) acts and give them wherewithal to meet their

essential needs. Give more riches and progeny to our enemies!”

A *mu'min* sometimes feels sad that Allah has made him impecunious. He must know that his penury is the cause of bringing him closer to Allah. When a *mu'min* gets riches in plenty, he feels happy. But he is oblivious of the fact that the riches might take him away from Allah!

Allah says, “The *mu'min*, happiest, and closest to Him is one who performs good deeds, offers good supplication and who is not unpopular amongst his fellow men. He earns livelihood in accordance with his needs and leads a contented life. He leaves the transitory world early, leaves behind him little worldly legacy and has few to mourn his death!”

Sincerity Of Action

The Prophet of Islam (S) has said, “O Abu Dharr! Happy are the people who shun the world and have their attention riveted on the Hereafter! They consider the place for taking rest and the dust their linen. They consider water as a substitute for fragrance. They feel that the Holy Book is their raiment and supplication their garment! They think that their harvest for the Hereafter is the good deeds and the worldly harvest is their wealth and the progeny! One who strives for the Hereafter, Allah will provide him the means of Salvation! To the contrary, one who strives only for the worldly gains, he will be in the same predicament as the Satan. He will not reap any benefits in the Hereafter.”

This highlights that the actions of the hypocrites, who do good deeds to get the appreciation of the people, will get adulation and benefits in this world only and no rewards in the Hereafter. The persons whose actions are sincere, might not get any appreciation from their compatriots in this world. However, compensation and reward awaits them in the Hereafter.

It has been narrated in the traditions that when a *mu'min* attains a high level of piety, he stops getting dreams during his sleep.

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) says that no one thanks a *mu'min* for his good deeds. He may not become popular among his fellow men because he is not interested in such popularity. His aim is only to please Allah. and his good deeds are always destined towards the Heaven. On the other hand, the good deeds of an unbeliever only receive the appreciation of his fellow men. The reason for this is that he does good deeds to please other men.

Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) narrates that the people didn't thank the Prophet of Allah (S) for his kindness and, to the contrary, they used to repudiate his commandments. Similarly they refuse to obey us, the *Ahl-ul-Bayt*. Also, the good deeds of our *Shi'a mu'mins* don't get any appreciation from others. Despite their good deeds, people are antagonistic towards them. The hardships caused by people to Yahya bin Zakaria (as), 'Ali bin Abi Talib (as) and Husayn bin 'Ali (as) illustrate the hardships inflicted by people on them.

A tradition highlights that recitation of the Qur'an is superior to the recitation of the supplications. It is strongly exhorted that one should cultivate the habit (*Sha-aaar*) of reciting the Qur'an. *Sha-aaar* is the garment that is worn outside and *dua* (supplication) is like the under-garment. that is closer to his self. Man can make access to either the Qur'an or to supplication, as per his wish.

The pious people will not derive so much salvation from supplications than those who cry and lament.

It is said: The wise among *mu'mins* are those who remember death and prepare well for it.

It is narrated that a person brought 12 Dirhams to the Prophet of Allah (S) as a gift. The Prophet (S) told to Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as), "O 'Ali (as)! Buy a cloak for me from these Dirhams." Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) went to the market and brought a very fine cloak from there. The Prophet (S) said that he didn't want to wear the expensive cloak and asked him to fetch one not so costly.

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) returned the cloak to the shop and fetched back the 12 Dirhams to the Prophet (S). The Prophet (S) himself went out to buy a cloak. On the way he found a woman crying. He went near her and asked why she was crying. She said that her master had given her four Dirhams to buy some merchandise. She had lost the money on the way and was worrying what reply she could give to her master for the loss. The Prophet (S) gave her four Dirhams and proceeded further. He selected a cloak worth four Dirhams and started back for home.

On the way he met an old Dervish who was dressed in tatters and was begging for a new set of dress. The Prophet (S) gave him his new cloak. When he went further he once again found the same maid crying bitterly. When he inquired the reason for her crying, she said that it was quite some time that she left home and was now worried what reply she would give to her master for the delay. The Prophet (S) said, "I shall accompany you to your master's house." When they reached the destination, the master said, "O Prophet (S)! Why did you take the trouble of coming? I not only condone her delay, but I set her free from today!" The Prophet (S) said, "How auspicious were the Dirhams of that virtuous man that they fulfilled the need of a needy person, a person in tatters got a new dress and a slave maid earned her freedom!"

The Prophet of Islam (S) said, "O Abu Dharr! I swear by Allah's Greatness that He has told me that a *mu'min* who cried in prayer would be provided a palace in the Heaven the like of which will not be provided to none other than the prophets (S)!" "O Abu Dharr! The sign of a man of piety is that he prostrates in recognition of Allah's Greatness and cries." *Giria?* or crying is of different types:

Giria while praying for increase in the means of livelihood.

Giria to be spared from getting consigned to the Hell on account of the sins committed.

Giria while supplicating to Allah for award of a place in the Heaven.

Giria for attaining nearness to Allah. Such a person loves Allah although the materialistic life has created

a distance between the creature and the Creator! This *Giria* is the noblest of all other types.

“O Abu Dharr! If one keeps Allah in view while performing any act, and performs it to earn the pleasure of the Creator, even to the extent of taking a morsel of food with the thought that the energy derived would enable him to offer prayer to Him! It would be the greatest of the acts of piety when a person does everything with the sole purpose of earning the pleasure of Allah!”

Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) has said, “Blessed and worthy of a hundred praises are those creatures of Allah who are not known to the people nor they strive to gain popularity in the society. Only such persons are recognized by Allah. He will give them Reward for their noble intent. These people are the beacons of the path of righteousness. Their hearts are radiant with the light of faith. They fully understand the futility and transience of the world. They strive to attain the Heaven and cry with the fear of the Hell. O Abu Dharr! Belief in the existence of the Heaven and the Hell is mandatory. Denying their existence is heresy and infidelity.”

One heretic asked some questions of Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as).

The First Question: How is it possible that the fruit trees in the Heaven would continuously bear fruit despite the inmates consuming them copiously?

Answer: The Imam (as) Said: It is like lighting thousands of lamps from one lamp and the light of the first lamp doesn’t diminish.

The Second Question: It is believed that people will not defecate in the Heaven. Then what will happen to the offal?

Answer: The Imam (as) Said, “The excreta will be discharged from the bodies in the form of fragrant perspiration.”

Hearing these replies the infidel embraced Islam.

Someone asked Bilal(r.a.) a question about the Heaven. Bilal(r.a.) said: I have heard the Prophet of Allah (S) say that the compound wall of the Heaven is built of gold, silver and bricks of precious stones mixed with musk, ambergris and saffron. The Heaven has several gateways. The gate called “the Gate of Blessings” is made of red rubies. The Gate of Forbearance is made of yellow rubies. The Gate of Thankfulness is made of white rubies. The biggest and the most imposing gate to the Heaven will be used only by the revered persons who spent their entire lives in prayer of Allah. At this gate there are canals from where the men of piety (*Mu’mineen*) will go sightseeing in boats. Allah will provide opportunities to all the *mu’mins* to qualify for entry into the Heaven.

Abu Salat Harwi asked Imam Ar-Ridha’ (as), “O son of the Prophet (S)! Do the Heaven and the Hell exist now?”

The Imam (as) replied, “Without any doubt!”

Abu Salat said, “People say that Allah will create the Heaven and the Hell and that they don’t exist now!”

The Imam (as) replied, “He who says so is not one of us! The Prophet (S), on the night of *Me’raj* (the Night of the Holy Prophet’s Accession), traveled through the Heaven and saw the Hell!” Then the Imam (as), referring to several verses of the Holy Book and the Traditions proved that denying the existence of the Heaven and the Hell would be tantamount to not believing in the Qur’an, the Prophet (S) and his Vicegerents. A person who holds such disbelief is a *kafir* and infidel.

The People Of The Hell

It is essential to believe that the *Kuffar* (the non-believers) would always live in the Hell. They will not have any respite from the Retribution! Barring the *Shi’as* the people of all other sects, who are wise and had been instructed on the *Hujjat* (the Right Path), continue with their prejudice, will ever live in the Hell. The ignorant women and persons with weak minds who cannot distinguish between the right and the wrong, but have the love for the *Ahl-ul-Bayt* in their hearts will receive the Pardon from Allah. The Shi’as who are eligible for the Intercession, although they have committed major sins, might be saved from the Hellfire by Allah. A person who refused to perform the mandatory practices viz: *Salat* (Prayers), fasting, *Hajj*, *Zakat* and denied the existence of the Heaven and the Hell is an infidel and will ever be in the Hell.

About The Hell

It is narrated from Abu Baseer that he inquired of Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as), “O son of the Prophet (S)! My heart has gone extremely callous! I request you to tell me about Allah’s Retribution in the Hereafter!”

The Imam (as) said: The life in the Hereafter has no end! One day Jibrael came to the prophet (S) in a ghastly appearance. The Prophet (S) asked him, “O Jibrael! Why are you so morose today?” Jibrael replied: O Prophet of Allah (S)! Allah has ordered blowing of air on the Hell for a thousand years. As a result of that, the Hell turned white. Again a similar order was given and, as a consequence of a thousand years’ blowing of air, the Hell turned red.

The order was repeated for a third time and, thereafter, Hell turned black. As a result of these operations, the juices of the sinners and the private parts of the adulterers emitted dirt that is called *Dareeh*. This dirt, boiled in the Hellfire, developed such foul smell that if a drop of it was put on the earth, the entire population thereon would perish. In the Hell there is a chain seventy yards in length that will be tied round the necks of the people of the Hell. If even one ring of the chain comes to the earth, it’s heat would kill all the living beings on the surface.

The garments of the inmates of Hell will smell foul that even one dropping to the earth would cause the death of all its inhabitants!

After this, Jibrael and the Prophet (S) started crying grievously. At this moment an angel was sent by Allah. He said, "Allah sends his greetings to both of you and says that He will protect you from sins that attract Retribution." After this event, whenever Jibrael came to the Prophet (S), he was in a jovial and happy mood.

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) said: O Abu Baseer! The infidels and the hypocrites will learn of Allah's Retribution when they get consigned to the Hell. In great pain they will strive for a thousand years to climb up. Reaching the edge they will be hit by the angels with fiery maces on their heads. With these blows they will slide back to the bottom of the Hell. The skins of their bodies will fall apart with the heat. They will get new skins that will burn and fall apart. This torturous process will continue forever.

The Imam (as) said, "O Abu Baseer! Is what I have told you sufficient or you wish me to tell you more?"

Abu Baser said, "O Master! Please tell me no more! Hearing about the Retribution my heart is shivering!"

The Food Of The Inmates Of The Hell

Omro bin Tabit narrates that Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) said, "The inmates of the Hell will plead with the Hell like dogs and wolves to be spared of the Retribution! O Omro! What will be the condition of those who will never find any respite from the Retribution. They will be hungry, thirsty, blind, deaf and dumb and burning in the Hellfire! They will be repentant of the past sins. There won't be anyone to commiserate with them. They will get *Hameem* from the Hell to drink in place of water and will be given *Zaqoom* to eat. They will receive blows from fiery maces on their heads. Angry angels would tie them up harshly in chains and drag them, face down, through burning embers. Their prayers and supplications will not be heeded by anyone. They will pray for death to escape the Retribution, but death would elude them. After all this Retribution, they will have one more severe test in store for them.

The Imam (as) continued, "When *Sadeed in Jahannam* is brought to them for drinking, its heat would peel away the skin of their faces. As soon as they drink the *Sadeed*, their entrails would get shredded and get discharged through their anus. It will be like a rivulet of puss and blood. They will cry so much in pain that their tears would run like rivers. The tears would then dry and in their place the eyes would start shedding blood. There would be so much of blood flowing that it would be possible to sail boats in that.

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) has said: The Hell has seven gates. From the first gate Pharaoh, Haaman, Qaroun, that is the First, Second and the Third would enter! From the second gate the hypocrites and the infidels would enter the Hell. The third gate would be earmarked for the *Bani Omayyad*. None else would use that gate. The fourth gate of the Hell is *Saqar* and the fifth is *Badia*. Those who enter through *Badia*, will descend for seventy years and will again be pushed upwards. This is the largest gate and is the most difficult.

It is mentioned in the traditions that the fire in our world is a part of the seventieth part of hellfire that had been cooled seventy times with water before coming down to Earth. If this wasn't the case, then the heat wouldn't have spared any life on the earth. On the Day of Judgment, the Hell would be brought to the *Maidan al-Mahshar* (the ground where people will have to account for their past deeds!) The *Sirat* would be suspended over this ground. There will be so much hue and cry from the Hell that the angels and the prophets (as) would start pleading with fear!

The Stages Of The Hell: Ghassaq, Jaheem Etc.

It is narrated in a tradition that there is a valley in the Hell by the name of *Ghassaq*. There are 330 palaces in this valley. Every palace has 300 rooms. Every room has 40 corners. At every corner in the rooms there is a snake that has 330 scorpions in its belly. Every scorpion has 330 pouches of venom. This venom is so lethal that if a drop falls in the Hell, the inhabitants there would all perish!

It is narrated that there are seven stages of the Hell. The first stage is *Jaheem*. If the inmates stand on the rocks here, their brains would start boiling with the heat radiated from the stones. The second stage of the Hell is *Lathaa*. Allah tells about this stage that it has excessive gravitational pull. It will pull the limbs of the hypocrites towards it. It will pull people towards itself who had been denying the Truth, had been unfairly amassing wealth and not giving to others their rights.

The third stage of the Hell is *Saqar*. This is a fire that will not spare any flesh, skin, veins and bones. They will all be rendered to soot. From this soot Allah will again create bodies. There will emanate such a flame from this stage that it will render all the infidels black. There are 19 angels who are the *Muwakkil* or keepers of this stage of the Hell. The fourth stage of the Hell is *Hutma*. From here come flames as high as the ceilings of the houses. The flames would resemble camels of yellow color travelling with the wind. Whoever is consigned to the flames, would be instantly consumed by them. It would be turned into a material like the collyrium. Allah will bring back the person to life once again and the flames would once again consume him. The fifth stage of the Hell is *Hawia*. The people will plead with the keeper of this stage for help. He will give to them a fiery pot full of puss to eat. With the heat of the pot, the skins of their faces would peel off and fall into the pots.

Allah has therefore said, "For the cruel people we have readied a fire which will surround them from all sides. If they complain of thirst, they will be given water, which will resemble molten copper. When brought near their faces, it will scald them. It will be very bad water."

For the people of the Hell there is a place of rest called *Mohl*. It is a type of fire. *Mohl* will be put into *Hawia* and it will keep descending for seventy thousand years in the fire. The skin that burns will be formed again, and this will be a continuous process. The sixth stage of the Hell is *Saeer*. This stage has 300 curtains of fire. With every curtain there are three hundred palaces of fire. There are 300 rooms in each of the palaces. In every room three hundred types of Retribution will be devised. Snakes, scorpions and chains of fire will be there in plenty.

Therefore, Allah says, “We have prepared for the infidels collars and chains.”

The seventh stage of the Hell is having a well. When its mouth is opened, innumerable flames would emerge from it. This is the most difficult of the stages of the Hell. There is a mount at the center of this stage called *Sa'uud*. *It is a mountain of copper and a canal of molten copper flows around it*. This is the place of maximum retribution in the Hell.

The Saqar

Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) narrates that *Saqar* is a valley in the Hell. From the day it has been created by Allah, it has never once ‘breathed’. If it breathes equal to the hole in a needle, it would burn the entire population of living beings on the earth. The inmates of Hell are scared of its heat. There is a mount in this valley that awes the people of the Hell because of its extreme heat and foul smell. There is a passage in this mountain and the passage has a pit that is replete with putrid dirt and its stench is obnoxious even to the inmates of the passage. In the pit there is a snake that emanates extremely foul smell. In the belly of the snake there are seven caskets.

Bin Abbas narrates that two Jews came to Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) and asked him where the Heaven and the Hell are located. Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) replied that the Heaven is in the sky and the Hell is on the Earth.

Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) was asked about the meaning of *Falaq*. He replied that *Falaq* is one of the hottest part of the Hell.

It is narrated from Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) that the Prophet of Allah (S) had said: On the way to *Me’raj* I heard a horrendous sound. I felt scared and asked Jibrael about the sound. Jibrael replied, “O Muhammad (as)! This is the sound of a stone that was hurled from the corner of the Hell seventy years ago. Today It has reached the bottom of the Hell. The sound has come from the same stone.” Ever since then, no one saw the Prophet (S) laughing.

The Prophet (S) then added: When I reached the first sky, the angels greeted me happily. But there was one angel who had a terrifying appearance. He too greeted me. He, however, was not as pleasant and happy as the other angels. I asked Jibrael, “How is this angel that looking at him gives one the scare!” Jibrael said, “O Muhammad (S)! We the angels too are scared of looking at his face. His name of *Malik the Keeper of the Hell*. The day Allah gave him the charge of the Hell, and thereafter, he has never laughed. His anger at the inmates of the Hell keeps increasing by the day.

Allah will order him to take revenge on the people of the Hell. O Muhammad (S)! If ever *Malik* smiled, he would certainly have done so seeing you!” The Prophet (S) said, “I greeted him and he gave me the tiding of Heaven for me. I told to Jibrael, ‘The angels obey your orders. Do ask him to show the Hell to me!’ *Malik* therefore took aside the curtain of the Hell and exposed a portion of it. Flames came from the Hell reaching almost up to the sky! The sound and fury scared me and I asked Jibrael to order putting

back of the curtain on the Hell. No sooner the curtain was put, the flames disappeared.”

It has been narrated in the traditions that the Verse of the Holy Book saying, ‘Raiment of fire have been readied for the infidels’ has been revealed with reference to *Bani Omayyad*. They will be surrounded so profusely by the Hellfire that it would appear as if they are wearing the garments of fire. Their lower lips would droop up to their navels. The upper lips would touch the tops of their heads. Allah then adds, “Put on them such scalding water that it burns their intestines and the innards. Fiery maces are in readiness for them. When they try to escape from the Hell, they will be beaten with the maces to force them retrace their steps back into the Hell. They will then be told, ‘Taste the retribution of the Hellfire for your evil deeds!’”

It is narrated in the traditions that those maces are so heavy that even if all the men and jinn together try, they would not be able to move them.

It is narrated that Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) has said for the sinners *Naqaba* has been prepared for them in the Hellfire. Their limbs will be bound with chains and they will be made to wear rings round their necks. They will be made to wear dresses of molten copper. They will be given cloaks of fire to wear. They will be totally deprived of cool breeze. Hardships shall be ever fresh for them. Neither their life will end nor will there be any diminution in the retribution faced by them. They will plead with *Malice* for mercy. He will reply, “This retribution for you shall remain in perpetuity. It will never diminish!”

Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) narrates that the Hell has a place that is so horrible that the inmates are scared to be there. That place will be for all the tyrants and the enemies of the Ahl-ul-Bayt. The easiest place in the Hell will be where the river of fire is located. The inmates will have slippers of fire in their feet. The heat of these slippers would boil the brains of the wearers like the food cooking in a pan. These persons would think that their retribution is the maximum. In fact, this punishment is lighter when compared with that meted out to the other inmates of the Hell.

The Prophet of Allah (S) has said, “If there are a hundred thousand persons in the mosque and amongst them is an inmate of the Hell; then the entire concourse would be burnt and not one would survive!” Then the Prophet (S) continued, “In the Hell there are snakes equal in circumference to the neck of a camel. If a snake bites a person, he would be restless with pain for forty years. In the Hell there are similarly venomous scorpions.”

Abdullah bin Abbas narrates that the Hell has seven doors. At every door there are seventy thousand hills. Every hill has seventy thousand ravines. Every ravine has seventy thousand crevices. Every crevice has seventy thousand rooms. There are seventy thousand snakes in every room. Every snake will be equal in length to the distance traveled in three days. The snake has teeth as big as the date. These snakes would adhere to the flesh of the inmates of the Hell. When they try to run away from the snakes, they would fall into the canal of the Hell and keep falling down for forty years.

Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) has said that Allah has not created any human being for whom He has not

apportioned a place either in the Heaven or the Hell. When the inmates of the Heaven and those of the Hell reach their destination a herald would announce to the inmates of the Heaven to look at the Hell. They will get scared and worried. One angel would say, "O people of the Heaven! If you had been disobedient to Allah, your predicament too would have been the same!" Then the inmates of the Hell would be called by the herald, "Look at the comforts and conveniences of the inmates of the Heaven!" Then he would add, "O unfortunate folk! If you were obedient to Allah, you too would have enjoyed all the privileges of the Heaven!"

Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) has said that the Hell has seven stages. The last stage has seven caskets. One of the caskets has five persons from the times of the past Prophets (S) and two from the time of the Prophet of Islam (S) who have not professed faith in Allah.

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) narrates that Allah has provided every individual a place in the Heaven or the Hell. The herald would ask the inmates of the Heaven to look at the inmates of the Hell. Finding them restless and suffering in the Hellfire, they will hear the herald calling: If you were disobedient to Allah, your predicament too would have been the same! Then the inmates of the Hell would be called by the herald to look at the people of the Heaven. Observing the luxuries and comforts of the people of the Heaven, the inmates of Hell would start crying and lamenting. The Herald would add, "If you too were, doing good deeds, you would have enjoyed the same comforts now!"

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) narrates that when the inmates of the Heaven and the Hell go to their respective destinations, a herald would announce, "O people! Will you recognize Death if it comes before you?" They will all reply in unison that they would not be able to recognize Death! The Death would appear in the space between the Heaven and the Hell in the shape of a sheep with black and white skin. The Herald would say, "Look! This is the Death!" Then with Allah's orders the sheep would be slaughtered. Then the herald would announce, "O people of the Heaven and the Hell! Remain in the places allotted to you! Now there will be no death for you!"

The Prophet said, "O Abu Dharr! Heaven is the place from where if a woman looks at the earth, the entire earth would glitter with the reflection of the radiant face like it reflects when there is the full moon!"

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) said: Heaven is the place the fragrance of which is spread over a distance equal to the distance traveled in a thousand years. Every *mu'min* in the Heaven is provided so well that if he invites all the men and the jinns, they would be completely sated and an equal quantity of the victuals would remain with him! The inmates of the Heaven would get all the bounties of the Heaven and every individual would get eight hundred virgins, four thousand non-virgins and two *Hoor-il-Een!*

About Hur al-'Ayn

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) has said: O Abu Baseer! There is a canal in the Heaven on either bank of which are stationed maids. The *mu'min* who passes that way would select the maids who would willingly

accompany him. Allah will create and station more maids in their place.

The *Hur al-'Ayn* are created with luminous soil. Their limbs would appear shining from within a thousand garments. The heart of the *mu'min* would be the mirror for the *Hur al-'Ayn*. Their hearts would be the *mu'min's* mirror. Their hearts would be clear and delicate and would be reflective. The talk of the *Hur al-'Ayn* would be so sweet that one would not have heard such sweet talk ever before. They will say: We are durable and immortal! We have happiness and bounties in perpetuity. Sorrow and care would never afflict us. We shall ever live in the Heaven and shall never be separated from it. Fortunate is the person who is born for us. If a single hair of ours is fixed in the sky, it would make the eyes of those who look at it blink.

The Doors Of The Heaven

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) narrates that the Heaven has eight doors. One door is for the Prophets (S) and the truthful ones (*the Siddiqeen*). The second is for the martyrs and the *Saleheen* (*benevolent*). The other five doors are for our friends and *Shi'as* who believe in our Vicegerency (*Imama*) and help us. I shall stand near the *Bridge of Sirat* and pray for the safe passage of the *Shi'as* and our helpers. At that time a herald would call from the firmament: We have accepted your prayers! You have the right to intercede on behalf of your *Shi'as*! Each of them too can intercede for seventy thousand of their friends and neighbors! The eighth door of the Heaven is for the other Muslims who do not have the slightest animosity towards the *Ahl-ul-Bayt*. They will enter the Heaven through this door.

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) has said: Allah has made Friday as the day of bounties for the inmates of the Heaven because of the *mu'mins*. On that day the angels would bring from Allah two garments for each *mu'min*. They will tell to the keeper of the Heaven, "Please take permission from so-and-so *Mu'min* for me to go to his presence!" The keeper will approach the *mu'min* and say, "O *mu'min* creature! Allah's angel is seeking your permission to meet you!" The *mu'min* will ask the keeper, "What should I do?" The keeper would reply, "O *mu'min*! Thank Allah! He has given you high honor that He has sent a messenger with His gift for you!"

Then the angel would approach the *mu'min* and give him the two garments sent by Allah. One he would wear around his waist and the other around his shoulders. The angel would take the *mu'min* along with him and proceed to the *wada'ah al-Rehmat*?. When all the *mu'mins* reach that place in a similar fashion, then Allah will show to them His Radiance. They will all prostrate their heads in prayer. Then Allah would order them to raise their heads from the prostration that it was not the time for prayer! They will all say in unison "O Allah! How could we thank You for granting to us the bounties of the Heaven?"

The reply will be, "You will be bestowed seventy times more bounties that you are receiving now! Every Friday you would receive seventy times more bounties than in the previous week!" Therefore Allah has said in the Holy Book, "We have more bounties and miracles." Friday is the day of enhancement of the bounties. The eve of Friday is very illuminating and the day is very bright. The *mu'mins* must keep

themselves busy in prayer on the eve and the day of Friday. They must repeatedly utter the words *Subhan Allah, Allahu Akbar wa la ilaha il Allah*. They should also recite *Alhamdu lillah* on the rosary and recite the *Durood Shareef* as much as they can.

When the *mu'mins* return from *the Muqam Rahma* to the Heaven with the gift of the raiment from Allah, their consorts would say, "By the Great Allah, who has endowed us with a place in the Heaven, we have not found you as handsome as today. From where have you acquired these good looks?" The *mu'min* would say, "I have acquired these good looks from the light and Radiance of Allah!" Then the Imam (as) said, "The women in the Heaven will be free of the menstrual periods. They will not have the instincts of jealousy and ill temper!"

The narrator asked, "Will there be music and song in the Heaven?" The Imam (as) said: In the Heaven there is a tree. With the wind, under Allah's Orders, the tree would sway and produce such a wonderful tune that was never there in the world. This music will be only for the ears of the *mu'min* who shunned music in his worldly life out of fear of Allah. Allah has created the Heaven. No human eye has seen it. Every morning it is opened and the fragrance reaches the inmates of the Heaven. Allah says, "No creature knows what hidden bounties are for him that would provide light and coolness to his eyes. This is in return for the good deeds he has done in the world."

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) has said that *Tawbah* is a tree in the Heaven the roots of which are in the Prophet's house and a branch in every *mu'min's* residence. Whatever a *mu'min* wishes to have, the branch of the tree would provide him. The girth of *Tawbah* is so wide that if a rider goes around, at great speed for one hundred years, he wouldn't reach from one end to the other. The tree is so tall that if a crow flies from one branch and keeps flying all its life, it would drop dead but wouldn't reach the top of the tree. Then Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) also said, "O people! Endeavor to get the shadow of the tree of *Tawbah*!"

In another tradition it is mentioned that there is a tree in the Heaven on which *Hillary* (the Heavenly Garments) are produced. Under this tree appear white steeds with harness and stirrups. These horses will have wings. They will be free of the need of passing the feces. The *mu'mins* would ride these horses and travel flying to wherever they wish to go. *Moments* of lower category will see this and say, "O Allah! For what you have rewarded them with this bounty?" Allah will reply, "They shunned their nights' rest to offer supplication to Me! They used to fast during the days, they did *Jihad* with my enemies and used to spend their wealth in My way!" The leaf of the tree of *Tawbah* will be so wide that under its shade the entire following of one Prophet (S) could assemble.

It is narrated that the Prophet of Islam (S) used to smell Lady Fatima Zahra (as) very often

Um-ul-Mu'mineen Ayesha didn't like this practice of the Prophet (S). Once she asked the Prophet (S) why he did this. The Prophet (S) replied, "O Ayesha! On the *Night of Me'raj* I had been to the *Firmament*. Jibrael took me near the *Tree of Tawbah*. He gave me the fruit from the tree. I ate it. That

introduced the sperm in my backbone. When I returned to the earth, I mated with Khadija (as) and she bore Fatima (as). I get the fragrance of the *Tree of Tawbah* from Fatima (as).” The Prophet (S) added, “Fatima (as) has the nature of the houris and the features of a human being. Whenever I think of the Heaven, I smell Fatima (as). She effuses the fragrance of the Heaven!”

Abdullah bin Abbas narrates that the Prophet of Allah (S) has said, “In the Heaven a ring of rubies is suspended on a tablet of gold. When this ring strikes the tablet it produces sound like saying “*Ya ‘Ali (as)*”.

It is narrated by Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) that the Prophet of Allah (S) has said: The night I went for *Me’raj* and entered the Heaven, I noticed some angels busy at construction work. They were alternatively putting on a golden and a silver brick. In between they took some respite. I asked them as to why they were stopping work periodically. They said that they were stopping the work for the arrival of the binding material. The Prophet (S) asked, “What is that binding material?” They replied, “It is the recitation of the *mu’min* on the rosary of the words: *Subhan Allah wal hamdu Lillah wa la ilaha ilAllahu wa Allahu Akbar.*” When a *mu’min* recites these words we commence our work. When he stops his recitation we stop our work.

Jabir bin Abdullah narrates that the Prophet (S) has said, “On the door of the Heaven it is inscribed, ‘*la ilaha il Allahu Mohammadun rasoolullahi Aliun akhoo rasoolillah— there is no god but Allah, Muhammad is his Prophet (S) and ‘Ali(as) is the Prophet’s brother.*’ This inscription was there on the firmament a thousand years before the earth was created. In the Heaven Allah has created a column of rubies on which there are seventy thousand palaces. Every palace has a thousand doors. These palaces are for those persons who make friend with people to please Allah and travel to meet them.

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) narrates that one day Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) asked the Prophet (S) to narrate the commentary of the verse: “*But those who fear Allah, story over story will be constructed for them under which canals would be flowing. This is Allah’s promise; and Allah never breaks His promises.*” Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) asked, “How will the story be?”

The Prophet (S) replied: Allah has made each story with precious stones. Their ceilings are of gold with engravings of silver. The door of every storey will have a thousand pearls affixed on it. The floors will have carpets of silk and brocade. They will be perfumed with musk, ambergris and camphor. When a *mu’min* enters them a crown will be placed on his head. The crown will be embossed with precious stones. He will be given a robe which will be embroidered with red rubies and pearls. He will be made to sit on a throne.

At that moment the angel of the *Garden of the Heaven* will seek permission to come to greet him. The attendants of the *mu’min* will tell to the angel that permission cannot be granted that the *mu’min* was resting with the *Houri*. When the *Houri* emerged out, then the angel would enter to greet the *mu’min*. The angel will notice thousands of maids in attendance around the throne. The *mu’min* would try to rise as a

mark of respect to the angel. The angel would say, “Don’t rise! This is the time for your relaxation!” Then they will both embrace. This embrace will be as long as a period of five hundred years in this world. But they will not be slightly tired or uneasy with this. Then the *mu’min* would look at the *Houri* who will have a tablet around the neck with the engraving, ‘O friend of Allah! You are my beloved and I am yours! I was very eager about you and you were very eager for me as well!’

Then other angels would follow to greet him. In this manner a thousand angels would be sent by Allah to greet the *mu’min*. When the angels reach the door of the Heaven, they will tell to the Keeper to seek permission from the *mu’min* for their visit.

The keeper would be told that the *mu’min* was meeting the *Houri* and the visitor shall have to wait for getting an audition. One thousand angels would thus wait their turn to meet and greet the *mu’min*. The Keeper would go to the private servants of the *mu’min*, who in turn will tell to the *mu’min* when permission will finally be granted to the thousand angels to enter through the doors. The angels would then greet and congratulate the *mu’min*. About this event Allah has said in the Holy Book,

And the angels shall approach them from every door (and say) ‘peace be on you on account of the forbearance that you practiced and the abode of the Hereafter is fine and excellent’ – Ar Raad 24–23.

Similarly in *Ad Dharr* Verse 20, Allah says,

“And which ever way you direct your vision, you shall find bounties and riches.”

The Prophet of Allah (S) has said that ‘*Naeem*’ means the realm that Allah will grant to His friend on the Day of Judgment. There the angels will greet and congratulate but they will not enter without the express permission of the *mu’min*. Then the Prophet (S) added that under the rooms of the *mu’mins* canals would be flowing and on their banks will be trees laden with fruits.

Whichever fruit they desire to eat, the branch of that fruit tree would come near the *mu’min’s* mouth. Every fruit would converse with the *mu’min* with Allah’s orders and would say, ‘O pious person! Please do eat me! Every *mu’min* would own several gardens where canals of milk, sweet water and beverages would be flowing. Whatever he desired to eat would be instantly available to him. The *mu’mins* would saunter around the Heaven together. They will meet and socialize with one another. Every time there will be a pleasant breeze blowing in the Heaven as is seen at the times of dawn in the world. Every *mu’min* will have seventy *Houris* and four human wives.

Then the Imam (as) said that the *mu’min* would sit in the Heaven with a bolster behind his back. Suddenly he would notice a bright radiance. He will ask his servants what the light was. They will say that it was a glimpse of the *Houri* that it had peeped from the corner of the door to get a glimpse of yours. Seeing you, the *Houri* smiled and the radiance was the reflection of its shining teeth. The *mu’min* would then give permission for the *Houri* to enter his chambers.

Hearing this, the servants would go running and convey the message to the *Houri*. The *Houri* would then dress in raiment of jewels, wear perfumes of musk and ambergris and come to the presence of the *mu'min*. The *Houri* would be so delicate that its slender limbs would be visible through its raiment of jewels. The *mu'min's* servants would spray sacrificial shower of jewels in honor of the *Houri*. Then the *Houri* would go forward and embrace the *mu'min*.

Narrating this tradition, the Imam (as) said: The heavens about which Allah has mentioned are *Jannat Adan*, *Jannat-ul-Firdous*, *Jannat-an-Nayeem* and *Jannat-il-Ma'awa*. In between these heavens, there will be several other heavens. The *mu'min* would rest in whichever heaven he wished to have a respite in. If he desired for anything, he would say, '*Subhanaka allahumma (Glory to you my Lord)*' Hearing this, the slaves would produce before him what he desired for. Therefore Allah has said, "*In the Heaven they would say, 'O Allah! You are pure and flawless' and their congregational prayer would be for their collective peace. This prayer would end in praises for Allah who is the Sustainer of the Worlds.*"

Someone asked Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) the commentary of the verse, "*Feehinna khairatun h'Isaan.*?" The Imam (as) replied that here are meant the pious *Shi'a women* who will go to the Heaven and get married to the *mu'mins*. Then the person asked, "What is meant by, '*Hoorun maqsooraatun filqiyam*?" He replied: There will be delicate *houris* of fair complexion in the Heaven who will sit in tents made of emerald and coral. Every tent will have four doors. Every door will have seventy virgin women stationed as guards. These *houris* have been created to give company to the *mu'mins*.

The Prophet of Allah (S) has said that the trunk of every tree in the Heaven is made of gold. The people of the Heaven will be endowed with increased good looks, strength and brightness every day. The lowest ranking inmate of the Heaven will be provided with seventy servants. Ninety-two stages of the elevated stages of the Heaven would be earmarked for him.

The women of the Heaven will remain virgin even after copulation because they will be the creation of pure and clean soil. They will have no marks and deformities and nothing would have entered their private parts. They will be free of menstrual discharges. Their hymen would be intact even after copulation.

In another tradition the Prophet (S) has said: The four walls of the Heaven have been erected with bricks made of gold and silver. In place of concrete, a mixture of musk, ambergris and rose water would be used. Its ramparts would be made of emeralds red and green. It has many doors. *Baab ar Rahma (door of mercy)* is made of red emeralds. *Baab as Sabr (door of patience)* is a small door made of emeralds and will have no door-chain. *Baab as Shukr (door of praise)* is made of white emeralds and its two shutters have a distance equivalent to the distance traversed in five hundred years.

A sound emanates from this door saying, 'O Allah! Guide towards me those who are deserving!' *Baab al Bala (door of test)* is made of yellow emerald. The people who enter through this door will be those who suffered from sicknesses in the world and did not squander their reward by complaining about their

condition. There is another big door to the Heaven through which such persons will enter who have abandoned the world to save themselves from evil deeds. The Prophet (S) was asked, “What will the inmates of the Heaven do when they reach there?”

The Prophet (S) said: They will board the boats and go sightseeing in the waters of the canals. The boats will be made of emeralds. The oars will be made of pearls and the angels would be the sailors. The name of the canal is *Jannat al Ma'wa* ?. Then the Imam (as) said: Inside the heaven there will be another heaven, the name of which is *Eden*. Its walls are made of red rubies and the flooring of pearls. Then there will be another heaven by name of *Jannat al Firdous*. Its walls and doors are made up of light.

The Prophet of Islam (S) has said: In the Heaven, the inmates will not need to attend the nature's call. It will, in fact, be converted into a fragrant liquid.

The Prophet (S) said, “O Abu Dharr! Be quiet while with a funeral procession and when in battle and recite the Holy Book!”

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen (as) said, “There are five times of prayer, when it is accepted: 1. While reciting the Qur'an. 2. When the *Adhaan* is said. 3. While it is raining (when the first rain drops fall on the land). 4. At the time of battle when the skirmish between the believers and the infidels is in progress. 5. When the oppressed pray.”

When the Qur'an is recited, listen quietly and with intent. At that time quiet is mandatory and talking taboo. Some jurists are of opinion that when the Imam (as) leads the prayer and recites the verses, the congregation should be quietly standing behind him. Also the Prophet (S) has exhorted (*Sunna mu'akkada*?) that people should quietly listen to the recitation of the Qur'an.

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) narrates that when a person hears quietly one word of the Qur'an recited, Allah will apportion one reward for him and deletes one sin from his account of deeds. The person will be advanced one stage ahead in the Heaven for this act.

Keeping quiet while proceeding with a funeral procession means that one should go with patience and equanimity and not crying and wailing.

The Prophet of Islam (S) has said that Allah doesn't like two sounds: the sound of people crying in times of difficulty and singing in times of happiness.

Laughter and Jest

A *mu'min* will have gracefulness on his face even if he is sad at his heart. A person remaining morose all the time is not good. A *mu'min* must keep a broad forehead, pleasant mien, and good nature. He should also have a good sense of humor. But all this should be in moderation.

It is narrated from the Prophet of Islam (S) that excessive jesting puts one to shame and excessive laughter harms one's faith. If a person lies, the radiance of his face diminishes.

The Prophet Dawood (as) told to Prophet Sulaiman (as) three things, one of which was, "My Son! Don't laugh much that on the Day of Reckoning one would rise a beggar because of this!"

It has appeared in the traditions that three things cause Allah's ire: 1. Sleeping during the day without remaining awake in the nights. 2. Laughing without any cause for doing so. 3. Eating to one's satiation.

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) narrates that one who laughs much in worldly activities, will cry much on the Day of Judgment. There are many who cry in fear of Allah's Retribution. They are the ones who will be happy on the Day of Judgment.

The Prophet of Allah (S) has said: I am surprised how one laughs who is sure of the retribution of the Hellfire? With excessive laughter the heart dies.

The Prophet of Allah (S) always kept his laughter to the extent of a smile. None heard him laugh loudly. Once he passed a group of persons laughing loudly, when he said, "O people! Excessive expectations and scarcity of good deeds have misled you. Think of your graves. Take lesson from the thought of inevitable death and the retribution of the Day of Reckoning!"

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) said that laughter causes loss of faith like the water dissolving the salt. Laughing for no reason is a sign of ignorance. He also said, "Don't joke or quarrel with your friend. Jest is like abuse and the cause of hate and enmity." He also said, "Don't expose your teeth in laughter when your bad deeds are there to put you to shame. You cannot prevent yourself from the onslaught of death!"

O Abu Dharr! Two things are bad: 1. Laughing without reason. 2. Delay in offering the mandatory prayers because of laziness.

O Abu Dharr! Man knows that his inner instinct makes him commit mistakes day and night that put him to hardship and repentance. Then how one can laugh knowing all this? It doesn't mean that he should always be morose and forlorn. A *mu'min* must be pleasant and smiling. But he should not laugh excessively. One should know that jesting much one loses his respect and excessive laughter reduces one's faith.

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) has said that people indulging in the futile worldly activities always keep laughing. They will cry on the Day of Reckoning. Those who cry out of the fear of the Retribution, will not cry in the Hereafter.

Jest and good humor in moderation is a part and parcel of good behavior and a sign by which a *mu'min* is recognized. Jest should be with the sole purpose of pleasing the *mu'mins*.

The Ninth Fruit: Laziness In Offering Prayers

Laziness in offering mandatory prayers is a trait of the hypocrites. *Mu'min* should not be tardy about offering prayers and should fulfill this obligation with humility and fear of Allah.

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) has said that when one thinks of performing a good deed, then he should hasten to accomplish it; lest Satan diverts his mind and the deed is not done!

Dedication Of Heart In Prayer

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) has said, "Abstain from two habits: Losing interest in performing tasks and shirking from doing work."

Losing interest in work would curb ones instinct of patience and being lazy will give him the feeling of not abiding by his legitimate duty.

The Prophet of Islam (S) has said: O Abu Dharr! Offering two genuflections of prayer with full dedication is better than praying the whole night with no dedication of the heart. O Abu Dharr! Truth is more valuable and bitter while falsehood is light and sweet.

Many a time a moment's carnal desire becomes the cause of retribution in the Hereafter.

.Man cannot become wise and jurisprudent till he doesn't visualize men as camels in comparison with the greatness and omnipotence of Allah. When he pays attention to himself, then he would realize that he is the most inferior.

O Abu Dharr! You will not realize the value of faith till you recognize that all men are wise in the matters of faith.

Every person is flattered with sycophancy although he knows well that whatever the flatterer says is sheer lies.

It must be borne in the mind that thoughtlessness is of two types. One category is good and the other is bad. The one thoughtlessness is that a person thinks that all profit and loss accrued is according to the wish of Allah. He doesn't give credence to what others think about his changed status. He generally doesn't bother about what others think when he decides to do something to please Allah.

This status is reached when the person has understood the Greatness of Allah. The bad type of thoughtlessness is due to pride and prejudice. Such persons consider others inferior to them and become oblivious of their own failings. At the time of prayer such persons don't bother about others. They consider others as sheer camels tantamount to being animals. Then he said: While introspecting, consider oneself humble. A person who tries to please someone in power contrary to the dictates of Allah, he will render himself an apostate.

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) says, "The person is a deserter of the Faith who, in order to please men, disobeys the Commandments of the Creator. Never displease Allah to please mortals. Don't acquire nearness to people by deeds that take you away from Allah. There is no way of achieving Rewards from Allah other than implicitly obeying Him." Obedience to Allah is the route to success and deliverance. Allah guards the obedient from all evil. The disobedient cannot protect himself from Allah's Retribution. When the time comes, such persons shall have no place to run to.

Then the Imam (as) said "Protect yourself from the reproach of those who have reason to reproach. Allah will save you from the deceit of the enemies."

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) says, "A person who rates a *mu'min* inferior, Allah always deems him inferior."

The Prophet of Islam (S) has said: A *mu'min* should always contemplate in his own conscience and remember that one day he will have to render account of his deeds. It is better he straightens his account today only, lest he repents tomorrow!

It is narrated from Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) through authentic source that "A person who doesn't introspect his own actions every day is not from amongst us."

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) has said, "If a person notices good in himself, he should pray to Allah that his good deeds enhance. If he finds that he has committed some bad deeds, he should seek the forgiveness of Allah."

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) says, "Obtain sustenance from your own conscience. Be grateful to receive sustenance in good health before you fall ill and in youth instead of doing it when you are old and weak."

Don't rate a thing low that can bring you reward on the Day of Reckoning. Don't also belittle the thing that might bring you Retribution on that Day. Remember, the things about which Allah has warned, have to be always borne in mind.

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as), as a part of his final testament, told to Imam Hasan (as), "O son! There are three moments for a *mu'min*. In one moment he supplicates to his Creator. In the second he draws a balance of his deeds and in the third he draws pleasure for his good deeds and offers thanks to Allah."

He also said, "One who searches the aberrations of his conscience and doesn't remove them, and gets overwhelmed with desires, would rather die."

Imam Zain-ul-'Abidin (as) says, "O son of Adam (as)! As long as your own conscience is your preacher (and reformer) your actions will remain good. When you attain this status, make fear of Allah your habit. Wear the raiment of sorrow and penitence. O son of Adam (as)! You are destined to die! You will be raised again to render account before Allah! Prepare now for that day!"

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) has said that before you are asked to give the account (of your deeds), audit the account yourself!

The Prophet of Islam (S) has said: O Abu Dharr! Modesty in front of Allah is compulsory. If you are particular of entry to the Heaven, then save your eyes, ears, tongue and thoughts from acts of sin. Being modest with Allah means abstaining from evil and not committing sins.

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) has said, "Modesty and faith are always together. Modesty is the part and parcel of faith and so is the faith of modesty. If there is no modesty, there is no faith!"

A tradition of the Prophet (S): If four traits are present in a person, the Hellfire is taboo on him even if he sinned no end. These traits are:

- Truthfulness.
- Humility
- Good manners
- Thankfulness.

Humility and Faith

An Infallible has said, "O Abu Dharr! Humility in a person prompts one not to forget that he would purify in the grave. He keeps the desires of his stomach and the head, his lust and carnal urge in control. One who is desirous of the benefits of the Hereafter should shun the world. If you can achieve this, you will qualify to attain the friendship and guardianship (*wilaya*) of Allah."

Humility (*haya'*) connotes curbing of instincts that put the conscience to shame. There are two categories of humility: One category is the height of virtuosity that brings felicity. The other category is the height of depravity.

The quality of virtuosity is acquired when one is able to distinguish good from evil, he starts feeling ashamed of ever quitting good deeds and missing mandatory prayers. He submits humbly to Allah and abstains from sins that have been rated taboo by the *Shariah*. The acts of the adherents (*Ummah*) are all presented every day to the Prophet (S) and the Imams (as). Two angels are always alert to record the actions of the person. If Allah removes the curtain, all the inhabitants of the firmament would witness the acts of the human beings and put them to shame on the Day of Reckoning in front of 124,000 Prophets (S) and the entire creation.

The other category of humility is inferior. Because of ignorance a person considers an act taboo and refrains from it. This happens because of the lack of correct knowledge. For example, sometimes they are confronted with a problem and are shy to seek an explanation from the knowledgeable. Such

humility can be the cause of losing the felicity or bliss in the Hereafter. Allah says:

﴿وَاللَّهُ لَا يَسْتَحْيِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ﴾

Allah is not shy of the truth (33:53)

The Prophet of Islam (S) has said that humility is of two types--- there is humility of wisdom and also there is humility of foolishness. The cause of the humility of wisdom is sagacity and knowledge. The humility of foolishness is because of ignorance and lack of knowledge.

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) has said, "One whose forehead is narrow, will have scanty knowledge. O people! Don't be ashamed of acquiring knowledge!"

The Prophet of Islam (S) has said, "Shunning humility is the cause of all ills and sins. Humility is of two kinds. One is attended with weakness of intellect and lack of knowledge. The other type connotes the strength of Islam and the Faith".

Prophet 'Isa (as) says, "One who wishes the privacy of his home must put up a curtain. Allah has endowed humility to people as He has endowed them with the means of livelihood."

The Tenth Fruit: Legitimate Livelihood

One should abstain from consuming things that are deemed illegitimate and even those things that have been rated *makrooh* (unbecoming) by the *Shariah*. One should not eat the *makrooh* foods and also avoid sharing the table of those who pursue *haram* professions. In today's world acquiring *halal* livelihood is a difficult task. But Allah has made it binding on the people to seek legitimate livelihood.

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) has said, "One who desires that his prayers are answered, he must strive for legitimate and fair livelihood!"

Guarding Ones Private Parts

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) said, "The best worship of Allah is to protect ones private parts from *haram* (illegitimate) acts." One person asked, "O Imam (as)! My actions are not commendable nor do I fast regularly. But I strive hard to have a *halal* (legitimate) livelihood." The Imam (as) said, "There is no prayer greater than the chastity of the stomach and the private parts."

The Prophet of Islam (S) has said, "The biggest causes of my followers going to the Hell are two empty things, the empty stomach and their private parts."

The Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) is reported to have said to Najm, "O Najm! All Shi'as will be with us in

the Heaven but imagine the predicament of those whose failings would be exposed there.” Najm asked the Imam (as), “O Imam! Will this be the condition of your Shi’as?” He said, “Yes! If he has not guarded his belly and the private parts.”

The Prophet of Islam (S) has said, “I am much worried about the following things in my followers: illegitimate earning, desire to fulfill secret carnal desires, cheating, usury and taking loans unnecessarily.”

Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) has said: If a person makes dishonest earnings and goes to perform Hajj with savings from such amount, in response to his call of Labbaik (the beck and call) the reply will be *la labbaik* (not at beck and call) and when he says *sadaika* the reply will be *la sadaik*, which means that none of his efforts are acceptable to Allah.

The Imam (as) said: One group received the world in a legitimate manner but they didn’t accept it and departed from the world in that state. Then another group was offered the legitimate mixed with the doubtful. They refused to accept the doubtful and contented themselves only with the legitimate. Then a third group was presented only with the illegitimate wealth that they refused to accept and went away. *Mu’min* draws only the bare necessities from the world. It is like a starving person consuming the meat of a dead animal to save his life.

Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) said: The illegitimate wealth grows, even then it will not bring *baraka* (good fortune). If this money is spent on charity, it will not bring any rewards. When one leaves behind such ill-gotten wealth, it will be the harbinger of Hell for him.

It is authoritatively narrated from Sama that he told to Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as), “O Imam! One of the retainers of Bani Omayyad has amassed huge wealth and gives large amounts in charity. He treats his kith and kin generously, goes for Hajj pilgrimage and says that he would definitely get reward for these good deeds. This, he says, because Allah has said,

﴿إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ﴾

“no doubt good deeds obliterate evil deeds” (11:114)

The Imam (as) replied, “The man is spending other people’s wealth which is a Sinful act. How can one sin obliterate another sin? Allah says in this regard:

﴿وَقَدِمْنَا إِلَىٰ مَا عَمِلُوا مِنۢ عَمَلٍ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ هَبَاءً مَّنثُورًا﴾

And We shall give attention to their good deeds that they have performed in the world, and We shall scatter these good deeds into particles.” (2:23)

Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) said, “By Allah! Their deeds will be very radiant and shining, but since they didn’t abstain from ill-gotten wealth, Allah will say that their deeds would be scattered away as particles.

Abstaining From Ill-gotten Sustenance

It is obligatory to abstain from taboo (*haram*) food. *Halal* and pure food is the victual of the good, truthful and pious persons. Amir’ul-Mu’mineen (as) was exercising special care about his food only on account of this. The food one takes has a strong bearing on the actions and the nearness the person has with Allah. The strength of the human body is related to the animal instinct and the animal instinct is related to the blood that is a product of the food ingested. Therefore, if the food is pure and legitimate, the blood produced will result in good deeds that will be deemed as invocation to the Creator. To the contrary, if the food taken by a person is derived from ill-gotten earnings, his prayers will not be accepted by Allah.

The Prophet of Allah (S) said that any person from amongst my followers who abstained from four things will earn a place in the Heaven: 1. Avarice for the world. 2. Carnal desires. 3. Filling one’s belly with illegitimate food. 4. Lasciviousness of the private parts.

Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) has said that a person who wishes that his prayers get answered, he should strive to earn legitimately and buy his food from such earning.”

The Eleventh Fruit: About Adultery

One should abstain and keep away from adultery. It is one of the major sins that a person can commit. Adultery is of different types.

There is adultery through the private parts, adultery through the eyes by looking at the females lustfully, adultery by peeping at adult *na-mahram females* (the females who, according to the *shariah*, are outside the immediate family circle), the adultery through the ears by hearing lustful talk or amorous songs and taking pleasure hearing the talk of *na-mahram* women.

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) and Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) have said that there are few men who are safe from adultery. The reason for this is that there are several categories of adultery: Adultery of the eye (looking with lust at women is *haram*), adultery with touch (touching women with lust), adultery with mouth (kissing *na-mahram females*), and the most accursed person on the Day of Reckoning will be that who introduced his seed in the private part of a *na-mahram*.

Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) has said that one must abstain from adultery because it affects the livelihood and nullifies the Hereafter for the person.

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) has said the adulterer will have six traits, three worldly and the other three are for the Hereafter. The worldly traits will be: 1. Loss of the radiance of the face. 2. The person becomes impecunious. 3. He moves closer to destruction. The traits of the adulterer in the Hereafter will be: 1. He faces the ire of Allah. 2. He finds it extremely difficult to render account on the Day of Judgment. 3. He will be consigned to the Hell in perpetuity.

After me, adultery will be rampant. Because of this there will be sudden deaths of people.

The companions of Prophet 'Isa (as) told him, "O perfect guide! Give us guidance." He replied, "Prophet Musa (as) has exhorted you not to make false promises. I warn you not to make even true promises. Prophet Musa (as) has asked you to never commit adultery. I exhort you not even to get the thought of adultery in your minds."

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) told to Mufazzil: O Mufazzil! One who commits adultery with another person, one day he too would face the same predicament. Listen with care! There was an infamous adulteress in the tribe of Bani Israel. One man used to visit her frequently. One day Allah made the woman tell him that his spouse was committing adultery with another male at his house. The man was doing the same with his wife that he did with her. In anger, the man rushed home. He saw a man sleeping with his spouse. He went to the presence of Prophet Musa (as) and complained. Jibrael(as) came and told Prophet Musa (as), "Please tell this person that as you sow, so shall you reap! You must take care of the chastity of others if you are concerned of your own!"

The Retribution For Adultery, Pederasty and Suhaq(Monosexuality)

The Prophet of Islam (S) has narrated that Jibrael has told him that the fragrance of the Heaven can be smelled from a distance equivalent to travelling for a thousand years. But one who has been disinherited by his parents, one who aborted a pregnancy and who is an adulterer will not be able to smell this fragrance.

It has come in the traditions that one who copulates with a woman through her anal cavity or commits pederasty will be raised up on the Day of Reckoning in a condition worst than the carcass of a dead animal. The people then will be troubled much with the foul smell. He will be consigned to the Hell and no cognizance will be taken of his past deeds. He will be sealed in a casket on which steel nails will be fixed. He will be in such extreme retribution that if a single vein of his is taken near a 100,000 persons, they will all die with the foul stink.

It is said that a person who sets an evil eye on his neighbor's house and avers the hair and bodies of women with lust, will be consigned to the Hell along with the hypocrites. A person who reveals the private deals of Muslims will not depart from the world till his own evil deeds are exposed.

It is said that one who gets an opportunity to rape a slave-girl and refrains from doing it with fear of Allah, will be spared from the Hellfire and will be in peace on the Day of Reckoning. He will be rewarded

with a place in the Heaven.

It is said that if one has touched a woman with an evil intent, his hands will be tied to his neck on the day of reckoning.

It is said that if one has talked in jest with a *na-mahram woman*, he will be made a prisoner in the Grounds of Reckoning for a thousand years.

It is said that if one has stared at a *na-mahram female* with evil intent, his eyes will be pierced with fiery nails. This process will continue till all the creation has gone through the Reckoning. Then the person will be consigned to the Hell.

A person who commits adultery with a married woman, such man and woman would ooze a stinking fluid from their private parts that the road in the Hell will smell foul for a distance that can be traveled in five hundred years.

When a married woman sets an evil eye on a *na-mahram male*, Allah's Retribution will fall on her and all her good deeds would go null and void.

A woman who beds with a strange man, she will burn in the Hellfire.

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) has said that one should treat the parents well that the person's children do likewise with him. Don't commit adultery with *na-mahram* lest someone commits the same with your women.

There are three signs of one who is born of adultery: 1. The person has a tendency to harm people. 2. The person has the desire for adultery. 3. The person carries ill will towards the *Ahl-ul-Bayt*.

The Prophet of Islam (S) has said, "On the *Night of me'raj* I noticed some women hanging from their breasts. I learnt from Jibrael that these were the women who gave birth to children through adultery and made them inherit their husbands' possessions." The Prophet (S) also said: If someone has committed adultery with a Christian, Zoroastrian, Jew or a Muslim, will not get even the smell of the Heaven. When a person has control over a *na-mahram female*, and, out of fear of Allah, refrains from adultery with her, all his sins will be pardoned and will find a place for himself in the Heaven. When a woman agrees with a man for adulterous relations, she will be a party to the sin. In cases of forceful adultery, only the man is answerable.

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) has said, "Sodomy is worst than adultery. It is because of this evil practice that the tribe of Lot has been destroyed by Allah."

The Prophet of Allah (S) has said, "One who commits sodomy will rise unclean on the Day of Judgment. The waters of the earth cannot make him clean. Allah's curse will be on such persons. They will suffer in the Hell."

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) says, "When a man approaches the back of another for sodomy, then the Firmament shakes and the sodomous? person will be incarcerated on the Bridge of the Hell till a time that he gives the account of his deeds. Then he will be consigned to the Hell forever. He will ultimately reach the lowest echelons of the Hell for maximum suffering."

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) has said, "Sodomy is copulation through the anal cavity. This activity is infidelity in the eyes of Allah."

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) has said, "The women who have committed *Suhaq (monosexuality)* will be brought forth on the Day of Reckoning in such a state that they will be draped in a fiery dress. On their heads there will be sheets of fire and a pillar of fire will be inserted inside them. They will ultimately be consigned to the Hell."

The Twelfth Fruit: Protecting One's Eye

Amongst the parts of the human body, the part most exposed to sin and transgression is the eye. It is the eye that provokes the base instincts in a person to commit minor and major sins. Setting eye on a *na-mahram* is no doubt illegitimate, but even looking at things that have been termed illegitimate by the *Shariah*. *The people who don't guard their eyes, their prayers are not answered, however pious they might be.* We shall deal with the matter of the acceptance of the prayers in three steps.

Someone asked Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as), "O Imam! What is love?" The Imam (as) replied, "Those whose hearts are devoid of the thought of Allah, He puts the love of others in them."

The Prophet of Islam (S) has said, "Save yourself from the company of the sons of the rich. They have more defects than the defects of the girls who remain in the veil."

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) said, "Sight is the most poisonous arrow of the Satan. A Person who refrains from setting evil eye around him out of fear of Allah, Allah will endow him with faith, sustenance and legitimate pleasures."

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