

## First Hadith: Jihad of The Self

عَنِ الشَّيْخِ ثِقَةِ الْإِسْلَامِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ الْكُلَيْنِيِّ، صَاحِبِ الْكَافِي، عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنِ النَّوْفَلِيِّ عَنِ السُّكُونِيِّ عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ، أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ، بَعَثَ سَرِيَّةً فَلَمَّا رَجَعُوا قَالَ: «مَرْحَبًا بِقَوْمٍ».  
«قَضُوا الْجِهَادَ الْأَصْغَرَ وَبَقِيَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْجِهَادُ الْأَكْبَرُ.» فَقِيلَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، مَا الْجِهَادُ الْأَكْبَرُ؟ قَالَ: «جِهَادُ النَّفْسِ»

### Verbal Translation

Al-Sukuni relates on the authority of Abu ‘Abd Allah al-Sadiq (A): Verily on seeing the returning armies from the battlefield, the Prophet (S) of God said, “Blessed are those who have performed the minor jihad, and have yet to perform the major one.” When asked, what is the major jihad? the Prophet replied, “the jihad of the self” (struggle against self).

### Exposition

السَّرِيَّةُ قِطْعَةٌ مِنَ الْجَيْشِ. يُقَالُ: خَيْرُ السَّرَايَا أَرْبَعُمِائَةٍ رَجُلٍ.

*Sariyyah* is the section (contingent) of a big army, and it has been said that four hundred is an optimum number for the best *sariyyah*. According to the wordings of the tradition this can be inferred that man is a marvel possessing two lives and two worlds within one existence. That is, apparent life or the outward world, which is this worldly existence, and is associated with his body, and the other is ‘inner life’, the inward world, associated with the hidden, invisible, higher other world, his soul in short, which belongs to the realms of invisible and celestial world, and consists of several levels and grades.

These levels are generally divided sometimes into seven sections and sometimes into four. They are sometimes divided into three, and sometimes into just two sections. For each one of them is specified host of guardians. The host related with the divine and intellectual powers attracts him towards the sublime, heavenly spheres, and summons him to the acts of virtue and goodness. The other host of

guardians is the ignoble and satanic, which attracts man towards the baser realms of darkness and shame, and invites him to the acts of villainy and destruction.

There is always a state of conflict and strive between these two forces, and human existence serves as the battleground of these two bands. When the divine forces of good become successful, man emerges as a virtuous and blessed being, and attains the high station of angels, and is congregated under the category of prophets, saints and the pious.

When the satanic forces of darkness dominate, man becomes a rebellious and vicious being, and is flocked with the fiendish group of the infidels and cursed. Since this is not an occasion to discuss it here, I shall take up this issue of the crusade of the self whenever the self and causes of its deterioration and perfection would be discussed in the latter passages.

## First Grade

This grade itself consists of different stages (*fusul*). You have to know that the lowest of them is the worldly and outward human existence comprising the initial stages of the self and its apparent manifestations. The divine spark is blended with the physical to form man's earthly existence. It is here in this body that the armies of good and evil are stationed, and the visible potentialities of body function as warring forces. It has seven quarters. They are ears, eyes, tongue, stomach, private parts, and arms and legs. All these diffused faculties under the control of the self are employed by the self in seven spheres of life. The seat of imagination also is an important faculty, as the thought and imagination are sovereign over all visible and invisible human faculties.

If the faculty of thought resolves to employ all other faculties to move in the fiendish directions, all of them are converted into satanic forces and the whole territory (of existence) is turned into a satanic domain, and the forces of piety, rationality and good are weakened and subjugated by them. As a result they wind up their business and leave off the scene, vacating the empire for the possession of Satan. If the faith and reason take possession of the mind, and they command all human faculties to work in their own direction, man acts according to the dictates of reason and faith (*shar'*), thus making the empire (of his existence) a domain of divine and rational powers, and compel satanic forces to retreat with all its weaponry accepting defeat.

Thus the *jihad* of the self is the *jihad* of greater importance. This *jihad* is superior to being killed in the way of God, since this condition implies overpowering one's own powers and faculties, and placing them under the yoke of God's command, and purging the domain of our body of satanic elements and their forces.

## Contemplation

The first and foremost condition for one's strife with his own self, and hence his movement towards God essentially means introspection and self-reflection. Some of the moral philosophers have given it the fifth position in priorities, which is also correct. Here introspection is used in the sense of devoting some time, however insignificant it is, contemplating about our duties towards our Master and Creator, Who has brought us into this world, and Who has bestowed upon us all the means of pleasure and joys of life, Who has equipped us with a sound body and faultless faculties and senses, each of whom serves a specific purpose of its own, and whose functioning bewilders human intellect. In addition to all these endowments and graces, He has sent so many prophets and His Holy Book for our guidance and invited us to receive His blessings.

Whether all these things have been granted to us by the Master and Emperor of all kings merely to serve this animal existence and to satisfy our appetites and instincts, which we share with other animals, or whether there is some higher aim? Whether all the prophets of God, great sages, thinkers and scholars of every nation have invited the people to follow certain rational principles and Divine legislation, and asked the people to abstain from all animal tendencies and detach themselves from this mortal and perishable habitation were their enemies, or they had conceived an entirely different idea of salvation, which we ordinary human creatures, blindly obeying the dictates of lust, could not conceive?

If we reflect in a rational manner for a moment, we shall realize that the aim of imparting to us all these graces and endowments is something else, superior to and higher than what is visible. This world is a stage of action and its aim is a higher and more sublime sphere of existence. This lower and animal existence is not an end in itself. A rational man should think of his own self introspectively and should feel pity for his state of helplessness. With a sense of pity he should address his own self, saying, "O callous self! Thou has wasted precious years of thy short life in pursuance of hedonistic and sensuous propensities! And nothing is gained except regret and sense of loss.

Thou should be regretful before God for thy past deeds, and commence a new journey in the direction of His prescribed goal, the journey that leads to the life of eternity and perpetual bliss. Thou should not bargain short-lived transitory joys, which are hard to obtain for eternal bliss and felicity. Think for a while, O Callous self!

Thou should think over the conditions of the people from the dawn of civilization up to the present time that is witnessed by thee. See and balance their hardships and torments with the comforts and pleasures they could attain, and thou shall see their pains and sufferings always overwhelmed and cancelled their joys and pleasures. Joys and pleasures are not for everyone in this life. One who invites and induces thee to pursue the worldly joys and material gains, is evidently one of the satanic hosts in the human form, who undoubtedly is an emissary of the Satan. 'He always induces other men to join him in his indulgence in sensualities, and declares his conviction in material life herewith.

At this juncture, O self, thou should pause for a moment, and think whether he is satisfied with his own condition, or whether all this points to one who himself is inflicted, and wants to taint others' poor life with the same vice. O self, thou should entreatingly ask God's approval of thine acts, and seek His pleasure. Pray to Him that thine acts be approved by Him. Between Him and thee there is always a spark of hope. This hope is realized in thy thinking with firm resolution to fight against the Satan and thine own baser self. This strife with the self leads thee to a higher stage, and try thy best to attain that through sincere struggle."

## Will and Resolution

The next stage, after the stage of contemplation and ponderance through which an individual striving to progress on the spiritual path has to pass, is the stage of resolution. (This is a different thing from volition, which *al-Shaykh al-Ra'is* Ibn Sina, in '*al-'Isharat*' alludes to as the initial stage of *'irfan*). Some of our revered scholars (may God grant them longevity) also state that resolution is the essence of humanity and criterion of human freedom.

The differences in human gradation are actually indicative of the discrepancy of the stages of human resolution. The resolution which is required for this particular stage is synonymous with laying the foundation of a good life, a resolution to purge life from sin, and to perform all obligatory (*wajib*) acts, and a resolution to compensate for the days lost (in sinfulness), and finally resolve to behave as a rational and religious person ought to.

That is, he should adopt a behavior that is in accordance with the codes of religious law, which would acknowledge him as a real human being, a rational man. His gait and manner should be an imitation and copy of the Prophet's life. He must, in appearance, follow the Prophet (S) as a model in his manner and actions, in his abstinences and his choices. This is quite possible, since it is in the powers of ordinary servants of God seemingly to act in the way of that great leader of human beings.

You should know that no path for the realization of divine existence can be undertaken unless one familiarizes himself with the apparent or overt form of *Shari'ah*. Unless a person fully acquaints himself with the knowledge of the *Shari'ah* laws and follows them faithfully, the higher values of morality cannot be attained by him. Without adhering to the apparent teachings of Islam it is not possible that the light of the Divine Knowledge could descend upon his heart, and the wisdom of the invisible, and the mysteries of the holy law be revealed to him.

After attaining this stage, the truth unveiled for him and enlightenment bestowed upon his heart, a person would act with greater observance of the manifest forms of religion. This falsifies the claims of pseudo spiritualists, who say that the inner perfection can only be acquired by relinquishing outer accomplishments, or, that after acquiring inner excellences, necessity of observing outward forms does not remain obligatory. This is a mistaken conception born of ignorance about the stages of worship and the different grades of human progress. We shall deal with this subject in the latter chapters, may God

grant it so.

## **Effort and Struggle (Spiritual)**

Dear friend: try to be a man of strong will power and resolution, so that you may not go from this world as a person without resolution, and hence rise on the day of resurrection as a brainless-being, not in the form of human being. For the otherworld is the place where what is hidden is unveiled and secrets are exposed. One's audacity to commit sin, converts him little by little into a man devoid of will power, and takes away the noble essence of humanity from him. Our respected teacher used to say that more than anything else, giving the ears to the sounds of music and songs, steal from men their will power and the power of resolution.

Hence, my brother, desist from transgression, resolve to return to God, and acquire a mien similar to that of true human being. Join the community of the men of religion and in seclusion pray to God, so that He may assist you in your mission, and pray that the Prophet (S) and the members of his Household (A) intercede for you. May God bestow His graces and favors upon you. May He escort you in the coming dangers, since the path of life is full of great risks and hazards. On the way of life there are very deep crevices and it is possible that one may stumble and fall in them in such a manner that none of his efforts could save him from the coming catastrophe. It is also probable that in some cases the interceding of an intercessor cannot save him either.

## **Self-Examination and Stipulation (Musharatah)**

Self-conditioning, contemplation and self-examination are essential pre-requisites for a seeker (*mujahid*) of truth who is battling with his self. Self-conditioning or stipulation means binding oneself with the resolve not to do anything against God's commands. This is called *musharatah*, such as 'I will not violate the Law of God today.' It is very easy to stick to such condition for one day. Try to resolve, abide by your own resolve, and experiment, and you will see that how easy this task is. Satan, the cursed creature, and his legions may magnify the volume of the task in your eyes, but these are the guiles played by the cheat. Curse, and drive the Devil and evil thoughts from within the depths of the heart and the domain of your mind. Experiment for one day and you will verify how easy this task is.

## **Guarding Against Evil (Muraqabah)**

After stipulating about his acts, man should enter this stage. It is essential that throughout the period of stipulation the *mujahid* struggling against his own self should constantly concentrate upon his actions. If any time any idea of violating Divine commands occurs to him, he should know that this idea has been instilled into his mind by the Satan and his allies, who want to deter him from his good resolutions.

He ought to curse them, and seek God's compassionate protection, and banish those villainous ideas

from the realm of his heart, and tell the Satan that this day also he has to abide by the condition imposed upon his own self that he would not go against God's commands, as He is the One Who has provided him with all the excellences and bounties. It is He, Who has given him the riches of health, security, and peace year after year in this world. In recognition of all God's graces it is not sufficient even if he serves Him till eternity, let alone a trivial thing like this.

I hope, that Satan will be driven away, and the Divine forces will prevail. I assure you that this practice of self-criticism and self-examination would not hinder your day-to-day activity. I advise you to remain in the same state of mind till night-the time for introspection and inner deliberation-and evaluate your deeds of the whole day. This is the time to see whether you have been honest to the Giver of all, to whom everybody is accountable. If you have been faithful to Him, you should be thankful to Him, that He has made you successful in your intentions. And realize that you have gone a step forward in His direction and became an object of His attention. God willing, God will help you in performing all worldly and religious duties, and will diminish your pains for the next day. If you repeat this many times, it is imminent that you will be accustomed to the acts of piety. You will see then that all this does not require you to make hard efforts.

You will also notice that obedience to God gives ample pleasure. Though this world is not where one is immediately rewarded, yet faithfulness to God and abstaining from sins is fruitful in this world also. God never entrusts His creatures with cumbersome and heavy tasks, which are beyond their powers, but it is the Satan and his allies who magnify them in your view. God forbid, if there are any lapses on your part, ask God's forgiveness, and beseechingly implore Him that you will be more careful in future, so that the Almighty may throw open the doors of His grace and compassion to you, and may guide you in the straight path.

## **Remembrance (Tadhakkur)**

The factors, that fully assist man in his *jihad* with his self and the Satan, and to which a trader *mujahid* has to pay greater attention is constant remembrance of God. Though there are many other important stages, I will be content to discuss this stage here.

## **Remembrance of God, Remembering The Graces Bestowed By Him**

You know that thankfulness is natural and man's nature commands man to be grateful to his benefactor. If one tries to read the book of his own heart, he will see that this law is written there. The sense of veneration and gratitude for the benefactors increases with the amount of benefaction, particularly if the benefactor's generosity has no selfish motive. Greater the selfless generosity, greater is sense of gratitude. For example, compare the extent of veneration for one who presents you a horse with a selfish motive, with the respect you have for a person, who grants you a village of several hectares,

without any inkling of selfish motives. If a doctor rescues you from the darkness of blindness, you naturally owe to him a lot of respect, and if someone saves you from the clutches of death, you owe him a lot more.

You yourselves reflect and estimate the seen and unseen favors bestowed on us by the Almighty, even a small fraction of which all men and the *jinn* cannot even provide us with. Take for instance the air we breathe day and night, upon which our existence as well as that of other living beings is dependent, nothing can remain alive even if it is taken off merely for a quarter of an hour. What a marvelous gift it is! If all men and the *jinn* of the world labor hard to contrive such a thing, they cannot do that. In the same way, try to recall other gifts of God also, like external bodily senses viz. sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch, etc., and inner faculties like thinking, imagination and reason, etc., each one of which carries unlimited benefits and which are granted to us by Our Lord. Besides these valuable gifts, there are several other gifts also.

Moreover, He has sent His messengers and prophets and His Books as well to show us which path is right and which one is wrong, which path leads us to Heaven or Hell. He fulfills all our needs in this world and the Hereafter, without having any need of our adoration. Observance of His commands, or transgressing them does not make any difference to Him, it is for the sake of our own benefit that He has enjoined good and forbidden indecencies. While remembering all these and various other favors, whose reckoning is beyond the powers of human beings, do we not see that respecting and obeying such a Benefactor is essential for us, or does our reason approve of the acts of violating His commands?

This is an evident fact that we respect great people and those older in age. This is also true that people respect the wealthy and powerful persons, and rulers and kings, since they are recognized as great. Can their greatness be matched with the grandeur and magnificence of that King of kings, in Whose kingdom this world of us is merely a particle of dust. He is the Creator and King of this vast cosmos, whose infiniteness cannot be measured or even conceived by human intellect.

Human being, a creature crawling on one of the smallest planets miserably fails to grasp the extent of his own small world, whose sun cannot be compared with far greater suns of innumerable galaxies. Our solar system is nothing as compared to lesser several other solar systems, which still elude the keen eyes (and refined telescopes) of great explorers and investigators of the world. Is that Greatest of the great, who can know and cover not only minute details of these known worlds, but of many more unknown worlds, in a twinkling of an eye, is not venerable according to the dictates of reason, as well as in the light of the great book of nature?

If any one fails to do this, he ought to be extra watchful and careful, since God Almighty is present everywhere, and no odd corner of the world can delude his Omnipresent sight. Every living being is within the range of His view and all knowledge is in His infinite attendance, so never forget Him. A speck of penitence in one's heart would not melt any person into water, and he would not fall to the ground. Therefore, my dear friend, remember God and remember all His favors and graces, and stop disobeying

Him.

Overpower and subdue the satanic band in this great war, and convert the spheres of your mind into divine realm by driving out the satanic legions and inviting the divine hosts, so that God may succor and protect you in the dangers threatening to befall you in this battle. The battlefield, which is more immense than this one, is the scene of the battle (*jihad*) against thine own self, the invisible world of within and the second stage of this *jihad*. We shall deal with this subject afterwards. By the time, I remind you not to have any expectations from anyone but God. Except Him, the Almighty, nobody can help you. With all humility and with all the tears your eyes can offer (to wash your sins), pray to God and seek His assistance to emerge victorious in this crucial battle. *wa innahu wali al-tawfiq*

## The Second Stage

The second stage also consists of several steps:

The human soul inhabits another realm and another territory also, which is the world of the hidden and the sphere of the sublime world. In that world, the role of the sensual forces assumes graver dimensions. This is the place, where the struggle and conflict between the divine forces and the fiendish ones is more severe and also more significant. Everything that exists in the external or visible world drifts to this hidden world, and is manifested there. Whichever of the forces whether godly or devilish, is victorious here is essentially triumphant there also.

So, the *jihad al-nafs* or the internal struggle is of great significance for all great religious thinkers, mystics, and moralists. It can be rather considered as the origin and the source of all felicities or woes, and of promotion and sublimation or debasement and degradation of self. One should be extremely self-conscious while undertaking this *jihad*. Because, it is possible that, God forbid, due to the defeat of heavenly forces, the self is left vacant for the unholy occupation of the vicious and unworthy satanic legions, and hence causing an eternal loss to the human being that cannot be retrieved.

Even the intercession of an intercessor cannot save him from becoming an object of the wrath and indignation of the Most Merciful of the merciful. It is also possible that man's intercessor may become his adversary. It is a pity that such a thing should happen to anyone that one who pleads for him should become his opponent. God alone knows that what misfortunes, what perils and what hardships are to follow Divine wrath and antagonism of God's friends, compared to which all the infernal fires, plagues, evils, serpents and scorpions are insignificant and mild. God forbid, whatever sufferings of hell have been described by saints, ascetics, and mystics, compared to them all the imaginable pains and sufferings of this world are very mild. All of the torments about which we have heard, are trifle and insignificant when compared to the miseries one has to undergo in the Hereafter. Heaven and hell whose account has been given in the Book and in the traditions of prophets of God are certainly the heaven and hell of wicked actions, and are prepared for rewarding or punishing good and bad human deeds.

There is a subtle allusion also to the heaven and hell of morality, which is more significant than even the *Bihisht al-liqa*, the heaven of beatific vision, and the *Jahannam al-firaq*, the hell of separation from Him. This is considered to be of great significance but is hidden from our eyes and is opened to them alone who deserve it. You and me who do not deserve it should not doubt it. We should have faith in it, since God and His friends have told us that this non-detailed (*ijmali*) faith also is beneficial for us. Sometimes, it is also possible that unbelief arising out of ignorance, and unreasonable rejection, without any knowledge and understanding of the truth may bring great harm to us, the extent of which is unthinkable. In this world we cannot understand those harms.

If you hear something, which has been, reported from any thinker, mystic or ascetic, do not refute it or consider it invalid just because it is not in accordance with your taste, or does not fit in your mode of thinking. This idea may have its origin in a higher source, inaccessible to you like the Qur'an, *hadith*, or reason. How strange it will be that a *faqih* issues a *fatwa* (a religious or legal opinion) regarding a certain *ayah* (a pecuniary compensation for any offence against a person) of which you are ignorant, and you reject it without checking the relevant evidences. Or, when a holy person or a mystic speaks something concerning religious learning, or he refers to the conditions of heaven or hell, it is easy for you to refute him or even dare to insult him. For it does not need much thinking or knowledge.

But do not forget that it is possible that the person, who is an authority on that subject and a master in that field, might have traced it back to the Holy Book, or has access to some traditions transmitted from infallible Imams (AS), and you may not have come across it. In that case, you would be guilty of rejecting God and His Prophet (S) without any plausible excuse. You have no justification to say later that your judgment was not correct, your knowledge was limited, or that you had heard a certain person speaking otherwise on the *minbar* (pulpit); such excuses are unfounded, and in any case let not your objective be blurred.

Whatever has been related about the paradise of good morals and deeds and about the inferno of bad morals and deeds refers to the states, which we cannot experience here. Thus, my friend ! take great care, search for remedy, and try to discover the ways and means of deliverance for yourself. Seek refuge in God, the Most Merciful, and Beneficent, and beseech His mercy with humble supplications and lamentation, so that He may help you in this holy war against your carnal self and you may be victorious and the domain of your heart may be liberated from evil influences.

The fiendish legions may be turned out of the place so that it may be given in the possession of its rightful Owner, and the felicities, honors and joys may be granted to you by God. All the praises that you have heard of the Heaven, its hours and its mansions, are nothing compared to Divine Bliss, nothing can be estimated higher. That domain is absolutely a divine sphere, which has been described by the friends of God from this rightly guided luminous ummah (*millat al-bayda*). This is a world of pleasures, which no ear has ever heard of, and no human heart has ever experienced.

## Hidden Or Inner Powers (Quwwa al-Batini)

You should know that with His Wisdom and Authority, God Almighty has created certain powers and faculties in the invisible world of the inner self. They are of enormous benefits for us. Here we shall mention three of them: they are, *al-quwwah al-wahmiyyah*—the power of invention or imagination, *al-quwwah al-ghadabiyyah*—the power of passion or anger, and *al-quwwah al-shahwiyyah*—the power of lust or sensuality.

Each of these powers is of great benefit to the mankind, like the preservation of the human individual and species, advancement of human interests in this world as well as in the Hereafter, of which religious scholars have given elaborate accounts and I need not repeat them. What is essential to state here is that these three powers are the source and origin of all virtuous and vicious deeds, and the source of all invisible and sublime forms.

Briefly speaking, as man possesses a physical and a terrestrial form in this world, which is devised and contrived by the Almighty in such a wonderful manner that all great philosophers and scientists are puzzled, and the science of anatomy is not fully equipped to discover and understand its functioning rightly even to this day. God has made man superior to other living beings by endowing him a superb constitution and a beautiful appearance. Yet there is another form and a different face of him, which is heavenly and invisible, which is determined by the qualities of his soul and his inner nature.

In the Hereafter, whether it is in the *Barzakh* (an interval of time between the death of man and his resurrection) or whether on the Last Day, if one's inner nature, his deeds, and his inner self are really human, his heavenly visage also will be man-like. But if his deeds are inhuman, he will not possess human form; it will be rather subject to the state of his inner self and his psyche. For instance, if his inner self is dominated by the power of lust or sensuality (*al-quwwah al-shahwiyyah*) and animality and brutality overwhelm and govern his inner self, his otherworldly visage will be of a brute and the reign of his inner world would be under the control of one of the beasts, corresponding to that quality of his soul.

If the power of passion or anger conquers one's inner self and his psyche, his otherworldly appearance will resemble one of the bestial forms, corresponding to that attribute of his nature. And if the power of imagination and invention is governed by fiendish forces and his inner self is made vicious, governed by the vices like deceit, dishonesty, slandering, backbiting, which are the attributes of Satan, he may undergo a metamorphosis and assume one of the forms of Satan. Sometimes it is also possible that he would have an appearance that symbolizes two or several vices. In that case, a form which does not resemble any of the brutes, but an unusual and queer form, with which cannot be compared the most terrible and ugliest monster in the world, will be acquired by him.

It has been recorded from the Prophet (S) of God that some persons will be raised on the Last Day in such a mien that even monkeys and dog flies will appear better looking than that. It is also possible that several forms may be prescribed for one individual in that world. Because that world is not like this

world, where one individual cannot acquire more than one form. This account itself is logical as well as self-evident. Because, the criterion of those different forms (of which human form is one) would be the state of soul at the time of death the state in which the soul departs from the body. It is in this very state and form that man's soul enters the realm of *Barzakh*. At the time of entering the other world, that is, the domain of the Hereafter, the first stage of which is *Barzakh*, in whichever state one's soul departs from the body, it assumes a form suited to it in the next world also.

It is the same form in which he is perceived by the inhabitants of *Barzakh* and by himself, when he first opens his eyes there, if he has not lost his sight to do so. Because, it is not necessary that man may enter the next world in the same physical state as he had in this world. God Himself says that on the Last Day some of the persons will ask God that why has He raised them as blind while they possessed eyes in the world. God will answer them that as they disregarded His clear signs in the world, they are forgotten and disregarded by God today.

O poor fellow! You had only external sight and were blind inwardly. You are realizing your blindness now, while you were already blind from the very beginning. You did not possess the inner vision, which could perceive His clear signs. You, the poor creature, who was endowed with a perfect earthly body and proportionate form, alas you did not know that the measures of the hidden and sublime world are different from this world. You should strive for inner uprightness, so that you may be upright on the Last Day. Your spirit should be a human spirit, so that your form in the *Barzakh* and the Hereafter may be a human form.

You are mistaken to consider the world of the hidden realities, where the secrets of this world are to be unveiled and your deeds are to be disclosed, as similar to this world of appearances, where one can deceive others and can create chaos, confusion, and misjudgment. Your eyes and ears, your hands and feet, and other parts of your body will bear witness against your deeds in this world with their supernatural tongues. Some of them may also appear in their celestial forms.

So, my friend, it is necessary to keep open the ears of your heart. Be brave, and have mercy on your own self, so that you may leave this world in a human form, and may be counted as redeemed and virtuous. Mind you, these words repeatedly occur in the speeches and teachings of great thinkers, in the inspirations of mystics and in the transmissions of the truthful and infallible servants of God.

## [How to Regulate Human Instincts](#)

It is possible that *wahm*, the power of imagination and invention, *ghadhab*—the power of passion and anger, and *shahwah*—the power of lust or sensuality, also possess divine aspect, and may bring about felicity and good luck to man, if these powers are subjected to the dictates of reason and good sense and the teachings of prophets of God. They may become satanic forces if they are unleashed and the power of invention and imagination is allowed to rule and lead other two powers. It is not a secret that none of the prophets of God ever tried to eradicate the powers of passion, sensuality or imagination

completely.

None of the messengers of God have ever demanded to completely kill sensuality and desire or to extinguish the fire of passion or anger and ignore the inventions of imagination. But they have rather advocated for controlling and bridling them and making them function under the command of reason and Divine Laws. For each one of these powers struggles to dominate others and win its goal, whatever mischief, chaos, and confusion may be stirred up.

For instance, the obstinate bestial self is determined to reach its goal even if it is resolved on committing adultery with married women in the Holy *Ka'bah*. Intractable power of passion arouses the self to win its objective even if it is contemplating to kill prophets and the friends of God. And the power of imagination, while devising satanic instruments, wants to go its own way, to cause corruption of the whole climate on earth, and to create chaos and disorder in the world.

The great prophets of God were sent to this world with the light of Divine Laws. God revealed to them heavenly books, so that they may prevent people from indulging into extravagances and immoderations, and bring the human self under the control of reason and the law of *Shari'ah*. To bridle the human self is essential so that it may not exceed the measures of reason and *Shari'ah*. Hence, every individual who subordinates himself to the Divine Laws and principles of good sense is fortunate, and it is he who attains salvation.

He finds refuge in God, the Most Exalted and the Most High, from the dangers and misfortunes, which might befall him, and thus is saved from the disgrace of assuming those beastly and hideous forms that may accompany him in the *Barzakh*, in the grave and on the Last Day, as the result of his vicious deeds and corrupt practices.

## [How to Bridle Fancy And Imagination](#)

The first condition for a *mujahid* in his struggle that he has to observe and abide by, at this juncture and at all other stages, is to control the flight of one's imagination, so that he can subjugate the Devil and his armies. Imagination is like a bird restless to fly, and sit on any tree it reaches. This flight may bring about many great misfortunes. Fancy is one of the tools of the Devil, with which he enslaves man and renders him helpless. With the help of fancy, he entices men to committing villainies and indecencies.

A *mujahid* who is determined on self-rectification, and who has made up his mind to purify his inner self and banish satanic forces from there, should firmly hold the bridle of his imagination and let not it soar and wander about wherever it likes. He should try to prevent his mind from nursing corrupt and sinful thoughts, and always divert it to high and noble ideals. In the beginning, it appears to be a little difficult, since Satan and his forces may glorify bad things in your eyes. But with little concentration and attention everything becomes easy.

It is possible that as an experiment you may just think for a while, and will not be able to concentrate upon an object. Whenever you see that your thoughts are stooping to lowly and mean things, turn your attention aside from them and think about the worthier and nobler things. If you have been successful in your attempts, thank God Almighty for His help, and pursue these matters further. May God, out of His mercy, open the path of spiritual progress for you, and may you be invisibly guided in the straight path. May human deeds and right conduct be made easy for you. Be careful that vicious thoughts and vain fancies are induced by Satan, who wishes to fortify its forces in the domain of your inner self.

You, who are at war with Satan and his legions, and want to make the realm of your inner self a heavenly domain, are expected to be on guard against the guiles of the cursed villain. You should drive away those thoughts that counter Divine command. God willing, you will be able to recapture this significant fortification from the unholy occupation of Satan and his allies, in this internal war. This fortification serves as a boundary (between good and evil). If you are victorious here you may hope for greater and nobler victories.

My dear friend, seek for God's help at every moment. Pray and beg humbly in the court of your Lord.

O God Almighty! Satan is a great enemy, who has enticed your great friends and prophets. O God! help this weak and entrapped servant of yours, and guard him against these vain ideas and these infirm thoughts that inflict me, so that he may succeed in his war against this strong enemy, who is threatening to destroy my felicity and humanity. O God! please accompany Thy servant and guide him so that he may drive the Satan's armies from Your seat, and may clip the hands of this usurper.

## **Estimation and Appraisal**

The thing, which is to be strictly followed during this process, is the estimation and evaluation (of vices and virtues). An intelligent person should carefully examine the effects and demerits of each one of moral vices and bad deeds, which are the product of sensuality, passion and imagination, and are under the control of Satan. He has to compare them with the benefits and blessings of good deeds and moral and spiritual excellences, which are under the guidance of reason and religious law (*Shari'ah*) and then decide which way is better to act. For instance, the advantages of obeying the dictates of uninhibited sensuality that gets hold of the human soul and firmly takes its roots there, and gives rise to many vices to flourish, may be taken into consideration.

In the course of time the sensual aptitudes develop, and a person does not hesitate to commit any of the vices, and tries all means and ways to obtain the sensual pleasure at any cost, and does not fail to perpetrate any crime, which he desires to commit, even if it results in something extremely vicious. As a result of letting loose one's passions several other vices are born and become his second nature. And he is more than ready to maltreat and subdue everyone who comes in his way. Those who react against oppressive activities and try to defend themselves, or show any signs of disagreement or hostility are crushed and oppressed by him.

He tries to repel all oppositions by all means, although it may lead to an outbreak of corruption in the world. In the same way, the person, who has surrendered himself to the demoniac power of imagination and lets it to be firmly rooted in his soul, does not hesitate to indulge in a fit of excessive passion and sensuality with all his satanic designs and treacheries and rule over the creatures of God by all kinds of unjust means, even if it is to dispossess a family of their belongings or stripping a city or a country of its resources.

These are the achievements of these faculties, while they are active under the ignoble supervision of Satan. If we think about it, and examine the plight of such people, we shall notice that every one of them, despite the enormous strength they possess, and most of their wishes being fulfilled, they still nurture thousands of new desires that are yet to be fulfilled. It is not possible in this world that all the desires and ambitions that we cherish be fulfilled here, since this world is the abode of obstacles.

The elements of this world dispirit our wishes. Our desires are also not limited. For instance, the power of sensuality and lust acts in man in such a way that if he is given one woman, he is attracted to other women. If he is given an empire, he will hanker after some other empire. Man always desires for what he does not possess. In spite of this vanity of imagination and futility of human desire, the kiln of sensuality is always hot, and its heat ever increasing, and our desires are never cooled down.

Similarly, the forces of passion are implanted in human nature in such a way that even if he is made an absolute monarch of a state, he will be attracted towards another state, which he cannot get, and he will try to pounce on it with all the force he can muster. This power is also ever increasing. Anyone who has any doubt is advised to examine his own self and other human beings belonging to the classes of poor, rich and powerful; he will agree with me. It is obvious that man is always allured by something, which he does not own. This is the human nature as conceived by various great Islamic thinkers and holy men, especially one should refer to a great master of divinity, Mirza Muhammad 'Ali Shahabadi.

Anyhow, even if man attains his goals, for how long can he be benefited from them? How long his youthful years are to continue? When the spring of youth fades out and the autumn of his life sets in, his heart has no more a zest for mirth and joy, his organs lose their vitality and those activities lose their relish. His eyes dim, his hearing is impaired, his sense of touch and other senses and faculties weaken. Ability to get pleasure declines or is completely lost. Then hosts of ailments make him an easy prey. His digestive, assimilative and excretory system fails, and his respiratory system cannot perform its function properly. Nothing but deep sighs, displeasure, regret and remorse are left to accompany him.

Thus, the duration of our exploitation of these bodily powers, from the days when one gains consciousness of good and bad till the process of decline sets in, is not more than thirty or forty years, even for a person of very strong constitution. That too, if one does not happen to come across all sorts of diseases and afflictions, which we witness every day and forget about. If, for the time being, we take it for granted (although it has no reality), that a man can attain the age of one hundred and fifty years, with all opportunities of involving oneself fully in all the three indulgences—sensuality, passion and

imagination, excluding all the chances of coming across any adversities and misfortunes, even this period of time would prove short, and pass soon like the winds and what would be in store for you for the next world? What benefit will you derive from all these treasures of amusements for your eternal life? What will save you from the horrors of the day of doom, helplessness, desolation and loneliness? What will you present on the Day of Judgment, and how would you face God, His angels, and His chosen servants and prophets?

Of course, nothing will accompany you except your wicked and sinful deeds, which will metamorphose you in such a form that would not be known to anybody except God. Everything that you have heard and conceived about the infernal fire, torments of the grave and agonies of the Doomsday, etc., you measured them with the worldly fire and worldly pains. What a gross error you committed. Fire of this world is relatively an accident, and all the horrors are easy to bear. Your estimation of the other world on the basis of this one is imperfect and faulty. Even if the fire burning throughout the world is accumulated at one place, it will not be hot enough to burn the human soul. In the next world, besides burning and roasting the body it will burn the soul and incinerate the heart also. Whatever you have been listening about till now, is actually the hell of one's actions, which you will see in the Hereafter as a reality, for God Almighty has said:

﴿وَوَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا﴾

***And they find all that they did confronting them. (18:49)***

You will have to face whatever you did in this world. If you thrived on the property of orphans, God alone knows in what state you will appear in hell and what comforts you will have to enjoy there as your reward. If here your harsh words have injured the hearts of people, this pain and discomfort caused to the hearts of the creatures of God, God alone knows, what punishment it will incur upon you in the Hereafter. You will know it only when you experience it what sort of pain and torture you have procured for yourselves. Because of your detractions, the other worldly and sublime form that was conceived for you is denied to you and you will have to undergo the pains of chastisement.

This will be the hell of one's actions, which is comparatively milder, cooler and tolerable, and is reserved for those who committed sins in this world. But for those who have acquired the viciousness of character and villainy of conduct like, greed, lust, hoarding, avarice, contentiousness, love of wealth, power and corporeal things, rapacity, ravenousness and other vices, the hell is their place, a place beyond human apprehension, a state and form which can never be anticipated by any stretch of the imagination, and emanates from within the soul itself.

The inhabitants of that hell will be so distressed that they will try to escape from it, (but in vain). In some of the authentic narrations, it occurs that there is a valley in hell, which is reserved for the proud, and which is named as *saqar* once it complained to God about the intensity of its heat, and asked Almighty

for a relief, so that it might take a breath. After the relief was granted, when it breathed, its breath filled the hell with fire.

Sometimes one's vices may cause a human being to become a permanent dweller of hell. Because they take away from him his faith and belief. For instance, a vice like jealousy, according to authentic traditions, eats away faith as the fire consumes wood. Another example is that of the love of the world, worldly power and riches, which, according to authentic narrations, consume the faith of a believer more rapidly than two wolves let loose on a sheep herd without a shepherd, one attacking from the front and the other from the back.

Adoration for the worldly things and lust for power deprives a believer of his belief, and God forbid, this sinfulness results in dark and ugly deeds, which finally leads to the loss of faith and one's end as an infidel, and the hell of the false beliefs and erroneous faith is severer, hotter and darker than those two other hells, mentioned above.

My friend, the higher knowledge has proved that the grades of intensity are infinite. The punishment is severer than what you imagine or what others imagine. If you do not believe in the arguments advanced by philosophers, or the revelations made to mystics, thanks to God, being a true believer, you have faith in the teachings of the prophets of God, and you consider all the reports recorded in the authentic books of the traditions which are accepted by all the Imamiyyah scholars as true and authentic. I hope that you believe in the prayers of infallible Imams, and have read the prayers and sermons uttered by Imam 'Ali (A), and the invocation by Imam Sayyid al-Sajidin (A) uttered in the prayer of Abu Hamzah al-Thumali.

My friend, reflect a little upon their subject matter and think for a while on their wordings. It is nowhere required to make a rapid reading of the lengthy prayer in a hurry without pondering over its meaning. You and I are not blessed with the spiritual state of Imam Sayyid al-Sajidin (A) to recite that lengthy prayer in a state of sustained ecstasy at one time. Try to read one third or one fourth of it every night with feeling, and meditate upon its words. You may feel ecstatic while reading it. Apart from this, pay a little more attention to the meaning of Quranic verses, and see what punishment has been prescribed for the inhabitants of hell, to escape which they will pray to the Lord for death, and alas death also will not help, as God Almighty says:

﴿أَنْ تَقُولَ نَفْسٌ يَا حَسْرَتَا عَلَىٰ مَا فَرَطْتُ فِي جَنْبِ اللَّهِ وَإِنْ كُنْتُ لَمِنَ السَّاخِرِينَ﴾

***Alas, my grief that I was unmindful of Allah, and I was indeed among the scoffers! (39:56)***

What kind of regret it will be, of which Almighty is making an emphatic mention. Do not pass quickly, without pausing and meditating upon such verses of the Qur'an:

﴿يَوْمَ تَرَوْنَهَا تَذْهَلُ كُلُّ مُرْضِعَةٍ عَمَّا أَرْضَعَتْ وَتَضَعُ كُلُّ ذَاتِ حَمَلٍ حَمْلَهَا وَتَرَى النَّاسَ سُكَارَىٰ وَمَا هُمْ بِسُكَارَىٰ﴾

﴿وَلَكِنَّ عَذَابَ اللَّهِ شَدِيدٌ﴾

***On the day when ye behold it, every nursing mother will forget her nursling and every pregnant will be delivered of her burden, and thou (Muhammad) will see mankind as drunken, yet they will not be drunken, but the Doom of Allah will be strong upon them. (22:2)***

Here God Almighty is depicting the Doomsday. My friend, think yourself that, God forbid (*na'udhu billah*), the Quran is neither a story book, nor is it making jokes with you. What sort of condemnation it will be that will make people abandon their dear ones, and relieve pregnant women of their burden? What a great calamity it will be about which God Almighty, Whose greatness knows no extent, Whose supremacy and authority has no limits and bounds, is commenting upon in such solemn terms. What is going to happen God alone knows.

Our intellect is insufficient to measure the extent of its magnanimity. If we study the transmissions and writings of the infallible Members of the Holy Household, and think over them, we shall see that the sight of misery and agony in that world will be quite different from this world, and cannot be equated with the misfortunes of this world.

Here I would like to quote a tradition from the great Shaykh of the Imamiyyah, al-Saduq, for you to demonstrate the meaning and extent of the misery, mentioned above. Nevertheless, this tradition narrated by him refers to the hell of the evil deeds and is comparatively a cooler place than other severer hells. I consider it essential to point out that al-Shaykh al-Saduq is the person who is held in great esteem and respect by all great religious scholars of *rijal*. He was born as the result of the prayer of the Imam (A), and was the object of great favor of Imam Mahdi (AF), and was among great writers of Shiite religious books.

I quote this tradition with reference to a chain of great Imamiyyah scholars, all of whom are considered as authentic narrators of *hadith*. Hence, if you are a true believer, you should have faith in the following tradition. The gist of the *hadith* is as follows:

رَوَى الصَّدُوقُ بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ مَوْلَانَا الصَّادِقِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ، قَالَ: بَيْنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ، ذَاتَ يَوْمٍ قَاعِدًا إِذْ أَتَاهُ جِبْرِيلُ، وَهُوَ كَتِيبٌ، حَزِينٌ، مُتَغَيِّرُ اللَّوْنِ، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: يَا جِبْرِيلُ، مَا لِي أَرَاكَ كَتِيبًا حَزِينًا؟ فَقَالَ: يَا مُحَمَّدُ، فَكَيْفَ لَا أَكُونُ كَذَلِكَ وَإِنَّمَا وُضِعَتْ مَنَافِيخُ جَهَنَّمَ الْيَوْمَ. فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ: وَمَا مَنَافِيخُ جَهَنَّمَ يَا جِبْرِيلُ؟ فَقَالَ: إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى أَمَرَ بِالنَّارِ فَأَوْقَدَ عَلَيْهَا أَلْفَ عَامٍ، حَتَّى احْمَرَّتْ. ثُمَّ أَمَرَ بِهَا فَأَوْقَدَ عَلَيْهَا أَلْفَ عَامٍ حَتَّى ابْيَضَّتْ. ثُمَّ أَمَرَ فَأَوْقَدَ عَلَيْهَا أَلْفَ عَامٍ حَتَّى اسْوَدَّتْ وَهِيَ سَوْدَاءٌ مُظْلِمَةٌ، فَلَوْ أَنَّ حَلَقَةً مِنَ السُّلْسَلَةِ الَّتِي طَوَّلَهَا سَبْعُونَ ذِرَاعًا وُضِعَتْ عَلَى الدُّنْيَا لَذَابَتْ الدُّنْيَا مِنْ حَرِّهَا. وَلَوْ أَنَّ قَطْرَةً مِنَ الزُّقُومِ وَالضَّرِيعِ قَطَرَتْ فِي شَرَابِ أَهْلِ الدُّنْيَا لَمَاتَ أَهْلُ الدُّنْيَا مِنْ نَتْنِهَا. قَالَ: فَبَكَى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ، وَبَكَى جِبْرِيلُ، عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ، فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِمَا مَلَكًا فَقَالَ: إِنَّ رَبَّكُمَا يُفْرُوكُمَا السَّلَامَ وَيَقُولُ لَكُمَا إِنِّي قَدْ أَمْنْتُكُمَا مِنْ أَنْ تُذْنَبَا ذَنْبًا أُعَذِّبُكُمَا عَلَيْهِ.

One day the Prophet (S) of God was seated when Gabriel came into his presence, with a sad face and

changed complexion. The Prophet (S) asked as to why he was looking so sad and grieved. Gabriel answered, 'O Muhammad (S), why should I be not grieved, while today I saw the bellows of hell being set in. The Prophet (S) asked him what the bellows of hell were. Gabriel told him that it referred to the hell-fire, which according to the Commandments of God Almighty was ablaze for one thousand years. After it became red hot He ordered it to burn for another one thousand years till it was white-hot. Then He commanded it to burn for one thousand years more till it turned black. Now that it was black and dark, if a slice of seventy cubits of it was to drop on this world, verily its heat would be sufficient to melt the whole world into fluid. If a single drop of its Zaqqum (an infernal tree, mentioned in the Quran proverbial for its extreme bitterness) and dari (something in hell more bitter than aloe, more fetid than carrion, and hotter than fire, which will be the food of the condemned) trickles down in the water reservoirs of the earth, everybody therein would die due to its stench. Thereupon the Prophet (S) wept and Gabriel also wept with him. On seeing this, God sent His angel, who came to them and said that God sent salaams to them along with the message that He exempted them both from the committing of sins and the consequent punishments.

My friend, there are a number of *ahadith* in this regard. Existence of hell and its horrible chastisements are among the essentials of all the religions of the world, which bring forward many arguments in favor of their necessity. And the great, mystics and saints have envisioned it even in this world. Try to imagine sincerely and contemplate the disheartening account of hell given in the tradition. If you consider it as probable only, even then should it not be sufficient to drive us to woods like the mad? What is the reason for our complacency and ignorance? Have the angels of God given us the tidings of being exempted from this punishment as they had given one to the Prophet (S) and Gabriel?

Whereas the Prophet (S) and the friends of God could not be oblivious of the fear of God till the ends of their lives. They could not eat and sleep properly because of that fear. Look at the life of Imam 'Ali ibn al-Husayn (A), whose weeping and moanings, lamentations and supplications melted human hearts. What is wrong with us that we do not feel ashamed? Even in our supplications to God, we so much violate and insult Divine principles, that a thousand pities on our thoughtlessness! Have pity on yourself and the extremity of the pangs of death. Again a thousand pities on our condition in *Barzakh*, the agonies of the Hereafter, and the Doomsday and its darkness! How pitiable are we who have to face the horrors of hell and its chastisement!

## **How to Cure Moral Maladies**

My friend! Arise, awake from the slumber, be aware of your negligence and make an effort till there is time to repent. Consider this opportunity as valuable, until you are alive, your faculties and your powers are still under control, and you are young. Think about a cure before it is too late, and before moral maladies overpower your existence, and evils take deep roots in your existence and take you in the grips of their tentacles. Drive them away, find out a way of extinguishing the fire of your sensuality and passion.

The best remedy prescribed by mystics and moralists is to concentrate upon each one of the evil habits that you detect in yourself, and offer an effective resistance against them. Fight bravely against your carnal self. Act unceasingly all the time against those vicious yearnings. Pray Almighty to assist you in this battle. Undoubtedly after sometime hideous habits would leave you, and Satan and his legions would vacate the fortress, and the battalions of heavenly armies would be installed in their stead.

One of the moral maladies, which may destroy one, cause torment of the grave, and plague man in this world, is the maltreatment of the people of his household, his neighbors, his colleagues and others around him. It is the product of passion and sensuality. If the mujahid is determined on correcting himself, he can counter those impulses of indignation, resentment and vituperation with gentleness and kindness, remembering the Hereafter and the chastisements therein. He should curse the Devil in his heart and take refuge in God.

I give you word that if you behave persistently like this, after some time you will realize that your nature is totally transformed and good habits have taken the place of the bad ones. But if you behave according to the propensities of your nature, it is possible that they consume you in this world itself. I seek refuge in God from the anger, which when present in an individual destroys him in both the worlds. At the same time it kills his spirit also, because possibly one may use some indecent words against Divine principles in a fit of anger, as so many times we hear people uttering words of heresy and being guilty of apostasy thus.

Philosophers say that the chances of being saved in a ship without a captain from the stormy waves of ocean are brighter than those of a man being saved in an outburst of wild passion. God forbid, that we should ever belong to that category of people who become aggressive during academic discussions, as some of our students suffer from this intemperance. You have to resist against this bad tendency. Act against it, especially on the occasions of formal functions, which are attended by a great number of scholars and common men.

During the discussions, if you see that the other party is justified in its argument, you are expected to admit your fault and confirm what opponents say. God willing, these meannesses will be eliminated in a short time. God forbid, that the words of some scholars, who claimed to be divinely inspired and said that it was revealed that the quarrel among the inhabitants of hell, mentioned by God, is that of the scholars and transmitters of *ahadith*, should ever be true. Even if you do not believe in the authenticity of this tradition, even then you should carefully try to get rid of this habit. See the following account:

رُويَ عَنْ عِدَّةٍ مِنْ أَصْحَابِنَا أَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا: خَرَجَ عَلَيْنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ، يَوْمًا وَتَحَنُّنُ تَنَمَارِي فِي شَيْءٍ مِنْ أَمْرِ الدِّينِ فَغَضِبَ غَضَبًا شَدِيدًا وَقَالَ: إِنَّ الْمُمَارِي قَدْ تَمَّتْ خَسَارَتُهُ. ذُرُوا الْمِرَاءَ فَإِنَّ الْمُمَارِي لَا أَشْفَعُ لَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ. ذُرُوا الْمِرَاءَ فَإِنِّي زَعِيمٌ بِثَلَاثِ آيَاتٍ فِي الْجَنَّةِ؛ فِي رِيَاضِهَا وَأَوْسَطِهَا وَأَعْلَاهَا، لِمَنْ تَرَكَ الْمِرَاءَ وَهُوَ صَادِقٌ. ذُرُوا الْمِرَاءَ، فَإِنَّ أَوَّلَ مَا نَهَانِي عَنْهُ رَبِّي، بَعْدَ عِبَادَةِ الْأَوْثَانِ، الْمِرَاءَ.

وَعَنْهُ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: مَنْ لَقِيَ اللَّهَ، عَزَّ وَجَلَّ، بِهِنَّ دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ فِي أَيِّ بَابٍ شَاءَ: مَنْ حَسَنَ خُلُقَهُ وَخَشِيَ اللَّهَ فِي الْمَغِيبِ وَالْمَحْضَرِ وَتَرَكَ الْمِرَاءَ وَإِنْ كَانَ مُحِقًّا.

It is narrated from many companions of the Prophet (S) that once as the Prophet (S) came to them they were engaged in wrangling over a religious issue. The Prophet (S) of Islam was greatly displeased and was indignant to this extent that they had never seen him before in such an anger. The Prophet (S) told them it was because of this habit of wrangling that their precursors were destroyed, and he added that a true believer would never wrangle. The Prophet (S) asked them to stop wrangling and told them that he would not act as an intercessor to any wrangler. Wrangling occupies the second place after idolatry among the things forbidden by God Almighty.

The Prophet (S) is reported to have also said that unless a believer refrains from wrangling and altercation he cannot know the truth, in spite of his position being correct.

There are various traditions in this regard. How abominable it will be if we deprive ourselves of the intercession of the Prophet (S) for the sake of merely a trivial thing, which has no value, no merit whatsoever. Intellectual discussions, which would otherwise be the highest order of service and worship if undertaken with sincere motives, end in such a catastrophe and wipe out all his good deeds and acts of worship. In all circumstances, man should focus his attention on each of his vices individually, and eradicate them from the domain of his soul by restraining his carnal self. Once the trespasser is driven out, the rightful owner of the house can readily come to take possession.

## Conclusion

Since the struggle of the self concludes here and man succeeds in driving off the legions of satanic armies from the empire of his soul, this land becomes the abode of angels of God and a place of worship of truthful servants of God. Thus, the task of pursuing the journey towards God becomes easier, and the road to humanism is illuminated.

The doors of blessings from heaven and their ascending steps are opened to him, and the doors of hell and the descending steps thereof are closed on him. God Almighty views him with mercy and benevolence and unites him with His faithful and His blessed servants. The path to divine knowledge, which is the ultimate purpose of creation of mankind and *jinn*, is opened to him. God Almighty guards him through this hazardous path.

I wished to refer to the third stage of self (*nafs*), wherein another struggle against the deceptions and temptations of Satan takes place. But, on later thought, this description seems to be out of place here, so I left it undiscussed.

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