

Incidents of God-Fearing Persons

Incident 1

Shaikh Kulaini narrates on the authority of Imam Ali Zainul Aabedeem (a.s.) that a person along with his wife and children was traveling in a boat when suddenly it sank. Everyone else was drowned except the man's wife, who fell on a log and was pushed away by the waves to the shores of a barren island.

On that island there lived an evil thief who had left no sin uncommitted. When he saw that woman he asked her whether she was a human or a jinn. She replied that she was very much a human, and that her boat had wrecked. The man did not say anything but proceeded towards her, and embraced her with the intention of committing adultery. He felt the woman to be trembling and in a troubled mood. He asked her the reason for her fright. She pointed towards the sky and said, "I fear Allah." The evil man said, "Have you ever done this act?" She replied, "By Allah! I have never committed adultery."

The evil man said, "When you have never committed an indecent act, why do you fear Him? Secondly it is I who is forcing you to commit adultery without your consent. And still you fear Allah. In fact it is I who should fear Him more, for all through my life I have sinned." Saying this the evil man stepped back and returned home without uttering a word. He thought about the sins he had committed all through his life and felt ashamed, he left his home to commence on way repentance.

On the way he met a recluse and they both became friends. The recluse told the man, "It has become too hot, please pray to Allah to send a cloud to shelter us from the heat of the blazing sun." The man replied, "All through my life I have never committed a good act, and hence I do not have the courage to ask from the Almighty." The recluse replied, "If this is so, I shall pray and you say Amen." They did so, and a cloud appeared and gave shelter on their heads until they reached a place where they had to part because their ways were different. They both bade farewell to one another, the recluse his way and the man his.

To the astonishment of the recluse, the cloud, which was sheltering them went along with the man. Seeing this, the recluse went to the man and said, "Verily you are better than me, for your wish was

granted while mine was refused. Please tell me as to which good act you have committed whose effect is such”? The man related the whole incident about the woman to the recluse. The recluse heard it and said, “Your fear of Allah made you give up that particular sin and repent sincerely upon all past ones, hence Allah forgave all your sins. Now in future avoid sinning, and always remain steadfast on the right path and never go astray.”

Incident 2

Shaikh Sadooq relates, that one day Ma’az bin Jabal came weeping to the presence of the Holy Prophet (s). The Holy Prophet (s) asked him the reason for his weeping. Ma’az replied, “O Prophet! A youth is standing at your door and weeping as a mother weeps at the dead body of her young son. His state is pitiable, and he desires to meet you.”

The Prophet (s) called him in. The youth came in and saluted the Prophet. The Prophet (s) answered his salutation and asked him the reason for weeping so bitterly. The youth replied, “O Prophet of Allah! Why should I not cry, for I have committed a grave sin. I fear that if Allah takes into account that sin of mine, and no doubt He shall do so, He shall throw me head-long into the fire of hell.”

The Prophet replied, “Have you committed ‘*shirk*’ (associated anyone with Allah)?” He said, “I seek refuge in Allah from being a polytheist (*mushrik*).” The Prophet asked, “Then have you killed anyone without any reason”? He replied in the negative. The Prophet then said, “Even if your sin is bigger than the mountains, Allah shall forgive you.” He replied, “Verily my sin is bigger than that.”

The Prophet said, “Then if your sin is bigger than the seven worlds, the seas, the trees and whatever is in them, then too Allah is merciful, He shall forgive you. He replied that his sin was even greater than that. The Prophet said that even if it was greater than the Heavens, the Throne (*Arsh*). and the Chair (*Kursi*), then too the Beneficent Allah will forgive you.”

The man still persisted. Then the Prophet turned towards him in anger and said, “O young man! Is your sin bigger than the Almighty.” The youth replied, “Verily my Lord is free from all shortcomings, nothing is greater or bigger than Him, and He is above all things.” The Holy Prophet (s) then said, “Who else besides the Almighty has got the power to forgive big sins. The young man replied, “Truly O Master, no one except Him has the power.” The Prophet said. “Now then young man, tell me as to what sin have you committed for whose forgiveness you have lost all hope of mercy.”

The young man replied, “O Apostle of Allah! Since the past seven years I have been digging the graves of people and robbing their shrouds. One day a young girl from among the *Ansars* (the Helpers, the people of Medina who had given refuge to the Prophet) died and was buried. As usual I went to the graveyard with the intention of robbing the shroud. I saw a newly formed grave and dug it, then I removed the shroud from her dead body, and leaving her naked started going away. When suddenly I looked at her, shaitaan tempted me and the girl seemed beautiful in my eyes. By now shaitaan and over

powered me and I turned towards the girl and had intercourse with her. Then I left her in that state and started leaving, when I heard a voice from behind me saying: “O young man! May Allah curse you! On the day of Qayamat when our case will be brought before Almighty Allah, and it will become apparent that you removed me from my grave, robbed me of my shroud, left me in a state of pollution among the dead, and I will rise in this impure state on that day. May your youth burn in the fire hell.”

The youth continued, “After having committing this sin, I am sure that I will not be able to even smell the fragrance of Paradise.” The Prophet replied, “O fornicator! Go away from me, I fear lest the fire of hell would burn me along with you, for you have gone quite near to it.”

It should be noted here that this attitude of the Holy Prophet towards the young man was so as to put fear (of Allah and the hereafter) in his heart, so that he may feel ashamed and repent sincerely for this indecent act, as will be seen later.

When the young man heard these words from the mouth of the Prophet (s), he left his presence. He went to the market place and bought food for some days and went to one of the mountains of Madina to repent. He wore a dress of sack-cloth and started worshipping Almighty. He put his hands behind his neck and said, “O Lord! This slave Bahlool of Yours is standing in front of You with his hands tied. O Allah! You know me well and also my sin. Verily I regret over it and even went to Your Prophet to confess my guilt. He turned me away from him thereby increasing my fear (of Your wrath). I now ask You in the name of Thy Magnificence, Thy Glory, and Thy Best Names, do not forsake me and leave me in despair. O Allah! Do not reject my prayers, and do not turn away Your blessings from me.”

Forty days passed in this state of repentance. He wept so bitterly that even the animals and beasts lamented over his pitiable condition. When forty days passed away, he lifted his hands towards the sky and said, “O my Lord! Have you heard my words? And if You have forgiven me, reveal to Your Prophet to give me the glad tidings. And O Lord! If You have still not forgiven me, send Your wrath on me, a fire which would burn me in this very world. But save me from Your chastisement on the day of Qayamat”. Almighty Allah forgave him and accepted his (sincere) repentance. It was revealed to the Holy Prophet (s):

“And those who when they commit an indecency or do injustice to their souls, remember Allah and ask for forgiveness for their faults, and who forgives the faults but Allah, and (who) do not knowingly persist in what they have done. (As for) these, their reward is forgiveness from their Lord, and gardens beneath which rivers flow, to abide in them, and excellent is the reward of the laborers.” (Surah al-Aale Imraan, 3: 134, 135)

When this verse was revealed, the Prophet came out reciting it and enquired about Bahlool. Ma’az replied, “O Prophet of Allah! We have heard that he is at so and so mountain repenting.” The Holy Prophet (s) accompanied by some of His close companions left for the place. He saw Bahlool standing between two stones with his hands tied on his neck. His face had turned dark because of the heat of the

blazing sun, and his eyelashes had fallen because of intense weeping. He was saying “O Lord You have created us humans the best creatures (*Ashraful Makhlooqat*), and given me a good disposition and face. I wish I knew what would happen to me (in *Qayamat*). When You will forgive me and permit me to enter Your paradise, or forsake me and throw me into the blazing fire. O Allah! Surely You have favored me, and Your rights are more than me. My sin is greater than the earth, the heavens, the Throne (*Arsh*), and the Chair (*kurse*). I wish I knew whether you will forgive me or disgrace me on the day of Qayamat.”

The young man was uttering these words and weeping and throwing dust on his head. Animals and beasts had surrounded him, and the birds had formed a circle around his head, and were weeping at his pathetic state. The Holy Prophet (s) went towards him and untied his hands. He cleaned the dust from his hair and said, “Bahlool! I give you glad news that Allah has forgiven you and promises to save you from the fire of hell.” Then he (s) turned towards his companions and said. “O my companions! You too seek forgiveness from Allah just like Bahlool.” Then He recited the above verse and gave the good news to Bahlool.

Allamah Majlisi in his '*Aynul Hayaat*' after quoting this narration says that repentance has come terms and conditions, which need to be fulfilled.

Conditions for Repentance (Tawbah)

The first condition for asking repentance is that a man should ponder upon the Highness and Glory of Allah, and about the disobedience, which he committed. Then he should think about the severity of his sin. He should know about the punishment, which Allah has promised for him in this world as well as the hereafter (which have been related in the Qur'an and traditions). Verily this will make him regret his sins, and he will rectify the loss done.

Repentance has the following effects: (i) The bond which existed between the slave and his Master which had broken off because of sinning, may again become firm, (ii) The person (who is repenting) will pledge never to repeat the sin which he committed, and (iii) He will strive to rectify the loss done.

Sins which need repentance

The first type of sins which need repentance are those which are related to the person committing it only, and no other person having been affected by it, for example – a man using gold, or wearing a silken dress.. Its punishment is reserved for the hereafter. The repentance of this sin is that the person should repent sincerely and promise never to commit it again. This will become the reason for warding off Allah's wrath in Qayamat.

The second types of sins are those related to another person other than the one committing it. Again these are of two types (a) *Huququllah* (Rights of Allah), and (2) *Huququn Naas* (Rights of men). If a man has usurped the property of someone, or has committed such a sin whose atonement is the freeing of a slave, and in spite of being capable of rectifying it, does not do so, he will not be forgiven. It is obligatory

on him to pay the atonement. And if someone has not recited the obligatory prayers or has neglected fast, it is compulsory on him to perform these as elapsed (*qaza*) In the case of rights of men, if a person has usurped someone's wealth, then he is compelled to return it to its rightful owner. Or someone has lead someone astray, then it is obligatory for him to guide him to the right path.

Incident 3

It is related from Ibne Babawayh that one day the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s) was sitting in the shade of a tree due to intense heat. Suddenly a man came and removed his clothes and lied down on the earth. He rubbed his stomach and forehead on the arid ground and said to himself "O my soul beware! Allah's wrath is more severe than this heat".

When the Holy Prophet looked towards him, he wore his clothes. The Prophet called him and asked, "O Slave of Allah! I have never seen anyone doing this before, tell me what has made you do it"? He replied, "O Prophet! Fear of Allah is the sole reason. I was burning myself with this heat so that my self (*nafs*) could understand that Allah's wrath (in hell) is more severe than this ordinary heat which I cannot bear."

The Holy Prophet (s) replied, "You have been fearing Allah as is the right to fear Him. And Allah has been glorifying and praising this deed of yours in the ranks of His Angels." Then the Prophet turned towards his companions and said, "Go to this man so that he may pray for you." When they went to him, he lifted his hands and prayed, "O Allah! Guide us and escort us to the Right Path, and make piety our provision for the journey (of the hereafter) and make us enter Paradise."

Incident 4

It is related from Imam Muhammad-al-Baqir (a.s.) that in Bani Israel there was a prostitute who had seduced and tempted many youth. There lived a virtuous person among them. One day some youth plotted, that if that virtuous man had a glimpse of that woman, he too would be tempted to commit sin. When they revealed their intention to the woman she said, "I swear that I will not go home until I have seduced this man."

During the night she went and knocked at the door of the virtuous man. She requested him to give her shelter for one night. When the man refused to permit her in, she said that some men of Bani Israel were trying to commit indecency with her and she had come to take his refuge, She also said that if he did not open the door, those men would disgrace her. When the virtuous man heard this he opened the door.

As soon as the woman entered his house, she threw away her clothes. When the virtuous man saw her beauty he was tempted and forwarded his hand towards her. Suddenly fear of Allah overcame him and he held back his hand. Instead he put it in a pot, which was boiling on the stove nearby. The woman was surprised and asked him as to what was he doing. To which he replied that he was punishing himself by

burning his hand for the sin. The woman was scared and ran out and told the people that the virtuous man was burning his hand. When the people came in they saw that his entire hand had burnt.

Incident 5

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) narrates, that one day after finishing the morning prayers, the Holy Prophet (s) suddenly looked at Haresa bin Malik whose head was falling down (he was dozing because of remaining awake at night) and his face had turned pale. His body had become thin and his eyes had gone in. The Holy Prophet (s) asked him, "How did you arise this morning? And what is your state"?

Haresa replied, "O Prophet of Allah I arose with belief. The Prophet said, "Every argument has a proof, what is the proof of your belief?" He replied, "O prophet! that very thing is my proof which keeps me unhappy and shameful, which keeps me awake all night and fast throughout the day, and makes me hate the things of this world. And my belief in Allah has reached a state. that I see before my eyes the place of accounting on the day of Qayamat. All the people are in front of me, and I see the dwellers of paradise sitting on their pleasantly with one another. On the other hand, I also see the dwellers of hell being engulfed by Allah's wrath and wailing. As if the terrible sound of the blazing fire is echoing in my ears."

The Holy Prophet (s) turned towards his companions and said, "Look as to how Allah has enlightened his soul with the light of faith." Then He turned towards Haresa and said, "O Haresa! Always remain like that." Haresa replied, "O Prophet! pray to Allah to present me with Martyrdom." The Prophet fulfilled his request and prayed for him. After some days the Prophet sent him along with Ja'fare Tayyar (the brother of Ali) for Jihad, where he attained martyrdom along with nine other people.

Tradition of Abu Darda and Supplication (Munajat) of Ali (a.s.)

Ibne Babawayh relates from Umru' bin Zubayr that one day the Prophet (s) was sitting with his companions. We started discussing about the worship and virtues of the Martyrs of Badr and Ahlulbait (a.s.). Suddenly Abu Darda said, "O people! I would like to introduce to you a person whose wealth is the least amongst all the companions, but his worship and piety is more than anyone else." People asked him as to who that person was? He took the name of Ali (a.s.) and people turned their faces away from him.

One man from among the Ansar got up and told him, "O Abu Darda! Today you have made such a claim when nobody supports you" Abu Darda replied, "I have told you whatever I have seen with my eyes, while you say only that which you hear from others. Listen what I have to say and then judge.

One day I met Imam Ali (a.s.) in Nakhlistan of Bani Najjar. I saw that Ali (a.s.) was hiding from the view of His companions and was standing behind a tree. He called out a sad and sorrowful voice: O Allah! How many grievous crimes I have committed. And instead of punishing me, You have acted with

temperateness. And I have committed many mistakes and errors but You have not disgraced me nor humiliated me, instead You had mercy on me. O Allah! If my age passes in Your disobedience, and the scrolls of my deeds get filled with sins, I shall not wish for any thing else except Your mercy and beneficence.”

I hid myself in the nearby bushes to hear what he said, I saw Ali (a.s.) reciting many units (Rak'at) of namaz, and after finishing each namaz he became engrossed in supplications, weeping and wailing. The supplication, which he recited was: “O Allah! When I think about Your mercy and beneficence, sins seem light in my eyes. But when I think about Your anger and wrath, these very sins become heavy for me. Mercy be on me when I see these sins of mine written down in the scrolls of my deeds, which You have noted down. And mercy be on me when You will order Your Angels to imprison me. Verily I lament upon this imprisonment as prisoner whose retribution of sins will not even save his group. And while group would not reach up to help him, the people of Qayamat will pity his bad state. Oh that fire, which melts the liver and kidneys, and cracks the skulls!” Then Ali (a.s.) started weeping bitterly and his voice faded away. I thought to myself that He must have dozed off due to remaining awake. I decided to wake Him for the morning Prayers. I shook him constantly but found no signs of life. His body had turned solid like a dry stick. I thought that He had died due to grief and said:

“Surely we are Allah’s and to Him we shall surely return.” (Surah al-Baqarah, 2: 156).

I ran to the house of Hazrat Fatema (a.s.) to give her the news of the death of Ali (a.s.) I narrated to Her whatever I had seen. She (a.s.) replied, “O Abu Darda! This frequently happens to Ali because of fear of Allah.” I took some water with me and went to that place where he was lying and sprinkled some on his face. He gained consciousness and looked at me weeping. He asked me as to why I was weeping, to which I narrated the whole incident. Then Ali (a.s.) said, “O Abu Darda! Do you assume that I will be able to enter paradise, when all the evil-doers know that undoubtedly they shall be chastised.

And when harsh and short – tempered Angels will have surrounded me from all sides and taken me to the Compelling Lord (*Jabbar*), at that moment all my friends would have deserted me and all people would pity me. You will see my wretched state, when I will be standing in front of my Lord as a culprit whose bad deeds will have been made apparent”. Abu Darda continued, “By Allah! I have seen no other companion more virtuous and pious than Ali (a.s.).”

I have stated below the very words of Ali (a.s.) as He supplicated before Almighty Allah, so that His followers may follow his practice and in the darkness of the night recite this du’a in the mid-night prayers (*namaze shab*). Shaikh Bahai also quotes this supplication in his book *Miftahul Falah*.

إِلٰهِي كَمْ مِنْ مُوبِقَةٍ حُلُمْتَ عَنْ مُقَابَلَتِهَا بِنِقْمَتِكَ

O my God; too many have been the astounding offenses of me, which You have been too Forbearing to

make me encounter Your punishment for them.

وَكَمْ مِنْ جَرِيرَةٍ تَكْرَمْتَ عَنْ كَشْفِهَا بِكَرَمِكَ

Too many have been the wrongdoings that You have been too Noble to disclose, out of Your Nobility.

إِلَهِي إِنَّ طَالَ فِي عِصْيَانِكَ عُمْرِي

O my God; if my days of disobedience to You have become long,

وَعَظُمَ فِي الصُّحُفِ ذُنُوبِي

and if my sins that are recorded in the Scroll have become gross,

فَمَا أَنَا بِمُؤَمِّلٍ غَيْرِ غُفْرَانِكَ

then I am still hoping for nothing other than Your forgiveness

وَلَا بِرَاضٍ غَيْرَ رِضْوَانِكَ

and I am pleased with nothing other than Your pleasure.

إِلَهِي أَفَكَّرُ فِي عَفْوِكَ

O my God; when I think of Your pardon,

فَتَهُونُ عَلَيَّ خَطِيئَتِي

the consequences of my evildoings are alleviated;

ثُمَّ أَذْكَرُ الْعَظِيمَ مِنْ أَخْذِكَ

but when I, after that, think of Your unbearable chastisement,

فَتَعْظُمُ عَلَيَّ بَلِيَّتِي

my oreal become greater and greater.

آهٍ إِنَّ أَنَا قَرَأْتُ فِي الصُّحُفِ سَيِّئَةً

Ah! if I see in the Scroll of my deed an evildoing,

أَنَا نَاسِيَهَا وَأَنْتَ مُحْصِيَهَا

which I have forgotten, but You have recorded;

فَتَقُولُ خُذُوهُ

then, You will order them to take me away!

فَيَا لَهُ مِنْ مَّا خُوذٍ لَا تُنْجِيهِ عَشِيرَتُهُ

Then, what a helpless one I shall be when my clan shall not be able to save me

وَلَا تَنْفَعُهُ قَبِيلَتُهُ

and my tribe shall be of no avail!

آهٍ مِنْ نَارٍ تُنْضِجُ الْأَكْبَادَ وَالْكَلَى

Ah! for the fire that cooks well all livers and kidneys!

آهٍ مِنْ نَارٍ نَزَاعَةٍ لِلشَّوَى

Ah! for the fire that darts by the head!

آهٍ مِنْ لَهَبَاتٍ لَطَى

Ah! for the flames of hell!

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