

Introduction

In the Name of Allah; the Beneficent the Merciful

All praise is to Allah for having favored us with a pure faith like the faith in Him of the Prophets, the Messengers and the monotheists – those who truly know Him. And for having blessed us with a true conviction as have attested the archangels, the saints and the righteous.

And peace be on the Messengers, those who conveyed the message of their Lord while remaining patient over what befell upon them in their mission. These are they on whom are blessings and mercy from their Lord and these are the most rightly guided – neither shall they fear anymore nor shall they grieve.

And peace and blessings be on the best of Allah's creatures, the pure and the chosen ones; Muhammad and his family, the leaders of all creation; and peace and blessings be also on those who follow them in goodness, until the Day of Judgment; those who show patience and fortitude in their love for the Ahl al-Bayt, for which they are tormented, killed, burnt and expelled from their homes but still have not ceased holding on to their (Ahl al-Bayt's) rope. They are those concerning whom Imam al-Sadiq [a.s]¹ commented:

نَحْنُ نَصِيرٌ وَشَيْعَتُنَا أَصْبَرُ مِنَّا؛ وَذَلِكَ أَنَّا صَبَرْنَا عَلَى مَا نَعْلَمُ، وَصَبَرُوا هُمْ عَلَى مَا لَا يَعْلَمُونَ.

“We are patient but our Shi'ah are even more patient than us; and that is because we bear patience over what we know whilst they bear patience even over what they do not.”²

These are indeed those who are true to the promise that Allah took from them.

And perpetual calamitous curses be upon all their enemies; those who seek to cheat Allah but in reality cheat themselves only. Thus, they carry on their backs the burden of all creation. Indeed, evil is what they bear.

In summary, faith (*iman*) has levels, degrees and a lofty status; and the true believers who have been

tried and tested have specific characteristics that make them stand out from the rest of mankind like a luminous full-moon.

The common man rejects them and deems them to be sick when in fact, they are not sick, but rather, out of awe for Allah, they are apprehensive. They (the true believers) appear confused and confounded. And yet, what confounds them is a mighty matter, of what has been revealed to them of the painful chastisement awaiting the criminals and everlasting bliss awaiting the righteous.

Every time they recite a passage of the Qur'an concerning the hereafter, they are, with regards to the verses of Paradise like one who has seen it and is in it enjoying its pleasures and they are, with regards to the verses concerning the Fire of hell like one who has seen it and abides in it tormented.

These are they whose eyes are wakeful in the dark of the night, fulfilling their obligation to their Creator until they are overcome with drowsiness; then they lie down on the ground, using their palm as a pillow. Their eyes cannot sleep out of fear of the Return, their bodies forsake their beds (to supplicate) and their lips hum with the remembrance of their Lord.

These are they whom Amir al-Mu'minin (the Commander of the Faithful, namely Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib [a.s]) described with the words:

مُرْهُ الْعُيُونِ مِنَ الْبَكَاءِ، خَمْصُ الْبَطُونِ مِنَ الصَّيَامِ، صُفْرُ الْأَلْوَانِ مِنَ السَّهْرِ؛ عَلَى وُجُوهِهِمْ غَبْرَةُ الْخَائِشِينَ، أَوْلَئِكَ إِخْرَانِي الظَّاهِبِونَ، فَحَقٌّ لَنَا أَن نَظَمَّ إِلَيْهِمْ وَنَعْضُ الْأَيْدِي عَلَى فَرَاقِهِمْ

"Their eyes are swollen due to weeping; their stomachs are hollow due to fasting; their colour is pale because of wakefulness; on their faces are the effects of the fearful. They are my brothers gone by. It is a right for us to long for them and lament their departure."

As for the believer, every time he draws closer to his Lord by a degree, Allah surrounds him with a variety of misfortunes and afflictions. He is surrounded from every corner, and obstacles are erected for him from every side. Yet, have misfortunes inflicted anyone but the one who is sincere to Allah and believes in Him? And this continues in different forms and manners so that Allah may reward him amply.

The subject of the severity of afflictions and their types has been discussed in our book entitled '**al-Tamhis** (The Testing)' so there is no need to repeat it here. This book has other traditions that will light up the path for the wayfarer and illumine the heart, feeding it from the spring of the Ahl al-Bayt [a.s]. They (the Ahl al-Bayt) are the most knowledgeable of the maladies of the soul and the whisperings of the devil; so they, naturally, are best suited to remove the illnesses with clear and unpolluted antidotes.

May Allah make us of those who hold on to the rope of their guardianship (**Wilayah**), and of those whose deeds are accepted, whose sins are forgiven and who are given glad tidings with a refreshing

drink from the fountain of al-Kawthar – those who attain the intercession of the Ahl al-Bayt [a.s] on the Day when neither one's wealth nor children will be of any use, except one who comes with a free heart. And the last of our supplication is: All Praise is to Allah, Lord of the worlds.

1. For maintaining readability, [a.s] which is an acronym for “Alayhum Salaam” is used throughout the book to denote “May God bless him, her or them”. When used for the Prophet, his Household is included. When used for others, it only refers to that person.

2. Al-Qummi, Ali ibn Ibrahim: al-Tafsir 489 [19], and Al-Majlisi: Bihar al-Anwar 71/84 [27].

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