

## Lesson 12

4-29-10 The Open School Class: Explanation of Forty *Ahadith* Text: Jalali, Sayyid Muhammad Husayn. Sharh al-Arba'in al-Nabawwiyah. Arabic edition 1987, pages 439-442.)

### Summary

When talking about *amal* (practice), what kinds of practice are important? Well, let us take a closer look at the concept of work. As Muslims, we should not be aloof or lazy; we should work. We should not expect to receive everything and do nothing. (Jalali, page 439). The wise **Qur'an (51:22)** states,

***“And in the sky is your provision and what you are promised.”***

What does this mean? The verse conveys the message that everything (in terms of provisions) is out there if you look for it. Do not say there is nothing. For example, fish will not walk to your house, but you can go to the sea or lake to catch fish (they are out there). Also, in regards to the blessed Maryam (peace be upon her and her family), the **Qur'an (19:24-25)** states,

***“Thereupon he called her from below her [saying,] „Do not grieve! Your Lord has made a spring to flow at your feet. Shake the trunk of the palm tree, freshly picked dates will drop upon you.”***

The dates were not automatically placed in her hands or mouth. No, she had to shake the tree. One must work! All Prophets (peace be upon them) tended to flocks or were shepherds at one point in time. (Jalali, page 440). This was a type of work for them in their respective communities. Also, Prophet Adam was a peasant (agricultural worker), Prophet Idris was a tailor, Prophet Nuh was a carpenter, Prophet Hud was a businessman, and Prophet Muhammad was a caravan manager (peace be upon all of them and their families). Furthermore, Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (peace be upon him and his family) entered into fair partnership-like financial transactions (*mudharabah*).

Companions of the Prophet and the Imams (peace be upon them and their families) also shared a similar work ethic. For example, Salman al-Muhammadi weaved carpets. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (peace be upon him and his family) said that *you cannot gain anything in life by just sitting and wishing*. He said

that *you have to drop the bucket in the well, and sometimes you may get a little water and sometimes you may get a lot of water.*

One must work to progress. Now, I must stress again that work is not just the concept of leaving the house to go to the office and collecting a pay check (*e.g.*, a person may go to an office and also may not do much work). Work is of many varieties. For example, a wife and/or mother that makes meals and feeds her family and manages a house is doing great and vital work. Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (peace be upon him and his family) said that *work is worship*.

For example, supporting ones family by working is fulfilling an obligation, which is worship. Also, Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (peace be upon him and his family) used to do some gardening type work and someone asked the Imam to let him (the other person) do the work.

The Imam said *no as long as I am able to do the work because I want to be close to Allah* (the Most High). Imam Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, (peace be upon him and his family) said that *never be lazy because if you are lazy, you may be lazy with God* (the All-Merciful). Imam Ali as-Sajjad (peace be upon him and his family) said that *you should do your work as if you will live forever, and you should do for your afterlife as if you will die tomorrow. Why? Well, focusing on the first part, when you do work for this life, do it properly.*

For example, if you are going to fix your house, fix it so that it will not fall apart the next day. This has many advantages, such as physical betterment and stability or security as well as other positive effects. Personally, when I vacuum the house sometimes, I may not clean every corner or vacuum under certain objects (maybe because I am tired). However, I do feel the difference between doing a full complete job in vacuuming versus when I do not do such a good job. Firstly, the house does not look as nice or is not as clean when I do not put in the full work, and, secondly, I do not feel as satisfied.

When someone does something, that person's work product represents that person in a way. As Muslims, we should do the best job at everything we do because our work represents ourselves, our character. When Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) was burying his son, Ibrahim, the Prophet looked in the grave and saw a pit in a corner. In order to level it, he smoothed the surface with his own hands and said, "Whenever anyone of you does a job he should endeavour to do it in a solid way."<sup>1</sup>

By doing something properly, we are trying to better ourselves, which may bring us closer to the Lord, the All-Beneficent. Of course, one should not get infatuated with materialism and work for the sake of mere aesthetic and worldly pleasure (because one may get addicted to material goals that may lead him astray). In Islam, all (no matter gender, race, nationality, etc.) are responsible to do some work and progress within the limits. (Jalali, page 441).

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (peace be upon him and his family) said to *never be lazy and never complain*. So, do your work (whatever it may be to help yourself, your family, and your society) and be thankful to

Allah, the All-Gracious. Unfortunately, a lot of us do not want to do any work, and we just want to complain all day. That is not Islam. Every individual is a product of his or her work.

For example, someone (such as a parent or teacher) may guide you, but you have to put in the time and work in the end. If you do not read or listen, how can you learn? Also, the work you do or the lack thereof may have an impact beyond yourself. For example, if you ignore your child and do not teach her certain values and etiquettes (meaning, you do not do your work in raising the child), it reflects poorly on you and you have done a great disservice to the child (which may cause the child, you, and the community great pains).

1. Subhani, Ja'far. The Message. Trans. Muhammad Fazal Haq. Islamic Seminary, 1984, page 718.

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