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Lesson 17: The Effects of Crying for the Hereafter, the Broadness of a Believer's Heart and Piousness

Most of the Noble Prophet's (S) advices which have hitherto been examined have been rotating on three axes:

1. Abstinence from love of the world and obsession with it.
2. Exhortation of invocation of Allah.
3. Humility and modesty and crying as a result of fear of Allah.

In this section of the *hadith*, the Noble Prophet (S) once again explains the importance of crying as a result of fear of Allah and/or crying due to intense longing to perceive His beatific vision [*liqa' Allah*] and he embarks upon elucidating the importance of paying heed to the hereafter, keeping aloof from the world and curing the inner conscience and abstaining from sanctimony.

The Effects of Crying for the Hereafter

“O Abu Dharr! The Lord has given me the news [saying], ‘I swear upon My honor and glory that my slaves will never comprehend the reward of crying and its value. I have established palaces in the highest levels of paradise for those who shed tears and no one will share it with them’.”

As has been mentioned previously, the crying which the Noble Prophet has recommended is shedding tears as a result of fear of Allah and/or weeping due to the intensity of yearning to be admitted in the divine beatific presence of Allah. Even if these two sections of crying are desirable and play a vital role in awakening man and making heedful to Allah but still crying as a result of desiring to be admitted in the

divine beatific presence of Allah is higher and calls for deep and profound knowledge which is not attainable save for a small group [among mankind], amongst the Infallibles (‘a).

Perceiving this fact that the saints [*awliya*] of Allah (‘a) and the Infallibles are enamored and in love with Allah and there is no pain for them comparable to the ache of separation and remoteness from their Beloved, by examining the supplications of the Imams (‘a), we comprehend how much they used to weep and wail as a result of the pain of separation from their Beloved and how they used to hurt due to their intense longing to be in the divine beatific presence of Allah.

Supplications which have been narrated from Imam ‘Ali (‘a) and Imam al-Sajjad (‘a) are a sign of the endless love of the Infallible and Pure *Ahl al-Bayt* (‘a) in regard to Allah. With consideration to these supplications, a section of the unlimited awareness and knowledge of the Infallibles becomes manifest to us.

Knowledge which caused those of pure birth, of pure breastfeeding and the models of mankind not to become heedless of the presence of their Lord even for a single moment and for the reason that they used to perceive Him as higher than everything and believed that all things are under His power, they were only enamored by Him and this inner love-sickness would not for one moment leave them tranquil and calm. Their supplications and invocations are themselves a sign of the pinnacle of this love:

In *Du‘a’ al-Kumayl*, Imam ‘Ali (‘a) removes the curtain from his yearning to attain the divine beatific presence of Allah and believes that it is harder to bear remoteness from Him than to bear the infernal hell and addresses his Lord thus:

“O Allah! My Lord and Master! I can bear your punishment, but how can I bear being separated from Thee?”

And explaining his anguish in the case that he is separated from his Lord, he continues:

“I swear upon Your glory O my Master! O my Lord! that if you lead me to hell with a speaking tongue, I will wail and weep so loudly and sorrowfully and I will shout very much, and like a person who has lost his beloved, I cry bitterly as a result of remoteness from Thee!”

Imam al-Sajjad (‘a) states in the *Du‘a’ Abu Hamzah*:

“I ruined my life with procrastinations of deeds and postponements of duties and with protracted hopes and now I have reached a stage where I have completely been driven to despair with regard to edification of character [and purification of the soul]. Therefore, who is in a worse and more ruined state than mine? Woe upon me if in this state I get led to the grave, which I have not made ready for myself and have not made it fine with good works. Why ought I not to cry when I do not know what the consequences of my actions are and now my soul deceives me and my days beguile me regardless that death has cast its shadow on me?”

It is because of the evaluative role of crying in cleansing the inner conscience of ethical vices and shortcomings that the Noble Prophet (S) states that the virtue and reward which is derived from crying is more than what is derived without crying and the people who cry shall attain stations which other people will not attain.

Abu Dharr asks who the most intelligent man is and the Noble Prophet (S) states:

“The most intelligent person is the one who thinks about death and prepares himself for it more than anyone else.”

A person who has selected a course to traverse always sets his eyes on the destination if he is smart thinker and tries to arrive at the goal quicker. If a person becomes inattentive along the way, becomes bewildered and perplexed along the way, he does not arrive at the destination in sound health. He who knows that the world is only a means of attaining the hereafter does not get deceived by the material attractions of the earth and incessantly meditates about death and prepares himself for it.

Therefore, when his death draws nigh, he goes to Allah with full hands and overflowing provisions but people who lose sight of the goal have not prepared produce and provisions for the hereafter setting out on a long journey without provisions and necessities which is a very hard job.

The Broadness of a Believer's Heart and Its Signs

“O Abu Dharr! If the light shines in the heart, it becomes broad and spacious.”

In the beginning, hearts are dark, then Allah adds His light to them and hearts become apt to receive that light. Once that light settles down, the heart's capacity to broaden increases. To cite an intelligible example, it is like a dry water-skin which expands when water is poured inside it and/or like a bladder which the more air they pump in it the more it enlarges. Therefore, a heart which has been broadened by the light of Allah has an increased capacity. (The purport of heart is not the piece of flesh beating in our hearts, but heart in this discourse denotes a spiritual essence and a place of perception and the station of faith.)

Perhaps His Holiness' (S) intention is that the excessiveness of remembering death and preparedness to meet it keeps the light of man's life burning and as a result of remembrance of death, a light is set in man's soul which does not let his pure natural disposition get contaminated by the darkness of sin and it is as a result of that same light that, in the words of the Noble Prophet (S), broadens and increases the capacity of man's soul in this sense that he perceives beyond this narrow world and concentrates on the everlasting afterworld.

For the reason that such a state is not intelligible to Abu Dharr, because this is not a matter susceptible to the senses so as to be felt by the physical senses, he asks the Noble Prophet (S) about the signs of a large heart. In response, His Holiness (S) cites three signs of this state:

1. The first sign of a broad heart is longing for the hereafter, in this sense that man overlooks the transient and perishable world and sets his eyes on the eternal world of the hereafter. In explanation of the meaning of '*anabah*' (returning from committing sins and going back to Allah), the deceased Raghīb Isfahani states, "Returning towards Allah implies going back to Him by means of repentance and good works."

2. The second sign of a large heart is abstaining from the deceiving world.

Once a believer concentrates on the everlasting world, he becomes vexed by this narrow world, which is why he detaches himself from the world and prepares to depart from it.

The House of Pride [*dar al-ghurur*] is one of the names by which the world is called in the Glorious Qur'an. Pride denotes deception and trickery and because adornments and ornaments of the world deceive man and make him infatuated with it; that is why it is called the House of Pride.

Explaining the deception of the world, eminent people like 'Allamah Tabataba'i, may he reside in Allah's Garden of bliss, used to state that man has a natural object of desire, that is to say man's natural disposition has a lost treasure it is always trying to find. His primary destination is becoming close to Allah and in other words, attaining absolute perfection.

Even if he himself is not conscious of this but unconsciously he still moves towards absolute perfection. But sometimes he loses his main aim and as a result of this mistake selects the world as his main goal; in reality, he has become seduced by the adornments and ornaments of the world and imagines them to be his lost treasure; that is to say the world presents itself as the real goal and desirable object of desire for man.

As a result of this, he attains the world after a life of struggle and effort only to find out that it was not his natural object of desire and does not satiate his spiritual needs. For this reason, the world can be compared to the nipple of a breast-feeder which once put in the mouth of a hungry child longing for breast milk will make it forget the mother's breast and finally realizes that the breast-feeder does not satiate his need for his mother's milk.

Yes, the world is nothing more than a mirage and the real object of man's desire is life giving water which springs from proximity to Allah and satiates his natural disposition. Even if he imagines the world to be his real object of desire—whether it is worldly ostentation in the form of a house and car or in the form of other earthly pleasures and attractions—but it has to be understood that with all its spaciousness and various gratifications and blessings, all are a means for attaining absolute perfection and the good pleasure of Allah, not the ultimate goal and natural object of desire.

We conclude that a person whose heart is in chaotic darkness and has not been enlightened by the light of faith, heedlessness and darkness get erased from his soul and he clearly discerns the truth and does not fall into error. He only sets his heart on the hereafter and it is not possible, even for a moment, to

give his heart to the world because he knows that the world is not the right place to fall in love.

3. The third sign of a large heart is to get ready for death before handing over his soul.

When man is not obsessed with the world and is always meditating about the hereafter, he always has to be ready to go back to the eternal Abode and attain his natural Object of desire. A person who knows that he has not been created for the world and the world is only a bridge of passage to the everlasting Abode zealously looks forward to the moment of gaining proximity to the divine presence of Allah. He impatiently tries to cross the bridge so as to attain his ultimate goal.

A state of impatience and hurriedness to attain the goal also appears for man in the world. Along the way as man is traveling in a car to a city, he wishes to arrive at the destination quicker. When his car overtakes all the other moving objects on the road, he becomes happy that he will arrive earlier than the others at the destination. Even if this is a childish fancy it still has its roots in man's natural disposition. When he knows that the destination is another place and he has no role to play in choosing the course and path, he tries to traverse the course faster so as to reach the goal which of course is a reasonable matter.

Therefore, a slave whose heart has become enlightened by Allah's light and whose eyes have become opened to the truth knows that the ultimate goal is the vicinity of the Truth and proximity to the divine presence of Allah and that the world is nothing more than a means; for this reason, he employs this means in order to arrive at the destination and does not become calm as a result of yearning to arrive and longing to meet the Beloved, to the extent that he forgets the world altogether.

Piousness and Fleeing from Sanctimony and Hypocrisy

Warning Abu Dharr against hypocrisy and sanctimony, the Noble Prophet states:

“O Abu Dharr! Fear Allah but do not sanctimoniously manifest your dread of Allah to the people with the intention of attracting their respect while your heart meditates about performing sin.”

Hypocrisy denotes man manifesting his outward better than his inside and making apparent what is contrary to that which is hidden in the inner soul. That is to say:

His appearance resembles Abu Dharr and Salman [Farsi],

His inner soul resembles Abu Sufyan.

Sanctimony is considered as hidden polytheism and a sanctimonious person is called a polytheist.

One of the great graces of Allah concealing man's sins and faults, as a result of which He has been called 'the Hider of Faults' [*sattar al-‘uyub*]. In truth, life would become unbearable if the vices of people were divulged and they perceived the faults of one another. It is for this reason that Allah's concealing of

defects is a great blessing for which being thankful is incumbent. Imam 'Ali ('a) states:

“If you were to perceive the secrets of one another, you would never bury one another.”^{[1](#)}

In the same way that Allah Himself conceals the faults of the believers, he does not give permission to the others to reveal the sins of other people; neither does He Himself discredit a believer nor does He allow a believer to disgrace himself. Therefore, man has no right to divulge his sins to other people. It has been recorded in a *hadith* that Allah has not allowed the believers to demean and debase themselves; naturally there is no meanness worse than sinning and corruption; it is for this reason that as soon as a believer sins, Allah sets a covering over that sin and does not allow the sinner himself to remove the covering from his sin and gives him the opportunity to repent.

Of course, this is not a general rule, because sometimes on the basis of His wisdom and in order to discipline people, Allah, the Exalted, divulges a bit of their sins and removes the covering from their secrets. Revealing their secrets is a means of training them. That is to say, in the case that he does not get corrected no matter how much he is warned and cautioned over his ugly works, the best way to awaken and train him is to disgrace him a bit so as to prevent him from committing further vices. Of course, this is an existential matter and is related to Allah and His control and no man has the right to disgrace others on the pretext of correcting them.

Therefore, from the Islamic perspective no person has the permission to disgrace neither himself nor other people; concealing and hiding personal defects is a duty of all the believers. Sometimes, the punishment of divulging sins is higher than sin itself and revealing sins is considered as one of the delicate instances of spreading corruption:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ تَشِيعَ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِي الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

“Surely (as for) those who love that scandal should speculate respecting those who believe, they shall have a grievous chastisement in this world and the hereafter, and Allah knows, while you do not know.”^{[2](#)}

Like scandal-mongering, sanctimony and outward adornment too is an ugly thing; it is unacceptable for man to portray himself as better than how he actually is. In spite of being a sinner and wrong-doer, he tries to portray himself as a man of piety, faith, fear of Allah and supplication and invocation so that the people may accord him respect.

Shaddad ibn Aws and 'Ibadah ibn Samit narrate that in interpretation of the *ayat*, ***“Say: I am a mortal like you; it is revealed to me that your god is one God, therefore whoever hopes to meet his Lord, he should do good deeds, and not join anyone in the service of his Lord”^{[3](#)}***, the Noble Prophet (S) states:

“A person who prays and fasts out of sanctimony and hypocrisy is a polytheist.”⁴

The Intention and Its Role in the Evaluation of Works

“O Abu Dharr! Make an intention for every one of your works, even eating and sleeping.”

From the viewpoint of edification of character, mentioning this matter is very important and constructive and in addition, this matter is founded on a very important scientific and philosophical axiom which calls for detailed discussion. The value of every work which man discharges, even worship and adoration of Allah, is related to the intention: the evaluation of one action performed as a result of two differing intentions is not the same.

A person who accepts his friend's invitation positively does a praiseworthy work, but his action is considered as worship which gives fruit to reward and profit if he accepts the invitation and goes to the house of his friend with the intention to please Allah because Allah is pleased to see the believers accepting the invitations of their fellow believing brothers [and having good relations].

Or, he is fasting a recommendable fast and one of his friends, ignorant of this fact, invites him to partake of food; in the case that he breaks his fast for the sake of pleasing Allah, his action is considered as worship and gives fruit to divine reward and profit; but if he breaks his fast for the reason that he is pleased with the food and longs for it, his action has no reward because it was not done for the good pleasure of Allah. Therefore, this very eating has divine reward and profit if it is done for the sake of pleasing Allah and has an invaluable role in the perfection and spiritual ascendance of man.

Therefore, heed has to be paid to this fact that man can discharge all his daily works, starting from trivial actions such as sleeping, eating, looking, and even joking up to the more important actions such as prayer and fasting for the good pleasure of Allah in the case that they are discharged in the direction of servitude and obedience of Allah.

Some of the great people used to pause a while before doing anything they wanted to do until they got sure that their intention was purely for the good pleasure of Allah and they were certain that the work has been performed for Allah. Or, if a question was asked of them, they never responded with haste and before reflecting a little and purifying the intention in their hearts. Then, they used to give the response for the good pleasure of Allah.

This point is indicative of the fact that a believer can be so smart and sharp that he can make every single moment of his lifespan in the course of Allah and His good pleasure. Therefore, it is as well possible to have a pure and correct intention in regard to pleasures of the flesh, actions which both give pleasure and are acts of worship at the same time.

Man can attain both the pleasures of the world and the gratifications of the hereafter. In such instances a medium between the world and the hereafter is possible. It is in cases that there is incompatibility

between two actions that a medium cannot be found, for example between the obligatory [*wajib*] works and the forbidden [*haram*] actions for which a medium is impossible. But if man has a divine intention in doing permissible actions, he attains both the pleasure of this world thereby increasing his bodily energy and vigor and brings to hand divine reward and profit. Of course, the divine intention itself has stages and one of its stages is a firm decision to abstain from sin and quit disobedience of Allah's will.

The deceased 'Allamah Tabataba'i, may he reside in Allah's Garden of bliss, used to narrate that whenever Imam 'Ali ('a) woke up to pray the optional night prayers [*nafilah*], he used to take a cold bath in order to increase his physical vigor and preparedness.

It is natural for a person such as Imam 'Ali ('a) who from morning to night was at the battlefield or was busy doing some other social duties in addition to performing five hundred and/or one thousand *rak'ats* of prayer to be exhausted and not to have enough energy and vigor for waking up at night to pray. It is for this reason that taking a cold bath increases his energy, vigor and liveliness.

[1.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 77, p. 385.

[2.](#) Surat al-Nur 24: 19.

[3.](#) Surat al-Kahf 18: 110.

[4.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 84, p. 248.

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