

Removing Doubt About The Rulings Relevant To Backbiting

[Atonement For Backbiting](#)

Be informed that it is mandatory on the backbiter to repent, regret and feel sorry for what he has done so he may get himself out of Allāh Almighty exacting on him what he deserves. After that, he must seek forgiveness of the person whom he had backbitten, perhaps he will forgive him and get him out of his wrongdoing. He ought to seek his forgiveness while he is sorrowful, regretful about what he had done, for a pretentious person may seek forgiveness just to feign piety while inwardly he is not regretful at all, thus he adds another sin. There are two traditions regarding its atonement:

One is this tradition by the Prophet (ص): "The atonement for the one whom you had backbitten is that you seek Allāh's forgiveness for him" (*Ihyā al-Ulūm*, Vol. 3, p. 145; also see *Al-Kāfi*, Vol. 2, p. 357 and p. 172 of *Al-A`māl* by Sheikh al-Mufīd).

Another is his (ص) statement: "If one owes his [Muslim or human] brother for having wronged him, whether it may be with regard to his honor or wealth, he must seek his forgiveness for it before a Day comes when there is neither a dinar nor a dirham. It will be taken out of his good deeds. But if he has no good deeds, his fellow's bad deeds are transferred to him, adding to those of his own" (*Ihyā al-Ulūm*, Vol. 3, p. 145). One may combine seeking forgiveness for the one whom he backbit with seeking the Almighty's forgiveness especially if the backbitten person may not have come to know about the person who had backbitten him.

There is the possibility that if one goes to someone and seeks his forgiveness, this will further cause bad feelings and grudge. Such combination may also be applied in case one cannot meet the person whom he had backbitten because that person is now dead. It is commendable that one should go and seek forgiveness of one who knew that he had been backbitten by him, and it is commendable for the latter to accept the backbiter's excuse according to the verse by the Almighty that says, "... **Hold to forgiveness;**

command what is right... (*Qurʾān, 7: 199*). The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) asked Gabriel: "What is this forgiveness?" Gabriel said, "Allāh orders you to forgive whoever wronged you, to stay in touch with whoever severed his ties with you, and to give whoever deprived you" (*Ihyāʾ al-ʿUlūm*, Vol. 3, p. 146).

According to another report, when humans are brought before Allāh Almighty on the Judgment Day, they will be addressed thus: "Let anyone who had sought rewards from Allāh stand", whereupon only those who had forgiven others would then stand" (*Ihyāʾ al-ʿUlūm*, Vol. 3, p. 146).

It has been reported about someone that a man said to him, "So-and-so has backbitten you." He, therefore, sent him a platter of fresh dates and said to him, "It has come to my knowledge that you have given me by way of present some of your own good deeds; therefore, I wanted to reward you for them, but please excuse me because I can not reward you enough" (*Ihyāʾ al-ʿUlūm*, Vol. 3, p. 146).

One route which the apologetic person can take is to exaggerate in praising the man whom he had backbitten and seek to be close to his heart and continue to do so till he wins his heart. But if he does not win his heart, his own apology and attempt to be close to that person will be regarded as good deeds counted for him, and they may suffice to wipe out the backbiting sin on the Judgment Day.

There is no difference between backbiting a young or an old person, a living or a dead one, a male or a female. Let seeking Allāh's forgiveness and supplicating for the person whom one had backbitten be done in a proper way that suits the person whom he had backbitten. He may supplicate the Almighty to grant a young person guidance, a dead person mercy and forgiveness, and so on.

The obligation is not dropped if one grants his honor to people because it is granting what should not be granted. Jurists have said that one who permits others to charge him does not rescind his right for compensation. It has been narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) has said, "Can you at all be unable to do what Abū Damdam does? Whenever he leaves home, he says, 'Lord! I have offered my honor by way of charity to people'" (*Ihyāʾ al-ʿUlūm*, Vol. 3, p. 146).

It means: "I do not demand on the Judgment Day retribution from one who has wronged me [by backbiting me], and I do not complain about him." It does not mean that backbiting him had thus become permissible; rather, forgiveness must be sought for it as is the case with all other atonements, and surely Allāh is the One Who grants success.

What one can conclude is this: Be informed, may Allāh Almighty grant you and our own selves success, the ultimate goal of the most Exalted One with regard to His creation, and the first objective behind sending His prophets and messengers with divine books and legislated codes, is to attract the creation towards the One, Praise to Him, and to cure them of the ailment of ignorance. Their attention is to be directed towards the final abode, the rejection and safeguarding of this abode, lest one should perish if doing so is perilous, and they should be attracted to something which no eyes had ever seen, nor ear had ever heard, nor a human mind had ever imagined.

Attention is also drawn, thereafter, to managing the physical life-preserving needs and all means for preserving humankind. This depends on people getting together, cooperating and solidifying their ranks with each other through learning and teaching, reminding the men of reason, of knowledge and understanding, urging everyone to be of benefit to others in attaining what benefits him, too. By nature, man cannot be independent as he seeks his livelihood, nor can he alone meet all his needs such as food and other necessities.

There is no harm when the objective of the most Wise One, the most Great, focuses on people's togetherness, on hearts being in harmony, in love, when they are present or absent. Therefore, reports and legacies have all agreed to urge people to love each other, to abandon their disputes. The Almighty has increased the rights which His servants owe to each other, warning them against denying goodness and against being ingrates, promising them generous rewards when they care about each other and have affection for each other, warning them against abandoning such ethics with a great deal of punishment and retribution as you, by the will of Allāh, will come to know in the reports which we will cite about the Prophet (ص).

Let us state what suits this message twelve traditions so we may be brief. If one seeks the ultimate end, let him read the categorized books in this regard such as *Al-Ikhwān* book by al-Sadq ibn Babawayh, the chapter on belief, the chapter on fellowship and other chapters in *Al-Kāfi* by al-Kulaini, may Allāh sanctify him, for there is in them sufficient wisdom for those who seek admonishment and a healing medicine for those who have vision.

Tradition 1

We have been informed by the happy and righteous mentor Noor ad-Din Ali ibn Abd al-Ali al-Maysi, may the Almighty sanctify him and fill his grave with light, through permission from his mentor, the late forgiven Shams ad-Din Muhammad son of the caller to prayer al-Jazeeni who quotes the mentor Diyā ad-Din Ali son of the happy imām, scholar and critic Shams ad-Din Abū Abdullāh, the martyred Muhammad ibn Makki, who quotes his afore-mentioned father quoting the master Amīd ad-Din Abdul-Muttalib and the mentor Fakhr ad-Din son of the mentor and virtuous imām, the scholar who brought the creed to life, Jamal ad-Din al-Hassan ibn Yousuf ibn al-Mutahhar who quotes his afore-mentioned father quoting his happy grandfather, the one whose creed is sound, namely Yousuf ibn Ali ibn al-Mutahhar.

Who quotes the mentor/critic Najm ad-Din Ja'far ibn al-Hassan ibn Sa'īd al-Hilli quoting Sayyid Muhyi ad-Din Abū Hāmid Muhammad ibn Abdullāh ibn Ali ibn Zuhrah al-Hilli quoting the honorable *faqīh* Izz ad-Din Abū al-Harth Muhammad ibn al-Hassan al-Husaini al-Baghdadi quoting the mentor Qutb ad-Din Abul-Hussain ibn Sa'īd ibn Hibatullah al-Rawandīzi quoting the mentor Abū Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Muhsin al-Halabi quoting the mentor *faqīh* Abul-Fath Muhammad ibn Ali al-Karajki.

Saying that Abū Abdullāh al-Hussain ibn Muhammad ibn al-Sairafi al-Baghdadi has said that Judge

Abū Bakr Muhammad ibn al-Jīlī has said that Abū Muhammad al-Qasim ibn Muhammad ibn Ja'far, one of the offspring of Omer ibn Ali, peace be with him, has said that his father quotes his father citing his forefathers quoting Imām Ali (ع) as saying that the Messenger of Allāh (ص) said, "A believer has three rights which his brother owes him and from which he has no way out except by carrying them out or be exempted from them (or any of them): He must forgive him when he slips away, have mercy on him when he sees him in tears, covers up his defect, straighten him when he stumbles, accepts his excuse when he seeks it, visits him when he returns from absence, continues to provide him with advice, safeguards his friendship.

Protects his trust, visits him during his sickness, be present when he dies, responds to his call, accepts his gift, rewards him for keeping in touch with him, thanks him when he bestows a blessing upon him, supports him very well, safeguards his lawful possessions, performs his errands, responds to his request, seeks Allāh's mercy for him when he sneezes, guides him when he strays, responds to his greeting, finds his speech to be good, expresses appreciation for his bounties, believes him when he swears, befriends him and not antagonize him, supports him when he is an oppressor or when he oppresses:

As regarding supporting him when oppresses, he keeps him away from oppressing. As regarding supporting him when he is oppressed, he helps him take what belongs to him. He does not hand him over [to his enemy], nor does he betray him; he loves for him the same goodness which he loves for himself, and he hates the same evil to afflict him as he hates it for himself" (*Kanz al-Fawā'id*, Vol. 1, p. 306). Then the Imām (ع) said, "I have heard the Messenger of Allāh (ص) saying, 'Some of you leaves out something which he owes his brother, and on the Day of Judgment, he will be tried on its account'" (*Kanz al-Fawā'id*, Vol. 1, p. 307).

Tradition 2

Through the above-stated *isnād* tracked back to Sayyid Muhyi ad-Dīn Zuhrah, the latter says that he was told by Abul-Hassan Ahmad ibn Wahab ibn Sulaymān "... through my recitation to him in the month of Sha'bān in the year 591 A.H. (August of 1195 A.D.), he said that he was told by Judge Fakhrud-Dīn Abul-Rida ibn Sa'īd Abdullāh ibn al-Qasam al-Sahrawardi on Friday, 574 A.H. (September 22, 1178 A.D.) in Mosul saying that he was told by the *hafiz* mentor Abū Bakr Wajeeh Tahir al-Shahami in his recitation on a Wednesday, the fifth of the month of Ramadān of 539 A.H. (March 1, 1145 A.D.) saying that he was told by the kind mentor Abū Hāmid Ahmad ibn al-Hassan al-Azhari saying that he was told by the mentor Abū Muhammad al-Hassan ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn al-Hassan ibn Ali Mukhallad al-Mukhalladi al-Adl who recited the tradition to him and who acknowledged it.

The latter said that he was told by al-Abbās Muhammad ibn Ishāq ibn Ibrāhīm al-Thaqafi al-Sarraj with regard to his recitation to him in 312 A.H. (924 A.D.) which he acknowledged, saying that he was told by Qutaibah ibn Sa'īd who said that he had heard the tradition from al-Laith who quoted Aqīl quoting al-

Zuhri quoting Ṣalim quoting his father saying that the Messenger of Allāh (ص) said, 'A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim; he does not wrong him or taunt him. When one is in need of his brother, Allāh will be behind him with regard to his need, and if one eases the distress of a Muslim, Allāh will reward him for it by easing one of his causes of distress on the Judgment Day. And if one covers the fault of another Muslim, Allāh will cover him on the Judgment Day'" (Al-`Awā'ij, Vol. 1, p. 128).

Tradition 3

Through the previous *isnād* traced back to Sayyid Muhyi ad-Dīn saying that he was informed by the judge and Islam's mentor "Abul-Mahāsīn" Yūsuf ibn Ṛifī` ibn Tamīm "... According to my recitation to him on the 14th of Jumada II in the year 618 A.H. (August 5, 1221 A.D.), he said that the imām/judge Fakhd ad-Dīn "Abū al-Rida" Sa`īd ibn al-Qasam al-Sahṛdī who was heard in Juṃda II of the year 574 (November of 1178 A.D.) saying that he was told by the imām/mentor "Abul-Fath" Muhammad ibn Abdul-Rahmān, the Kashmahini orator, according to my recitation to him on a Saturday, the 17th of Shawwāl of 541 A.H. (March 22, 1147 A.D.) saying that he was informed by Sheikh "Abul-Q̣sim" Hibatullah ibn Abdul-Ẉrith ibn Ali ibn Ahmad al-Shiṛzī, or he may have written it in person, in the month of Rabi` I in 486 A.H. (April of 1093 A.D.) saying that he was told by "Abū Nasr" Ahmad ibn Abdul-Baqi ibn al-Hassan ibn Tawq al-Mu`addal saying the he was told by "Abul-Q̣sim" Nasr ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad, the jurist, saying the he was told by "Abū Ya`li" Ahmad ibn Ali ibn al-Muthanna, of Mosul, of Tamīm, saying that Habatullah and "Abul-Q̣sim" Abdul-Aẓz Ali ibn Ahmad al-Sukkari saying that he was told by "Abū Tahir" Muhammad ibn Abdul-Rahmān ibn al-Abbās al-Mukhallas saying that he was told by "Abul-Q̣sim" Abdullāh ibn Muhammad ibn Abdul-Aẓz al-Baghawi saying that he was informed by Abd al-A`la` ibn Hamṃd, the Tunisian, saying that he was informed by Hamṃd ibn Salāmah who quoted "Abū Ṛifī" quoting Abū Huraira saying that the Messenger of Allāh (ص) said, "A man visited his brother in another village, so Allāh placed an angel on his pathway. When he came to the angel, the latter asked him, 'Where are you going?' The man said, 'I am going to visit a brother of mine in such-and-such village.' The angel said to him, 'Has he bestowed upon you a blessing which you would like to see?' The man said, 'No, but I love him for the sake of Allāh.' The angel said, 'I am a messenger sent to you by Allāh to tell you that Allāh has loved you just as you have loved him'" (Muslim, *Saḥh*, Vol. 4, p. 1988, tradition 2567).

Tradition 4

Through the previous *isnād* tracked to Judge Fakhr ad-Dīn al-Sahrawardi, the latter said that he was told by the *ḥafiz*/sheikh Thiqatud-Dīn "Abul-Q̣sim" Ẓhir ibn Ṭhir ibn Muhammad al-Shahham by way of recitation to him as the judge was listening on the 29th of Shawwāl of 525 A.H. (September 24, 1131 A.D.) saying that he was told by Sheikh "Abū Nasr" Abdul-Rahman ibn Ali ibn Mousa saying that he was informed by "Abul-Hassan" Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Mousa ibn al-Salt al-Qazwini in Baghdad saying that he heard the tradition from "Abū Ishaq" Ibrahim ibn Abdul-Samad al-Hashimi by

way of dictation saying that he was informed by "Abū Mus`ab" Ahmad ibn "Abū Bakr" al-Zuhri quoting Mālik ibn Anas quoting "Abū Shihab" quoting Anas ibn Mālik saying that the Messenger of Allāh (ص) said, "Do not hate each other; do not envy each other; do not turn your backs to each other, and be, servants of Allāh, brothers. It is not permissible for a Muslim to shun his brother for more than three nights" (Muslim, *Sahih*, Vol. 4, p. 1983, tradition 2559).

Tradition 5

Through the past *isnād* tracked back to al-Shahami, the latter said that he was told by Sheikh "Abū Sa`īd" Muhammad ibn Abdul-Aziz al-Saffar who said he was informed by Sheikh "Abū Abdul-Rahman" Muhammad ibn al-Hassan al-Salami who said he was informed by "Abdul-Rahman" ibn Muhammad ibn Mahboob who said he was informed by Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Yahya who said he was informed by Muhammad ibn al-Azhari who said he was informed by Muhammad ibn Abdullah al-Basri who said he was informed by Ya`li ibn Maymoon who said he was informed by Yazid al-Raqashi citing Anas ibn Mālik saying that the Messenger of Allāh (ص) said, "If someone pleases a believer or carries out an errand for this world or for the hereafter, whether small or big, Allāh will surely appoint a servant for him to serve him on the Judgment Day" (see *Al-Kāfi*, Vol. 2, p. 206).

Tradition 6

Through the past *isnād* tracked to al-Salami, the latter said that he was informed by Abdul-Azīz ibn Ja`far ibn Muhammad ibn al-Hirāni in Baghdad saying he was informed by Muhammad ibn Harūn ibn Bariyya who said he was informed by `Isa ibn Mahrūn who said he was informed by al-Hassan ibn al-Hussain who said he was informed by al-Hussain ibn Zaid saying that he said to [Imām] Ja`far ibn Muhammad, "May I be your sacrifice! Was there any jesting in the speech of the Prophet (ص)?" He said, "Allāh described him as having the greatest moral code in jesting. Allāh sent His prophets and there was rigidity in them, and He sent Muhammad to be affectionate and merciful. One of the manifestations of his affection towards his nation is that he teased them so that none among them would glorify him to the extent that he cannot look at him in the eyes." Then he said, "I was told by my father, Muhammad, who quotes his father Ali (ع) quoting his father al-Hussain (ع) quoting his father Ali (ع) saying, 'The Messenger of Allāh (ص) used to entertain with jesting a man from among his companions whom he saw to be depressed. And he (ص) used to say, 'Allāh dislikes one who frowns in the face of his brothers'" (*Makrīm al-Akhḡq*, p. 21).

Tradition 7

Through the previously stated *isnād* tracked to the sect's mentor, the man who brought life back into it, and its critic, Jamal ad-Dīn al-Hassan ibn Yousuf ibn al-Mutahhar, who quotes his happy father, the man whose creed was sound, namely Yousuf ibn al-Mutahhar, saying that he was informed by the `allama genealogist Fakhar ibn al-Ma`add al-Mousawi from the *faqḡh* "Sadād ad-Dīn" (the one whose

creed is sound), namely Shadhūn ibn Jibra'eel al-Qummi, from Imāḍ ad-Dīn al-Tabari from the mentor "Abū Ali" al-Hassan son of the mentor "Abū Ja'far" Muhammad ibn al-Hassan al-Tāsi from his father, the mentor, may Allāh sanctify his soul, from Sheikh al-Mufīd Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn al-Nu'mān from Sheikh al-Sadīq Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Hussain ibn Babawayh al-Qummi from Sheikh "Abū Abdullāh" Ja'far ibn Qawlawayh from the mentor "Abū Abdullāh" Muhammad ibn Ya'qūb al-Kulaini from Muhammad ibn Yahya from Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn `Ṣisa from Ali ibn al-Hakam from Abdullāh ibn Bakr from Mu'alli ibn Khanṣ from "Abū Abdullāh", namely Imām Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Sādiq (ع), whom I asked, "What obligation does a Muslim bear towards another Muslim?"

He said, "They are seven rights and obligations. Each of their rights is an obligation. If any of them is lost, he will get out of obedience of Allāh and His mastership, and there will be no share in him for Allāh." I said to him, "May I be your sacrifice! What are they?!" He said, "O Mu'alli! I worry about you. I am concerned you may lose track and not remember, and you may learn but not act upon your knowledge." The man said, "There is neither power nor might except in Allāh." The Imām (ع) went on to say, "The easiest of them is that you should love for him what you love for yourself and hate for him what you hate for yourself. The second right is that you avoid making him angry. You seek to please him and obey his command. The third right is that you help him with your own self, wealth, tongue, hand and leg.

The fourth right is that you are his eyes, his mirror and his guide. The fifth right is that you must not be satisfied while he is hungry, or quench your thirst while he is thirsty, or be clothed while he is without clothes. The sixth right is that you must not have a servant while your brother has no servant; you are obligated to send him your servant to wash his clothes, cook for him and make his bed. The seventh right is that you accept his oath, respond to his call, visit him when he is sick, be present during his funeral, and if you know that he has a need, you must take the initiative to take care of it before you obligate him to request you in its regard. Rather, you must be the one who takes the initiative. If you do this, you will have connected your friendship with his, and you will have connected his friendship with yours" (*Al-Kāfi*, Vol. 2, p. 169).

Tradition 8

Through *isnād* tracked to Muhammad ibn Ya'qūb al-Kulaini from Muhammad ibn Yahya from Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn `Ṣisa from Ali ibn al-Hakam from Muhammad ibn Marwān from Imām Abū Abdullāh (ع) who has said, "If a man goes to take care of an errand for his believing brother, ten good deeds will be written down for him, ten bad deeds will be wiped out from his record and he will be raised ten degrees." Al-Kulaini goes on to add, "I think he also said, 'And his deed will be equivalent to setting free ten slaves and is better than one month of *i'tikaf* at the Haram Mosque'" (*Al-Kāfi*, Vol. 2, p. 196).

Tradition 9

Through *isnād* tracked back to al-Kulaini, may Allāh have mercy on his soul, from Ali ibn Ibrāhīm ibn

al-H^ushim al-Qummi, may All^h have mercy on his soul, from his father from Muhammad ibn Ab^u `Umaid from Hussain ibn Ab<sup>u</sup> Na<sup>u</sup>m from Masma` ibn Ab^u Sayar saying that he heard Im^um Ab^u Abdull^h (ع) saying, "One who eases the depression of a believe, All^h will ease from him one cause of depression on the Judgment Day, and he will come out of his grave with an ice-cool heart. And if one feeds him, All^h will feed him from the fruits of Paradise. If one gives him a drink, All^h will give him of the sealed nectar" (the sealed nectar is a brand of wine in Paradise) (*Al-K^ufi*, Vol. 2, p. 200).

Tradition 10

We have narrated this tradition through many *isn^uds* one of which is cited in Tradition 7 above tracked back to Sheikh Abul-Qasim Ja`far ibn Muhammad ibn Qawlawayh from his father from Sa`d ibn Abdull^h from Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn `<sup>u</sup>sa from his father Muhammad ibn `^usa al-Ash`ari from Abdull<sup>h</sup> ibn Sulaym<sup>u</sup>n al-Nawfali. The latter said that he was once in the company of Im<sup>u</sup>m Ja`far ibn Muhammad al-S^udiq (ع) when a slave of Abdull^h al-Najashi came to him, greeted him and delivered his master's letter to him. The Im^um (ع) opened the letter.

The first line in it read: "In the Name of All^h, the most Gracious, the most Merciful. May All^h Almighty prolong the life of my master and consider me as his sacrifice against any ill, prevents me from seeing anything bad happening to him; surely He is the Master of all of this and is Able to do it. My master! Please be informed that I have been tested by becoming the *wali* (provincial governor) of the Ahwaz (in Iran). If my master sees to draw a line for me in this regard or strike an example for me so I may find guidance in it in a way that brings me closer to All^h, the most Exalted, the most Great, and to His Messenger (ص), and summarizes in his letter what he sees I should do, what I should change or replace, where I should place my *zakat*, who should receive it, with whom I should feel comfortable, whom I should trust, to whom I should refer in order to confide my secret..., perhaps All^h will grant me salvation through your guidance and instruction, for you are the Proof of All^h against His creation and His trust in His land, and may His blessing on you remain so."

Abdull^h ibn Sulaym^un says that Im^um Ab^u Abdull^h (ع) answered him saying, "In the Name of All^h, the most Gracious, the most Merciful. May All^h include you in His kindness and mercy and look after you through His care, for surely He is the Master of all of this. Your messenger brought me your letter. I read it and understood its contents, all what you stated and about which you inquired, claiming you have been tested by becoming the *wali* of al-Ahwaz. This pleased me and displeased me. I shall inform you about what has displeased me and what has pleased me by the will of All^h Almighty. As regarding my pleasure with your becoming the *wali*, I have thought that perhaps All^h will enable you to help one of the followers of the Prophet's Progeny who is in dire need for help, guide you to raise the status of those whose status has been lowered, enable you to clothe those who have no clothes to wear, strengthen through you the weak from among them and through you puts out the fire of those who disagree with this Progeny. As regarding what has displeased me, the least about which I have concerns for you is that you may stumble on one of our followers [and be unfair to him], and this will deprive you of inhaling

the presence of the Holy One.

"I am going to summarize for you all what you have asked about. If you act upon it and not overlook it, I hope, by the will of Allāh, you will be safe. I have been told, O servant of Allāh, by my father who has been told by his forefathers back to Ali ibn Abī Talib (ع) who quotes the messenger of Allāh (ص) saying that if one is sought for counsel by his believing brother and did not grant him his pursuit, Allāh will take wisdom away from him (see *Bihar al-Anwar*, Vol. 72, p. 104, Tradition No. 36).

Be informed that I am going to suggest something for you which, if you implement, you will be ridden of your concerns. And be informed that your salvation lies in preventing bloodshed, stopping those who harm the servants of Allāh, being kind to the subjects, not being hasty, being a good companion, lenient without being weak, tough without being arrogant. You should tolerate your superior and whoever brings you his messages. Mend the cracks among your subjects by showing them what agrees with righteousness and justice by the will of Allāh Almighty. Beware of busy-buddies and those who disseminate calumny, and you should not keep company with any of them, and Allāh should not see you during your day or night accepting their own judgment about who is right and who is wrong and thus Allāh becomes angry with you and reveals your covering. Beware of the trickery of the Ahwaz Bedouins, for my father has informed me that his forefathers, up to the Commander of the Faithful (ع), say that the Imām (ع) said, 'Conviction never remains firm in the heart of a Jew or a [Bedouin] from Khuzistan' (*Kitāb al-Arba`een* [manuscript]).

"As regarding who you should keep company with, feel at ease and resort regarding your affairs, it is a man with an insight, a trustworthy man, one who agrees with you when you adhere to your creed. Compare your assistance, try both sides; if you see that there is someone there who can provide you with guidance, you ought to choose him as such. Beware of giving one *dirham* or taking off one garment or loading a beast of burden for a poet or entertainer without paying the same in the way of Allāh.

Let your rewards, gifts, outfits be for the commanders, messengers, grandchildren, letter carriers, police commanders and those who levy the *khums*. Let whatever you wish to spend be on acts of righteousness in order to achieve success, to set someone free, by way of charity, for performing the pilgrimage, quenching someone's thirst and for the attire in which you perform your prayers and visit others wearing it, and the gift which you present to Allāh Almighty and His Messenger (ص)... be all from the best of what you earn.

"O servant of Allāh! Exert your effort so you may hoard neither gold nor silver so you may be included in this verse: Allāh Almighty has said:

'... And there are those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend in God's way: Announce a most grievous penalty to them' (Qur'ān, 9:34).

Do not underestimate anything sweet or food leftovers with which you fill empty stomachs; such deeds puts out the fire of wrath of Allāh, the most Praised One, the most High.

"Be informed that I heard my father quoting his forefathers quoting the Commander of the Faithful (ع) saying that he heard the Prophet (ص) say this to his companions one day: 'Nobody is counted among those who believe in Allāh and the Last Day if he spends his night satisfied while his neighbor is hungry.' The companions said to him, 'O Messenger of Allāh! Now we all have perished!' The Prophet (ص) said, 'Do so from the leftovers of your food, of your dates, of your sustenance, of the clothes which you do not want whereby you put out the fire of the Lord's Wrath' (*Al-Kāfi*, Vol. 2, p. 668).

"And I shall inform you of when life becomes so unwanted, so low, in the sight of the predecessors and the *tabi`ūn*: I have been informed by Muhammad ibn [Imām] Ali ibn al-Hussain (ع) saying that when al-Hussain (ع) prepared to depart to Kāfa, [Abdullāh] Ibn Abbās came to him and pleaded to him in the Name of Allāh and of kinship to be the one who will be killed in the Battle of Taff instead. The Imām said, 'When I am killed instead of yourself, the only difference will be that I will simply part with this life. Shall I tell you, O son of Abbās, what the Commander of the Faithful (ع) had said about this life?!' Ibn Abbās said, 'O yes, indeed, by my life, I would love that you narrate it to me.'

The Imām (ع) said, 'Ali bin al-Hussain (ع) said that he had heard his father Abū Abdullāh (ع) saying, 'The Commander of the Faithful (ع) said to me once, 'I was in Fadak once at one of its walls when it was inherited by Fātima (ع). A woman suddenly forced her way towards me. I had a spade in my hand with which I was working. When I looked at her, my heart flew from its place due to her beauty; she was so beautiful, she looked like Buthaina daughter of `Umir al-Jamhi, the most beautiful woman in Quraish.

She said to me, 'O son of Abū Talib! Would you like to marry me so you will no longer have to work with this spade, and I shall lead you to the treasures of the earth and to possessions that will be yours and your offspring's after you?' Ali (ع) said to her, 'Who are you so I may approach your family and seek your hand?' She said, 'I am life.' He said to her, 'Get back right now and seek another husband.' The Imām (ع) went on to say that he returned to his spade and composed these verses of poetry:

"Disappointed will be whoever is tempted by a covetous life,

Even if it tempts for centuries, it shall never last forever.

She came to us outfitted like the dear one Buthaina,

With ornaments similar to her decorations,

So I said to her to tempt someone else because

I have no desire for life, and I am not ignorant.

What shall I do with life since Muhammad's life

Has been snatched away in the midst of heroes?

Suppose she brings me means to access treasures

And the wealth of Qarun and the domains of the tribes,

Will fate not render them all to naught?

And its treasures are sought with tribulations; so,

Tempt someone else for I am not willing to have

All what you offer: possessions, prominence and pursuits.
I have satisfied myself with what has been destined for me,

So, do what you will, O Life, with those who are easy to lure,
For I fear Allāh on the Day I shall meet Him for sure,
And I fear a torment that
Stays and will never depart'
(see *Manāqib Al Abi Talib*, Vol. 2, p. 102).

"He left this world without owing anything to anyone till he met Allāh praised, having no blame on him, nor was he spoken ill of. Then the Imāms (ع) after him followed in his footsteps as has reached you. They were not stained with any of this life's filth, peace and blessings be with them all, and may Allāh reward them with the very best. I have informed you of the best of this life and of the Hereafter, and I have cited for you what the truthful one, the one who is believed by Allāh, the Messenger of Allāh (ص), has said; so, if you act upon my advice to you in this letter of mine, and if your sins weigh as heavily as the mountains and count as many as the sea waves, I will wish Allāh to overlook them all, the most Exalted One, the most Sublime, in His own Power.

"O servant of Allāh! Beware of scaring a believer, for my father, [Imām] Muhammad ibn Ali (ع), has quoted his father citing his grandfather Imām Ali ibn Abī Talib (ع) saying, 'One who casts a look at a believer in order to scare him, Allāh will scare him on the Day when there is no shade except His, and Allāh will resurrect him in the form of particles, his flesh, body and all his parts, till he is lodged in his final abode' (*Jami' al-Akhhār*, p. 154 in a chapter dealing with harming a believer; see also *Al-Kafi*, Vol. 2, p. 368).

"My father has quoted his forefathers quoting [Imām] Ali (ع) citing the Messenger of Allāh (ص) saying, 'One who relieves the distress of one of the believers, Allāh will remove his distress on the Day when there is no shade but His and will grant him security on the Day of the greatest fear and protect him from an evil reverting. And if one meets the need of his believing brother, Allāh will meet many of his needs one of which is Paradise. If one clothes his believing brother, Allāh will clothe him of the silk of Paradise, its shiny silk, and he will wade in the Pleasure of Allāh as long as he is outfitted in it.

If one feeds his brother to satisfy his hunger, Allāh will feed him of the good things of Paradise, and if he gives him a drink to quench his thirst, Allāh will let him drink of his Lord's sealed nectar. If one serves his brother, Allāh will let the immortalized youths be his servants and lodge him in the company of His pure friends. If one transports his believing brother on his conveyance, Allāh will let the conveyances of Paradise convey him and brag about him before the angels who are close to Him on the Judgment Day. If one marries off his believing brother to a women with whom he feels comforted, who strengthens him and with whom he feels restful, Allāh will marry him to the *huris* with large lovely eyes' (see *Thawāb al-A'māl*, p. 177).

"And if one visits his believing brother without seeking his brother to do something for him, Allāh will record him among the guests of Allāh, and it will be binding upon Allāh to be generous to His guest' (*Jāmi' al-Akḥbār*, p. 90 in a chapter about pleasing a believer; see also *Al-Kāfi*, Vol. 2, p. 176).

"O servant of Allāh! My father has also narrated to me quoting his forefathers quoting Imām Ali (ع) saying that he had heard the Messenger of Allāh (ص) saying one day to his companions, 'O folks! One is not counted as a believer who just believes with his tongue but not with his heart; so, do not track the faults of the believers, for if one tracks the faults of a believer, Allāh will track his faults on the Judgment Day and expose him even in the depth of his own home'" (see *Al-Kāfi*, Vol. 2, p. 355).

"And my father has also narrated to me that his forefathers quote Imām Ali (ع) saying that Allāh took the covenant of a believer to be truthful when he speaks and not to seek revenge against his foe, that he should not satisfy his anger by exposing his own self. A believer is gagged for a short-lived goal followed by a lengthy rest. Allāh has taken upon the believer a covenant about many things the easiest of which is that a believer makes his statement, so he finds him truthful yet he envies him; Satan tempts and prevents him, while the ruler tracks his steps and counts his faults. One proves his disbelief if he sees the shedding of the blood of another believer as a way of life and violates his honor as a gain; so, what is the value of a believer's life after all of this?' (see *Bihār al-Anwār*, Vol. 75, p. 276 where an Appendix disclosing benefits in the book titled *Al-Ghāba* is quoted).

"O servant of Allāh! My father (ع) has also quoted his forefathers citing Imām Ali (ع) citing the Prophet (ص) saying, 'Gabriel (ع) descended once and said, 'O Muhammad (ص)! Allāh greets you and says: I have derived for the believer an attribute from one of My own Names and called him a *mu'min*; for a believer is of Me and I am of him, and anyone who takes a believer lightly starts a fight with Me'" (*Ibid.*)

"O servant of Allāh! My father (ع) has also quoted the Prophet (ص) saying, 'The lowest degree of apostasy is when a man hears a statement by his brother which he memorizes so that he may later expose him by it. Such people have no manners' (see *Bihār al-Anwār*, Vol. 75, p. 276; see also *Al-Mahāsīn*, Vol. 1, p. 104, tradition No. 83).

"O servant of Allāh! My father (ع) has quoted his forefathers citing Imām Ali (ع) saying, 'If a believer says about a Muslim what he had seen with his own eyes and heard with his own ears things that shame him and undermine his dignity, he will be included by Allāh, the most Great, the most High, in this verse:

'... Those who love (to see) scandal publicized widely among the believers will have a grievous penalty in this life and in the hereafter' (Qur'ān, 24: 19)

(*Jāmi' al-Akḥbār*, p. 154 in a chapter about harming a believer; see also *Al-Kāfi*, Vol. 2, p. 357).

"O servant of Allāh! My father has narrated to me citing his forefathers citing Imām Ali (ع) saying, 'If one narrates an incident about his believing brother with which he wants to defame him or scandalize him, Allāh Almighty will penalize him for his sin continuously till he gets out of what he had said, and he will

never find an exit for it. If one brings happiness to his believing brother, he will be as though he made Ahl al-Bayt (ع) happy. And if one makes the Ahl al-Bayt (ع) happy, he will have made the Messenger of Allāh (ص) happy. And if one makes the Messenger of Allāh (ص) happy, he will have pleased Allāh, and if one pleases Allāh, it will be incumbent upon Allāh to permit him into Paradise' (*Jāmi' al-Akḥbār*, p. 90 in a chapter about pleasing a believer; see also *'Iqḍāb al-A'māl*, p. 286 in a chapter about the penalty of one who narrates an incident about a believer; see *Al-Kaḥfi*, Vol. 2, p. 192).

"I further admonish you to fear Allāh and prefer to obey Him and hold on to His rope, for if one holds on to the rope of Allāh, he will be guided to the Straight Path. So, fear Allāh and do not prefer anyone over pleasing Him and doing what He likes, for this is the admonishment of Allāh, the most High, the most Sublime, to His servants; He does not accept from them anything else, and He does not deem as great anything else. And be informed that the beings have never been held responsible for anything greater than piety, for it is our admonishment, we members of Ahl al-Bayt (ع). If you are able not to obtain of this life something about which you will tomorrow be questioned, do just that."

Abdullāh ibn Sulaymān says that when the letter of Imām al-Sādiq (ع) reached al-Nejashi, he looked into it and said, "Surely Allāh, there is no God but He, has said the truth, and my master [al-Sādiq], too, has said the truth. Anyone who acts upon the contents of this letter will surely achieve salvation."

Abdullāh kept acting upon it during his life's days (*Al-Arba'īn*, p. 97, a manuscript; the entire tradition is quoted on p. 271, Tradition No. 112, Vol. 75 of *Bihar al-Anwār* as a citation from the chapter on backbiting appended to the book titled *Kashf al-Fawā'id*, p. 264).

Tradition 11

Through *isnād* tracked back to al-Kulaini from Muhammad ibn Yahya from Ali ibn al-Nu'mān from Ibn Maskan from Khaythamah saying that he went once to visit Imām Abū Ja'far (ع) to bid him farewell. The Imām (ع) said to Khaythamah, "Convey our greeting to those whom you will see and who follow our leadership, and admonish them to fear Allāh, the Great, and that the rich among them should visit the poor and their strong ones should visit the weaklings. The living should be present during the funeral of their dead. Let them meet at their homes, for when some of them meet each other, they will bring to life our causes; may Allāh have mercy on a servant who keeps our causes alive. O Khaythamah! Notify our followers that only those who do deeds of righteousness have a status with Allāh. They will never earn the honor of our mastership except through piety, and the one who sighs the most on the Judgment Day is one who describes justice yet shrinks from it to doing the opposite" (*Al-Kaḥfi*, Vol. 2, p. 175).

Tradition 12

Through *isnād* to the same man, may Allāh have mercy on his soul, from Muhammad ibn Yahya from Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn 'Isa from Muhammad ibn Sinān ibn al-Aḥmad ibn al-Mufaddal who quotes Imām Abū Abdullāh (ع) saying that Abū Ja'far, blessings of Allāh be with him, used to say, "Think highly

of your fellows. Look at them with awe, and do not charge each other, nor should you oppose or envy each other. Beware of miserliness, and be sincere servants of Allāh " (*Al-Kāfi*, Vol. 2, p. 637).

Thus do we come to the conclusion of the dissertation.

We plead to Him, the most Exalted One, through the medium of His overwhelming grace and tremendous honor, and through the medium of Muhammad and his progeny, the best of blessings and salutations be with them, to grant us the honor of acting upon the perfection towards which the message directs one, and not to let our portion of it be merely narrating, to reform us for the sake of our own selves and our brethren and to reform them for us; He surely is the most Merciful of those who are merciful and the most Generous when it comes to giving. All praise is due to Allāh, Lord of the worlds, and may His blessings be with the master of His messengers and the best of His creation, Muhammad, and with his pure Progeny.

This text has been sorted out in distant places by the one who badly needs Allāh Almighty, Zayn ad-Dīn son of Ali ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Jamal ad-Dīn ibn Taqi ibn Saliḥ ibn Ashraf al-Ḥamili Takharizi, may Allāh Almighty overlook his sins and enable him to please Him. He completed it on a Thursday, the 13th of the month of Safar, the month sealed with goodness and success, of the year 949 A.H. (May 29, 1542 A.D.), praising Him, praying to Him, surrendering to Him, seeking His forgiveness. Blessings of Allāh be with Muhammad and the progeny of Muhammad, the pure, the righteous.

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