

Right n. 1: The Greatest Right of God

حق الله الأكبر

فَأَمَّا حَقُّ اللَّهِ الْأَكْبَرُ فَإِنَّكَ تَعْبُدُهُ لَا تُشْرِكُ بِهِ شَيْئًا، فَإِذَا فَعَلْتَ ذَلِكَ بِإِخْلَاصٍ جَعَلَ لَكَ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ أَنْ يَكْفِيكَ أَمْرَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَيَحْفَظَ لَكَ مَا تُحِبُّ مِنْهُمَا.

Then the greatest right of God incumbent upon you is that you worship Him without associating anything with Him. When you do that with sincerity, He has made it binding upon Himself to give you sufficiency in the affairs of this world and the next and to keep for you whatever of them¹ that you like.

Aims of the Prophets

Certainly one of the major aims of the Prophets was to invite mankind to worship God, and fight against paganism:

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنْ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِ الضَّلَالَةُ فَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكذِّبِينَ

“For We assuredly sent amongst every People an apostle, (with the Command), “Serve God, and eschew Evil”: of the People were some whom God guided, and some on whom error became inevitably (established). So travel through the earth, and see what the end of those who denied (the Truth) was.” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Naḥl 16:36]

The divine call to the Unity of God and the fight against paganism was the aim of all the Prophets. Thus, they did their best to guide man away from worshipping the moon, the sun, the idols, cows or even other

men. The Prophets directed man to worship God.

Man's Intrinsic Belief in Unity

Worshipping God and being humble to Him is intrinsic in man's nature. This naturally exists in all men, and has been manifested throughout history. The Noble Prophet of Islam said:

كُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ يُوَلَّدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ فَأَبَوَاهُ يُنصِّرَانِهِ وَيَهُودَانِهِ وَيُمَجْسَانِهِ

“Each baby is born inherently innocent and God-worshipping. It is due to his parents that he becomes a Christian, a Jew or a Magian.”²

Psychologists have outlined this intrinsic tendency of mankind towards God-worshipping and have called it “inclination towards excellence.” They say that man has an inclination to find the truth that leads him to study philosophy and science. Thus, man is naturally inclined to seek the truth. This sense starts from childhood and extends throughout our lifetime. The child's sense of curiosity and the many questions he asks his parents is a sign of this.

The child wants to discover the truth about the various causes of Creation and its underlying secrets. Man is inclined to moral ethics and noble characteristics. He enjoys honesty, and doing good deeds just as he loves the beauties such as lakes, rivers, and the woods. Man does not need any reasoning for these tendencies. Likewise, man is inherently inclined towards the absolute Perfection, Beauty and Knowledge – the One that is the source of all perfections. Regarding man's God-inclined nature the Holy Qur'an says:

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

“So set thou thy face steadily and truly to the Faith: (Establish) God's handiwork according to the pattern on which He has made mankind: no change (let there be) in the work (wrought) by God: that is the standard Religion: but most among mankind understand not.” [The Holy Qur'an, al-Rum 30:30]

In the above verse, man's nature has been referred to as “God's handiwork” or “pattern on which He has made mankind.” We can notice the following points in the above verse:

- 1 – The coordination between divine regulations and human nature
- 2 – The intrinsic inclination of man to submit to God, which is called Islam and the one who does so is called a Muslim.

Regarding this intrinsic human inclination to God, Imam Ali said:

فَبَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولَهُ وَوَاتَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ أَنْبِيَاءَهُ لِيَسْتَأْذِنُوهُمْ مِثْلَاقَ فِطْرَتِهِ.

“Then God appointed His Apostles among them and sent the Prophets one after another so that they ask the people to honor their natural divine inclinations.”³

In another sermon we read:

وَ كَلِمَةِ الْإِخْلَاصِ فَإِنَّهَا الْفِطْرَةُ.

“The statements of Unity and Purity of God are indeed in harmony with man’s intrinsic nature.”⁴

Turning to God at Times of Hardship

Man’s turning to God during times of calamities is a sign of our inclinations to Godliness. Man gets involved with his position and status so much that he forgets about God. He gets fully entangled in his sins and disobedience. Once a calamity befalls upon man, he suddenly remembers God and turns to Him for help. Thus, we realize that this sense of Godliness is intrinsic in humans, but man’s involvement in worldly affairs results in his forgetting God. There is a well-known tradition that states that a man went to see Imam Sadiq and expressed his amazement about the recognition of God.

He said: “I have discussed this issue with many knowledgeable people, but they have not been able to help me.” Imam Sadiq ended his amazement using his intrinsic human Godliness and asked him: “Have you ever been aboard a ship?” The man said: “Yes.” Then Imam Sadiq asked: “Have you ever been on a sinking ship, and reached out for a narrow piece of board to stay afloat?” The man said: “Yes. I have.” Then Imam Sadiq said: “Then while you could not see any dry land or anyone there to save you, were you not really attracted to some power to rescue you?” The man replied in the positive and was finally relieved of his amazement about God’s recognition.”⁵

Now that we have recognized the intrinsic nature of man’s inclination to God, and that the Prophets were appointed to invite man to honor this intrinsic Godliness, we will attend to the first and most important rights as described by Imam Sajjad – that is worshipping God and abandoning paganism. First, we should see what is meant by worshipping and paganism, and what acts are considered worshipping or related to paganism.

The Meaning of Worshipping

Worshipping is defined as expressing one’s insignificance and being humble. This is not proper unless it is done for God who is the possessor of all nobility, blessings, beauties and grandeur. There are two

forms of worshipping. One form of worshipping is what we see when one prostrates to God and is absolutely subjected to His will. The second form of worshipping is the voluntary verbal form to which we are invited.⁶ The difference between obedience and worshipping is that obedience is used for God and the people too, while worshipping is exclusively used for God. One can be obedient to his parents, spouse or God, but he can worship only God.

The Meaning of Servant in the Qur'an

There are two meanings for the Arabic word 'abd' meaning servant as used in the Holy Qur'an. The Almighty God said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِصَاصُ فِي الْقَتْلِ الْحُرُّ بِالْحُرِّ وَالْعَبْدُ بِالْعَبْدِ وَالْأُنثَىٰ بِالْأُنثَىٰ

“O ye who believe! The law of equality is prescribed to you in cases of murder: the free for the free, the slave for the slave, the woman for the woman.” [The Holy Qur'an, al-Baqarah 2: 178]

In another verse the Almighty God said:

ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا عَبْدًا مَمْلُوكًا لَا يَقْدِرُ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ

“God sets forth the Parable (of two men: one) a slave under the dominion of another; he has no power of any sort.” [The Holy Qur'an, al-Na'ul 16:75]

We also note the following verse of the Holy Qur'an that says:

إِن كُلُّ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِلَّا آتِي الرَّحْمَنِ عَبْدًا

“Not one of the beings in the heavens and the earth but must come to (God) Most Gracious as a servant.” [The Holy Qur'an, Maryam 19:93]

Servant has been defined to mean man, whether free or a slave.⁷ The second meaning of servant is a sincere worshipper of God, as we read in the following verses of the Holy Qur'an:

ذُرِّيَّةَ مَنْ حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوحٍ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَبْدًا شَكُورًا

“O ye that are sprung from those whom We carried (in the Ark) with Noah! Verily he was a devotee most grateful.” [The Holy Qur'an, Bani Isra'il 17:3]

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَا

“Glory to (God) Who did take His servant for a Journey by night from the Sacred Mosque to the farthest Mosque.” ⁸ [The Holy Qur’an, Bani Isra’il 17: 1]

وَ اذْكُرْ عَبْدَنَا أَيُّوبَ إِذْ نَادَى رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ الشَّيْطَانُ بِنُصْبٍ وَعَذَابٍ

“Commemorate Our Servant Job. Behold, he cried to his Lord: The Evil One has afflicted me with distress and suffering!” [The Holy Qur’an, Sad 38:41]

In these verses the second meaning is used for servant, and the Prophets Noah , Job , and Muhammad have been introduced to be the best of God’s servants. There are two forms of obedience to God. One form is obeying his decrees regarding what is forbidden and what is legitimate as in the following verses:

إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدْنِي وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي

“Verily, I am God: There is no god but I: So serve thou Me (only), and establish regular prayer for celebrating My praise.” [The Holy Qur’an, Ta-Ha 20: 14]

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

“I have only created Jinn and men that they may serve Me.” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Dhariyat 51:56]

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ عَلَى حَرْفٍ فَإِنْ أَصَابَهُ خَيْرٌ اطْمَأَنَّ بِهِ وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ فِتْنَةٌ انْقَلَبَ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ خَسِرَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةَ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِينُ

“There are among men some who serve God, as it were, on the verge: if good befalls them, they are, therewith, well content; but if a trial comes to them, they turn on their faces: they lose both this world and the Hereafter: that is loss for all to see!”[The Holy Qur’an, al-Hajj 22: 11]

The other meaning of worshipping or servitude is self-humiliation accompanied by the recognition of God’s Majesty, and His absolute Perfection and Purity. Therefore, when we talk about servitude of God in Islam, we mean that man should be freed from the servitude of all except God, especially the kings, the rulers or the chiefs. We must realize that all harm or benefit is in the control of God, and none of the material powers in the world can bring us any harm or gain. God the Almighty said:

قُلْ أَتَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا وَاللَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

Say: "Will ye worship, besides God, something which hath no power either to harm or benefit you? But God, – He it is that heareth and knoweth all things." [The Holy Qur'an, al-Maida 5:76]

In another verse He said:

إِنَّمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْثَانًا وَتَخْلُقُونَ إِفْكًا إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ لَكُمْ رِزْقًا فَابْتَغُوا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الرِّزْقَ وَاعْبُدُوهُ وَاشْكُرُوا لَهُ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

"For ye do worship idols besides God, and ye invent falsehood. The things that ye worship besides God have no power to give you sustenance: then seek ye sustenance from God, serve Him, and be grateful to Him: to Him will be your return." [The Holy Qur'an, al-Ankabut 29: 17]

In another verse we read:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

"O people! Adore your Guardian-Lord, who created you and those who came before you, that ye may have the chance to learn righteousness." [The Holy Qur'an, al-Baqarah 2:21]

The Range of Worshipping in Islam

Here we will address the question of the range of worshipping in Islam. Worshipping does not imply just one's action. Rather it applies to an extensive number of actions. It is similar to a deeply rooted tree with its many branches. Various actions are considered to be worshipping. We will briefly discuss them below.

a – Gratitude is worship

Expressing one's gratitude is defined as worshipping in many of the verses of the Holy Qur'an. First let us define gratitude, and then review some of the relevant verses of the Holy Qur'an. Expressing one's gratitude has been defined to be the act that is either verbal or spiritual and mental. It implies respect for and humbleness before the One who has sent us His Blessings for which we must be grateful. Another form of gratitude is the proper application of blessings that we are given. For example, one way of expressing our gratitude for the eyes is looking at the Signs of God and taking heed therefrom:

قُلْ انظُرُوا مَاذَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا تُغْنِي الْآيَاتُ وَالنُّذُرُ عَنْ قَوْمٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

Say: "Behold all that is in the heavens and on earth"; but neither Signs nor Warners profit those who believe not." [The Holy Qur'an, Yunus 10: 101]

Imam Ali said:

الأَبْرَارُ غَضُّوا أَبْصَارَهُمْ عَمَّا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَوَقَفُوا أَسْمَاعَهُمْ عَلَى الْعِلْمِ النَّافِعِ لَهُمْ.

“The pious ones close their eyes to the forbidden sights, and dedicate their ears to hearing useful knowledge.”⁹

Imam Ali said:

شُكْرُ كُلِّ نِعْمَةٍ الْوَرَعُ عَمَّا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ.

“Gratitude for each blessing is piety, abstinence and avoiding the divinely forbidden things.”¹⁰

Therefore, we should not use the resources that God has provided for us in order to commit sins.

Usage of Gratitude in Leadership and Management

Scientists today have classified the encouraging effects of gratitude of managers and leaders on their workers. When managers express their gratitude for the way the workers perform their duties, they are encouraged and work harder. On the other hand, if the managers do not care about the way their workers perform their duties and do not thank them, they will be discouraged and might even not do their basic duties. Imam Ali said:

وَلَا يَكُونَنَّ الْمُحْسِنُ وَالْمُسِيءُ عِنْدَكَ بِمَنْزِلَةٍ سَوَاءٍ، فَإِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ تَزْهِيْدًا لِأَهْلِ الْإِحْسَانِ فِي الْإِحْسَانِ، وَتَنْدَرِيْبًا لِأَهْلِ الْإِسَاءَةِ عَلَى الْإِسَاءَةِ.

“Do not let the good-doers and the wrongdoers have an equal station before you, since this will make the good-doers abstain from good deeds and accustom the wrongdoers to sinning.”¹¹

Regarding this issue the Holy Qur’an says:

أَفَنَجْعَلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ كَالْمُجْرِمِينَ مَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ

“Shall We then treat the People of Faith like the People of Sin? What is the matter with you? How judge ye?” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Qalam 68:35-36]

This implies that faithful people are different from people who commit sins.

Moral Aspects of Gratitude

Gratitude consists of the following:

- Recognition of the blessing and the one who has bestowed it
- Being humble to the one who has done us good, and being pleased with the blessing
- Using the blessings for the purpose intended for it by the donor of the blessing

Imam Sadiq said the following regarding the recognition of blessings:

مَنْ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ نِعْمَةً فَعَرَفَهَا بِقَلْبِهِ فَقَدْ أَدَّى شُكْرَهَا.

*“Whoever recognizes that something he received is a blessing from God has indeed expressed his gratitude.”*¹²

Imam Sadiq said:

وَأَدْنَى الشُّكْرِ رُؤْيَةُ النِّعْمَةِ مِنَ اللَّهِ.

*“The lowest level of gratitude is to recognize that God is the source of the blessings that we receive.”*¹³

Imam Ali said:

النَّيِّبُ بِأَكْثَرِ مِنَ الْإِسْتِحْقَاقِ مَلَقٌ، وَالتَّقْصِيرُ عَنِ الْإِسْتِحْقَاقِ عِيٌّ أَوْ حَسَدٌ.

*“Praising someone more than he deserves is flattery, and falling short in praising someone as he deserves is (a result of) the inability to express oneself or envy.”*¹⁴

We mentioned that God considers our being thankful for His blessings to be a form of worshipping. The following verses of the Holy Qur’an point this out:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُلُوا مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِلَّهِ إِن كُنتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ

“O ye who believe! Eat of the good things that We have provided for you, and be grateful to God, if it is Him ye worship.” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Baqarah 2: 172]

بَلِ اللَّهُ فَاعْبُدْ وَكُن مِّنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ

“Nay, but worship God, and be of those who give thanks.” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Zumar 39:66]

Great divine men have been grateful to God because of His blessings. The Almighty God said:

لَتَسْتَوُوا عَلَى ظُهُورِهِ ثُمَّ تَذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ رَبِّكُمْ إِذَا اسْتَوَيْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ وَتَقُولُوا سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ لَنَا هَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لَهُ مُقْرِنِينَ

“In order that ye may sit firm and square on their backs, and when so seated, ye may celebrate the (kind) favor of your Lord, and say, "Glory to Him Who has subjected these to our (use), for we could never have accomplished this (by ourselves).” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Zukhruf 43: 13]

Solomon expresses his gratitude for God’s blessings as we read in the following verse:

فَتَبَسَّمَ ضَاحِكًا مِّن قَوْلِهَا وَقَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَى وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأَدْخِلْنِي بِرَحْمَتِكَ فِي عِبَادِكَ الصَّالِحِينَ

“So he smiled, amused at her speech; and he said: "O my Lord! So order me that I may be grateful for Thy favors, which thou hast bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I may work the righteousness that will please Thee: And admit me, by Thy Grace, to the ranks of Thy righteous servants.” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Naml 27: 19]

b - Earning a Living as a Form of Worshipping

Another deed that is considered to be worshipping God is working in order to earn a living legitimately so that one does not become needy of others. In this regard, the Holy Qur’an says:

فَإِذَا قُضِيَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَانْتَشِرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَابْتَغُوا مِن فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

“And when the Prayer is finished, then may ye disperse through the land, and seek of the Bounty of God: and celebrate the Praises of God often (and without stint): that ye may prosper.” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Jumu’ah 62: 10]

This verse implies that we can go to work even after the congregational Friday prayers. Even the Prophet went to the bazaar after the prayers. [15](#) Imam Baqir quoted on the authority of God’s Prophet :

الْعِبَادَةُ سَبْعُونَ جُزْءًا أَفْضَلُهَا طَلَبُ الْحَلَالِ.

“There are seventy parts in worshipping, the most excellent of which is seeking to earn a legitimate income.” [16](#)

Abu Hamzeh quoted the following on the authority of Imam Baqir :

مَنْ طَلَبَ الدُّنْيَا اسْتِعْفَافاً عَنِ النَّاسِ وَسَعِيّاً عَلَى أَهْلِهِ وَتَعَطُّفاً عَلَى جَارِهِ لَقِيَ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَوَجْهُهُ مِثْلَ الْقَمَرِ لَيْلَةَ الْبَدْرِ.

“Whoever strives hard in order to earn a living for his family, to be independent of others, to help his neighbors and save his honor will meet God in the Hereafter with his face shining like the full moon.” [17](#)

Passing Away while Working

Mohammad ibn Ya’qoob Kulayni quoted on the authority of Ali ibn Ibrahim, on the authority of his father, on the authority of Muhammad ibn Shazan, on the authority of Ibn Abi Amir, on the authority of Abdullah Ibn Hajjaj, on the authority of Imam Sadiq that Muhammad ibn Munkadir said: “I did not think that Ali ibn Al-Husayn [18](#) might appoint some child better than Muhammad ibn Ali [19](#) as his successor to lead the Muslims until one day I decided to advise him, but he advised me instead.”

He was asked about the advice he was given. He explained: “One day I was walking in the alleys around Medina when I ran into Imam Baqir . It was a hot day. The Imam had two slaves with him, and he was working hard. I thought to myself why was one of the noble men of the Quraysh tribe working so hard on such a hot day seeking the benefits of this world. I thought I should advise him.

I went to him and greeted him. The Imam was sweating. I asked him: “How come you who are one of the noble men of the Quraysh tribe are working so hard seeking the benefits of this world on such a hot day? What would happen if your death approaches now? How will you then answer God?

Then Imam Baqir replied: “If the angel of death comes now while I am obeying God and working to earn a living for my family to be needless of others, I have no fear. I should be worried if I was committing a sin when the angel of death arrives to take my life.” Then Monkadir said: “O’ Grandson of the Prophet ! I wanted to advise you, but you advised me!” [20](#) We see that Imam Baqir considers working to earn a living to be a form of worshipping.

In another tradition Musa ibn Bukayr quoted on the authority of Imam Kazim : “Whoever seeks a legitimate income for himself and his family is like a soldier who is engaging in a holy war.” [21](#)

Seek Your Sustenance from God by Hard Work

Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Al-Husayn quoted on the authority of Fuzayl ibn Yasar that he told Imam Sadiq : “O’ Grandson of the Prophet! I have quit working.” Imam Sadiq said:

لَا تَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ! افْتَحْ بَابَكَ وَأَبْسِطْ رِزْقَكَ وَاسْتَرْزِقِ اللَّهَ رَبَّكَ.

“Do not do that! Open your shop’s doors and seek your sustenance from God—your Lord.”²²

Hard-working Worshippers are Superior to Idle Ones

Ruh ibn Abd al-Rahim quoted on the authority of Imam Sadiq regarding the following verse:

رِجَالٌ لَا تُلْهِهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَن ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ يَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيهِ الْقُلُوبُ وَالْأَبْصَارُ

“By men whom neither traffic nor merchandise can divert from the Remembrance of God, nor from regular Prayer, nor from the practice of regular Charity: Their (only) fear is for the Day when hearts and eyes will be transformed (in a world wholly new).” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Nur 24:37]

قَالَ) كَانُوا أَصْحَابَ تِجَارَةٍ فَإِذَا حَضَرَتِ الصَّلَاةُ تَرَكُوا التِّجَارَةَ وَانْطَلَقُوا إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ وَهُمْ أَعْظَمُ أَجْرًا مِمَّنْ لَمْ يَنْجِرِ

“This verse is about people who did business, but stopped doing business whenever it was time to pray. These people will receive a better reward than those who just worship and do not work.”²³

There are many such traditions regarding the worth of and the reward for working, but we will suffice with the few mentioned. Our intent is to show that working and worshipping are not contradictory. Rather if work is done to earn a living, it is a great form of worship itself since worshipping is of no value if one does not work. One must have a reasonable financial condition before he can sincerely attend to his worshipping. The Commander of the Faithful said:

مَنْ وَجَدَ مَاءً وَتُرَابًا ثُمَّ افْتَقَرَ فَأَبْعَدَهُ اللَّهُ

“If one has land and water but he is poor, God will deprive him of His Mercy.”²⁴

People were talking to the Prophet about a man who was known for his abstinence, piety and constant fasting and praying. They told the Prophet :

“O Prophet of God! We have never found anyone more pious than him.” The Prophet asked: “How does he then earn a living?” They said: “We run his life.” Then the Prophet said: “Then you are more pious than he is.”²⁵

c – Supplications for Worshipping

Praying or reciting supplications is a part of worshipping God. It is the means of communication between man and the Lord. There are many hardships that we face which we cannot overcome by ourselves. Sometimes we need to rely on something or someone. The best One to rely on is God. Prayers and supplications are the means to approach God. He says:

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ

And your Lord says: "Call on Me; I will answer your (Prayer): but those who are too arrogant to serve Me will surely find themselves in Hell – in humiliation!" [The Holy Qur'an, al-Mumin 40:60]

We see that God likes us to pray and call on Him. God has promised to answer. This answering is conditional. Prayer is itself a form of worship as we read in the following verse:

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ

"When My servants ask thee concerning Me, I am indeed close (to them): I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when he calleth on Me: Let them also, with a will, Listen to My call, and believe in Me: That they may walk in the right way." [The Holy Qur'an, al-Baqarah 2: 186]

In the above verse, God has referred to Himself and His servants several times showing the close ties between Him and His servants. Praying is a form of worshipping and expressing one's humility to God and one's servitude. All acts of worshipping have educational effects. Praying has some educational effects as well. It has been reported that an Arab went to see the Prophet and asked: "Is God close to us so that we pray to Him, or is He far away from us and we must call Him?" The Prophet was silent, and Gabriel descended and revealed the above verse [Baqarah 2: 186] in response.

Praying Cures Spiritual Ailments

When man gets spiritual problems and develops complexes, he tries to save himself by resorting to praying. He talks to God, and asks Him for help.

Calamities Cause Man to Turn to God

Man inherently forgets God when he is having good times. He forgets that God has given him the blessings that he has. However, whenever he faces calamities and sees himself stuck with many problems, he turns to God. The Almighty God said:

وَإِذَا أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ أَعْرَضَ وَتَأَى بِجَانِبِهِ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَذُو دُعَاءٍ عَرِيضٍ

"When We bestow favors on man, he turns away, and gets himself remote on his side (instead of coming to Us); and when evil seizes him, (he comes) full of prolonged prayer!" [The Holy Qur'an, Ha-Mim 41:51]

Traditions on Supplications

There is a tradition from the Prophet Muhammad that says:

الدُّعَاءُ هُوَ الْعِبَادَةُ.

*“Supplication is a form of worship.”*²⁶

In another tradition, Imam Sadiq was asked:

مَا تَقُولُ فِي رَجُلَيْنِ دَخَلَا الْمَسْجِدَ جَمِيعاً كَانَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَكْثَرَ صَلَاةً وَالْآخَرَ دُعَاءً، أَيُّهُمَا أَفْضَلُ؟ قَالَ: «كُلُّهُمَا حَسَنٌ». قَالَ: «قَدْ عَلِمْتُ، وَلَكِنْ أَيُّهُمَا أَفْضَلُ؟» قَالَ: «أَكْثَرُهُمَا دُعَاءً. أَمَا تَسْمَعُ قَوْلَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى: «ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ»؟» وَقَالَ: «هِيَ الْعِبَادَةُ الْكُبْرَى».

*“If two people enter a mosque, and one says more prayers and the other one says more supplications which one is better than the other?” The Imam replied: “Both of them are good.” The man said: “I know. But which of the two is better?” Then Imam Sadiq replied: “The one who says more supplications. Have you not heard the statement of Allah, the Exalted: ‘.Call upon me and I will answer you’ (40:60). The Imam said: “It is the greatest worship.”*²⁷

d - Looking can be Worshipping

Islam considers any looking that results in taking heed or acquiring knowledge and recognition for man to be a form of worshipping. Imam Ali said:

النَّظَرُ إِلَى الْعَالَمِ عِبَادَةٌ وَالنَّظَرُ إِلَى الْإِمَامِ الْمُقْسِطِ عِبَادَةٌ وَالنَّظَرُ إِلَى الْوَالِدَيْنِ بِرَأْفَةٍ وَرَحْمَةٍ عِبَادَةٌ وَالنَّظَرُ إِلَى الْأَخِ يَوَدُّهُ فِي اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عِبَادَةٌ.

*“Looking at a scholar or a just leader, and kindly looking at one’s parents are considered to be various forms of worshipping God. Also looking at a brother in faith who is loved for the sake of God is a form of worshipping.”*²⁸

It is clear that any kind of looking that is done for the sake of God is a form of worshipping, and God will reward it. Therefore, when Imam Sajjad says that it is one of God’s rights incumbent upon us to worship Him, it implies any of the various forms of worshipping.

Worshipping Under all Circumstances

Our religion tells us that we must worship God under all circumstances. We should know that God is

always present. Various states such as happiness or sadness, poverty or affluence, health or illness should not affect our worshipping of God. Some people only remember God when they are in trouble and need Him.

The Almighty God said:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ عَلَى حَرْفٍ فَإِنْ أَصَابَهُ خَيْرٌ اطْمَأَنَّ بِهِ وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ فِتْنَةٌ انْقَلَبَ عَلَىٰ وَجْهِهِ خَسِرَ الدُّنْيَا
وَالْآخِرَةَ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِينُ

“There are among men some who serve God, as it were, on the verge: if good befalls them, they are, therewith, well content; but if a trial comes to them, they turn on their faces: they lose both this world and the Hereafter: that is loss for all to see!” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Hajj 22: 11]

This verse implies that they only say that they worship God, but they do not whole-heartedly believe in God. They have a very weak faith. This implies that they are not in the main stream of faith and Islam, but only on the side. Such people are not firm in their belief and might change if they experience even minor problems. Zurarah quoted on the authority of Imam Baqir : “There are some people who abandoned paganism and worshipped God, but they did not acknowledge the Prophet . Their worshipping sprung from pagan roots since they said: We will acknowledge him as the Prophet of God if God increases our wealth and children.” [29](#)

Take Pleasure in Worshipping

Muhammad ibn Yahya quoted on the authority of Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Isa on the authority of two other people on the authority of Imam Baqir on the authority of God’s Prophet :

أَلَا إِنَّ لِكُلِّ عِبَادَةٍ شِرَّةً ثُمَّ تَصِيرُ إِلَى فِتْرَةٍ، فَمَنْ صَارَتْ شِرَّةً عِبَادَتِهِ إِلَى سُنَّتِي فَقَدْ اهْتَدَى، وَمَنْ خَالَفَ سُنَّتِي فَقَدْ ضَلَّ وَكَانَ عَمَلُهُ فِي تَبَابٍ. أَمَا إِنِّي أُصَلِّي وَأَنَامُ وَأُصُومُ وَأُفْطِرُ وَأُضْحِكُ وَأُبْكِي. فَمَنْ رَغِبَ عَن مِّنْهَاجِي وَسُنَّتِي فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي.

“Indeed there is an eagerness for every worship, which then turns to lassitude. So one whose eagerness in worship leads to my Sunnah, he is guided, and whoever opposes my Sunnah has gone astray and his deeds perish. Indeed, I pray and I sleep, I fast and I break my fast, I laugh and I cry. So whoever dislikes my path and my Sunnah is not of me.”[30](#)

He also said:

وقال: كَفَى بِالْمَوْتِ مَوْعِظَةً وَكَفَى بِالْيَقِينِ غِنًى وَكَفَى بِالْعِبَادَةِ شُغْلًا.

“Death is the best admonition, certitude is the best wealth, and God's worship is the best occupation.”

Imam Sadiq said:

لِكُلِّ أَحَدٍ شِرَّةٌ وَلِكُلِّ شِرَّةٍ فُتْرَةٌ، فَطُوبَى لِمَنْ كَانَتْ فُتْرَتُهُ إِلَى خَيْرٍ.

*“Each person has some eagerness. For each instance of eagerness, there is also some sluggishness. How prosperous are those who are inclined towards the good even in their times of sluggishness.”*³¹

Hafs ibn Bakhtari quoted Imam Sadiq :

لَا تُكْرَهُوا إِلَى أَنْفُسِكُمُ الْعِبَادَةَ.

*“Do not force yourselves to worship God (when you are tired or unwilling to do so).”*³²

Being Moderate in Worshipping

We are advised to take pleasure in worshipping God. This is meant to help us worship God out of our love for Him so that we can benefit from the good effects of worshipping God. We should avoid sluggishness in our acts of worshipping. If we are tired or bored, our worshipping will lose its spiritual context. We should also be moderate in worshipping God. We are instructed by the Prophet to avoid worshipping God when we are tired. Amr ibn Jamia quoted on the authority of Imam Sadiq on the authority of God's Prophet:

يَا عَلِيُّ، إِنَّ هَذَا الدِّينَ مَتِينٌ فَأَوْعِلْ فِيهِ بِرِفْقٍ وَلَا تَبْغِضْ إِلَى نَفْسِكَ عِبَادَةَ رَبِّكَ فَإِنَّ الْمُنْبِتَّ - يَعْنِي الْمُفْرِطَ - لَا ظَهْرًا أَبْقَى وَلَا أَرْضًا قَطَعَ. فَأَعْمَلْ عَمَلٌ مَنْ يَرْجُو أَنْ يَمُوتَ هَرِمًا وَاحْدَرٌ حَذَرَ مَنْ يَتَخَوَّفُ أَنْ يَمُوتَ غَدًا.

*“O Ali! This religion is strong; therefore enter into it with gentleness. Do not make the worship of your Lord hateful for yourself, for the one who has fatigued his mount and is unable to continue his journey – that is, the one who is excessive – has neither a riding animal nor can he travel.. Therefore act as one who hopes to die in old age, but be cautious with the caution of one who is afraid that he will die tomorrow.”*³³

Imam Sadiq said:

مَرَّ بِي أَبِي وَأَنَا بِالطَّوَّافِ وَأَنَا حَدَثٌ وَقَدْ اجْتَهَدْتُ فِي الْعِبَادَةِ فَرَأَنِي وَأَنَا أَتَّصِبُّ عَرَقًا فَقَالَ لِي: يَا جَعْفَرُ يَا بُنَيَّ! إِنَّ اللَّهَ إِذَا أَحَبَّ عَبْدًا أَدْخَلَهُ الْجَنَّةَ وَرَضِيَ عَنْهُ بِالْيَسِيرِ.

“Once when I was very young and was circumambulating the Holy House of God my father passed by and looked at me. When he saw that I was making a hard effort and sweating he told me: “O my son Ja’far! Know that when God loves His servant, He will be pleased with even his small amount of worshipping and let him into Heaven.”³⁴

Therefore, we should be moderate in worshipping God, as we should be in other affairs.

God is considered the cause of everything in the Islamic world–outlook and in monotheistic philosophical schools of thought. Other causes do not rank equal to Him, but God causes all. This is where materialists differ from monotheists. Materialists place a lot of value on material causes, and consider them independent. However, monotheists consider everything dependent upon God and His will. This is what separates materialists from monotheists. A study of the verses of the Holy Qur’an clearly shows us that there is no power equal to God, and God is the cause of all things.

أَمَّنْ يَهْدِيكُمْ فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَنْ يُرْسِلُ الرِّيَّاحَ بُشْرًا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهِ أَلَيْهَ مَعَالَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى اللَّهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

“Or, Who guides you through the depths of darkness on land and sea, and Who sends the winds as heralds of glad tidings, going before His Mercy? (Can there be another) god besides God? - High is God above what they associate with Him!” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Naml 27:63]

In another verse of the Holy Qur’an we read:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُنَزِّلُ الْغَيْثَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا قَنَطُوا وَيَنْشُرُ رَحْمَتَهُ وَهُوَ الْوَلِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ

“He is the One that sends down rain (even) after (men) have given up all hope, and scatters His Mercy (far and wide). And He is the Protector, Worthy of all Praise.” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Shura 42:28]

Regarding those who have not attained certitude and sincerity in their beliefs, the Holy Qur’an says:

وَإِذَا مَسَّ النَّاسَ ضُرٌّ دَعَوْا رَبَّهُمْ مُنِيبِينَ إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ إِذَا أَذَاقَهُمْ مِنْهُ رَحْمَةً إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ يُشْرِكُونَ

“When trouble touches men, they cry to their Lord, turning back to Him in repentance: but when He gives them a taste of Mercy as from Himself, behold, some of them pay part-worship to other gods besides their Lord.” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Rum 30:33]

Moreover, in another verse we read:

فَإِذَا رَكِبُوا فِي الْفُلِكِ دَعَوْا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ فَلَمَّا نَجَّاهُمْ إِلَى الْبَرِّ إِذَا هُمْ يُشْرِكُونَ

“Now, if they embark on a boat, they call on God, making their devotion sincerely (and exclusively) to Him; but when He has delivered them safely to (dry) land, behold, they give a share (of their worship to others!)” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Ankabut 29:65]

In addition, we read:

قُلِ اللَّهُ يُنَجِّبِكُمْ مِنْهَا وَمِنْ كُلِّ كَرْبٍ تُمُّ أَنْتُمْ تُشْرِكُونَ

Say "It is God that delivereth you from these and all (other) distresses: and yet ye worship false gods!" [The Holy Qur’an, al-An’am 6:64]

Jesus is not the Lord: Trinity is Rejected

Next, we will consider Imam Sajjad’s stress on not associating partners to God. There are various forms of ascribing partners to God, as there are various aspects of belief in the Unity of God.

Blasphemy

At the time of the revelation of the Holy Qur’an, the Christians considered Jesus to be the Lord. The Qur’an rejects this and considers this a blasphemy as we read in the following verse:

لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ قُلْ فَمَنْ يَمْلِكُ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئاً إِنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُهْلِكَ الْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَ أُمَّهُ
وَ مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعاً وَ لِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَ الْأَرْضِ وَ مَا بَيْنَهُمَا يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

In blasphemy indeed are those that say that God is Christ the son of Mary. Say: "Who then hath the least power against God, if His will were to destroy Christ the son of Mary, his mother, and all – every one that is on the earth? For to God belongeth the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between. He createth what He pleaseth. For God hath power over all things." [The Holy Qur’an, al-Maida 5: 17]

In another verse we read:

لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ ثَلَاثَةٌ وَ مَا مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِلَّا إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ وَإِنْ لَمْ يَنْتَهُوا عَمَّا يَقُولُونَ لَيَمَسَّنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ
عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

They do blaspheme who say: God is one of three in a Trinity: for there is no god except One God. If they desist not from their word (of blasphemy), verily a grievous penalty will befall the blasphemers among them.” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Maida 5:73]

In the first verse above it is clearly stated that God could have destroyed Jesus and everyone else if He wished. All Christians agree that Jesus is the son of Mary . Therefore, Jesus is a man like everyone else. His life and death are controlled by God. Why then do they consider Jesus to be the Lord? In the next verse the fact that Jesus and his mother Mary both needed to eat food in order to stay alive is stressed in order to indicate their being human beings no different from other Prophets.

مَا الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ وَأُمُّهُ صِدِّيقَةٌ كَانَا يَأْكُلَانِ الطَّعَامَ انظُرْ كَيْفَ نُبَيِّنُ لَهُمُ الْآيَاتِ
ثُمَّ انظُرْ أَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ

“Christ the son of Mary was no more than an apostle; many were the apostles that passed away before him. His mother was a woman of truth. They had both to eat their (daily) food. See how God doth make His signs clear to them; yet see in what ways they are deluded away from the truth!” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Maida 5:75]

The claim that Jesus is the son of God is one of the forms of ascribing partners to God. This claim will foster trinity instead of the reality of the One and Only God. In the following verse, the Holy Qur’an stresses that what they have stressed to worship is only servants of God who worship God themselves.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ عِبَادٌ أَمْثَلُكُمْ فَادْعُوهُمْ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

“Verily those whom ye call upon besides God are servants like unto you: Call upon them, and let them listen to your prayer, if ye are (indeed) truthful!” [The Holy Qur’an, al-A`raaf 7: 194]

We also read the following verses in the Holy Qur’an:

وَالَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ لَا يَسْتَجِيبُونَ نَصْرَكُمْ وَلَا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَنْصُرُونَ وَإِنْ تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَى لَا يَسْمَعُوا وَتَرَاهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ
إِلَيْكَ وَهُمْ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ

“But those ye call upon besides Him, are unable to help you, and indeed to help themselves. If thou callest them to guidance, they hear not. Thou wilt see them looking at thee, but they see not.” [The Holy Qur’an, al-A`raaf 7: 197-198]

The Qur’an addresses the People of the Book, and stresses the major belief in all religions to be in the Unity of God as we read in the following verse:

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا
مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ

“Say: "O People of the Book! Come to common terms as between us and you: That we worship none but God; that we associate no partners with Him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, Lords and patrons other than God." If then they turn back, say ye: "Bear witness that we (at least) are Muslims (bowing to God's Will).” [The Holy Qur’an, Al-i-Imran 3:64]

Therefore, any form of ascribing partners to God is rejected.

Blasphemy in Worshipping

The same is stressed regarding the worshipping of God:

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ اللَّهُ وَاحِدٌ فَمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا

Say: "I am but a man like yourselves, (but) the inspiration has come to me, that your God is one God: whoever expects to meet his Lord, let him work righteousness, and, in the worship of his Lord, admit no one as partner.” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Kahf 18: 110]

Abi al-Jarood quoted on the authority of Imam Baqir :

سئل رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله عن تفسير قول الله عز وجل: "فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ.." فقال: «مَنْ صَلَّى مُرَاءَاةَ النَّاسِ فَهُوَ مُشْرِكٌ. وَمَنْ زَكَّى مُرَاءَاةَ النَّاسِ فَهُوَ مُشْرِكٌ. وَمَنْ صَامَ مُرَاءَاةَ النَّاسِ فَهُوَ مُشْرِكٌ. وَمَنْ حَجَّ مُرَاءَاةَ النَّاسِ فَهُوَ مُشْرِكٌ. وَمَنْ عَمِلَ عَمَلًا بِمَا أَمَرَهُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ مُرَاءَاةَ النَّاسِ فَهُوَ مُشْرِكٌ. وَلَا يَقْبَلُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عَمَلًا مُرَاءَاةً.»

“The Prophet was asked about the interpretation of the words of Allah, the Exalted: “Whoever expects to meet his Lord...” (18: 110) . The Prophet said: Whoever says his prayers in order to show off is ascribing partners to God (because he is establishing the people to be the ones for whom he prays). Whoever pays the alms tax to show off is ascribing partners to God. The same holds true for whoever fasts or performs the Hajj or performs a divinely ordained deed just to show off. God does not accept the deeds of the hypocrites.”³⁵

Jarrah Mada'ini quoted on the authority of Imam Baqir :

الرَّجُلُ يَعْمَلُ شَيْئًا مِنَ النَّوَابِ لَا يَطْلُبُ بِهِ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ إِنَّمَا يَطْلُبُ تَزْكِيَةَ النَّاسِ يَشْتَهِي أَنْ تُسْمَعَ بِهِ النَّاسُ فَهَذَا الَّذِي أَشْرَكَ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ. مَا مِنْ عَبْدٍ أَسْرَّ خَيْرًا فَذَهَبَتْ الْأَيَّامُ أَبَدًا حَتَّى يُظْهَرَ اللَّهُ لَهُ خَيْرًا وَمَا مِنْ عَبْدٍ يُسِرُّ شَرًّا فَذَهَبَتْ الْأَيَّامُ أَبَدًا حَتَّى يُظْهَرَ اللَّهُ لَهُ شَرًّا.

“If one does a good deed with the intention of showing off, and not to please God, and likes the people

to admire him, then he is ascribing partners to God in his acts of worshipping. No one's secret good deeds will be hidden forever. God will make them known one day. No one's secret evil deeds will be hidden forever. God will make them known one day."³⁶

What is it Like

The act of associating partners to God is described as follows in the Holy Qur'an:

حُنْفَاءَ لِلَّهِ غَيْرَ مُشْرِكِينَ بِهِ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَكَأَنَّمَا خَرَّ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَتَخَطَّفَهُ الطَّيْرُ أَوْ تَهْوَى بِهِ الرِّيحُ فِي مَكَانٍ سَحِيقٍ

“Being true in faith to God, and never assigning partners to Him: if anyone assigns partners to God, he is as if he had fallen from Heaven and been snatched up by birds, or the wind had swooped (like a bird on its prey) and thrown him into a far-distant place.” [The Holy Qur'an, al-Hajj 22:31]

The various instances of similitude used in this verse are understood to mean that the belief in Unity is like the heavens. Once we abandon this belief, we collapse into corruption, lust, selfish desires, etc. Each of these can destroy a part of our well-being and existence. The result will be our collapse into total destruction and disintegration. The wind is the similitude used for Satan.

We know that a free-falling object experiences a feeling of being weightless. This is similar to the anxiety we experience when we are collapsing into corruption. Once we abandon our faith in Unity and turn towards ascribing partners to God, then our soul and body will experience such anxiety.³⁷

The Umayyad Clan and Blasphemy

Imam Sadiq said:

إِنَّ بَنِي أُمَيَّةَ أَطْلَقُوا لِلنَّاسِ تَعْلِيمَ الْإِيمَانِ وَلَمْ يُطْلِقُوا تَعْلِيمَ الشِّرْكِ لِكَيْ إِذَا حَمَلُوهُمْ عَلَيْهِ لَمْ يَعْرِفُوهُ

“The Umayyad clan let the people learn faith freely, but they did not let them recognize blasphemy. That was done so that when the Umayyads would invite them to acts of blasphemy, the people would not realize what they were doing and follow their call. Then they would not realize that they have been unwillingly pushed towards ascribing partners to God.”³⁸

The people of the Umayyad clan were very eager to have the people follow them without any hesitation. They did so in order not to let the people recognize that they are being misguided. Should the people realize what is going on, they will no longer follow them. In general, all ungodly rulers try to hinder the people from acquiring true knowledge so that the people would obey them. That is why Islam encourages all the people to study and learn, and the acts of teaching and learning have been

introduced to be the best deeds.

Invisible Blasphemy

Mus'adah ibn Sadaqah quoted on the authority of Imam Sadiq when asked about the Prophet's statement:

إِنَّ الشِّرْكََ أَخْفَى مِنْ دَبِيبِ النَّمْلِ عَلَى صَفَاةِ سَوْدَاءَ فِي لَيْلَةٍ ظُلْمَاءَ

“Blasphemy is more invisible than an ant walking on a black stone in a dark night.”

Imam Sadiq said:

كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ يَسُبُّونَ مَا يَعْبُدُ الْمُشْرِكُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَكَانَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ يَسُبُّونَ مَا يَعْبُدُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ، فَهَيَّ اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَنْ سَبِّ آلِهَتِهِمْ لِكَيْلَا يَسُبَّ الْكُفَّارُ إِلَهَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَيَكُونَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ قَدْ أَشْرَكُوا بِاللَّهِ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ. فَقَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى:

وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَيَسُبُّوا اللَّهَ عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ كَذَلِكَ زَيْنًا لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ عَمَلُهُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ مَرْجِعُهُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

“The believers used to revile the idols of the idolaters, as the idolaters reviled the Worshipped One of the believers. Then God admonished the believers not to do so since this in a way was a form of ascribing partners to God. God the Almighty said:

“Revile not ye those whom they call upon besides God, lest they out of spite revile God in their ignorance. Thus have We made alluring to each people its own doings. In the end will they return to their Lord, and We shall then tell them the truth of all that they did.” [The Holy Qur’an, al-An’am, 6: 108]

Therefore, we should seek refuge in God, and ask God to help us and grant us success in worshipping Him.

[1.](#) The pleasures of this world and the life to come.

[2.](#) Manshoor-i-Javid, v.2, p.58.

[3.](#) Nahjul Balaghah, Subhi Salih, Sermon no. 1

[4.](#) Nahjul Balaghah, Subhi Salih, Sermon no. 10

[5.](#) Al-Shafi, v. 1, p.40.

[6.](#) Al-Mufradat, article on 'Abd'

[7.](#) Aqrab al-Mawarid.

[8.](#) This refers to the ascension of the Prophet of God via a creature called al-Buraq which carried the Prophet from the al-Haram Mosque in Makkah to al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. The Arabic word 'al-buraq' comes from the word 'barq' which

means light. We also know that angels are created from light and therefore this might imply that the ascension was a transportation based on the speed of light, as we see in the modern theory of relativity by Albert Einstein.

- [9.](#) Nahjul Balaghah, Sermon the the Pious ones, 193.
- [10.](#) Safinah al-Bihar, v. 1, p.710
- [11.](#) Nahjul Balaghah, Subhi Salih, Letter no.53.
- [12.](#) Usul al-Kafi, v.2, p.96, tradition no. 15
- [13.](#) Safinah al-Bihar, v. 1, p. 710
- [14.](#) Nahjul Balaghah, Fayz al-Islam, Hikmat no.339
- [15.](#) Tafsir-i-Namuneh, v.24, p. 128
- [16.](#) Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, v. 12, p. 11
- [17.](#) Ibid. Tradition no.5.
- [18.](#) Imam al-Sajjad
- [19.](#) Imam al-Baqir
- [20.](#) Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, v. 12, p.9, Ch.4, Tradition no. 1
- [21.](#) Ibid. p. 11, Tradition no.4
- [22.](#) Ibid. p.8, Tradition no.11
- [23.](#) Ibid. Tradition no. 14
- [24.](#) Ibid. Tradition no. 13
- [25.](#) Kar wa Huquq-i-Kargar, p. 119
- [26.](#) Majma'ul Bayan, v.8, p.528
- [27.](#) Ibid. p.529
- [28.](#) Majmu'ah Waram, v.2, p. 175
- [29.](#) Nur al-Thaqalayn, v.3, p.437
- [30.](#) Usul al-Kafi, v.2, p.85
- [31.](#) Ibid. p.86
- [32.](#) Ibid.
- [33.](#) Ibid. p.87
- [34.](#) Ibid. p.86
- [35.](#) Nur al-Thaqalayn, v.3, p.314.
- [36.](#) Ibid. p.319
- [37.](#) Tafsir-i-Namunah, v. 14, p.96.
- [38.](#) Al-Shafi, v. 1, p. 146.

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