

Section One: General Ethics

Moral conduct

Moral conduct is a mood arousing good behavior with others by showing happy mien, nice wording, and kind manners. As he was asked about the limit of moral conduct, Imam as-Sadiq (a) answered:

“It is to be modest, speak honorably, and meet your brother cheerfully.”

One of the expectations that every judicious individual exerts efforts for achieving is to have an attractive personality. It is surely a noble aim that cannot be attained by everyone except the virtuous and those who are characterized by knowledgeability, liberality, courage, and the like good traits.

All virtues, however, cannot be true matters of admiration unless they are connected to moral conduct. On that account, moral conduct is the core and pivot of virtues. The Ahlul-Bayt (a) used a variety of instructive methods in favor of glorifying the moral conduct so remarkably:

The Prophet (S) said: “The best of you are the most well-mannered and generous ones who go on intimate terms with people and people go on intimate terms with them, and whose places of residence are frequently trodden on by guests¹.”

“He who has a good nature will have the reward of those who observe fasting in days and keep awake praying at nights².”

“You cannot treat people by means of your wealth; hence, you should treat them by means of your moral conduct³.”

Imam al-Baqir (a) said: “The most perfect believers⁴, in the sight of faith, are the most well-mannered⁵.”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “After the fulfillment of the obligatory religious duties, the most favorable thing that a servant offers to Allah is to extend the moral conducts over people⁶.”

“Allah gives a servant for his moral conduct the same reward that He gives to the mujahid⁷.”

“The moral conduct dissolves sins in the same way as the sun dissolves snow⁸.”

“Piety and moral conduct construct the countries and prolong the ages⁹.”

“If you want to be respected, you should be lenient, and if you want to be disrespected, you may be severe¹⁰.”

God did not send any messenger to people before He had adorned him with moral conduct, which is, then, the symbol of the prophets' virtues and the title of their personalities.

The Prophet Muhammad (S) was the ideal example of moral conduct, as well as the other high moral standards. By means of his ideal moralities, he could seize the hearts, and deserved, worthily, the praise of God:

“Most surely, you conform yourself to sublime morality. (68:4)”

Imam Ali (a), describing the moralities of the holy Prophet (S), said:

“He was the most generous, the bravest, the most truthful and the most faithful, and in terms of temper, the most lenient and in terms of association, the most honorable. Any one seeing him for the first time is filled with awe, and any one associating with him loves him. I have never seen his like before and after him¹¹.”

As a picture of the Prophet's moral conduct, it is sufficient to refer to his story with people of Koreish¹² who allied each other against him and showed him various sorts of bitterness that obliged him to flee his hometown. When God gave him victory against them, they were quite sure he would revenge himself upon them. He said nothing to them but, ‘what do you think I am going to do with you?’ ‘Only the good, for you are a noble brother and the son of a noble brother,’ answered they. He said: ‘I will repeat the same wording of my brother Joseph the prophet: (Today, you are not condemned.) Go, you are released.’

Anas narrated: I was with the Prophet who was putting a garment of a tough margin when a Bedouin pulled him so violently that the margin of his garment left an effect on his neck. ‘Muhammad,’ said the Bedouin, ‘load on my two camels with the fortune of God that is in your possession, because it is neither yours nor your father's.’

The Prophet (S) kept silent for a while before he said, ‘The fortune is Allah's, and I am His servant.’ He then added, ‘Do you, Bedouin, not think you will be retaliated for you deed?’

‘No, I do not,’ answered the Bedouin.

‘Why?’ asked the Prophet.

The Bedouin said, 'Because you do not set evil for an evil.'

The Prophet laughed and ordered to load on the back of the Bedouin's camel with barley and wheat¹³.

Amirul-Mu'minin¹⁴ (a) narrated:

The Prophet (S) told the very rich Jew whom he had owed a few dinars¹⁵ that he had nothing to pay him back at that time. The Jew decided not to leave the Prophet before he would pay him. The Prophet therefore sat with him. In the same place, he offered the Dhuhr, Asr, Maghrib, Eshaa, and Fajr prayers. As he noticed that his companions were threatening that Jew, the Prophet (S) looked at them and said, 'What are you doing?' 'God's Messenger,' said they, 'he is detaining you.' The Prophet answered, 'Allah has not sent me to wrong any person, including the followers of other religions.'

As soon as the day broke, the Jew declared, 'I declare there is no god but Allah and that Mohamed is His servant and messenger. I will dedicate half of my fortune to the cause of God. By God I swear, I only did so to notice the conformity of your descriptions to these that are mentioned in the Torah. I have seen your characteristics in the Torah: Muhammad son of Abdullah, the born in Mecca, will emigrate to Teeba. He is neither rude nor coarse nor abusive nor adorned with obscenity. I declare there is no god but Allah and you are surely the messenger of God. This is my fortune: I offer it to you so that you will apply to it the rules that God has revealed¹⁶.'

Thus were the sinless Imams with regard to the excellence of moralities:

Imam Abu Muhammad al-Askari (a) related:

Amirul-Mu'minin (a), once, received the two faithful men who visited him so warmly, honored them, and asked them to sit in the head of his session. They were a father and his son. After they had finished the meal that the Imam served to them, Qanbar his servant brought a washtub, a wooden pitcher, and a handkerchief. Amirul-Mu'minin (a) took the pitcher to pour water on the hands of the guest. The man refused so intensely, but Amirul-Mu'minin insisted on pouring water on his hand and asked him to behave as if it was Qanbar who would do so to him. The man did. Amirul-Mu'minin, then, handed the pitcher to his son Muhammad Ibn al-Hanafiyya and said, 'son, if that son had visited me alone without his father, I myself would have poured water on his hand. Allah does not accept to put fathers and sons on the same level when they are in the same place. Since the father poured on the hands of the father, the son then should pour on the hands of the son.'

Hence, Muhammad poured on the hands of the son. On this event, Imam al-Askari (a) commented:

"He who copies Ali in this deed is the true Shiite¹⁷."

It is related that Imams al-Hasan and al-Hussein once noticed an old man performing the ritual ablution incorrectly. They avoided stating to him directly; hence, they agreed on making him the arbiter who should rule of the most accurate ablution. As they performed the ablution before him, the old man said,

“Sirs! You both have performed the very accurate ablution, but it seems that the old man can master nothing. He now declares his repentance out of your blessing and mercy to the members of your grandfather’s community¹⁸”

It is also related that, once, a servant of Imam al- Hussein (a) committed a mistake that caused him to be punished. The Imam therefore gave the orders of beating him.

“Sir,” said the servant, “(Remember God’s saying) those who refrain the anger.”

The Imam, hence, ordered to release him.

“Sir,” said the servant, “(Remember God’s saying) and those who forgive people.”

The Imam, hence, forgave him.

“Sir,” said the servant, “(Remember God’s saying) and Allah loves those who do good.”

The Imam said, “Go, you are free for the sake of

Allah. I will also double your payment¹⁹”

As-Sawli narrated the following:

A disagreement occurred between al-Hussein and Muhammad Ibn al-Hanafiyya who wrote to his brother: “So then, brother! Your and my father is the same. You are not preferred to me and I am not preferred to you in this point. Regarding your mother Fatima the daughter of the Messenger of God, if my mother possesses gold that is filling the earth, she will never reach the standing of your mother. If you read this missive, you may visit me so that I will please you. You are surely worthier of virtue than I am. Peace and God’s grace and blessings be upon you.”

Al-Hussein did, and they were no longer engaged in any disagreement.

Muhammad Ibn Ja’far and others narrated the following:

A kinsman of Ali Ibn al-Hussein (a) stood in front of him and insulted. The Imam, however, did not reply. When the man went away, the Imam said to his companions: “You have heard what that man had said. I want you to come with me so that you may hear my reply.”

“We will,” we replied, “we, however, wanted you to answer him.”

The Imam took his shoes and went reciting (God’s saying): (Those who refrain from anger and those who forgive the people. Allah loves those who do good.)

We understood that he would not say anything to that man.

When the Imam was in front of that man's house, he shouted (at the servants), "Tell him that it is Ali Ibn al-Hussein."

The man rushed out towards us with evil intent. He had no doubt that the purpose of the Imam's attendance had been to repay him for some of his evil deeds.

"Brother," said Ali Ibn al-Hussein, "you stood proudly over me and over spoke. If you have said what is really in my character, I then seek Allah's forgiveness. If you have said what is not in my character, Allah may forgive you!"

The man kissed the Imam between the eyes and confessed: "I said what was not in your character. In fact, I am worthier of seeking God's forgiveness²⁰."

Ali Ibn al-Hussein (a) narrated: Amirul-Mu'minin (a) went for facing the three individuals who had sworn by Lat and Uzza²¹ and took upon themselves the pledge of killing the Prophet (S) He could kill one and capture the others. When he carried out the Prophet's order of advancing one of them before him, the Prophet (S) asked him to declare that there is no god but Allah and that he is His messenger. The man answered: "To move the unshakable Mount Abu Qubays is easier for me than uttering this statement." Hence, the Prophet (S) asked Amirul- Mu'minin (a) to behead him.

The same thing was said to the other man whose answer was, "Attach me to the previous." The Prophet (S), also, asked Amirul-Mu'minin (a) to attach him to the previous. In this very time, the Archangel Gabriel descended and said to the Prophet (S): "Muhammad, your Lord sends His salaams to you and asks you not to kill this one, because he was well-mannered and openhanded with his people." The Prophet (S) shouted at Amirul-Mu'minin: "Ali, stop it. The messenger of my Lord has just told me that this man was well-mannered and openhanded with his people." As he heard the Prophet's statement, the man who was under the edge of the sword wondered: "Was it the messenger of your Lord who told you of this?" The Prophet (S) said: "Yes, it was."

The man said: "By God I swear, I have never possessed a single dirham²² while a brother of mine does not have it. I also have never frowned my face in warfare. I now declare that there is no god but Allah and you are surely the messenger of God." The Prophet (S) commented: "This is a man whose moral conduct and openhandedness have drawn him to the gardens of bliss."²³

¹. Quoted from al-Kafi.

². Quoted from al-Kafi.

³. Quoted from Men La Yahdhuruh ul-Faqih.

⁴. Believer stands for every individual who believes in the fundamental beliefs of Islam. It differs from Muslim in the point that a Muslim is everyone who utters the shahada (The Muslim profession of faith: La ilaha illa (A)llah, Muhammadun rasul Allah, 'there is no god but Allah, [and] Muhammad is the messenger of God') verbally, even if he does not believe in it, while the believer is the individual who utters the shahada and believe in it in heart.

⁵. Quoted from al-Kafi.

⁶. Quoted from al-Kafi.

- [7.](#) Mujahid is the performer of jihad.
- [8.](#) Quoted from al-Kafi.
- [9.](#) Quoted from al-Kafi.
- [10.](#) Quoted from Tuhaf ul-Uqoul.
- [11.](#) Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar.
- [12.](#) Koreish is the tribe that inhabited Mecca in the time of the Prophet Muhammad (S) and to which he belonged.
- [13.](#) Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar.
- [14.](#) Amir ul-Mu'minin (the commander of the faithful) is a name that the Prophet (S) gave exclusively to Ali ibn Abi Talib (a). However, all the leaders that ruled the Islamic states had it to themselves.
- [15.](#) Dinar is the golden currency of the Arabs and the Islamic states.
- [16.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 6
- [17.](#) Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar
- [18.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 10, quoted from Uyoun ul- Mahasin; p. 89
- [19.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 10, quoted from Keshf ul- Ghumma.
- [20.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 11/17, quoted from I'lam ul- Wara and al-Irshad.
- [21.](#) Lat and Uzza are the two major idols the Arabs were regarding as gods before Islam.
- [22.](#) Dirham is the currency of the Arabs as well as the Islamic states
- [23.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 15 part 2 p. 210.

Ill-Temper

Ill-temper is a mental aberrance that causes depression and truculence. It is the opposite of moral conduct. Often the repercussions of ill-temper intensify to the degree that it results in a variety of tragedies and physical and mental crises. The meanness of ill-temper appears clearly through God's words addressed to the Prophet (S):

“And had you been rough, hard-hearted, they would certainly have dispersed from around you.”

Let us now refer to some texts in this regard:

The Prophet (S) said: “Hold fast on moral conduct, for it will unquestionably be in Paradise. Beware of ill-temper, for it will unquestionably be in Hell.”

“Allah does not allow the ill-tempered to repent whenever the ill-tempered repents from a sin, he engages himself in another greater one.”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “If you want to be respected, you should be lenient, and if you want to be disrespected, you may be severe.”

“Ill-temper ruins good works, in the same way as vinegar ruins honey.”

“The mentality of the ill-mannered individuals is always bad.”

Morals between Rectitude and Deviation

In the same way as bodies are subject to illnesses that cause certain symptoms, such as paleness and weakness, morals are subject to definite illnesses that cause certain symptoms in a form of moral frailty and mental collapse that vary according to the dimensions of the symptoms. The ailed bodies are treated so as to regain activity. The ill morals, too, are treated so as to recover and resume moderation.

Had it been impossible to treat the morals, all the efforts of prophets would have been meaningless, and, furthermore, man would have been just like animals or even worse. Animals, in fact, could be tamed.

The unruly horse, for instance, could be made docile through taming, and wild beasts could be domesticated by means of taming, too. How is it then impossible for man, who is the noblest creature, to be disciplined? It happens that the moralities of an individual are ailed, and change him into a frowning, quarrelsome person. This occurs because of:

1. Either feebleness that is resulted from a physical ailment or symptoms of senility or the like, and cause the infected person to be weak-nerved, intolerant, and unable to treat people courteously,
2. Grievances and distresses that astound the intelligent and the well-mannered and take them away from noble traits,
3. Poverty that causes frowning and rudeness,
4. Office that may cause loss of good temper and impudence against people, or
5. Isolation that results in feelings of disappointment and humility. Such feelings are the causes of frown and grimace.

Treatment of Ill-Temper

The disadvantages and gross damages of ill-temper should be kept in mind. It should be always remembered that ill-temper brings about the wrath of God.

Self-control should also be practiced, and the motives of ill-temper should be suppressed through taking enough time before saying or doing anything. The Prophet (S) said:

“The best jihad¹ is self-control.”

¹. Jihad is religious warfare or a war for the propagation or defense of Islam.

Truth

Truth stands for the conformity between word and deed. It plays a great role in the lives of both the individuals and communities. Truth is the beauty of speech and ground of success. From this cause, the Islamic Sharia¹, in both the Quran and Sunna², glorified and urged telling truth:

“Those who have brought the truth and those who have acknowledged it are those who have fear of Allah. They will receive whatever they want from their Lord. Thus is the reward of the righteous ones.” (39:33–4)

“Allah will say, “This is the Day when the truthful ones will benefit from their truthfulness.” (5:119)

“Believers! Have fear of Allah and always be friends with the truthful ones.” (9:119)

The Prophet (S) said: “Truth is the adornment of speech.”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “Do not be deceived by their very much offering of prayers and observance of fasting. In fact, prayers and fasting have become habits that they feel desolate if they omit them. You should test them by their truthfulness and fulfillment of trusts.”

“The deeds of the truthful are growing.”

This means that the deeds of the truthful are ongoing and their rewards are, too, growing. Thus, God accepts only the deeds of the pious ones. Truth, then, is one of the most significant characteristics of piety.

Achievements of Truth

The publicity of mutual understanding between individuals is a social necessity. If they commit themselves to so, they will have the ability to shoulder the burdens of life and enjoy a peaceful coexistence. It goes without saying that tongue is the instrument of mutual understanding and the translator of the various concepts that rove in people’s minds. It therefore plays a serious role in the existence of communities and the harmony of individuals’ feelings and ideas.

The happiness or distress of any society depends upon verbal truthfulness or falsehood. If tongue is truthful in interpreting the emotions, it will fulfill the mission of communication. If it, on the other hand, is characterized by mistranslation and misrepresentation, it will be the guide to evil and the means of social destruction. Hence, truth, whose effects and reflections play the greatest role in the individuals’ lives, is a social necessity.

Parties of transactions, for instance, can save themselves and times from the fatigue of bargain if they

adhere to truthfulness. If all people observe truthfulness, they will gain its innumerable benefits and advantages. If untruth, on the other hand, becomes a common phenomenon in a society, the moral principles will be flimsy, mutual understanding will be missing, and the society will be the subject of disarrangement.

Parts of Truth

- **Truth of speech:** It stands for telling the very reality of a thing without falsification or concealment.
- **Truth of deeds:** It stands for the conformity of deeds with words, such as the commitment to oath and fulfillment of pledges.
- **True determination:** It stands for the determination to do good.
- **True intention:** It stands for purifying the intent from blemishes of showiness.

1. Sharia: The Islamic code of religious law, based on the teachings of the Koran and the traditional sayings of Prophet Muhammad (S).

2. Sunna is the body of Prophet Muhammad's words, deeds, and confirmations.

Untruth

Untruth denotes the disconformity of speech with reality. It is surely the source of evils. From this cause, the Islamic Sharia has banned untruth, censured the untruthful, and threatened them through numerous texts in the Quran and Sunna:

“Allah does not guide a transgressing liar.” (40:28)

“Woe to every sinful liar!” (45:7)

“Those who do not believe in the miracles of Allah invent lies and they are liars.” (16: 105)

In the Farewell Pilgrimage¹, the Prophet (S) said: “Forging lies against me has been common to a great extent. However, it will increase. He who forges lies against me intentionally should find himself a place in Hell. When you receive any hadith, you should first measure it according to the criteria of the Quran and my Sunna. If it conforms to them, you will then adopt it. If not, you should then throw it away².”

Amirul-Mu'minin (a) said: “Persistence on telling untruths brings about poverty.”³

Imam al-Baqir (a) said: “Allah has made locks for the evil and made drinking wine the master key of all these evils. Untruth, in fact, is eviler than drinking wines.”⁴

“Telling untruths is the destruction of faith.”[5](#)

“Ali Ibn al-Hussein (a) used to say to his sons: Avoid telling untruths, whether they were significant or venial, or in serious or humorous situations, for a man who tells a trivial lie will surely dare to tell a big one. Know that the Prophet (S) said: A servant persists on telling only the truth until Allah records him as truthful. The teller of lies, on the other side, keeps on telling untruths until he is recorded with Allah as liar.”[6](#)

Jesus (a) said: “He who tells very much untruth will lose brightness.”[7](#)

Disadvantages of Untruth

- Untruth brings about ill reputation and indignity. The liar will never be believed even if he tells truths. His testimonies, too, are not admitted, and his promises are not trusted. One of the manners of the liars is that they forget their previous untruths and invent new ones totally contrary to the previous. A liar often invents a number of contrasted untruths as a support of a previous one.
- Untruth causes mutual mistrust and creates feelings of apprehension.
- Untruth produces waste of time and efforts that are exerted for distinguishing between reality and falsity.
- Untruth has many disadvantageous spiritual effects.

Reasons of Untruth

- Habit: An individual may have the habit of telling untruths because of ignorance, influence of the surroundings, or feebleness of the religious restraint. A wise man said: “It is so difficult to wean him who found sweet the suckling of untruth.”
- Greed: It is surely one of the strongest incentives of untruth.
- Enmity and envy: These two things have very often induced to invent false accusations and fabricate libels against enemies. The righteous individuals who promote themselves against plunging in the wrong have frequently had to suffer the tragedies of false accusations.

Sorts of Untruth

False Swearing: False swearing is the most dangerous sort of untruth, because it is a double crime it is flagrant daring against the Almighty Lord and a shocking crime that eradicates the rights.

The Prophet (S) said: “Beware of false swearing, for it changes countries into deserted wastelands”[8](#).”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “False swearing brings poverty to the descendants⁹.”

Perjury: Like the previous, perjury is a serious crime resulting in denial of the rights and commonness of disorder in the society.

The Prophet (a) said: “Before the perjurer finishes his false testimony in front of the judge, his place in Hell is prepared. The same thing is said about him who conceals a testimony¹⁰.”

The holy Quran, also, warned against false wording:

“Stay away from wickedness, idols, and false words.” (22:30)

Damages of false swearing and perjury

- The false swearer and the perjurer do badly to themselves by exposing them to the wrath of God.
- The false swearer and the perjurer do badly to those who encourage them to swear falsely, because such persons support in the fields of wronging people’s rights and insulting their dignities.
- The false swearer and the perjurer do badly to those against whom they swear falsely because they deprive them of their rights.
- The false swearer and the perjurer do badly to the community as a whole, because they spread disorder and destroy the religious and moral values.
- The false swearer and the perjurer do badly to the Islamic Sharia, because they challenge its sacred constitution.

Breach of Promise

Fulfillment of promises is one of the noble traits with which the intelligent people adorn themselves:

“Mention in the Book (the Quran) the story of Ishmael; he was true to his promise, a Messengers and a Prophet.” (19:54)

As he promised a man, Ishmael the prophet confined himself in one place for a whole year waiting for him so as to keep his promise.

It is unfortunate that breach of promise, nowadays, has become a common phenomenon among Muslims who neglected its disadvantages that weaken the mutual confidence, corrupt the social relations, and harm the public interests.

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “The promise of the believer is a ransomless vow. He who reneges breaks his word with Allah and exposes himself to His dislike. This is the meaning of Allah’s saying: ***Believers, why***

do you preach what you do not practice? It is most hateful in the sight of Allah if you say something and do not practice it. (61:2-3)¹¹

The Prophet (S) once, promised he would wait for a man near a rock. When the heat of the sun became so intense, the Prophet's companions suggested to him to stand in the shadow until that man would come. "No," said he, "I promised him to wait near this rock. If he does not come, that will be his fault¹²."

Mocking Untruth

Some people find nice to invent mocking lies in order to laugh at others.

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: "For anyone who forges lies against a believer for the purpose of disgracing him, demeaning his personality, and sticking ill reputation to him, Allah will move him from His guardianship to the Shaitan's. The Shaitan¹³, however, will not welcome him¹⁴."

Treatment of Untruth

- The previously mentioned disadvantages of untruth, in addition to the material and ethical inconveniences, should be taken in consideration.
- The merits and virtues of truth should be kept in mind.
- Mental training on telling truth and avoiding telling lies should be permanently practiced until untruth is completely erased.

Justifications of Untruth

Untruth is an unwilling vice that is forbidden by the Islamic law. But, there are certain circumstances in which telling untruths becomes allowable. In case a vital interest cannot be achieved unless untruth is committed, the Islamic Sharia permits it. As an example on such vital interests we cite the salvation of a Muslim individual from killing or capture, the protection of the honor of a Muslim, or the guard of his property.

In such cases, untruth becomes obligatory, according to the Islamic law. Correspondingly, when untruth becomes the only means for achieving a more important mission or remedial goal, it is then preponderant or allowed. Reconciliation between people, the propitiation of wives, and trickeries of wars are matters for which telling untruth is allowable.

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: "The teller of any untruth will be interrogated on the day of Resurrection except the untruths that are told in three situations: stratagems of war, reestablishing the ruptured relations between two parties of the reconciler, in this case, tells one party something that was not said about him by the other party and does the same thing with the other party so as to make peace between them, and

promises to the wives [15](#).

- [1](#). The Farewell Pilgrimage is the last hajj of the Prophet (S).
- [2](#). Quoted from a-Tabirsi; Alihtijaj.
- [3](#). Quoted from as-Saduq; al-Khissal.
- [4](#). Quoted from al-Kafi.
- [5](#). Quoted from al-Kafi.
- [6](#). Quoted from al-Kafi.
- [7](#). Quoted from al-Kafi.
- [8](#). Quoted from al-Kafi.
- [9](#). Quoted from al-Kafi.
- [10](#). Quoted from al-Kafi and Mel La Yahdhuruh ul-Faqih.
- [11](#). Quoted from al-Kafi
- [12](#). Quoted from Ilal ush-Sharayii.
- [13](#). Shaitan is the Devil; Satan.
- [14](#). Quoted from al-Kafi
- [15](#). Quoted from al-Kafi.

Clemency and Suppression of Anger

Clemency and suppression of anger stand for self- possession in situations that arouse anger. They are noble traits they indicate self-excellence and result in affection and amicability:

“(Among) the servants of the Beneficent Allah are those who walk gently on the earth and when addressed by the ignorant ones, their only response is, “Peace be with you.”” (25:63)

“Virtue and evil are not equal. If you replace evil habits by virtuous ones, you will certainly find that your enemies will become your intimate friends. Only those who exercise patience and who have been granted a great share of Allah's favor can find such an opportunity.” (41:34-5)

“And who also harness their anger and forgive the people. Allah loves the righteous ones.”
(3: 134)

Pursing this, The Ahlul-Bayt (a) advanced their instructions:

As he noticed that Qanbar was about to answer with revilement the man who had reviled at him, Amirul-Mu'minin (a) said: “Slow down, Qanbar! Leave him who reviled at you plunging in humility so that you will please the Beneficent Allah, annoy the Shaitan, and punish your enemy. I swear by Him Who split the seed and made the soul, nothing like clemency for the believers to achieve the satisfaction of the Lord, nothing like silence for them to annoy the Shaitan, and nothing more punishable than leaving the foolish alone [1](#).”

“The first remuneration that one can gain for showing clemency is people’s being his supporters against the ignorant².”

Imam al-Baqir (a) said: “Allah does like the modest and the clement³.”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: When a quarrel takes place, two angels attend there. They say to the foolish party, “You have said such and such. You are worthier of that which you have said. You will be punished for it.” For the clement party, the angels say, “You have stood and showed clemency. Allah will forgive you if you accomplish it.” If the clement party answers the other, the angels leave the place⁴.

“Allah will certainly increase (His bestowals to) the servant who suppresses his anger, and will reward him. Allah says: And who also harness their anger and forgive the people. Allah loves the righteous ones. (3: 134)⁵”

Imam al-Kadhim (a) said: “Be steadfast against the enemies of the graces, for your best retaliation for those who acted disobediently to Allah against you is to act obediently to Allah with them⁶.”

Once, he (a) gathered his sons and said: “Sons, I will lead you to an instruction that saves you from deviation if you adhere to it. Accept the apology of him who reviled at you in your right ear, and then turned to your left to make an apology and claim that he had not said anything bad⁷.”

The foolish may regard clemency as signs of weakness, while the intelligent regard it as signs of nobility, high standards, and honor.

When man’s prestige mounts, his traits become nobler he holds fast on clemency and pardon. Hence, he becomes the matter of admiration and praise.

It is related that a wise man answered those who asked him why he had not replied the one who had reviled at him: “I will not engage myself in a war the triumphant of which is eviler than the loser.”

When al-Ma’mun, the Abbasid caliph, asked Imam ar-Rida (a) to recite some poetic verses, the Imam composed:

If he whose ignorance befell me is lower than I am in position, I will reject for myself to answer him by means of ignorance.

If he enjoys the same position of intelligence that I have, I will adopt for clemency so that I will not be likened to him.

If he is higher in position than I am, I will respect him from his preference.

As he heard these verses, al-Ma’mun showed his admiration and asked about the one who composed them. The Imam (a) answered: “He is one of our men⁸.”

The Prophet and the immaculate Imams (a) were the ideal examples of clemency:

Imam al-Baqir (a) narrated: When the Jewess who served the Prophet (S) a poisonous meal was brought before him, he asked her a reason for her deed. "Well," she replied, "I said that the poisoned meal would not affect him if he was real prophet. But if he was only an ordinary king, the meal would save people from him." The Prophet pardoned her.

The Prophet (S) also forgave many individuals after he had outlawed and ordered to be killed.

Habbar Ibn al-Aswad Ibn al-Muttalib was one of those individuals. The Prophet (S) outlawed him after he had frightened Zainab the Prophet's daughter- and caused her to terminate her pregnancy.

It was related that this man came to the Prophet and said: "We, God's Prophet, were polytheists, and God guided us to the right by you and saved us from perdition. I beseech to you to overlook my ignorance and that which I had committed, for I confess of my ill deeds and sins." The Prophet (S) answered him:

"I will forgive you. Allah has done you a great favor when He guided you to Islam. Islam cancels that which was done before the embracement of it."

Abdullah Ibn Az-Zubaari is another one. He used to satirize the Prophet (S) in Mecca so extremely. When the Prophet (S) conquered Mecca, Az-Zubaari fled it. After a period, he came back and apologized for the Prophet who accepted his apology.

Wahshi, the killer of Hamza (a) is a third one. When he declared being Muslim, the Prophet asked him to narrate how he had killed Hamza; his uncle. The man did and caused the Prophet to weep. He (S) then asked Wahshi not to appear before him any longer⁹.

Amirul-Mu'minin (a) was another ideal example of clemency and pardon.

When he captured Abdullah Ibn az-Zubair, Marwan Ibn al-Hakam, and Saeed Ibn al-Aas who were the most mortal enemies that rallied people against him, he pardoned them and did not retaliate.

He (a) also could kill Amr Ibn al-Aas who was more dangerous than an equipped army, but he left him because Amr unveiled his anus in order to save himself from the Imam's strike!

During the battle of Siffeen, the troops of Muawiya prevented Amirul-Mu'minin (a) to reach the springs of water there and told that they would not give him a single drop of water. When he (a) raided on them, he dropped them away from these springs. But he allowed them to drink from them, just like his troops.

After the Battle of the Camel, Amirul-Mu'minin (a) visited Mistress Aisha¹⁰ and saw her off so honorably and sent with her caravan a number of individuals whose mission was to serve and protect her¹¹.

Like his father and grandfather, Imam al-Hasan (a) was another ideal example of clemency.

Al-Mubarrad and Ibn Aisha narrated the following:

A Syrian man went on reviling at Imam al-Hasan (a) who was riding an animal. The Imam kept silent until the Syrian man finished. He then approached him and answered with handsome smiling: “Old man! I think you are foreigner. You might have been wrong. If you had admonished us, we would have satisfied you. If you had asked us, we would have given you. If you had sought our guidance, we would have led you. If you had asked us to load something on your riding animal, we would have done. If you had been hungry, we would have supplied you. If you had been naked, we would have dressed you. If you had been needy, we would have given you. If you had been fugitive, we would have succored you. If you had needed something, we would have settled your needs. I now hope you would drive your riding animal towards our residence so that you will be our guest until you determine to leave. This will be better for you. We have a large residence, a remarkable position, and an abundant fortune.”

As he heard the words of the Imam, the Syrian man wept and said: “It is surely that God is the most knowledgeable of the worthiest of conveying His message. Previously, your father and you were the most hateful creatures of God to me. But now, you are the dearest creature to me.” He then turned towards the residence of the Imam and was his guest until he left. He embraced the affection for The Ahlul-Bayt (a).

Thus was al-Hussein Ibn Ali (a):

A servant of Imam al-Hussein committed a mistake that caused him to be punished. The Imam therefore gave the orders of beating him.

“Master,” said the servant, “(Remember God’s saying) those who refrain the anger.”

The Imam ordered to release him.

“Master,” said the servant, “(Remember God’s saying) and those who forgive people.”

The Imam forgave him.

“Master,” said the servant, “(Remember God’s saying) and Allah loves those who do good.”

The Imam said, “Go, you are free for the sake of Allah. I will also double your payment¹²”

As I have read the life accounts of The Ahlul-Bayt (a), I found them unique modes and ideal examples in the field of morality.

Narrators reported the following story about the unparalleled scope of Imam as-Sajjad's clemency:

One of the servants of Imam as-Sajjad tried to serve the guests of his master with the grill. He was so hurried that one of the skewers fell down from his hand to kill one of the Imam’s sons. The servant was so confused, but the Imam (a) said to him: “Now, I set you free, because you did not intend to kill the

boy.” Then, the Imam held the funeral ceremonies of the boy¹³.

Imam Musa Ibn Ja’far (a) was called Al-Kadhim the one who suppresses his anger—, because of his great clemency for the sake of God.

A narrator reported the following story in this regard: In Medina, a descendant of one of the caliphs used to hurt Abu al-Hasan Musa (a) whenever he would meet him. Moreover, he used to revile at Ali and the Imam. The Imam’s retinue asked him to allow them to kill that man. The Imam ordered them not to do so. As he asked about that man, the Imam was told that he had a ranch in Medina. The Imam rode on a donkey, went to the ranch, saw the man, and entered that ranch with his donkey. “Do not tread on our yields,” shouted the man. But the Imam did not pay attention to his warning, and drove his riding animal to tread on the yields until he approached the man. He, then, rode off, sat with the man, spoke with him kindly, smiled in his face, and asked: “How much did I cause you to lose as a result of treading on your yields?”

“About one hundred dinars,” said the man.

“How much do you expect to gain from it?” asked the Imam.

“I cannot tell of the unseen,” answered the man.

“I only asked how much do you expect,” said the Imam.

“I expect two hundred dinars,” answered the man. The Imam (a) took out a bag of three hundred dinars and said to the man “This is for the yields, and Allah may give you that which you expect.”

The man stood up, kissed the Imam on the head, and asked him to forgive his past wrongdoings. The Imam smiled and went away.

When the Imam entered the mosque, that man was sitting there. As soon as he saw him, he shouted: “It is surely that God is the most knowledgeable of the worthiest of conveying His message.”

The man’s associates jumped to him with astonishment and asked, “What is the matter with you? We used to see the opposite of this.”

“Well,” said the man, “you have heard my new situation,” and went on praising and praying to God for the Imam (a). That situation made him lose those associates.

When the Imam went back home, he said to the company who had asked him to kill that man: “Which one is the best your intention or my deed? I could guide that man to the right as much as you saw, and I could save myself from his evils¹⁴.”

¹. Quoted from Sheikh al-Mufid; al-Majalis.

². Quoted from Nahj ul-Balagha.

- [3.](#) Quoted from al-Kafi.
- [4.](#) Quoted from al-Kafi.
- [5.](#) Quoted from al-Kafi.
- [6.](#) Quoted from al-Kafi.
- [7.](#) Quoted from Al-Arbali; Keshf ul-Ghumma.
- [8.](#) Quoted from Sheikh as-Saduq; Me'aani al-Akhbar and Uyounu Akhbar ir-Redha.
- [9.](#) Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; vol. 1.
- [10.](#) Mistress Aisha was the Prophet's widow who mutinied and led an army against Amir ul-Mu'minin (a) and rode a camel due to which that battle was called the Battle of the Camel. She, however, lost that battle and was captured by Imam Ali's army.
- [11.](#) Quoted from al-Aqqad, Abbas Mahmoud; The Genius of Imam Ali.
- [12.](#) Quoted from al-Arbali; Keshf ul-Ghumma.
- [13.](#) Quoted from al-Arbali; Keshf ul-Ghumma.
- [14.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 11 as quoted from l'lam ul- Wara and al-Irshad

Anger

Anger is a mental condition that provokes the excitement of man in words and deeds. Because of the dangers and sins --such like mocking, gibe, obscenity, beating, killing, and the like evildoings that are resulted from anger, it has been considered as the door to every evil:

Imam as-Sadiq narrated on the authority of his father that a Bedouin came to the Prophet (S) and said: "I live in the desert; hence, I want you to instruct me the comprehensive of speech." The Prophet said: "I instruct you not to be angry." As the Bedouin repeated the same request three times, the Prophet (S) repeated the answer three times. The Bedouin commented: "I will not ask you for anything anymore. Certainly, the Messenger of God has instructed me the best¹."

Amirul-Mu'minin (a) said: "Keep off anger because it is one large army from the Shaitan's armies."

"Anger is a stroke of madness, for the angry, later on, feels sorry. If he does not, his madness then is inclusive²."

Imam al-Baqir (a) said: "A man often becomes so angry that he is never pleased until this causes him to be in Hell³."

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: "Anger is the key to every evil⁴."

Incentives of Anger

- The incentive of anger could be a physical disorder, such as illness or neuropathy that cause hypersensitiveness.

- It could be a psychological defect that is arisen from mental stress, excessive selfishness, or feeling of insult or inferiority.
- It could be ethical, such as habituation of quarrelsomeness and quick anxiety.

Damages of Anger

Anger causes gross damages that harm individuals and communities, physically and mentally, materially and morally. A single state of anger often injured the emotions, charged the spirits with hatred, and split the handles of mutual amicability. Moreover, it often threw people in jails, exposed them to perditions, aroused wars, and shed blood of thousands of innocent people. What is more is the mental crises and tragedies most of which end with sudden death.

After all, anger changes man into a furious volcano whose flames are rage and evils. Thus, you see the tongue of the angry speak vulgar language and words of disgracing, and see his hands set for beating or even killing. This is in case the angry controls his rival completely. If not, the calamities of anger reflect on the angry; therefore, you see him tear his dress, slap his head, and, in some cases, practice insane deeds, such as reviling at beasts and beating on the solid things.

Anger between Praise and Censure

Anger is a significant instinct that excites in man the spirit of zeal and disdain and stirs up the spirits of sacrifice for the sake of the noble aims, such as defending the belief and protecting the souls, fortunes, and dignities. When a man misses such an instinct, he becomes the subject of humility. It is said: "He who does not feel angry when infuriated is surely donkey."

As a conclusion, the abominable anger is the excessive that takes away from moderation and challenges the regulations of the intellect and the Sharia. The moderate anger, on the other side, is an honored virtue strengthening man and restoring the morale.

Treatment of Anger

- If the incentive of anger is a physical disorder or a nervous depression, such like the states of the sick, the old, and the emaciated, the treatment should be clinical means, strengthening of the public health, and availability of the physical and mental rest, such as following a certain regime of nutrition, commitment to cleanness, and practice of suitable physical exercises and muscular relaxation. Finally, such individuals should keep off any matter that exhausts the mentality or the body, such as mental stress, sleeplessness, submission to depression, and other incentives of agitation.
- Anger does not occur arbitrarily. There are definite reasons that agitate it, such as excessive selfishness, disputation, mocking, gibing, and injurious joking. In such cases, the treatment should be to

avoid such reasons as much as possible.

- To remember the disadvantages, dangers, and sins of anger, and to keep in mind that anger harms the angry more than the others this may help in its treatment. It may happen that a trivial matter arouses an uncontrollable state of anger. A psychoanalyst says: “Leave the idea of retaliating on your enemies, because this causes you harm more than that which you intend for your enemies. When we bear malice against our enemies, we grant them the opportunity to overcome us. In fact, our enemies would dance delightedly if they knew the scope of worry that they cause to us. The malice that we bear against them does not harm them. As a matter of fact, it harms us and changes our days and nights into hell.” Hence, it is necessary to keep in mind the advantages of clemency:

“If you replace evil habits by virtuous ones, you will certainly find that your enemies will become your intimate friends. Only those who exercise patience and who have been granted a great share of Allah’s favor can find such an opportunity.” (41:34–5)”

- The influence and criminal motives of anger expose to the wrath and punishment of God. Imam as-Sadiq (a) said:

“Allah revealed to one of His prophets: Son of Adam⁵! Remember Me in your states of anger so that I will remember you in My wrath and will not crush you with those whom I will crush. Consider Me as your supporter, for My support to you is better than your own support⁶.”

- It is better to postpone the temporary inducements of anger until its vehemence fades away. This may achieve relaxation and regain reason. It, however, can be achieved only by means of self-control and temperance.

Amirul-Mu'minin (a) said: “If you are not clement, you should try to be it. He who imitates a people shall be one of them⁷.”

- The following practices help in the treatment for anger: seeking God’s guard against the Devil, sitting or laying down when standing or sitting, practicing the ablution or washing the face with cold water, and touching the hand of the relative who is the object of anger.

¹. Quoted from al-Kafi.

². Quoted from Nahj ul-Balagha.

³. Quoted from Nahj ul-Balagha.

⁴. Quoted from al-Kafi.

⁵. Son of Adam is a famous expression that refers to man.

⁶. Quoted from al-Kafi.

⁷. Quoted from Nahj ul-Balagha.

Modesty

Modesty is to regard the others' standings and avoid behaving arrogantly with them. It is an attractive quality that draws the hearts and provokes admiration. God ordered His Prophet Muhammad (S) to cling to modesty:

“And be modest with him who follows you of the believers. (26:215)”

The Prophet (S) said: “The most favorable of you and the nearest to me on the Day of Resurrection will be the most well-mannered and the most modest. The remotest of you to me on the Day of Resurrection will be the bigmouth and the proud¹.”

Amirul-Mu'minin (a) said: “It is very nice for the rich to behave modestly with the poor, out of seeking that which is with Allah. A nicer thing is the arrogance of the poor towards the rich, out of their trust in Allah².”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “In the heavens, there are two angels whose mission is to oversee the servants. They advance him who behaves modestly, and humiliates him who behaves proudly³.”

“Modesty is to accept to sit in a place other than the first row of a session, to greet whom you meet, to avoid disputation even if you are right, and to detest to be praised for the acts of God-fearing⁴.”

It is worth mentioning that the recommended modesty is characterized by moderation and free from negligence and excess. Excessive modesty causes meanness, and negligence of modesty is a motive of arrogance.

A proverb says: The modesty of a high-positioned one will save him from the malicious enjoyment at his falling.

We now forward some models of the virtues of The Ahlul-Bayt (a) regarding their unique and ideal modesty: The Prophet (S) was the most modest. When he was attendant in a house, he sits in the last place. In his house, he helped his wives. He also used to milk his ewe, patch his garment, repair his slippers, serve himself, carry his goods from the mart, sit with the poor, and eat with the needy.

When someone wanted to whisper in his ear, he used not to nod his head so that the other party would not nod the head. When someone shook hands with him, he used not to pull his hand unless the other party would do. When somebody sat with him, he used not to leave that meeting unless the other party would leave. He used to greet everyone he met and extend his hand before the other would do. He had never extended his legs among his sitters.

He used to honor everyone who would visit him. In most cases, he used to spread out his garment so

that his guest would sit on it, and used to give the cushion on which he had sat to his guest. He used to call his companions with their most preferable nicknames. He had never interrupted a speech. He used to divide his looks fairly among his companions. He was always smiling and good-humored⁵.

Abu Dharr al-Ghifari⁶ narrated:

“The Prophet (S) used to sit among his companions. Any stranger who visited him for the first time would not distinguish him among the others unless he would ask. We therefore asked him to choose a special place so that the strangers would recognize him. We then made a muddy bench on which he used to sit while we were beside him.”

It was also narrated that he was, once, in a journey when he ordered his companions to cook a ewe. A man volunteered to slaughter it, another volunteered to skin it, and a third volunteered to cook it. The Prophet (S) volunteered to gather firewood. When his companions told that they would do that mission instead of him, he answered: “I know you can do it, but I do not like to be distinguished. Allah dislikes to see His servant distinguish himself from his companions.”

It was also narrated that the Prophet (S) went to bathe in a spring. Huthaifa Ibn al-Yeman, who accompanied him, took a piece of cloth to screen him. When he finished, the Prophet (S) took a piece of cloth so as to screen Huthaifa who began to bathe. Huthaifa refused and asked him not to do, but the Prophet insisted. When Huthaifa finished, the Prophet said: “For the two persons who accompany each other, Allah will prefer and love more the one who is more lenient to his companion.”

Describing Amirul-Mu'minin, the ideal example of modesty, Dhirar said:

“Among us, he was just like one of us. He used to approximate us when we visited him, answer us when we asked him, respond to our invitations, and answer our questions. Along with this, we could not speak to him because of fear of him. When he smiled, his teeth were the like of well-organized pearls. He used to honor the religious and favor the needy. The strong could not exploit him and the weak were not despaired of his justice.”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) narrated: Amirul-Mu'minin (a) was, once, riding an animal and his companions were walking after him. He turned his face towards them and asked why they were following him. They answered that they had just liked to walk after him. He asked them to leave, and said: “To walk with a rider corrupts the moralities of that rider and causes humility to the walker⁷.”

As he passed by a group of needy people who were having bits of bread that was put on a shirt, Imam al-Hussein (a) greeted them. When they invited him to their meal, he responded and sat with them. He said: “I would like to eat with you except that your food is alms⁸.” He invited them to his house, served them food, and gave them dresses and some money⁹.

In his journey to Khurasan, Imam ar-Rida (a) ordered to make a dining table and gathered all his

servants, including the black ones, to eat with him. I suggested to him to use another dining table for the slaves. He answered: “What is this wording? The Lord is one, mother is one, father is one, and each one will be rewarded according to his own deeds¹⁰.”

¹. Quoted from Qurb ul-Isnad. A similar narrative is recorded in Ilal ush-Sharaayi.

². Quoted from Nahj ul-Balagha.

³. Quoted from al-Kafi.

⁴. Quoted from al-Kafi.

⁵. Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; vol. 1 p. 415.

⁶. Abu Dharr al-Ghifari was one of the heroes of Islam and the four closest friends of Amir ul-Mu'minin (a) who supported him in the tragedy of the usurpation of his leadership. He was well known of his courage and revolutionary. Othman ibn Affan, the third caliph, banished him to a village because of his public protestation against the caliph's policy of preferring his relatives and kinsmen to the others where he died in a tragic situation, and that was an assertion of the Prophet's prediction to him.

⁷. Quoted from al-Barqi; al-Mahasin

⁸. According to the Islamic Sharia, it is unallowable for the Prophet's family to have or possess anything that is given as alms.

⁹. Quoted from Ibn Shahrashoub; al-Manaqib.

¹⁰. Quoted from al-Kafi.

Arrogance

Arrogance is a mental state causing self-admiration and haughtiness against others in words or deeds. It is censured and dispraised in many texts in the Quran and Sunna:

“Do not scornfully turn your face away from people. Do not walk around puffed-up with pride; Allah does not love arrogant and boastful people (31:18).”

“Do not walk proudly on the earth; your feet cannot tear apart the earth nor are you as tall as the mountains (17:37).”

“He does not love the proud ones (16:23).”

“Is not hell the dwelling of the arrogant ones? (39:60)”

The Prophet (S) said: “The most favorable of you and the nearest to me on the Day of Resurrection will be the most well-mannered and the most modest. The remotest of you to me on the Day of Resurrection will be the bigmouth and the proud¹.”

As he passed by some people, the Prophet (S) asked them about the reason of their gathering. They answered that they were gathering on an insane epileptic person. He (S) commented: “This is not insane. He is afflicted with a disease. May I tell you about the true insane?” “Yes, you may,” they

answered. He said: “The true insane is he who walks swaggeringly, looks to his sides, moves his shoulders through his sides, and hopes for Paradise of Allah while he acts disobediently to Him. His evil cannot be trusted and good is not expected from him. That is the true insane and this one is inflicted with a disease².”

While a wealthy man with a clean garment was sitting with the Prophet (S), a poor man with dirty garment came and sat next to the wealthy who pulled his garment. The Prophet (S) said to the wealthy: “Have you been afraid that his poverty would inflict you?” “No, I have not,” answered the man. “Have you been afraid that he would soil your garment?” asked the Prophet. “No, I have not,” answered the man. “Why did you then do so?” asked the Prophet. “God’s Messenger,” said the man, “I have a companion who shows me my evildoings as righteous and my righteous ones as evildoings. As penance, I offer the half of my fortune to this man.”

The poor man refused this offer and answered the wealthy who asked him about the reason, “Well, I refuse because I am afraid I will be inflicted with the same feeling of arrogance that you had.”

In one of his sermons, Amirul-Mu'minin (a) said: “You should take a lesson from what Allah did with Satan; namely He nullified his great acts and extensive efforts on account of the vanity of one moment, although Satan had worshipped Allah for six thousand years whether by the reckoning of this world or of the next world is not known. Who now can remain safe from Allah after Satan by committing a similar disobedience? None at all. Allah cannot let a human being enter Paradise if he does the same thing for which Allah turned out from it an angel and seek Allah’s protection from the dangers of vanity, as you seek His protection from calamities. Certainly, if Allah were to allow anyone to indulge in pride, He would have allowed it to his selected prophets and vicegerents. But Allah, the Sublime, disliked vanity for them and liked humbleness for them³.”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: In the heavens, there are two angels whose mission is to oversee the servants. They advance him who behaves modestly, and humiliate him who behaves proudly⁴.”

“Any behavior of arrogance or haughtiness is inevitably the result of the feeling of humility in the mentality of the arrogant or the haughty⁵.”

A quarrel broke out between Salman al-Farsi⁶ and a man who addressed to him: “Who are you and what are you?” Salman answered: “The first of you and me is a dirty sperm. The last of you and me is a stinking carrion. On the Day of Resurrection, the scales will be maintained. Those whose good deeds will weigh heavier on the scale will be the true noble men, but those whose good deeds will be lighter on the scale, will be the true inglorious⁷.”

Disadvantages of Arrogance

Arrogance surrounds with a ring of vanity and pride and inflicts with the fondness of selfishness and

showiness to the degree that nothing will satisfy the arrogant except false flattery and fake praise. The arrogant, then, can no longer see his defects and shortcomings, care about self-discipline, or remedy his flaws. The result will be that he becomes the target of criticism and the subject of malice and revulsion. Furthermore, the arrogant is the remotest from the right and justice. The arrogant, too, excites people's malice and loathing in such a way that nobody else can do.

Incentives of Arrogance

Self-esteem is one of the incentives of arrogance, which occurs only when one feels that he bears abundant knowledge, high position, big fortune, or the like stimulants of selfishness.

It may also be arisen from enmity, envy, or pride that may urge to challenge the ideal individuals for belittling their qualities of honor and daring them through various sorts of verbal and active practices.

Levels of Arrogance

Levels of arrogance vary according to the intensity of its signs.

The first level is that which is treated with modesty without allowing its signs and disadvantages to appear.

The second level is that when arrogance grows and allows its signs to appear through vain behaviors with people.

The third level is that in which arrogance prevails so aggravatingly causing megalomania and excessive fondness of high rank and showiness. Hence, you see the affected ones go on referring to their merits and disparaging others. This is in fact the worst level of arrogance.

Sorts of Arrogance

- Arrogance against God: This stands for the abstention from believing in Him and the vanity against obeying Him. This is definitely the worst kind of atheism and the most hideous sort of arrogance.
- Arrogance against the prophets: This stands for the vanity against believing and submitting to them. Though the two are very close to each other, this sort is, to some extent, less horrible than the first.
- Arrogance against people: This is achieved by showing contempt against people and regarding one's being too far above them in words and deeds. Arrogance against the scholars by regarding oneself too high for asking them or seeking their knowledge, is a subclass of arrogance against people.

Treatment of Arrogance

The arrogant should recognize his reality: his origin is a dirty sperm and his end is stinky carrion. Between these two, man is weak and feeble. Hunger and thirst exhaust him, ailment and sickness overcome him, poverty and harm afflict him, and death and wear will inevitably befall him. Man cannot provide benefits and cannot save himself from misfortunes:

“There is the life hereafter which we have prepared for those who do not want to impose their superiority over the others in the land nor commit evil therein. The happy end certainly belongs to the pious ones. (28:83)”

Hence, the best people are the most well-mannered, helpful, pious, and righteous.

Man should keep in mind the advantages of modesty as well as the disadvantages of arrogance. He should also remember the words of praise that were said about modesty and these of dispraise that were said about arrogance. It is said: “For people of reason, modesty with ignorance and stinginess is better than arrogance with mannerism and openhanded. Modesty, then, is such a great good feature covering two bad qualities, and arrogance is such a bad quality screening two good traits⁸.”

- ¹. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 15 part 2 page 209 (quoted from Qurb ul-Isnad.) There is a similar narrative that is recorded in Sheikh as-Saduq’s Ilal ush-Sharaayi.
- ². Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 15 part 3 page 125 (quoted from Sheikh as-Saduq’s al-Khissal.)
- ³. Quoted from Nahj ul-Balagha.
- ⁴. Quoted from al-Wafi; 3:87 (quoted from al-Kafi).
- ⁵. Quoted from al-Wafi; 3: 150 (quoted from al-Kafi).
- ⁶. Salman al-Farsi (born in 7th century) is a great figure in Islam. He was a companion of the Prophet Muhammad (S) and a close friend of Imam Ali Amir ul-Mu’minin (a) who supported him during the tragedy of the usurpation of his right of leadership after the Prophet. During his caliphate, Imam Ali (a) gave him a governmental office.
- ⁷. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 15 part 3 page 124 (quoted from Sheikh as-Saduq’s al-Amali.)
- ⁸. Quoted from ar-Raghib; Muhadharat ul-Udabaa.

Satisfaction

Satisfaction is to please oneself with the minimal necessities that meet the needs and to neglect everything additional. It is a noble trait revealing dignity and high moral standard:

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said to the man who complained about his increasing greed: “If you think it is fortunate for you to have only what suffices you, then you will be sufficed with the least needs of this world. If you think it is not sufficient for you to have the minimum needs of this world, then all the worldly pleasures will not suffice you¹.”

Imam al-Baqir (a) said: “Beware of aspiring after that who is higher than you are. You should regard sufficient for you what Allah said to His Prophet: ‘Do not be admired by their fortunes or sons.’ ‘Do not extend your eyes to the pleasures of the worldly life which we had given as enjoyment to some of them.’ If you are afflicted with such feelings, you should then remember the lifestyle of the Prophet (S). His food was barley, sweets were the dates, and firewood was the leaves of date-palm trees if found².

“He who satisfies himself with that which Allah has given to him is surely the richest of people³.”

The satisfied is surely the richest of people because richness, in reality, is not to need for people. The satisfied is content and convinced with that which God has given to him; therefore, he does not need people and does not ask anyone except God.

It was related that when Galen, the famous Greek physician, was dead, people found in his pocket a sheet of paper with the following script:

“Everything that you earn moderately is for the good of your body. Everything that you give as alms is for the good of your spirit. Everything that you leave behind you is for the good of others. The charitable is alive even if he is taken to the other abode. The wrongdoer is dead even if he is in this world.

Satisfaction covers the defects. Moderation increases the much amount. For son of Adam, there is nothing more helpful than trust in God⁴.”

Advantages of Satisfaction

Satisfaction has a remarkable influence on the individuals' lives. It achieves physical and mental relaxation, and breathes the spirits of honor, disdain, and chastity. The satisfied is in fact happier, more tranquil, and meeker than the greedy. Furthermore, satisfaction supplies with spiritual awakening and discerning, and urges to ready for the life to come, practice righteous deeds, and gain the incentives of happiness.

It is related that al-Khalil Ibn Ahmed al-Farahidi⁵ was suffering starvation among the poor people of Basra while others were benefiting by the profits of his writing works. Once, Sulaiman Ibn Ali the Abbasid summoned him to attend in al-Ahwaz for teaching his son. Al-Khalil served the messenger of Sulaiman few pieces of dry bread and said: “You can eat this because I do not have anything else. As long as I can find such pieces of bread, I am not in need for Sulaiman.”

When the messenger asked al-Khalil for an answer for Sulaiman, the latter said as poetic verses---: “Tell Sulaiman that I am not in need for him since I am rich but without possessing any fortune. The true poverty lies in one's spirit, not in the scarce of money. The true richness, as well, lies in one's spirit, not in the abundance of fortune. Sustenance is measured and already decided. Weakness will not decrease the sustenance, and frequent movements will not increase it⁶.”

Othman Ibn Affan, once, sent a bag of dirhams to Abu Dharr and told the slave who would carry them

that he would be manumitted if Abu Dharr would accept it. Abu Dharr, however, did not accept that present in spite of the slave's importunate insistence. "Please," said the slave, "accept it, for I will be manumitted if you do." Abu Dharr answered: "But I will be enslaved if I do⁷!"

Deoganes al-Kelbi was one of the famous wise men of Greece. He was so ascetic. He did not possess anything and did not live in a house. Alexander, once, summoned him. He said to the messenger of Alexander: "Tell him: the same thing that prevented you from coming to me has prevented me from coming to you. You did not come to me because you are not in need for me out of your power, and I will not come to you because I am not in need for you out of my satisfaction⁸."

Al-Mansour, the Abbasid caliph, wrote a missive to Abu Abdullah as-Sadiq (a): "Why do you not visit us like the others?" The Imam answered: "We do not have any worldly pleasure that we anticipate you to stop, nor do you have any matter of the world to come for us that we expect to gain from you, nor are you enjoying bliss on which we should congratulate you, nor are you suffering a misfortune for which we should console you." Al-Mansour wrote: "You may accompany us so that you will advise us." The Imam answered: "He who seeks the worldly pleasures will not advise you, and he who seeks the world to come will not accompany you⁹."

¹. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 79 (quoted from al-Kafi).

². Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 78 (quoted from al-Kafi).

³. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 79 (quoted from al-Kafi).

⁴. Quoted from al-Bahaai; al-Kashkul page 371.

⁵. Al-Khalil ibn Ahmed al-Farahidi was the founder of prosody and the compiler of the best Arabic-Arabic dictionary; namely Kitab ul-Ayn.

⁶. Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; part 1 page 426.

⁷. Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; part 1 page 483

⁸. Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; part 2 page 451.

⁹. Quoted from al-Bahaai; al-Kashkul.

Greed

Greed is the excess fondness of money and fortune. It is one of the bad manners that draw to various evils and sins.

Amirul-Mu'minin (a) said: "Know with certainty that you cannot achieve your desire and cannot exceed your destined life. You are on the track of those before you. Therefore, be humble in seeking and moderate in earning because often seeking leads to deprivation. Every seeker of livelihood does not get it, nor is everyone who is moderate in seeking deprived."¹

Imam al-Hasan (a) said: "People's perdition lies in three things: arrogance, greed, and envy. Arrogance

is the perdition of the religion. Because of arrogance, Eblis² was cursed. Greed is the enemy of the soul. Because of greed, Adam was dismissed from Paradise. Envy is the pioneer of evil. Because of envy, Cain killed Abel the two sons of Adam--.”

Imam al-Baqir (a) said: “In his love for the world, the greedy is like the silkworm: the more it wraps in its cocoon, the less it has of escaping from it, until it dies of grief³.”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “If son of Adam were to possess two valleys of gold and silver, he would long for a third. Son of Adam, your stomach is but an ocean or a valley that cannot be filled in with anything except dust⁴.”

“The destruction that the fondness of fortune leaves on a man is more effective than the deed of two ravenous wolves that attack a shepherd less herd one from the front and the other from the back. The Muslim’s honor, however, lies in his religiosity⁵.”

Disadvantages of Greed

Greed enslaves man and causes him grief. The greedy cares only for collecting fortunes without stopping at any limit. Whenever he achieves a goal, he works for achieving another and, so, he becomes the slave of avidity until death strikes him. He, also, exerts laborious efforts for collecting riches, but he is the less beneficiary. He tires for gaining fortunes, but death comes unexpectedly upon him to deprive him of enjoying that fortune. The heirs, then, enjoy his fortune so easefully. Furthermore, greed takes to the slips of sinful matters that produce problematic situations in the world to come. It also hinders from doing charity.

Treatment of Greed

- It is necessary to keep in mind the disadvantages and the worldly and religious inconveniences of greed and to remember that man will be interrogated about the legally gotten pleasures of this world, punished for the illegally gotten, and blamed for the suspicious.
- It is necessary to ponder over the aforementioned virtues of satisfaction, contemplating the life accounts of the great personalities, such as the prophets, their successors, and the saints, especially in the field of asceticism.
- It is advisable to avoid looking enviously to the richer ones and those who enjoy false luxuries of this world, and to consider the less rich.
- It is necessary to achieve living moderation, for it is the most important factor that contributes in alleviating the tension of greed.

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “I guarantee for the moderate that he will not see poverty.”

- [1.](#) Quoted from Nahj ul-Balagha.
- [2.](#) Eblis is the name of the Devil.
- [3.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 152 (quoted from al-Kafi.)
- [4.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; 3/154 (as quoted from as-Saduq's Men la Yahdhuruh ul-Faqih.)
- [5.](#) Quoted from Mir'aat ul-Uqoul; 2 (The Explanation of al- Majlisi's al-Kafi) as quoted from al-Kafi; page 303.

Generosity

Generosity is the opposite of stinginess. It stands for offering money, food, or any other lawful gaining out of one's free will. It is in fact the worthiest nature. As a sign of the unprecedented virtue of generosity is that you see every precious and appreciable thing is described as generous. For example, God says:

“This is a generous Quran (56:77).”

“A generous messenger came to them (44: 17).” “And corn-fields and generous mansions (44:26).”

The The Ahlul-Bayt (a) therefore praised generosity laudably:

Imam as-Sadiq related that the Prophet (S) said:

“The best men in view of faith is the most openhanded[1.](#)”

“The generous is close to Allah, close to people, and close to Paradise. The stingy is remote from Allah, remote from people, and close to Hell[2.](#)”

Imam al-Baqir (a) said: “A generous young man who is plunging in sins is favorable, in the sight of Allah, to a niggardly old man who plunges in worship[3.](#)”

“Spend and be sure that Allah will recompense you. Any male or female servant of Allah who behaves stingily in a field that pleases Allah will surely spend many folds in a field that displeases Him[4.](#)”

Advantages of Generosity

A society cannot feel happy or tranquil unless its individuals feel the spirit of mutual sympathy and harmonize with each other in feelings and senses. Such being the case, the society will be just like a compact building. Mutual sympathy has a bright picture that shines with beauty and brilliance. Undoubtedly, the noblest, most beautiful, and most everlasting picture of mutual sympathy is the feelings of the wealthy individuals for the poor. Such feelings will surely ease the pains of poverty.

By the application of this noble humane principal, (namely, the principals of mutual sympathy) the poor

will bear the feelings of amicability towards the wealthy, and this will help the community live happily.

From this cause, the Islamic Sharia has called for openhandedness and sympathy with the poor, and condemned the societies whose individuals suffer starvation and deprivation without finding any one who extends the hand of help towards them. It has also regarded the wealthy who do not help the poor as being very far-off Islam.

The Prophet (S) said: “He who begins his day without caring for the affairs of the Muslims is not a Muslim.”

“He who passes a night satiated while his neighbor is hungry has never believed in me. On the Day of Resurrection, Allah shall not look at the inhabitants of a village one of whose individuals is hungry⁵.”

Fields of Generosity

Virtues of generosity vary according to its fields. The noblest virtue of generosity, however, is carrying out the obligations of the Sharia, such as the zakat⁶, khums⁷, and the like.

The Prophet (S) said: “The most generous is he who fulfills that which Allah has deemed obligatory upon him⁸.”

Then comes the second criterion of generosity, which is the settlement of the dependents’ needs. In addition to its being obligatory in the sight of both the Sharia and traditions, this matter is very important because, naturally, a man’s family members are the worthiest of his charity and kindness.

Some individuals may behave abnormally in this regard. They may ignore this genuine natural principal and go on conferring generously on the strangers for seeking reputation, while they behave stingily with their family members who, such being the case, will live in neediness and suffer poverty. Such irregular behaviors are originated from meanness and foolishness.

Imam al-Kadhim (a) said: “Man’s dependents are his prisoners. Anyone upon whom Allah confers with graces should be generous towards his prisoners. If he does not, he will soon be deprived of these graces⁹.”

Imam ar-Rida (a) said: “Man should save the requirements of his family members’ lives, so that they will not hope were he dead¹⁰.”

It is a big mistake to deprive the relatives of such emotions and pour them on the foreigners, because such behavior is regarded as barefaced disgrace that arouses the relatives’ hatred and deprives of their sympathy. The true generous should begin with the nearest and the most beneficiary in his endowments, such as friends, neighbors, and people of virtue, because such classes are worthier of being treated generously.

Incentives of Generosity

The incentives of generosity vary according to individuals and reasons of openhandedness. The noblest incentive in this regard is that which is offered for the sake of God. The incentive may be the desire for gaining praise and glory and, in this case, the generous is regarded as the merchant who bargains with his generosity. The incentive may, also, be the desire for gaining something or being saved from a fearful harm. These two matters encourage generosity.

Love plays the greatest role in the encouragement on openhandedness for attracting and drawing the emotions of the beloved.

It is worth mentioning that the results and fruits of generosity will not be sweet unless it is freed from the reproachful reminding of the favor, the blemishes of procrastination, and the appearances of exaggeration.

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “Favors are worthless unless they are disregarded, veiled, and provided immediately. If you disregard your favors, you will surely revere the one to whom you have done that favor. If you cover up the favors that you do, you will surely accomplish your deeds. If you offer your favor as soon as possible, you will surely give it pleasantly; otherwise, you will destroy and give unpleasantly¹¹.”

- ¹. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 6 page 67 (quoted from al-Kafi
- ². Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 15 part 3 (quoted from al- Imama wat-Tabssira).
- ³. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 6 page 68 (quoted from al-Kafi and al-Faqih).
- ⁴. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 6 page 68 (quoted from al-Kafi).
- ⁵. Quoted from al-Kafi.
- ⁶. Zakat is the obligatory payment made annually under Islamic law on certain kinds of property and used for charitable and religious objects.
- ⁷. Khums is obligatory payment of one-fifth of the wealth made once under Islamic laws.
- ⁸. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 6 page 67 (as quoted from al- Faqih).
- ⁹. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 6 page 61 (as quoted from al-Kafi and al-Faqih).
- ¹⁰. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 6 page 61 (as quoted from al-Kafi and al-Faqih).
- ¹¹. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 16 quoted from Kitab ul- Ahsara; 116 and Ilal ush-Sharaayi.

Altruism

Altruism is the noblest concept of generosity. Not everyone can adorn himself with this trait, because it is dedicated to the few ideal persons whom are characterized by openhandedness and who attained the climax of generosity as they gave liberally while they are in urgent need. They therefore preferred charity to the settlement of their needs. The holy Quran praises the virtues of such persons:

“They give preference to them over themselves – even concerning the things that they themselves urgently need (59:9).”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “The best almsgiving is that which is given by the needy. Allah says: ***“They give preference to them over themselves – even concerning the things that they themselves urgently need (59:9)***[1](#).”

The Prophet (S) was the highest example of altruism: Jabir Ibn Abdullah said: The Prophet (S) had never refused anyone’s request.

Imam as-Sadiq (a) narrated: In al-Jirana, the Prophet (S) distributed the treasury among people. He gave every single individual who asked from him. As people crowded around him, they pushed him until he had to lean on a tree that scratched his back. People kept on pushing him until they took him away from that tree and his garment was hanged to one of its branches. He was shouting: “People, let me have my garment! By Allah I swear, even if I have treasures as many as the trees of Tuhama, I will distribute among you. You shall never find me coward or stingy².”

The Prophet (S) used to prefer the poor to himself. He used to give them his food while he suffered hunger to the degree that he, once, tied the stone of hunger on his stomach so as to share the pains of hunger with the poor.

Imam al-Baqir (a) said: “The Prophet (S) had never eaten his fill for three consecutive days since Allah gave him the Divine Mission³.”

The The Ahlul-Bayt (a) were copies of the Prophet in the fields of generosity and altruism.

Imam as-Sadiq (a) narrated: Ali was the most similar to the Prophet. He used to eat bread with oil and serve people with bread and meat⁴.

The following holy Verse was revealed for Ali and his family:

“They feed the destitute, orphans, and captives for the love of Allah, saying: We only feed you for the sake of Allah and we do not want any reward or thanks from you (76:9).”

The disciples of The Ahlul-Bayt have unanimously agreed that the previous holy Verse was revealed for Ali, Fatima, al-Hasan, and al-Hussein (a). Moreover, a good deal of ulema of other sects have also asserted so.

Interpreting Sura of al-Insan, az-Zamakhshari records the following narration in his book titled Tafsir ul-Keshaf:

Ibn Abbas narrated:

The Prophet (S), with some of his companions, visited al-Hasan and al-Hussein who were sick. They

suggested that Imam Ali should vow a three-day fasting if they would recover their health. The Imam, as well as their mother Fatima and Fuada their bondswoman implemented that suggestion. When al-Hasan and al-Hussein were healed, the group fasted. The Imam had no food at that time; therefore, he had to borrow three measures of barley from Shimon the Jew. In the first day, Fatima (a) milled and baked one of these measures. In the very time of breaking fast, a poor man knocked their door and said: "Peace be upon you; the family of Muhammad. I am a poor Muslim. Serve me with food and God may serve you from the food of Paradise." The Imam gave him his share. The others pursued him and gave their shares. They passed that night without eating anything.

On the second day of their fasting, an orphan complaining hunger knocked their door in the time of breaking fast. They offered their shares and passed the second night without having anything except water.

On the third day and in the very time of breaking fast, a prisoner complaining hunger knocked their door asking for some food. They all offered him their shares before having anything of it.

On the fourth day, Imam Ali took al-Hasan and al-Hussein to the Prophet while they were trembling because of hunger. "I am very touched for what I see," said the Prophet who walked with them to their house. There, he saw Fatima standing in her place of prayer while her belly was stuck to her back and her eyes were deep-set. He was affected by such a view. In the meantime, the Archangel Gabriel descended and said: "Muhammad, enjoy it. Allah may please you in connection to your household." He then recited the Sura⁵.

¹. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 6 page 58 (as quoted from al-Faqih).

². Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; 1/607 (as quoted from Ilal ush-Sharayi). Jirana is a place between Mecca and Ta'if.

³. Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; part 1 page 194 (as quoted from al-Kafi).

⁴. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 9 page 538 (as quoted from al-Kafi).

⁵. Quoted from Sayyid A. Sharafuddin's al-Kalimat ul-Gharraa; page 29.

Stinginess

Stinginess stands for the abstention from giving in situations of generosity. It is the opposite of generosity and among the mean features that cause humility, hatred, and disgrace. Islam has censured and warned the Muslims strongly against stinginess:

"It is you who are asked to spend for the cause of Allah, but some of you behave in a niggardly way. Whoever behaves miserly does so against his own soul. Allah is Self-sufficient and you are poor (47:38)."

"The stingy ones who try to make others stingy or those who hide the favors that Allah has

bestowed on them. We have prepared a humiliating torment for the disbelievers (4:37).”

“Those who are avaricious of the favors that Allah has given them should not think that this is good for them. Avarice is evil and whatever they are avaricious about will be tied to their necks on the Day of Judgment (3: 180).”

Imam as-Sadiq narrated on the authority of his fathers that Amirul-Mu'minin (a) once heard a man saying that stinginess is less forgivable than wronging. The Imam commented: “No, this is a lie. A wrong man may repent, seek Allah’s forgiveness, and correct his mistakes. But when one behaves in a stingy mood, he will not defray the zakat and almsgiving, will not regard his relatives, will not receive the guests hospitably, and will not spend his fortune in the cause of Allah and in the fields of charity. Paradise is forbidden for the stingy¹.”

“I wonder at the stingy who speeds towards the very destitution from which he wants to run away and misses the very ease of life which he covets. Consequently, he passes his life like the destitute, but will have to render an account in the next world like the rich².”

Disadvantages of Stinginess

Stinginess causes malice and hatred of the close as well as the foreigners. The closest individuals of the stingy may hope were he dead, because he deprives them of his fortune and they expect greedily to inherit him. Besides, the stingy is the most tiring: he exerts all efforts for collecting fortunes, but he does not enjoy them, because he very soon leaves all the fortunes to the heirs. Hence, “he passes his life in this world like the destitute, but will have to render an account in the next world like the rich.”

Forms of Stinginess

All forms of stinginess are abominable; yet, there is a variance among them. The most sinful form of stinginess is the refusal to defray the financial obligations that God has imposed upon Muslims for organizing their economical lives. Thus, the defects of stinginess vary among persons and states. For example, the stinginess of the wealthy is worse than that of the poor, and to behave stingily with the dependents, relatives, friends, and guests is uglier than it is with the foreigners.

Treatment of Stinginess

The advantages and disadvantages of stinginess should be kept in mind, because this may decrease the vehemence of stinginess. If this is not useful, the stingy should prompt himself to openhandedness for the desire of gaining good reputation. If a man feels at ease with openhandedness, he will discipline himself with sincerity and will like for himself to spend in the cause of God.

There are definite motives of stinginess. The treatment, then, is related to such motives. To stop these

motives is to remove the effects.

The strongest motive of stinginess is fear of poverty, which is one of the evil inspirations of the Devil so as to prevent generosity. By its wise and unparalleled style, the holy Quran decides that stinginess is useless, but it brings about bankruptcy and deprivation:

“It is you who are asked to spend for the cause of Allah, but some of you behave in a niggardly way. Whoever behaves miserly does so against his own soul. Allah is Self-sufficient and you are poor (47:38).”

The holy Quran also decides that everything that is given or spent out of generosity will not go in vain; yet, God the All-generous will compensate for it:

“Whatever thing you spend, He exceeds it with reward, and He is the best of Sustainers. (34:39)”

The holy Quran continues to enjoin openhandedness, confirming that he who spends for God’s sake is lending God who will repay him many folds out of His extensive kindness:

“Spending money for the cause of Allah is as the seed from which seven ears may grow, each bearing one hundred grains. Allah gives in multiples to those whom He wants. Allah is Munificent and All-knowing. (2:261)”

The holy Quran addresses a horrible threat against those whom are enslaved by stinginess:

“Those who horde gold and silver and do not spend (anything out of it) for the cause of Allah, should know that their recompense will be a painful torment on the Day of Judgment and that their treasures will be heated by the fire of hell and pressed against their foreheads, sides and back with this remark: “These are your own treasures which you hoarded for yourselves. See for yourselves what they feel like.” (9:34-5)”

Among the other incentives of stinginess is fathers’ excessive care for the future of their sons. Such fathers will not spend their fortunes so as to save them for their sons, believing that such fortunes will protect their sons from poverty. Such an emotion, which is deep-rooted in man’s mentality, cannot be harmful or excessive if it is moderate, reasonable, and away from negligence and exaggeration. Nevertheless, it is unfit for people of reason to feel such an emotion so exaggeratively. The holy Quran warns fathers against the prevalence of this emotion over them so that they will not be seduced by the love for their sons:

“Know that your possessions and children are a temptation for you and that Allah has the greatest reward for the righteous ones. (8:28)”

The best word in this regard is the following missive of Amirul-Mu’minin (a):

“So then, the worldly collection, which is between your hands, was possessed before you and will be possessed by others after you. You are only hording for one of two men: a man who will use that fortune in the acts of obedience to Allah, and this fortune that you suffered unhappiness until you collected it will be the source of happiness for such an individual. The other man is that who will use the fortune that you collected in the fields of disobedience to Allah, and your hording will cause him unhappiness. None of these two men is worthy of being preferred to yourself or being burdened on your back; therefore, you should hope Allah’s mercy for the past and hope Allah’s sustenance for the remaining³.”

Regarding God’s saying,

“That is how God will show them their regrettable deeds (2: 167),”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “The intendeds in the previous Verse are those who do not spend their fortunes in the ways of Allah and then die to leave them to others who will use them either in fields of obedience or disobedience to Allah. If the heirs use these fortunes in fields of obedience to Allah, those who collected them stingily will see them accounted with the good deeds of those heirs and, therefore, they will feel regretful for them. If the heirs use such fortunes in the fields of disobedience to Allah, the collectors will be regarded as assistants of those disobedient heirs⁴.”

There are groups of people who love money maniacally for its being money, without considering it as the means to a pleasure in this world or the world to come. Such groups find their pleasures only in hording money and, then, they behave towards it extremely stingily.

This sort of love is considered as mania that causes unhappiness and perdition. Money is not the purpose; yet, it is only the means used for livelihood and the Hereafter. Money that is used for any other means is useless:

“Since wealth does not necessarily guarantee everlasting happiness, then why do you not show kindness to the orphans, or urge one another to feed the destitute? Why do you take away the inheritance of others indiscriminately and why do you have an excessive love of riches?”

When the earth is crushed into small pieces and (when you find yourself) in the presence of your Lord and the rows and rows of angels, your greed for riches will certainly be of no avail to you. On that day, hell will be brought closer and the human being will come to his senses, but this will be of no avail to him. He will say, “Would that I had done some good deeds for this life.” On that day, the punishment of Allah and His detention will be unparalleled. And His bonds will be such as none other can bind. (89: 17-26)”

“In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent the Merciful: Woe to every slanderer and backbiter who collects and hoards wealth, thinking that his property will make him live forever. By no means! They will be thrown into hutamah. Would that you knew what hutamah is! It is a fierce fire created by Allah to penetrate into the hearts. It will engulf them in its long columns of flames. (104)”

Amirul-Mu'minin (a) said: "This world is only termination, suffering, raids, and lessons. As a form of its termination is that, you see that the bows of time are strung, its arrows are put to use, its spears are not missing the target, and its wounds are incurable. It hits the healthy with ailment and hits the alive with death.

As a form of the suffering of this world is, that man gathers while he will not have what he gathers and builds but he will not reside in what he builds. Then he leaves to Allah without being able to carry the wealth or use his building. As a form of the raids of this world is that, you imminently see the lucky change into unlucky and the unlucky change into lucky. Between the two, there is nothing more than the luxury that vanished and the misery that befell. As a form of the lessons of this world is that a man becomes very near to achieve his expectation but suddenly death captures him⁵."

¹. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 6 page 69 (as quoted from al-Kafi).

². Quoted from Nahj ul-Balagha.

³. Quoted from Nahj ul-Balagha.

⁴. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 6 page 69 (as quoted from al-Kafi and al-Faqih).

⁵. Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; part 1 page 467.

Chastity

Chastity is the abstention from whatever is unallowable and unsuitable, such as excessive food and carnal appetites. It is among the noblest traits and highest features that indicate elevation of faith, self-honoring, and dignity:

The Prophet (S) said: "The two hollow things the stomach and the genitals, are the main reasons beyond my umma's¹ being in Hell²."

Imam al-Baqir (a) said: "The best worship in the sight of Allah is the chastity of the stomach and the genitals³."

A man said to Imam al-Baqir (a) that his practices of worship were weak and his prayers and days of fasting were few; however, he hope he would eat and copulate only in legal ways. The Imam answered: "No jihad is better than the chastity of the stomach and the genitals⁴."

Reality of Chastity

Chastity does not mean to deprive oneself of the legal desires of food and sex. It only represents the moderation in the use of such desires. As a matter of fact, negligence and excess are always harmful to humankind. The excessive desires for food and sex cause gross dangers to which we will refer in our

discussion of gluttony. Shortage in such desires also causes deprivation of the life enjoyments and legal pleasures. It also causes bodily weakness as well as feebleness of energies and morale.

The Sought Moderation

It is difficult to identify the moderation in the desires for food and sex because of the different needs and energies of individuals. Moderation of an individual may be considered as exaggeration or shortage for another. The relative moderation is to have only the quantity that is sufficient, away from greed and fill. The best criterion in this regard is that which was stated by Amirul- Mu'minin:

“Son! May I instruct you four words after which you will no longer need medicine? Do not eat unless you are hungry. Stop eating while you are still hungry. Chew food deliberately. Before sleeping, go to toilet. You will not need medicine if you follow.”

“In the holy Quran, there is a Verse gathering the whole matter of medicine. It is:

“Eat and drink but do not be excessive.” (7:31)⁵

Advantages of Chastity

Chastity achieves happiness on both levels of individuals and communities. It beautifies man, raises him above gluttony, guards him against flattery to the mean ones, and enjoins him to gain the means of living and desires of life through legal ways.

- ¹. Umma stands for the Islamic community.
- ². Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 15 part 2 page 183 (as quoted from al-Kafi).
- ³. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 65 (as quoted from al-Kafi).
- ⁴. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 15 part 2 page 184 (as quoted from al-Barqi's al-Mahasin. In al-Kafi, there is a similar narration).
- ⁵. Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; 2/79 (as quoted from ar- Rawandi's ad-Dawaat).

Gluttony

Gluttony is the opposite of chastity. It stands for the excessive desires for food and sex. It is a mean tendency indicating self-feebleness, greedy nature, and slavery of instincts.

Amirul-Mu'minin (a) said: “He who wants to survive, yet no one will survive forever, should ease his back from the burdens of debts-, have the food as early as possible, and reduce copulation with women¹.”

Once, Amirul-Mu'minin (a) ate some dates, drank water, and then beat on his stomach with his hand and said: "Away with him who lets his stomach cause him to be in Hell." He then recited the poetic verse:

Whenever you respond to the desires of your stomach and genitals, they both will give nothing but the extreme dispraise².

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: "Gluttony is the source of every malady except fever, which appears to the body³."

"The sated stomach overdoes⁴."

"Allah hates the overeating⁵."

Abu al-Hasan (a) said: "If people have moderate food, their bodies will be healthy⁶."

Disadvantages of Gluttony

It is not unacceptable to say that gluttony, charms of the falsities of life, and attraction of luxury and lavish expenditure have been the main elements of retardation. All these elements have taken the nations into corruption. Overeating, for example, has many bad results. Modern medicine has proved that most of the diseases, curls, lines on the skins that deform the attractive lineaments of men and women, accumulation of fats, deepness of eyes, exhausting powers, and ailed mentalities the reason of all these defects is the continuous gluttony and the fatty foods. It has been also proved that overeating exhausts the stomach and creates various sorts of healthy troubles, such as arteriosclerosis, angina pectoris, hypertension, and diabetes.

The sexual gluttony also causes similar defects, such as impotence of the public health, disappearance of nervous power, and vanishing of vitality.

Treatment of Gluttony

- It is necessary for the overeater to keep in mind the advantages of chastity and ponder over the disadvantages of gluttony.
- It is necessary for the overeater to try his best to train himself on moderate food. The protective and remedial constitution of health is the moderation of food and the avoidance of overeating. This constitution is summarized in the holy Verse:

"Eat and drink but do not be excessive." (7:31)

The treatment of the sexual gluttony is as follows:

- Keeping in mind the dangers of sexual excess and moral and material corruptions.
- Striving the simulative of sexual desires, such as looking at the beauties of women, mixing of the sexes, excessive sexual imagination, and daydreams.

[1.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 14 page 545 (as quoted from Tibb ul-Ayimma).

[2.](#) Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; vol. 1 page 27.

[3.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 11 page 67 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

[4.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 11 page 67 (as quoted from al-Faqih).

[5.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 11 page 67 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

[6.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 14/876 (as quoted from al- Barqi's al-Mahasin).

Faithfulness and Breach

Faithfulness is the fulfillment of the deposited rights. It is the opposite of breach and one of the noblest traits and most dignified qualities that achieve admiration and success.

The opposite of faithfulness is breach, which stands for the seizure and usurpation of rights. It is one of the meanest qualities and nastiest manners that cause indignity, failure, and disappointment.

Therefore, reports and traditions urged faithfulness and warned against breach:

“Allah commands you to return that which had been entrusted to you to the rightful owners. Be just when passing judgment among people. Allah’s advice is the most noble. (4:58)”

“Believers, do not be dishonest to Allah and the Messengers or knowingly abuse your trust. (8:27)”

The Prophet (S) said: “My umma will be kept in goodness so long as they do not breach the trusts of each other, keep on fulfilling their trusts, and defray the zakat; otherwise, they will be inflicted with famine and harsh years of draught^{[1](#)}.”

“The fulfillment of the trusts brings sustenance, while treachery causes poverty^{[2](#)}.”

“He who breaches the trust is not one of us.”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “Do not be deceived by their very much offering of prayers and observance of fasting. In fact, prayers and fasting have become habits that they feel desolate if they omit them. You should test them by their truthfulness and fulfillment of trusts^{[3](#)}.”

“Abide by God-fearing and fulfillment of the trusts of them who deposit things with you. If the killer of Ali

Ibn Abi Talib deposits with me a trust, I will surely keep it for him⁴.”

Advantages of Faithfulness and Disadvantages of Breach

Faithfulness plays a great role in the lives of nations. It is the system of their deeds, the support of their affairs, the title of their nobility, and the way to their moral and material development. The faithful individuals win the others' admiration, trust, love, and confidence. Besides, such individuals will win shares in people's fortunes and profits.

This fact is applicable to all nations whose lives cannot advance without the surroundings of confidence. Through faithfulness, the Arabs could control the reins of economy and keys of industry and commerce that brought abundant profits. Unfortunately, Muslims, thereafter, neglected faithfulness; therefore, they failed and were disappointed.

Thus, breach of trusts is one of the major reasons of failure. It is a serious factor causing mutual mistrust, enmity, and fear. Such factor results in social corruption, loose of ties, waste of interests, and dissipation of energies.

Forms of Breach

There are many forms of breach that vary in the scope of its cruelty, crimes, and results. The vilest form is treason that is committed by the thinkers and writers who violate the sacred facts of science by means of distortion and misrepresentation. The divulgement of Muslims' secrets is another form of breach. A third one is the breach of the deposits. To confiscate such deposits is surely a double crime of breach, larceny, and usurpation. There are many other repulsive forms of breach that injure both the individuals and communities, such as trickery, cheating, deficient measurements, fraud, and dishonesty.

- ¹. Quoted from as-Saduq's Thawab ul-A'mal.
- ². Quoted from al-Wafi; part 10 page 112 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- ³. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 82 (as quoted from al-Kafi).
- ⁴. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 10 page 112 (as quoted from al- Kafi and Tahdhib).

Fraternity

Spiritual Fraternity

The pre-Islamic era was a stage of tragedies in the various mental and material fields. Moral dissolution and disorder were the most horrible tragedies that caused people to practice natures of beasts, law of jungle, disagreement, fighting, killing, usurpation, and declamation of revenge and retaliation.

When the dawn of Islam rose to spread its lights over humankind, it could, through its immortal principles and unparalleled constitution, stop these tragedies and cut off these combats. Then, it changed these ignorant herds into “the best nation that ever existed among humanity¹.”

Faith replaced atheism, order replaced disorder, knowledge replaced ignorance, peace replaced war, and mercy replaced retaliation.

Thus, these concepts faded away and were replaced by the new Islamic principles. The Prophet (S) began to establish that ideal nation whose individuals were unique in order, morals, and perfection. As they progressed under the pennon of the holy Quran and the leadership of the Prophet (S), Muslims flew in the horizons of generosity until they could achieve the principle of fraternity in such a method that could not be achieved by any other code. Moreover, the ties of belief became stronger than those of kinship, and, likewise, the bonds of faith exalted over the tribal and national bonds. Muslims, hence, became a united nation of compact lineup, high edifice, and fluttering pennon:

“People, we have created you all male and female and have made you nations and tribes so that you would recognize each other. The most honorable among you in the sight of Allah is the most pious of you. Allah is All-knowing and All-aware (49: 13).”

The holy Quran went on implanting the concepts of spiritual fraternity in the mentalities through numerous Verses compacted by a remarkable and wise style.

The Quran, once, legislates fraternity as a law that should be applied by Muslims:

“Believers are each other's brothers. Restore peace among your brothers. Have fear of Allah so that perhaps you will receive mercy (49: 10).”

On another occasion, the Quran confirms the law of fraternity and warns against factors of disagreement, reminding of the grace of the Islamic fraternity and harmony after long periods of disagreement and fighting:

“All of you united hold fast to the rope of Allah, and recall how He favored you when your hostility to each other had torn you apart. He united your hearts in one faith and through His grace you became brothers (3: 103).”

In abstract, Islam has exerted all efforts for strengthening the spiritual fraternity among Muslims and protecting it against trends of disagreement and separation through the constitution of the social ties.

As a model, we provide the following:

☞ The Islamic constitution of the social ties took Muslims' emotions and feelings far above the slavery of the tribal sectarianism to guide them to the noblest aim; namely, the obedience to God and the seeking of His satisfaction. Love, hate, giving, deprivation, support, and disappointment all these should be for

the sake of God. Such being the case, the handles of fraternity will become firmer and Muslims will become the like of the well-established building each part of which strengthens the other.

The Prophet (S) said: “The mutual love of the believers that is intended sincerely for the sake of Allah is one of the greatest classes of faith. He who loves, hates, gives, deprives all for the sake of Allah is surely one of the choices of Allah².”

Imam as-Sajjad (a) said: “When Allah will gather the past and the late generations on the Day of Resurrection, a caller that everybody will hear will cry out on those who loved each other for the sake of Allah. A few people will stand up. They will be sent to Paradise without being rendered to judgment. In their way to Paradise, the angels will meet and ask them. ‘We are going to our abodes in Paradise without being rendered to judgment,’ they will answer. As the angels ask them about their class, they will answer, ‘We loved each other for the sake of Allah.’ As the angels ask them about their deeds due to which they have gained such a rank, they will answer, ‘We loved and hated for the sake of Allah.’ The angels then will say: Very well is the reward of the doers of charity³.”

Imam al-Baqir (a) said: “If you want to know whether you are to the good or not, you should test your heart: if it loves the people of obedience to Allah and hates the people of disobedient to Him, you are then to the good and Allah loves you. If your heart hates the people of the obedience to Allah and loves the people of the disobedience to Him, you are then not to the good and Allah hates you. Certainly, man will be attached to the one whom he loved⁴.”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “On the Day of Resurrection, those who love each other purely for the sake of Allah will be on luminous stages; the light of their faces, bodies, stages, and everything will be shining so that shining will be their distinctive feature and everybody will point to them and say those loved each other for the sake of Allah⁵.”

“He who does not love or hate for the sake of the religion is not Muslim⁶.”

The Islamic constitution of the social ties enjoined Muslims to adhere to the factors of coalition, dignity, and luxury, such as exhorting each other to the right, helping each other in fields of piety, supporting each other for the achievement of justice, and joining the forces in the economical fields of life. According to the Islamic Sharia, all Muslims are one family whose matters of happiness and unhappiness are the same. The constitution of such a family is:

“Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah and those with him are stern to the disbelievers yet kind among themselves. (48:29)”

And the slogan is the saying of the Prophet (S):

“He who begins his day without caring for the affairs of the Muslims is not a Muslim.”

The Islamic constitution of the social ties warned Muslims against all factors of separation, hostility,

obscenity, backbiting, tale bearing, breach, and cheating as well as all other matters that arouse seditions and rancor. The Muslims' principal in this point is the Prophet's saying:

“The true believer is only he whom Muslims can trust in regard with their estates and souls. The true Muslim is only he whom Muslims are saved from his hand physical harm– and tongue– verbal harm–. The true Muhajir⁷ emigrant– is that who deserts the sins⁸.”

☞ The Islamic constitution of the social ties granted the opportunities of improving friendly relations between Muslims, such as exchanging visits, frequenting religious circles, and witnessing Islamic gatherings such as collective prayers, hajj⁹, and the like.

^{1.} Quoted from the holy Quran; 3:110.

^{2.} Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 89 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

^{3.} Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 15 part 1 page 283 (as quoted from al-Kafi).

^{4.} Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 90 (as quoted from al-Kafi).

^{5.} Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 89 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

^{6.} Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 90 (as quoted from al-Kafi).

^{7.} Muhajirs: The emigrants. The early Muslims of Mecca who had to flee their homeland to Medina.

^{8.} Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 99 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

^{9.} Hajj is the pilgrimage to the Sacred Mosque at Mecca undertaken in the twelfth month of the Hijri year and constituting one of the religious duties of Islam.

Sectarianism

Sectarianism stands for supporting one's people, family, or homeland on bases in violation of the law, right, and justice. Islam has fought against sectarianism and warned Muslims from its vices.

The Prophet (S) said: “Whoever has the least amount of fanaticism in his heart shall be raised by Allah on the Day of Resurrection together with the pagan Arabs of the pre-Islamic times¹.”

“By means of Islam, Allah eradicated the fanaticism of the pre-Islamic times and the taking pride in fathers. Certainly, all people belong to Adam who was created from dust. The best of you in the sight of Allah is the most pious².”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “As for him who behaves fanatically, Allah will bind him with a fire band³.”

Imam al-Baqir (a) narrated:

Salman al-Farsi –the Persian– and Omar were among some companions who began mentioning their tribes and lineages proudly. Omar asked Salman: “What is your tribe?” Salman answered: “I am Salman the son of God's servant. I was astray, but God guided me through Muhammad. I was poor, but God

made me rich through Muhammad. I was slave, but God set me free through Muhammad. This is my lineage, Omar.”

As he was told of the previous discussion, the Prophet (S) commented: “People of Koreish! A man’s lineage is his religion, personality is his moralities, and origin is his intellect. Allah says:

“People, We have created you all male and female and have made you nations and tribes so that you would recognize each other. The most honorable among you in the sight of Allah is the most pious of you (49: 13).”

He (S) turned to Salman and said: “Salman! No one of those is preferable to you by any means except piety. You are preferable to him whom you are more pious than he is⁴.”

The best evidence on the credibility of Islam in its denial of the confessional feud and deciding faith and piety to be the criterion of preference is the fact that Abu Lahab who was the real Arab and the uncle of the Prophet (S) was declared as disbeliever and that he would be punished and tortured in Hell because of his atheism:

“May the hands of Abu Lahab perish! May he too perish! His property and worldly gains will be of no help to him. He will suffer in a blazing fire. (111: 1-4)”

Salman, on the other hand, was Persian and away from Arabism, but the Prophet (S) granted him that immortal Medal of Honor:

“Salman is one of us the Ahlul-Bayt.”

This was for nothing other than his high faith, genuine honesty, and wholehearted devotion to God and His Messenger.

Reality of Sectarianism

The dispraised sectarianism against which Islam has warned is supporting one another in fields of wrongness and taking pride in the non-Islamic values.

Conversely, there is the fanaticism for the right as well as the support of one another on achieving the public interests of Islam, such like defending the religion, guarding the Islamic homeland, and protecting Muslims’ dignities, souls, and fortunes. This sort of fanaticism is praised since it results in uniting the aims and efforts and achieving dignity and poise for Muslims.

Imam as-Sajjad (a) said: “The fanaticism for which one is offended is to prefer the evil individuals of one’s clan to the righteous people of another. To love one’s clan is not a sort of fanaticism, which is to support one’s people on evildoings⁵.”

Calamities of Sectarianism

A survey into the Islamic history, as well as the reasons of the collapse of Muslims, proves that the confessional feuds were the main reason that resulted in the disagreement, disunity, and crumbling of Muslims and their powers that led to such a gloomy destiny. Muslims were humiliated only when the disuniting tendencies of fanaticism found grounds in their mentalities and caused their handles of mutual affection to be broken and their ties of fraternity to be split up. Hence, they became the example of retardation, separation, and humbleness after they had been the symbol of superiority, cohesion, and pride. They did not take heed of God's saying:

“All of you united hold fast to the rope of Allah, and recall how He favored you when your hostility to each other had torn you apart. He united your hearts in one faith and through His grace, you became brothers. You were on the verge of falling headlong into the abyss of fire, but Allah saved you. (3: 103)”

[1.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 99 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

[2.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 14 page 48 (as quoted from al- Faqih).

[3.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 14 page 48 (as quoted from al- Faqih).

[4.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 15 part 2 page 95 (as quoted from Sheikh at-Tusi's al-Amali).

[5.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 149 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

Justice

Justice is the master of virtues and the course to peace. Islam has glorified justice and encouraged it through numerous texts of the Quran and the Sunna:

“Allah commands (people) to maintain justice, kindness, and proper relations with their relatives. (16:90)”

“Be just in your words, even if the party involved is one of your relatives. (6: 152)”

“Allah commands you to return that which had been entrusted to you to the rightful owners. Be just when passing judgment among people. (4:58)”

As he was asked about the codes of the religion completely, Imam as-Sajjad (a) said: “They are to say the right, judge with justice, and fulfill the pledge^{[1.](#)}”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “Justice is more delicious than honey, softer than butter, and more sweet-smelling than musk^{[2.](#)}”

Imam ar-Rida (a) said: “The application of justice and charity is sign of the continuance of graces³.”

Forms of Justice

(1) Man's justice towards God

This is the brightest form, the highest concept, and the title of credibility of justice. How is it possible for anyone to fulfill the obligations of God so justly since God is the All-benefactor whose graces are innumerable and favors are incalculable? It is impossible to achieve justice towards the Lord who is absolutely Self-Sufficient except through confessing of shortcoming.

Justice towards God stands for the believing in Him, being sincere with Him, believing in His messengers and representatives, and responding to the necessities, such as the love for Him, having the honor of worshipping Him, persisting on the obedience to Him, and being away from the acts of disobedience to Him.

(2) Man's justice towards the society

This form of justice can be achieved by observing the individuals' rights, refraining from maltreating them, dealing with them through noble traits, and courtesy, and sympathizing the poor as well as the other matters of social justice.

In the holy Quran, God summarizes the factuality of the public justice by saying:

“Allah commands (people) to maintain justice, kindness, and proper relations with their relatives. He forbids them to commit indecency, sin, and rebellion. Allah gives you advice so that perhaps you will take heed. (16:90)”

Amirul-Mu'minin (a) depicted the course of the social justice so briefly and eloquently:

“My son, make yourself the measure for dealings between you and others. Thus, you should desire for others what you desire for yourself and hate for others what you hate for yourself. Do not oppress as you do not like to be oppressed. Do good to others, as you would like good to be done to you. Regard bad for yourself whatever you regard bad for others. Accept that (treatment) from others, which you would like others to accept from you. Do not talk about what you do not know even though what you know be very little. Do not say to others what you do not like to be said to you.”

(3) Justice towards the dead

The alive should be just towards the dead who departed this life leaving fortunes and gaining nothing in their everlasting journey except a few yards of clothes and narrow spans of the inside of the earth.

It is just for the alive to feel sympathetic to the dead and reward them equitably by implementing their

wills, defraying their debts, doing charitable and righteous deeds for their sake, and seeking God's forgiveness to them.

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: "The dead feels happy for seeking Allah's mercy and forgiveness for him in the same way as the alive feels happy for the presents gifted to him."

"As for Muslims who do a charitable deed for the sake of a dead, Allah will double their rewards and will reward the dead for that deed, too⁴."

(4) Justice of the rulers

Because of their being the leaders of people and the guardians of nation, the rulers are the worthiest of being characterized by justice. On that account, the rulers' justice represents the highest concept of justice and the most influential. Through the rulers' justice, security is achieved, peace predominates, luxury prevails, and the subjects become happy.

Advantages of Justice

The sound souls are created on the nature of the love for justice and hate for wronging. Over the existence on this earth, all human beings agreed unanimously, despite their different trends and courses, on glorifying justice. Furthermore, they have gone on praising its virtues and dedicating themselves to the doing of justice. It is then the secret of the existence of nations and the symbol of virtues. Only was it because the loss of justice, the great powers collapsed and the glorious civilizations reduced to rubble.

The Ahlul-Bayt (a) were high examples of justice. Their deeds and words were immortal lessons that light for humanity the courses of justice, right, and guidance:

In his final disease, the Prophet (S) asked people to retaliate upon him if he had made mistake with any of them intentionally or unintentionally. Suwada Ibn Qays said: "O God's Messenger, once, you were riding your she-camel and having a cane in the hand when I received you after you had been in Ta'if. As you were trying to beat your riding animal with your cane, you hit my belly." The Prophet (S) ordered him to retaliate. "Show me your belly," asked Suwada, and the Prophet did. "May I put my mouth on your belly, God's Messenger?" asked Suwada. The Prophet permitted, and Suwada said: "I seek the guard of the Prophet's place of retaliation against fire of Hell."

The Prophet then asked him to retaliate or forgive. "I will certainly forgive, God's Messenger," said Suwada. The Prophet prayed: "Allah, forgive Suwada Ibn Qays, for he forgave You Prophet Muhammad⁵."

Abu Saeed al-Khidri narrated the following:

A Bedouin asked the Prophet (S) impudently to defray the debt that he owed him. The companions

interfered and reproached the Bedouin, saying, “Woe is you. Do you know to whom are you addressing?” “I am only demanding with my right,” said the Bedouin. The Prophet (S) said to his companions: “You should have been with the right party.”

He then summoned Khawla bint Qays and asked her to loan him some dates and promised he would repay her when his share would come to his hand. She did, and the Prophet (S) gave the Bedouin his due in full after he had invited him to a meal. The Bedouin said: “You have given the due in full. God may give you your due in full.” The Prophet commented: “Those who give the due in full are the best of people. Woe to the nation whose individuals do not give the weak his due in full.”

It is said that the Bedouin embraced Islam after he had seen the high morality of the Prophet, and said: “God’s Messenger, I have never seen such a fair individual⁶.”

Thus was Amirul-Mu'minin Ali (a). Imam as-Sadiq (a) narrated the following.

When he held the position of caliphate, Ali (a) scaled the mimbar and said: “All praise and thanks be to Allah. I will not seize a single dirham from your shares so long as a single bunch of my dates in Yathrib is available. Be sure. Do you think I will prefer you to myself?” Aqil⁷ stood up and said: “This means that you will put me and the black ones of Medina on the same level, does it not?” The Imam (a) asked him to sit down, and said, “You have no preference to the black ones of Medina except by means of a virtue in Islam or piety⁸.”

The following narration is recorded by Ibn Hagar in his book titled ‘As-Sawaaq ul-Muhriqa’ page 79:

(Ibn Asakir narrated that) Aqil asked Amirul-Mu'minin (a) to give him some money because he was poor. The Imam told him to wait until his share of the public treasury would come out. As Aqil insisted, the Imam asked a man to take Aqil to the market and lead him to the locks of the stores so that he would unlock and take from them. “Do you want me to be thief?” asked Aqil. The Imam (a) said: “And do you want me to be thief as you ask me to give you the shares of Muslims?” Aqil then threatened he would join Muawiya.

As soon as Aqil asked him, Muawiya gave him one hundred thousand dirhams and asked him to take the mimbar and tell people his story with his brother.

Aqil ascended the mimbar and said: “People, when I tried to make Ali give up his religion, he refused and preferred his religion to me. But when I asked Muawiya to prefer me to his religion, he did⁹.”

Ibn Abbas narrated the following:

I, once, visited Amirul-Mu'minin (a) and found him repairing one of his old slippers. As he finished, he added it to the other and asked me to evaluate. “It is valueless,” I answered. As he insisted, I said: “They may be half a dirham.” He (a) commented: “By Allah I swear, these slippers are favorable for me to my leadership to you unless I constitute the right or reject the wrong¹⁰.”

On another occasion, Imam Ali (a) said: “By Allah, I would rather pass a night in wakefulness on the thorns of as-Sadan (a plant having sharp prickles) or be driven in chains as a prisoner than meet Allah and His Messenger on the Day of Judgment as an oppressor over any person or a usurper of anything out of worldly wealth. And how can I oppress any one for (the sake of a life) that is fast moving towards destruction and is to remain under the earth for a long time¹¹.”

- ¹. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 16 (as quoted from Kitab ul-Ahsara; page 116 and as-Saduq’s al-Khissal).
- ². Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 89 (as quoted from al-Kafi).
- ³. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 16 (as quoted from Kitab ul-Ahsara; page 116 and Uyounu Akhbar ir-Ridha).
- ⁴. These two narratives are quoted from Sheikh as-Saduq’s Men La Yahdhuruh ul-Faqih.
- ⁵. Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; part 1 page 671.
- ⁶. Quoted from Fadhaail ul-Khamsa Mines Sihah is-Sitteh, part 1 page 122 (as quoted from Ibn Madgeh’s Sahih).
- ⁷. Aqil ibn Abi Talib is the brother of Imam Ali, peace be upon him.
- ⁸. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 9 page 539 (as quoted from al-Kafi).
- ⁹. Quoted from Fadhaail ul-Khamsa Mines Sihah is-Sitteh, part 3 page 15.
- ¹⁰. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 2 page 570.
- ¹¹. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 2 page 606.

Injustice

Terminologically, injustice is to put a thing in an inappropriate place. Polytheism, hence, is grave injustice, because it is replaced with monotheism. Conventionally, injustice stands for the seizure of rights, and the words and deeds of hostility against others, such as revilement, backbiting, and confiscation of property, crimes of beating or murder, and the like forms of wrongdoings.

Injustice, however, is one of the bad characteristics that are deep-rooted in most of the mentalities. All over history, humankind suffered various kinds of tragedies that made life seem depressing. It therefore is the comprehensive of sins, source of evils, and incentive of corruption. God says:

“The unjust will certainly have no happiness. (6:21)”

“Allah does not guide the unjust. (6:144)”

“Allah does not love the unjust. (3:57)”

“The unjust will face a painful punishment. (14:22)”

“We destroyed certain generations who lived before you because of their injustice. (10:13)”

“Do not think that Allah is unaware of what the unjust people do. (14:42)”

“(On the Day of Judgment) to redeem oneself of one’s injustice, one would gladly spend the

wealth of the whole earth if it were possible. On seeing the torment one will try to hide his regret. They will all be judged fairly and no wrong will be done to them. (10:54)

Amirul-Mu'minin (a) said: "By Allah, even if I am given all the domains of the seven (stars) with all that exists under the skies in order that I may disobey Allah to the extent of snatching one grain of barley from an ant, I would not do it. For me, your world is lighter than the leaf in the mouth of a locust that is chewing it. What has Ali to do with bounties that will pass away and pleasures that will not last?"

Abu Bassir narrated the following:

Two parties of litigation filed their case before Imam as-Sadiq (a). After he had listened to both of them, the Imam spoke: "It is quite true that he who seizes something by wrong means is not seizing goodness. Certainly, the oppressed party seizes from the religion of the wronging party more than that which the wronging party seizes from the oppressed party's property. He who does evil to people should not show loathing towards the evil that is done to him. As a matter of fact, man will harvest nothing but that which he sowed. No one will harvest sweetness from the bitter, and no one will harvest bitterness from the sweet."

These words of the Imam (a) made the two parties settle their litigation before they left him¹.

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: "He who seizes his brother's property wrongfully will consume a flame of fire on the Day of Resurrection²."

"As for him who wrongs others, Allah will cause him, his descendants, or the descendants of his descendants to be wronged by absolute persons."

When the Imam was asked how it is acceptable for God to cause somebody to wrong the descendants of the wrongdoer, he referred to God's saying:

"Those who are concerned about the welfare of their own children after their death should have fear of Allah and guide them properly. (4:9)"

To punish sons for their fathers' crimes is restricted only to those who accept and welcome their fathers' wrongdoings so that they would inherit such usurped properties. To punish such sons is a reproach that discourages the wrongdoers from aggressions out of their care for their dear sons. It is also a good tidings for the oppressed individuals that their oppressors will be punished eventually.

The Prophet (S) said: "For anyone who begins his day without having the intent to oppress anybody, Allah will forgive his sins that he committed against his Lord-."

Forms of Injustice

(1) Self-Wronging

Self-wronging is the negligence of the obedience to God. Therein, disappointment and humility will be the result:

“(I swear) By the soul and that (Power) which designed it and inspired it with knowledge of evil and piety, those who purify their souls will certainly have everlasting happiness and those who corrupt their souls will certainly be deprived (of happiness) (91: 10).”

(2) Injustice towards the Family

Injustice towards the family occurs when the paterfamilias neglects to apply the true Islamic education to them, overlooks to guide them to virtue, uses excessive severity and violence, and prevents them from having the necessities of good livelihood. Such matters cause material and ethical shortcomings to the family members.

(3) Injustice towards the Relatives

This form of injustice occurs when the relatives are deserted, disappointed in misfortunes, and deprived of feelings of kindness. Such matters bring about enmity and disregard of relations.

(4) Injustice towards the Society

This form of injustice occurs when the individuals of a society are treated proudly, their rights are neglected, dignities are disrespected, and interests are disregarded. Such behaviors cause social corruption. The most hideous forms of social injustice is wronging the weak individuals who lack the ability to defend themselves and have no weapon other than complaining and supplicating to the All-merciful Just Lord.

Imam al-Baqir (a) said: “When my father was dying, he hanged me to his chest and said: son, I command you with the matter that my father said to me that his father had commanded him with when he was dying. I command you to beware of wronging him who has no supporter against you except Allah³.”

(5) Injustice of the Rulers

This sort of injustice is the gravest.

Imam as-Sadiq (a) narrated: “Allah ordered, by revelation, one of the prophets to go to the absolute ruler of that kingdom and say to him: I have not appointed you for shedding their blood and seizing their

property. I only appointed you for responding to the cries of the oppressed people. Even if they are atheists, I will not neglect the oppressions that the wronged people encounter.”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) related on the authority of his fathers that the Prophet (S) said: “On the Day of Resurrection, Hell will speak to three categories of people: the rulers, the reciters, and the wealthy. It will say to the ruler: ‘Allah gave you authority, but you did not rule justly.’ Hell, then, will swallow him in the same way as birds swallow grains of sesame.

To the reciter, Hell will say: ‘You adorned yourself before people but fought against Allah by committing the acts of disobedience to him.’ Hell, then, will swallow him.

To the wealthy, Hell will say: ‘Allah showered you with abundant worldly wealth, but when He asked you for a loan, you refused out of your stinginess.’

Hell, then, will swallow him⁴.”

The previous threat is not restricted only to the wrongdoers; it also includes those who join the oppressors, those who accede to their deeds, and those who contribute in their evildoings. All these are partners in the sin and the punishment:

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “The wrongdoer, his supporter, and the one who accepts his deed are partners (of the same crime).”

To stand by the oppressed people and protect them from inequity is one of the best acts of obedience to God that leave nice traces and good marks on the spiritual and material existence of humankind.

Imam al-Kadhim (a) said to Ibn Yaqtin⁵: “Guarantee for me one thing and I will guarantee for you three things: guarantee for me that you will settle the need of anyone of our adherents that you meet in the center of caliphate and I guarantee for you that you shall not encounter the strike of swords, you shall not be under the ceiling of any cell, and poverty shall never visit your house⁶.”

Abu al-Hasan (a) said: “There are certain disciples of Allah who accompany the rulers for guarding Allah’s disciples. (According to another report,) Those are the ones whom Allah will save from Hell⁷.”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “The expiation of holding governmental authorities is to settle the needs of the friends⁸.”

A man asked Imam as-Sadiq (a) to write a message to an-Nejashi, the treasury official of al-Ahwaz and Persia, to cancel the debts that he owed his office, since an-Nejashi was Shiite. The Imam did, and the man carried that message to an-Nejashi and handed it over to him when they were alone. In that message, the Imam (a) wrote: “In the Name of Allah the Compassionate the Merciful. Please your brother and Allah will please you.”

As he read the message, an-Nejashi kissed and put it between his eyes and asked the man about his need. "I owe your office ten thousand dirhams," said the man. An-Nejashi asked his secretary to cancel the debt and record ten thousand dirhams that the man would have the next year. He then took out ten thousand dirhams and gave to the man and asked, "Have I pleased you?" "Yes, you have," answered the man. An-Nejashi took another bag of ten thousand dirhams and gave to the man and asked, "Have I pleased you?" "Yes, you certainly have," said the man. An-Nejashi went on giving that man everything, including a riding animal, a bond maiden, and a servant, and asking whether he had pleased him until it was the turn of the rug on which he was sitting. He also asked the man to provide all his needs so that he would settle them.

The man came to Imam as-Sadiq (a) and told him of the whole story. The Imam was highly delighted. "Son of God's Messenger," asked the man, "Are you pleased by that which an-Nejashi had done to me?" The Imam answered: "Yes, indeed, by Allah. His deed has also pleased Allah and His Messenger⁹."

Bad Consequences of Injustice

To deem ugly and deny injustice is a natural quality of humankind. The free spirits refute injustice and exert all efforts for fighting against it. Commonness of injustice is the most dangerous epidemic on societies, since it causes social collapse. To overlook acts of injustice encourages the oppressors to go beyond the limits in aggression and criminality. It also enjoins the oppressed people to revenge themselves upon others. Such being the case, disorder will be common. All this will certainly produce dissolution of nations as well as loss of security and luxury.

Treatment of Injustice

It is very difficult to treat from injustice and pull up its roots. At any rate, it may be possible to ease the sharpness of injustice by:

- Keeping in mind the virtues of justice and nice influence, such as spread of peace, amicability, and comfort,
- Learning lessons from the disadvantages and mental and material damages of injustice,
- Strengthening the religious restraint by means of educating the conscience and the feelings of the values and purposeful concepts of faith, and
- Studying the examples of the despots who suffered the vilest consequences because of their tyranny and injustice.

It is narrated that a Kurdish celebrity, once, was invited to a banquet of a prince. As he noticed two grilled partridges on the banquet, he smiled. The prince asked him for a reason. He narrated: "When I

was in the vigor of my youth, I waylaid a merchant. When I was about to kill him, he begged me, but, uselessly. When he despaired, he turned to two partridges that were on a mountain and asked them to be the witnesses on that crime. Now, I remembered that situation when my eyes fell on these two grilled partridges.”

As the man finished, the prince said: “Yes, the two partridges testified on your crime.” He then ordered to behead that man¹⁰.

It is also narrated that, one night, Abdul-Melik Ibn Marwan the Umayyad caliph- could not sleep; therefore, he summoned a storyteller who told the following story:

“An owl in Mosul asked the hand of the daughter of an owl in Basra for her son. The owl of Basra stipulated that the dowry should be one hundred ruined villages. ‘Well,’ answered the owl of Mosul, ‘I cannot do so now. But if God perpetuates our governor for only one more year, I will easily do it.’”

Abdul-Melik was highly affected by this story. Since early morning, he dedicated all his efforts to repealing the injustice that befell some people, judging justly between individuals, and inspecting his officials’ deeds¹¹.

- ¹. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 162 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- ². Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 162 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- ³. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 162 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- ⁴. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 16/209 (as quoted from as- Saduq’s al-Khissal).
- ⁵. Ibn Yaqtin was holding a high position in the center of caliphate.
- ⁶. Quoted from al-Bahaai’s al-Kashkul; 124.
- ⁷. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 10 page 28 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- ⁸. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 10 page 28 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- ⁹. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 10 page 28 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- ¹⁰. Quoted from al-Kashkul: 21. It is also in Hayat ul-Hayawan; THE PARTRIDGE
- ¹¹. Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; 1/110. It is also recorded in Siraj ul-Mulouk.

Sincerity

Sincerity stands for purifying one’s deeds from blemishes of ostentation in order to make them purely intended to God Who says:

“Whoever desires to meet his Lord should strive righteously and should worship no one besides Him. (18: 110)”

“Worship Allah and be devoted to His religion. The religion of Allah is certainly pure. (39:2-3)”

“They were only commanded to worship Allah, be uprightly devoted to His religion, steadfast in prayer and pay the zakat. This is truly the eternal religion (98:5).”

The Prophet (S) said: “As for anyone who works to Allah sincerely for forty days, Allah will make the springs of wisdom come out of his heart and tongue¹.”

“Man cannot be full knowledgeable before he considers people as camels with regard to relation with Allah, and considers himself the meanest².”

Amirul-Mu'minin (a) said: “This world is wholly ignorance except the situations of knowledge. Knowledge is wholly ignorance except that which is practiced. All the practices are showiness except those which are done heartily. Sincerity, likewise, is insecure before the end result is realized³.”

Imam al-Jawad (a) said: “Sincerity is the best worship⁴.”

Virtue of Sincerity

Values of deeds vary according to their purposes. The measure of decency and acceptance of deeds depends upon the nobility of purpose and purity from blemishes of cheating, defraud, and hypocrisy. In view of the Islamic Sharia, the only incentive is the intention that stirs the deed. Whenever such an intention is heartily provided to God and purified from the blemishes of showiness, it will be honored by the acceptance of God. Conversely, if cheating and showiness is mixed with the intention, the wrath and refusal of God will befall it. On that account, sincerity is the cornerstone of the beliefs and the factual stipulation that is specified for the validity of deeds. Sincerity, also, frees from inducements and deceptions of the Devil:

“He (the Shaitan) said, ‘By Your Glory, I shall seduce all of them (children of Adam) except Your sincere servants among them’ (38:82-3).”

Obstacles of Sincerity

Since sincerity is the brilliant lodestar that shows the courses of true obedience and honest worship of God, the Devil has used all snares for inducing people through a great variety of deceptive expectations, such as fondness of reputation and wealth, attainment of glory, and seeking for material desires. Sometimes, the devilish inspirations may come in the form of soft, deceptive whispering. Accordingly, one may practice acts of obedience to God with the intention of sincerity, but if he examines them closely, he will find them mixed with showiness. This is in fact one of the most dangerous slips that nobody can evade except the genuine disciples.

It is related that a man said: “For thirty years, I used to offer my prayers collectively in the mosque in the first row. One day, I was late because of something and I had to join the second row. As soon as I stopped, I felt embarrassed. Only then, I discovered that my previous prayers had been my source of

pleasure.”

It is also narrated that a worshipper used to fast for forty years without letting anyone, including his relatives, notice so. He used to take his food to give it as alms in his way to the market so that his family member think that he would have his food in the market and the people in the market think that he had his food at home.

How to Obtain Sincerity?

The most important incentive of showiness is to attract people’s admirations and obtain their satisfaction. As a matter of fact, the obtainment of people’s satisfaction is an unattainable purpose, because people are unable to satisfy themselves; therefore, they cannot be satisfied with others. The only One Whose satisfaction should be sought is God Who possesses the reins of the affairs completely and can do everything. Hence, the true men of reason should direct towards Him and obey Him completely heartily.

Showiness and cheating cannot continue for a long time. They are soon revealed before everybody, and the showy will soon become the subject of loathing and disrespect.

It is narrated that a man from the Israelites decided to worship God so that people would praise him. For a long period, he observed an excessive worship to God, but every individual who passed by him realized that he was ostentatious. One day, he said to himself that he had tired himself and wasted his lifetime for nothing; hence, he should work heartily from now on. As he did, every individual who passed by him was admired by his worship and said that he was pious man.

- [1.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 15/87 (as quoted from Ibn Fahad’s Oddat ud-Daee).
- [2.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; 14/54 (within the Prophet’s commandment for Abu Dharr).
- [3.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 15/85 (as quoted from Al- Amali and at-Tawhid).
- [4.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 15/87 (as quoted from Ibn Fahad’s Oddat ud-Daee).

Showiness

Showiness stands for seeking high rank and respect of people by flaunting charity:

“The hypocrites try to deceive Allah but He, in fact, deceives them. They stand up in prayer lazily just to show that they pray, but, in truth they remember Allah very little. (4: 142)”

“Whoever desires to meet his Lord should strive righteously and should worship no one besides Him. (18: 110)”

“ Like the one who spends his property to show off and who has no faith in Allah or belief in the

Day of Judgment. (2:264)”

The Prophet (S) said: “A time will come upon people in which their intentions will be evil and their appearances will be deceiving all out of their greediness for the worldly pleasures. Their deeds will not be heartily intended for the sake of Allah. Their religion will be showiness. They will not feel fearful at all. Then, Allah will inflict upon them with such harsh punishment that they will not be responded even if they pray for Him like the drowned¹.”

The Prophet (S) said: “(On the Day of Resurrection,) some people will be taken to Hell. The Lord will order Malik² to tell Hell not to burn those individuals’ feet, because they used them for walking to the mosques, not to burn their faces, because they used to perform the (ritual) ablution so perfectly, not to burn their hands, because they used to raise them in supplications, and not to burn their tongues, because they used to recite the Quran very frequently. Then, the angel in charge of Hell will ask them about their manners. They will answer: We used to do all these things not for the sake of Allah. Hence, we were told to take the rewards of our deeds from those for whom we used to do³.”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “Any form of showiness is polytheism. Certainly, he who does something for the sake of people should take the reward from people, but whoever does purely for the sake of Allah will take his reward from Allah⁴.”

“As for anyone who keeps secret a good deed, Allah will sooner or later reveal a good reputation for him. As for him who keeps secret an evil, Allah will sooner or later reveal an ill reputation for him⁵.”

Categories of Showiness

1. Showiness of the Belief

This category of showiness stands for pretending faith and concealing disbelief. It is hypocrisy, which is the most serious and the gravest danger on Muslims.

2. Showiness of Acts of Worship

This category stands for practicing acts of worship openly before people so as to show them, while the same acts of worship are neglected in seclusions. As example of this category is to offer prayers openly, show the signs of fasting, prolong the gestures of the prayer, recite in a distinguishable way, frequent to the mosques, witness the collective prayers incessantly, and practice similar acts pretentiously. The showy, in this case, is considered as more sinful than the neglecter of worship because he does so out of his disregarding God and trying to deceive people.

3. Practical Showiness

Under this category lie the pretence of being pious, having the beard unshaved, branding the forehead

as a sign of frequent prostration, dressing hard clothes, and the like false appearances of ascetics.

4. Verbal Showiness

Under this category lie the false declamation of wisdom, pretence of enjoining good and forbidding evil, and mentioning the divine reward and punishment.

Incentives of Showiness

- Fondness of high rank is the most important incentive of showiness.
- The anticipation of criticism is a reason that pushes man to pretend to show acts of worship and charity in order to avoid censure.
- Greed is a strong incentive urging showiness.
- The criminals try to dress themselves with false appearances of piety so as to cover up themselves.

Some Facts

For the purpose of completing this discussion, it is suitable to refer to some facts:

Scholars have had different opinions regarding the preference of the concealment or exposure of the acts of obedience. In abstract, deeds are subject to intentions, and each will be rewarded according to his intention. Thus, there is no difference between concealed or open showiness. Likewise, the semi-showiness does not differ, whether it is hidden or shown. In definite situations, it is preferable for those who cannot stand their showiness, because of its intense incentives in their inner selves, to conceal it. On the other hand, if one's deed is purified from blemishes of showiness and intended for a good purpose, such as enjoining charity, it is, in this case, preferable to show the appearances of piety.

☞ In case sincerity is heartily intended in the acts of worship, it is inoffensive to show people such appearances and to be pleased by them provided that the source of such pleasure is the expectation of God's favor.

Once, Imam al-Baqir (a) was asked whether it is acceptable to be pleased by showing one's good deeds before others. He answered: "This is not unacceptable. As a matter of fact, every single individual likes that Allah reveals his good deeds before others provided that such good deeds are not intended for showing off."

☞ Since the Devil uses all trickeries for inducing people so as to prevent them from going on in the plans of charity and obedience, it is necessary to beware of him. The Devil urges to neglect the acts of worship. If he fails in this regard, he induces eagerly to show off. If he fails in this regard too, he casts in

minds the idea that they are showing off and that all the deeds are mixed with showiness. Such being the case, it is necessary to reject the devilish inspirations and pay no attention to the inducements and insinuations of the Devil. The true sincere, however, cannot be cheated by such ill inspirations.

On the authority of his fathers, Imam as-Sadiq narrated that the Prophet (S) said: “If the Shaitan inspires you, during your prayers, that you are showing off, you should then offer your prayers as long as you like unless the time of another obligatory prayer begins. The same thing is said about any other act that is done for sake of the life to come. But if the act was for a worldly benefit, you should then rest yourselves⁶.”

Disadvantages of Showiness

Showiness, being mere cheating and deception, is undesirable manner indicating self-humbleness. The fickle and the deviant take showiness for achieving their goals without feeling embarrassed. The showy, however, commits two grand sins: he first challenges God because he prefers the servants to their Lord and, second, cheats people by means of hypocrisy and pretense.

Regarding his impudence and foolhardiness, the showy looks like an individual stopping before a great king showing false loyalty, while he, in the meantime, is cheating that king by courting the bondmaidens or flirting with the servants. It is very appropriate for that king to punish such an individual so harshly for his disparagement and ridicule. The showy deserves a harsher punishment, because he disparages God and cheats His servants. Moreover, care is the share of the showy in the end: as he flatters for gaining the impossible; that is the content of all people, he gains nothing but disappointment.

In truth, ill-heartedness very soon floats on the surface to show the reality. Referring to this fact, the Prophet (S) said:

“As for anyone who keeps something in the mind, Allah will dress him with that thing. If it is good, the dress will be good, but if it is bad, the dress, likewise, will be bad⁷.”

Treatment of Showiness

Practical Treatment of Showiness:

- To challenge the Devil and frustrate his trickeries and insinuations by using logical method of self-satisfaction.
- To reject the devilish inspirations of showiness completely by relying upon sincerity.
- To avoid the fields and appearances of showiness by concealing the acts of worship until self-confidence and sincerity are gained.

Within the anecdotes of showiness, it is narrated that a Bedouin, as he entered a mosque, was highly admired by the prayer offered by a person. ‘I was highly admired by your prayer,’ said the Bedouin. ‘What is more, I am fasting,’ said that person, ‘the prayer of the fasting people are rewarded doubly.’ The Bedouin then handed the reins of his camel to that person as a trust because he had something to do for a while. As the Bedouin left, that person took the camel and ran away. As he was back, the Bedouin did not find his camel or that person. He searched for him for a long time, but uselessly. He then left showing his grief for his camel that he lost because of that man’s showiness.

It is also narrated that Ali (a) threatened the Bedouin who did not offer his prayer properly with the stick⁸ that he had in the hand. The man repeated his prayer and, when he finished, asked whether this one had been better than the previous. ‘No,’ answered Ali, ‘the first one was better, because it was offered for the sake of God, while this one was offered out of fear of the stick.’

¹. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 147 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

². Malik is the angel in charge of Hell.

³. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; Chapter: Showing off, page 53 (as quoted from Ilal ush-Sharayi and Thawab ul-Aamal).

⁴. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 137 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

⁵. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 147 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

⁶. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 15 page 53 (quoted from Qurb ul-Isnad.).

⁷. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 147 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

⁸. ((It is unfamiliar to read that Amir ul-Mu'minin Ali, peace be upon him, who was famous of his extraordinary humanity and kindness used to have a stick in the hand for threatening or punishing people As a matter of fact, it was Omar ibn al-Khattab who used to have a stick in the hand about which tens of narrations were reported.)) The Translator

Conceit

Conceit stands for self-importance for a good trait or a noble quality, such as knowledge, wealth, high rank, or righteous deed. The difference between conceit and arrogance is that the previous is to regard oneself highly important without the feeling of being proud, while arrogance is conceit plus feeling of pride. Conceit, however, is a detestable manner implying self-humbleness, narrow-mindedness, and impudence:

“Do not consider yourselves very great. Allah knows best who is the most righteous person (53:32).”

The Prophet (S) said: “Allah knew that sin is better for the believer than self-conceit; lest, He will never let the believers commit sins¹.”

Imam al-Baqir (a) said: “Three things are exterminating: to regard the deeds are very much, to neglect the sins, and to be conceited².”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “The conceited shall perish³.”

“Eblis the cursed said to his troops, ‘If only I could impose three things upon son of Adam, I would not care for whatever he would do then, because his deeds will not be accepted: to regard his deeds as very much, neglect his sins, and be controlled by conceit⁴.’”

“A knowledgeable man asked the worshipper about his prayers. ‘How can a person like me be asked about his prayers?’ said the worshipper. ‘How about your weeping (out of fear of God)?’ asked the knowledgeable man. ‘I weep so heavily that my tears flow on my cheeks,’ answered the worshipper. The knowledgeable commented, ‘To laugh while you are truly fearful of God is surely better than weeping while you are conceited. No single item of the deeds of the conceited will be raised (i.e. accepted).’”

One of the Imams (a) narrated that two men; a worshipper and sinful, entered a mosque. When they went out, the sinful was faithful and the worshipper sinful. The worshipper offered the rites of worship while he was conceited; therefore, his mind was engaged in his conceit. The sinful offered the acts of worship because he was regretful for his sins; therefore, he was seeking God’s forgiveness as he remembered his sins⁵.

It is worth mentioning that the discommended conceit is to consider the good deed as very much. To feel pleased for the good deed along with modesty for sake of God this is not included with the discommended conceit.

Disadvantages of Conceit

Conceit causes selfishness and vanity, which are the causes of people’s detestation and humiliation. It turns one’s eyes away from noticing his own defects. The conceited forgets his sins and causes himself many damages, since negligence of sins stops against repentance to God and exposes to His wrath.

Treatment of Conceit

Because conceit and arrogance are of the same origin, though they differ in trend, their treatment is the same. It is important for the self-conceited to realize that all virtues that arouse in himself conceit are the graces of God that He grants to whom He wills. Hence, He should be shown gratitude for them.

In the field of avoiding self-conceit, it is related that one of the righteous people, once, left his house after midnight for visiting one of the holy shrines and offering the rites there. In his way, he was controlled by conceit and thought that he was in his way for offering rites of worship in such a cold hour while others were enjoying warmth and sleep in their houses. Meanwhile, he saw one of the hawkers who was selling round rape. He pushed himself towards him and asked how much he would earn from that job. ‘Two or three dirhams,’ said the hawker. The man then thought with himself, ‘Why should I be so conceited? The value of my sleepless and wandering in such an hour is only two or three dirhams.’

- [1.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 15/3 (as quoted from al-Amali).
- [2.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 15 part 3 (as quoted from as-Sadiq's al-Khissal).
- [3.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 151 (as quoted from al-Kafi).
- [4.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 15 part 3 (as quoted from as-Sadiq's al-Khissal).
- [5.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 151 (as quoted from al-Kafi).

Conviction

Conviction is the constant believing in the principles of the religion. Such believing should conform to the reality and not be shaken by suspicions. If it does not, it is then compound ignorance.

The Islamic Sharia has taken a special notice of conviction and showered people of conviction with glorious items of praise:

Amirul-Mu'minin (a) used to say: "No one can find the true taste of faith before he believes that whatever befell him would never miss him and whatever missed him would never befall him. The real source of harm and benefit is only Allah¹."

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: "Faith is preferable to being Muslim. Conviction is preferable to faith. In fact, there is nothing more powerful than conviction²."

"The little permanent deed with conviction is favorable in the sight of Allah to the many deeds that are lacking conviction³."

"To avoid pleasing anyone and discontenting Allah and reproaching anyone for something that Allah has not given to you these are parts of the trueness of Muslim's conviction. The sustenance cannot be obtained through (any sort of) niggardliness and will not be ceased when someone hates it. If you escape your decided share of sustenance in the same way as you escape death, it will surely catch you in the same way as death will inevitably catch you. Out of His justice and equality, Allah has made pleasure and rest lie in conviction and content, and has made care and grief lie in suspect and dissatisfaction⁴."

Once, Imam ar-Rida (a) was asked to identify the best of two men one of whom says only the truth, but he commits wrongdoings, consume wines, and perpetrates the grand sins, while the other is less in conviction but he does not commit such evildoings. The Imam said: "The first one is just like a man who sleeps on the right course; as soon as he is awoken, he will take it. The other is like a person who sleeps on the wrong course; when he is awoken, he cannot realize the right course to take⁵."

Imam as-Sadiq narrated that the Prophet (S) once, noticed a young man, in the mosque just after the Fajr prayer, nodding his head with his face pale, his body thin, and his eyes sunken in his head. 'How is

your morning?’ the Prophet asked the young man. ‘God’s Messenger,’ answered the man, ‘I begin this morning with full conviction.’

The Prophet (S) was admired by this answer; hence, he said, ‘There is a proof for every conviction. What is the proof of yours?’

The young man said, ‘God’s Messenger, my conviction is the reason of my grief, sleeplessness, and thirst in midday. Hence, I disdain this world along with its pleasures so completely, as if the Throne of my Lord is prepared for the judgment, all people, including I myself, are gathered there for interrogation, and as if people of Paradise are there enjoying the bliss and introducing themselves to each other and leaning on the sofas, and as if people of Hell are there tormented and lined up, and now I can hear the sound of fire in my hearings.’

The Prophet (S) said to his companions, ‘Surely, Allah has illuminated the heart of this man with faith.’ He (S) then asked him to keep on such faith and conviction. The young man asked the Prophet to pray to God for martyrdom, and the Prophet did.

Not before long time, that young man participated in one of the Prophet’s campaigns and was martyred⁶.

Qualities of People of Conviction

People of conviction, as they are flourished and lightened by the glittering rays of conviction, acquire various colors of mental perfection that exalt them to a lofty spiritual standing. Thus, they are characterized by high moral standards and moral conducts as they avoid vices and bad manners. The illusions of this world cannot divert them from exalting their spiritual qualifications for gaining the lofty ranks and the expected endless pleasures of the life to come.

They exert all efforts for offering acts of obedience to God for sake of attaining His satisfaction. They trust in Him completely in sorrow and in joy. They neither fear nor hope for anything except God because they are convinced of His well management and wisdom. Their prayers therefore are responded and their charismata are shown. Finally, they find favor with God.

Ranks of Faith

There is a great variety in the scope of people’s faith. Some are forerunners in the field of faith while others are too tardy. The following holy text may cast shadow on such a variety.

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “Like stairs, faith is often ranks that should be taken one by one. The owner of two ranks of faith should not accuse the owner of one rank of having nothing of faith until he climbs the ten ranks successfully. Hence, you should not throw him who is lower than you are down, lest he who is higher than you are will throw you down. You should also raise him who is lower than you are so leniently and you should avoid burdening him with heavy things that break his back. In fact, he who

breaks a believer should set him⁷.”

Categories of Faith

Natural Faith

Natural faith is that which God grants, such as faith of the prophets and their successors, because those individuals are the highest examples of faith and nobility of conviction. Neither doubts nor can the devilish inspirations influence them.

Transient Faith

Transient faith is the artificial that is only said without having any reality in the inner self. Such category of faith is very soon influenced by doubts and ill inspirations.

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “A man may begin his day with faith but ends it with disbelief or the opposite. Some people borrow faith then dress it. Those are the borrowers⁸.”

“Allah created prophecy in the prophets; hence, they never apostatize. Likewise, He created succession of prophecy in the prophets’ successors; hence, they never apostatize. For some believers, He created faith in them; hence, they never apostatize. For others, they are given faith as loans; but if they pray and supplicate to Allah importunately, they keep on that faith⁹.”

After these two sayings, Imam as-Sadiq (a) adds a third one as the criterion of constant and transient categories of faith. He says:

“Regret, sorrow, and woe all will be to him who does not benefit by that which is shown to him and does not realize whether his belief is for his good or bad he whose deeds conform to his words will be saved (since he enjoys constant faith), while he whose deeds do not conform to his words enjoys the transient faith¹⁰.”

Acquisitive Faith

Acquisitive faith is the slight natural that has been grown and increased until it is exalted to a considerable level. This category of faith, however, has different ranks.

Now, let us provide some advices that help in protecting the natural part of faith and saving the acquisitive:

☞ It is recommended to associate with the faithful, pious individuals and avoid the sinful, wicked ones. It is well known that the associate plays a great role in acquiring moralities. Referring to this fact, the Prophet (S) said:

“A man follows his associate’s beliefs. Hence, you should care for choosing your associates.”

☞ It is recommended to avoid looking in and listening to the books of deviation and sayings of the misleading people whose main concern is to poison the others’ pure ideas in order to take them away from the Islamic creed and to corrupt the values and concepts of faith in their mentalities.

☞ It is recommended to practice pondering over God’s creatures that are characterized by beautiful made, accurate organizing, and fascinating wisdom of management:

“In the earth, there is evidence (of the Truth) for those who have strong faith. There is also evidence of the Truth within your own selves. Will you then not see? (51:20-1)”

☞ It is highly recommended to strive oneself and practice acts of obedience to God. It is recommended to avoid acts of disobedience to God so that one’s mentality will be established correctly by the concepts of faith. As a matter of fact, the soul is as pure as fresh water unless it is blemished by pollutions. Were it not for the rust of sins and the dirt of wrongdoings that raid at the souls to seize their beauties and abate their lights, most of people would benefit by the illumination of faith:

“(I swear) by the soul and that (Power) which designed it and inspired it with knowledge of evil and piety, those who purify their souls will certainly have everlasting happiness and those who corrupt their souls will certainly be deprived (of happiness) (91:7-10).”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “When a man commits a sin, a black spot emerges to his heart. If he repents, that spot will disappear. But if he keeps on committing sins, that spot will increase in area until it covers the whole heart. That man will never see success¹¹.”

- [1.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 54 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- [2.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 15 part 2 page 57 (as quoted from al-Kafi).
- [3.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 15 part 2 page 60 (as quoted from al-Kafi).
- [4.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; part 3 page 54 (as quoted from al-Kafi).
- [5.](#) Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; 2/734 (as quoted from Fiqh ul- Imam ir-Ridha).
- [6.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 33 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- [7.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 30 (as quoted from al-Kafi).
- [8.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 30 (as quoted from al-Kafi).
- [9.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 30 (as quoted from al-Kafi).
- [10.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 30 (as quoted from al-Kafi).
- [11.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 167 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

Patience

Patience is the moderate steadfastness against misfortunes. It is also defined as to compel oneself to

stand the necessities of the Sharia including the matters to do and the matters not to do. It indicates wisdom, broadmindedness, high morality, and great steadfastness. In more than seventy places in the holy Quran, God refers to and praises patience. He promises the patient of His contentment and liking:

“Allah loves those who have patience (3: 146).”

He promises He should always support them:

“Allah is with those who have patience (8:46).”

He promises He should grant them abundance rewarding:

“Allah will recompense the deeds of those who have exercised patience, without keeping an account (39: 10).”

He promises He should confer upon them with a variety of kindness:

“We shall test you through fear, hunger, and loss of life, property, and crops. (Muhammad), give glad news to the people who have patience and in difficulty say, “We are the servants of Allah and to Him we shall all return.” It is they who will receive blessings and mercy from Allah and who follow the right guidance. (2: 155-7)”

Imam al-Baqir (a) said: “Paradise is surrounded by misfortunes and patience. He who shows steadfastness against misfortunes of this world will be in Paradise. Hell, likewise, is surrounded by lusts and appetites. He who allows himself to have these lusts and appetites will be in Hell¹.”

“In his final hours, my father embraced me to the chest and said, ‘son, stand the right even if it is bitter, for if you do it you will be granted your rewards without interrogation².”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “The rank of patience for faith is as same as the rank of the head for the body. When there is no patience, there will be no faith³.”

“The believer who shows steadfastness against misfortune that befalls him will be given the rewards of one thousand shahids.”

One may ask how people of patience are given the rewards of one thousand shahids who are the heroes of patience in the fields of jihad? To answer this wonderment, we say that people who practice patience deserve the rewards of those shahids although God will grant them more rewards.

Amirul-Mu'minin (a) said: “He who is not saved by steadfastness will surely be killed by impatience⁴.”

Categories of Patience

Steadfastness against Misfortunes and Calamities

This category of patience is the greatest because it implies self-dignity, wide-mindedness, unruffledness, and progression. Man is naturally the subject of misfortunes that befall him unwillingly while he has no ability to stop them. The best thing that such a man may practice in such states is to armor himself with steadfastness without which man will surely collapse and become a palatable bite of grieves:

“Give glad news to the people who have patience and in difficulty say, “We are the servants of Allah and to Him we shall all return.” It is they who will receive blessings and mercy from Allah and who follow the right guidance. (2: 155-7)”

Amirul-Mu'minin (a) said: “If you practice patience, the destined calamity will befall you while you are rewarded. But if you lose your temper, the destined calamity will befall you while you are sinned⁵.”

It is worth mentioning that patience that is described as nice stands for the steadfastness against the inescapable calamities, such as loss of a dear person, usurpation of the wealth, or persecution of the enemy.

Submission to calamities, while the ability to protect oneself against them is available, is a sort of foolhardiness that is denied by Islam. The thing that divests of the virtue of patience is the excessive intolerance, such excessive complaint and grumbling. To give vent to the mental pains by means of moderate weeping and to complain about the sufferance of a disease are among the necessities of the vital emotions. The Prophet (S) said when his son Ibrahim died:

“The eyes shed tears and the heart grieves, but we will say nothing that may displease the Lord.”

Within the folds of history, there are many stories carrying glorious examples from the past generations who practiced patience remarkably:

It is narrated that Khosrow the Persian king, once, was angry with Bozorgmehr; therefore, he detained him in a gloomy house and ordered to enchain him with iron. Several days later, the king sent some people to investigate his state. As they visited him in that gloomy house, they found him tranquil and cheerful. They were astonished; therefore, they wondered: “How can you enjoy such peace of mind while you are in such miserable state?”

He answered: “In fact, I have made, mixed, and used six humors that helped me keep such manner. The first humor is trust in God. The second is to believe that every destined matter will inevitably occur. The third is the fact that steadfastness is the best thing that the inflicted person should opt. The fourth is the fact that what should I do if I do not practice patience, since I will not make impatience prevail on me.

The fifth is that there may be some others who suffer harsher calamities. The sixth is that relief may come in any moment⁶.”

Imam ar-Rida narrated the following story on the authority of his fathers (a): One day, Prophet Solomon said to his companions: “Although Allah has granted me a kingdom that no one will ever have its like, made the wind, humankind, jinn, birds, and beasts subservient to me, taught me the languages of birds, and granted me a part of everything, I have never passed a whole daytime with pure pleasure. Tomorrow, I want to go to the surface of my palace in order to watch my kingdoms. Thus, do not let anybody visit me so that nothing will ruin my pleasure.”

The next day, he took his stick in the hand, went to the highest point in his palace, and leaned on his stick watching his kingdoms cheerfully. Suddenly, a young handsome man came to him from one of the corners of his palace. “Who permitted you to enter my palace on this day that I have dedicated to my seclusion?” asked the prophet (a). “I entered here by the permission of the lord of this palace,” said the young man. “Well,” said Solomon, “the lord is worthier of this than I am. Who are you?” “I am the angel of death,” answered the young. “What for are you here?” asked Solomon. “I am here for grasping your soul,” answered the angel. “Do it, then,” said the prophet, “This is surely the day of my pleasure. Allah has rejected for me to have pleasure other than meeting Him.” Hence, the angel grasped the soul of the Prophet Solomon while he was leaning on his stick⁷”

Standing the Obedience and Perseverance against the Disobedience to God

Man, naturally, rejects the obligatory regulations that delimit his freedoms, even if such regulations are put for sake of achieving his pleasure. Thus, man does not submit to such regulations except by means of inducement, encouragement, warning, or threat.

Seeing that the practicing of acts of obedience to God and the avoidance of acts of disobedience to him are two difficult deeds, to stand the obedience to God and to persevere against the disobedience to Him are within the most important obligations:

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “Stand the acts of obedience to Allah and practice the perseverance against the acts of disobedience to Him. This world is only one hour: you cannot find the taste of pleasure or bitterness of all that which passed, and you can never realize that which has not come yet. Hence, show steadfastness in that hour and you will be surely happy⁸.”

“On the Day of Resurrection, a group of people will go straightly to knock the door of Paradise. As they are asked about their identities, they will answer they are people of patience. As they are asked about the fields of their patience, they will answer that they stand the acts of obedience to Allah and persevere against the acts of disobedience to Him. Then, Allah will say, ‘They have told the very truth. Let them be in Paradise.’ This is the indication of Allah’s saying:

Allah will recompense the deeds of those who have exercised patience, without keeping an

account. (39: 10)⁹

“Patience is of two forms: steadfastness against misfortunes. It is good and fair. What is better and fairer is the ability to avoid what Allah has forbidden¹⁰.”

Patience of the Graces

This category of patience stands for self-control against the inducements of ingratitude. As a matter of fact, steadfastness against tragedies of this life is not preferable to self-control against pleasures, passions, and charms of this world. The neglect of steadfastness against misfortunes results in destroying impatience. Likewise, negligence of self-control in luxury results in ingratitude and exaggeration, which are both detestable:

“The human being still tends to rebel when he becomes wealthy (96:6-7).”

Patience of graces means to observe the rights of such graces and exploit them in the fields of charity, such as helping the miserable, aiding the persecuted, settling the believers’ needs, and avoiding slips of ingratitude and vanity.

Advantages of Patience

Patience is the shelter of the grievous because it supplies with tranquility. It is also security against intolerance and anxiety. Without patience, the afflicted people would fall in and become the prey of mental and physical defects. Patience, too, is the expected hope due to which God has prepared the great rewards.

How to Acquire Patience?

To acquire patience it is recommended:

- To look in the virtues and nice traits of patience.
- To ponder over the disadvantages that impatience leaves on people’s lives. Impatience does not settle a need, save from acts of God, or change a reality. It only results in wearisome. In his *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living*, Dale Carnegie says: “In the last eight years, I have read every book, magazine, and article that dealt with worry. Do you want to know the wisest and most beneficial advice that I extracted through such prolonged survey? It is ‘satisfy yourself with the inescapable.’”
- To sympathize with the actuality of this life, which is based upon troubles and concerns. Indeed, this world is not the abode of comfort. It is a transitory place of test for the believers. Like students who exhaust themselves in the tests for sake of obtaining high grades, the believers in this world are examined for recognizing the scope of their faith and conviction:

“Do people think they will not be tested because they say, ‘We have faith?’ We had certainly tried those who lived before them to make sure who were truthful in their faith and who were liars (29:2-3).”

- To learn lessons from the sufferings of the great persons who exercised patience for sake of God purely, and
- To practice matters of entertainment that help in alleviating the pains and relaxing the nerves, such as traveling, visiting charming views, and reading amusing stories.

- [1.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 65 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- [2.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 65 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- [3.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 65 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- [4.](#) Quoted from Nahj ul-Balagha.
- [5.](#) Quoted from Nahj ul-Balagha.
- [6.](#) Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; part 2 page 7.
- [7.](#) Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; 1/614 (as quoted from Uyounu Akhbar ir-Ridha).
- [8.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 63 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- [9.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 65 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- [10.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 65 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

Gratitude

Gratitude stands for thanking the conferrer for his graces and using them in the fields that he accepts. It is one of the qualities of perfection that grow and perpetuate the graces. Because of His absolute self-sufficiency, God does not benefit by one's thanks. As a matter of fact, the benefits of thanks are due to the thankful himself, since he expresses his appreciation for the divine graces and uses them in the fields that achieve the contentment of God. So, the thankful person's happiness lies in his acts of obedience to God.

The Islamic Sharia, through texts of the holy Quran and Sunna, has called people to be characterized with gratitude:

“Thank Me and do not show ingratitude to Me. (2: 152)”

“Eat of the sustenance of your Lord and give thanks to Him. (34: 15)”

“Remember when your Lord said to you, ‘If you give thanks, I shall give you greater (favors), but if you deny the Truth, know that My retribution is severe’ (14:7).”

“Very few of My servants are grateful. (34: 13)”

The Prophet (S) said: “He who eats and gives thanks will have the reward of him who fasts purely for the sake of Allah. He who gives thanks and enjoys good health will have the same reward of him who practices patience in his illness. He whom is conferred with graces and gives thanks will have the same reward of him whom is deprived and satisfied¹.”

Imam al-Baqir (a) said: “If you look at an ailed person, you should say, but not let him hear you, ‘All praise is due to Allah Who protects me from that which inflicted you, but if He wills, He shall do.’ He who says so will never be befallen by that ailment².”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “He who is conferred with thanks will be granted increase. Allah says: ‘If you give thanks, I shall give you greater (favors)³.’”

“The thanks of every grace, no matter how big it is, is to praise Allah for it⁴.”

“The gratitude that is shown to Allah for any grace, no matter how big it is, is surely better and weightier than the grace itself⁵.”

“Verily, one of you drinks water and Allah assigns Paradise to him on that account. Verily, one who takes the vessel (containing water), brings it to his mouth, then takes Allah's name, then drinks from it, then draws it away while desiring it, then praises Allah, then drinks from it again, then takes it away while he desires it, then praises Allah, then drinks from it again, then sets it aside and praises Allah, Allah makes the paradise obligatory for him.”

Categories of Gratitude

Gratitude can be classified into three categories:

1. Gratitude of the heart,
2. Verbal gratitude, and
3. Gratitude of the organs.

Once the heart is full of the recognition of the graces of the Conferrer Lord, the tongue expresses thanks. Once the heart and the tongue unite in the feelings of gratitude, they inspire the organs to express their gratitude by submission and response to the acts of obedience to Him.

Thus, there are various categories and methods of showing gratitude:

- Gratitude of the heart is to recognize the grace and recognize that its source was God.
- The verbal gratitude is to express thanks to the Conferrer.
- Gratitude of the organs is to engage them in acts of obedience to God and save them from plunging in

acts of disobedience to Him.

Hence, it is necessary to thank each of the graces of God in a suitable form:

To thank for a fortune is to spend some of it in the fields of obedience to God.

To thank for the knowledge is to publicize and expose its beneficial concepts.

To thank for a high rank is to support the weak and the persecuted and save them from the oppression that befall them.

The true gratitude of any grace cannot be attained whatever efforts are exerted, because showing gratitude is one of the graces and items of success that God confers. Consequently, man is too short to show the proper gratitude for any grace.

Imam as-Sadiq (a) narrated that Allah revealed to Prophet Moses: “Moses, thank Me so properly.” “Lord,” asked Moses, “How can I thank You so properly while I cannot find any method of showing gratitude to You other than that which You have conferred upon me?” The Lord answered: “Moses, as long as you realize this fact, you are thanking Me so properly⁶.”

Virtue of Gratitude

The appreciation for graces and acts of kindness and thanks for the conferrers of favors are within the properties of the noble personalities. As the graces are increased, they should be thank worthier and more appreciative so that they may attain the level of the divine favors that man can never evaluate and thank properly.

As a matter of fact, every single twinkling of the eye, every single word that is produced by the mouth, every single movement of an organ, and every single breathe all these are great favors of the Lord that none can evaluate except those who are deprived of them.

If it is obligatory to thank the favor of the creatures, how will it be then if the favorer is the Creator whose graces are countless and favors are innumerable?

Finally, showing gratitude takes nearly to the Lord and achieves His contentment and His endowments of more graces and favors.

Ingratitude, on the other hand, is the trait of the humble personalities. The holy Quran tells that ingratitude is a direct reason of the collapse of nations and the eradication of their blessings:

“Allah tells a parable about a secure and peaceful town surrounded by abundant sustenance. Its inhabitants rejected the bounties of Allah and He caused them to suffer hunger and fear as a result of their deeds (16: 112).”

As he was asked about the explanation of God's saying,

“And they said: our Lord! Make spaces to be longer between our journeys; and they were unjust to themselves so We made them stories and scattered them with an utter scattering; most surely there are signs in this for every patient, grateful one, (34: 19)”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “Those were some peoples whose villages were connected to each other. They had flowing rivers and many fortunes, but they showed ingratitude to Allah and changed what is in their hearts; therefore, Allah changed the graces that they enjoyed. As a matter of fact, ‘Allah does not change the condition of a nation unless it changes what is in its heart.’ He then sent upon them a torrent that scattered their villages, ruined their territories, and wasted their fortunes. In place of their two gardens, Allah gave to them two gardens yielding bitter fruit and (growing) tamarisk and a few lote-trees. ‘This We requited them with because they disbelieved; and We do not punish any but the ungrateful⁷.’

“When the people of Tharthar were given great graces, they baked the core of wheat and used it for cleaning their babies from feces. That bread was put on each other until it took the form of a high mountain. As a man passed by a woman who was using that bread for the same purpose, he said, ‘Woe to you! Fear Allah and do not cause your graces to be eradicated and taken away from you.’ She answered, ‘Are you threatening us with starvation? As long as our lake is flowing, we do not fear famine.’ Allah did not accept so; therefore, He blocked their lake and stopped rainfall and planting. They, first, consumed all that which they had stored. Then, they had to consume that mountain of bread to the degree that it was distributed among them by measure⁸.”

Imam ar-Rida narrated on the authority of his fathers that the Prophet (S) said: “The quickest in punishment is ingratitude⁹.”

How to Acquire Thankfulness?

To acquire thankfulness, it is recommended:

- To ponder over the great variety of graces, good turns, and acts of kindness that God has conferred.
- To neglect considering the luxurious people who enjoy excessive means of living and false pleasures of this world, and to look at the miserable people as well as those who are in less levels of livelihood.

Amirul- Mu'minin (a) said:

“Try to look very frequently at those who are less than you are in the levels of livelihood, for this is a sort of showing gratitude¹⁰.”

- To keep in mind the calamities from which God has saved and the diseases that God has changed into good health and the hardships that He has changed into luxury, and

● To think of the advantages of showing gratitude, some of which are the attracting of the conferrer's contentment and increase of his favors, and to ponder over the disadvantages of ingratitude, some of which are attracting the conferrer's dissatisfaction and decrease of his graces.

- [1.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 67 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- [2.](#) Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; 15/2/135 (as quoted from Thawab ul-A'mal).
- [3.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 67 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- [4.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 67 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- [5.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 67 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- [6.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 68 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- [7.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 68 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- [8.](#) Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar (as quoted from al-Barqi's al- Mahasin).
- [9.](#) Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar (as quoted from al-Amali).
- [10.](#) Quoted from Nahj ul-Balagha.

Trust In God

Trust in God means to rely upon Him and to commend all affairs to Him by diverting from anyone or anything else. The source of trust in God is power of heart and conviction. Likewise, loss of trust in God is originated from feebleness of heart and conviction and influence of apprehensions and illusions:

“Allah is Sufficient for the needs of whoever trusts in Him. (65:3)”

“Allah loves those who trust Him. (3: 159)”

“(Muhammad), say, ‘Nothing will happen to us besides what Allah has decreed for us. He is our Guardian. In Allah alone do the believers trust.’(9:51)”

“If Allah is your helper, no one can defeat you. However, if He abandons you, who would help you? The true believers trust in Allah. (3: 160)”

Amirul-Mu'minin (a) said: “Regarding all of your affairs, seek the refuge of your Lord, for you are seeking the refuge of a sheltering haven and powerful sanctuary¹.”

“Within his sermons to his son, Luqman said: Son, for him who is unconvinced and ill-intentioned in the matter of seeking earnings, he should learn lessons from the fact that Allah has created him and guaranteed his sustenance in three states; He secured him and gave him his decided shares of sustenance without exerting any efforts or planning for any proposal in gaining them. First, when he was in mother's womb, Allah was giving him his sustenance without being exposed to coldness or heat. Then, Allah caused him to go out to this world and gave him his shares of sustenance, which were

sufficient and nutrient, from the mother's breast while he had no power to earn. Then, when he was weaned, Allah gave him his share of sustenance out of the earnings of his parents who were very kind to him to the degree that they preferred him to themselves in many situations. When he attained maturity and went on seeking earnings for himself, he became unable to stand it, mistrusted his Lord, denied the rights that he should defray from his earnings, and behaved stingily with his dependents and himself. All that was because of his expecting scarcity, mistrusting Allah and suspecting His promised recompense in this world and the world to come. See, my son, how evil such man is!"

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: "Richness and honor are wandering. They settle only when they find a situation of trust in Allah²."

He (a) also narrated that Allah revealed to Prophet David (a): "For any one of My servants who relies upon Me heartily exclusively, then the heavens and the earth plot against him, I will surely grant him an exit between them to escape their plots. But for the servant who relies upon any of My creatures, I will cut the rope that links him to the heavens and will sink the earth under his feet and, then, I will not care where he will perish³."

"He who is given three things will not be deprived of three others: he who is granted supplication to Allah will not be deprived of response; he who is granted thankfulness will not be deprived of increase; he who is granted trust in Allah will not be deprived of His security." Read in the Book of Allah: 'Allah is Sufficient for the needs of whoever trusts in Him. (65:3)'

'If you give thanks, I shall give you greater (favors) (14:7).'

'Pray to Me for I shall answer you prayers. (40:60).'"

Reality of Trust in God

Trust in God does not mean to neglect the means that achieve benefits and to lift no single hand for facing events and crises. As a matter of fact, trust in God is to confide in and depend on Him exclusively, because He being the source of goodness, the originator of reasons, the predominant over the creatures, and the only able to give success. To have such trust in God should not conflict with the reliance on the natural means and the outward reasons for achieving the aims, such as supplying for traveling, armament for fighting against the enemies, treatment against diseases, and guard against dangers. All these are necessary for protecting man and achieving his aims. God has decided to make all matters proceed according to their natural reasons. Notwithstanding, it is necessary to depend upon and trust in God for achieving the purposes.

As he noticed a Bedouin neglecting hobbling his camel for he had relied upon God exclusively, the Prophet (S) instructed him: "Hobble your camel then trust in Allah exclusively."

Ranks of Trust in God

Like the variety of faith, there is a great variety among people in ranks of trust in God. Some are forerunners in this regard: they devoted themselves completely to God and neglected everything except Him. Those are the prophets, their successors, and the saints.

As an example on the best picture of trust in God, it is narrated that when Prophet Abraham (a) was in his way to the fire, the angel Gabriel met him in the air and asked whether he would do him anything. He answered: “For you, you can do me nothing. I depend on God Who is the best Guardian.” Then the angel Michael met him and suggested that he would extinguish that fire since rain and water had been under his disposal. The prophet also rejected. Then the angel of wind met him and suggested that he would cause that fire to fly away, but the prophet also rejected. Then the angel Gabriel came to him again and asked him to supplicate to God. Abraham said: “My supplication is worthless so long as He knows my current state best⁴.”

Advantages of Trust in God

Man, in this life, is exposed to calamities, problems, and crises against which he fights. He, once, overcomes, and is overcome in other situations. In most cases, such calamities knock man down and make him helpless and brokenhearted. Thus, man lives in permanent worry because he anticipates loss, poverty, and ailment. It is true that modern civilization has helped in alleviating burdens of life by the availability of means of comfort, but it has failed to supply mentalities with tranquility. Worry is still casting its shadows on people and collaring the necks resulting in multiplication of mental diseases and events of suicide and insanity in the most civilized countries.

Through its moral constitution, the Islamic Sharia could alleviate the worries of people and supply them with huge spiritual energies, such as tolerance, steadfastness, trust, and confidence. To adhere to this fact achieves peace of mind and replaces fear with security.

After all, trust in God is one of the most important factors that attain self-dignity, self-respect, and peace of conscience. People that are worthiest of adhering to trust in God are the celebrities and reformists. They are in need for willpower and self-determination for facing others' obstinacy and overstepping many obstacles and barriers.

How to Acquire Trust in God?

We can acquire trust in God by:

- Keeping in mind the Verses and traditions that confirm the virtues of trust in God.

It is narrated that Imam al-Hussein (a) composed the following: “If calamities of time bite you, do not

seek the refuge of the creatures. Do not ask anybody except God the Distributor of the sustenance. If you live for a long time and wander in this world from the west to the east, you will not find anybody who is able to give you happiness or remove your unhappiness.”

It is also narrated that Amirul-Mu'minin (a) composed: “I have satisfied myself with that which God has decided for me, and I have entrusted my affairs with my Creator. As He used to treat me charitably in the past, He will keep on in the rest.

- Strengthening belief in God, trust in His good turn, and considering His being the source of goodness, originator of reasons, and able to do everything.
- Paying attention to the nice doing of God and His outstanding care for man all over stages of life, and keeping in mind that God will surely guard him who depends upon Him and save him who seeks His help.
- Learning lessons from the changeability of this life.

Many poor people have become rich, many rich people have become poor, many celebrities have become paupers, and many paupers have become celebrities.

Finally, to gain true trust in God is to satisfy oneself with His acts in situations of joy and misery.

[1.](#) Quoted from Nahj ul-Balagha.

[2.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 56 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

[3.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 56 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

[4.](#) Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; 2/683 (as quoted from Bayan ut-Tanzil).

Fear Of God

Fear of God stands for the mental pains arisen from the anticipation of God's punishment for the commitment of acts of disobedience to Him. It enjoins holding on straightforwardness and forbids vices and sins. For that reason, the Sharia has paid a considerable attention to fear of God:

“Only Allah's knowledgeable servants fear Him. Allah is Majestic and All-pardoning. (35:28)”

“Those who fear their Lord in secret will receive forgiveness and a great reward (67: 12).”

“However, those who had feared their Lord and restrained their souls from acting according to their desires, Paradise will be their dwelling (79:41).”

The Prophet (S) said: “For those who avoid acts of disobedience or the illegal desire that is shown

before them out of fear of Allah, Allah will prevent the fire of Hell from consuming them, save them on the Day of the Grand Horror, and fulfill His promise to them that He cites in His Book as He says:

“Those who fear their Lord will have two gardens (55:46)1.”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “Fear Allah as if you can see Him before you. If you cannot see Him before you, then it is surely that He can see you. If you think that He cannot see you, then you disbelieve Him. If you realize that He can see you and, yet, you commit acts of disobedience to Him, then you consider Him as the humblest among those who can see you2.”

“The believer should live between two fears the past sin that he does not know what Allah will do about it and the remaining days that he does not know what misfortunes he will encounter through them. Thus, the believer begins his day fearfully and ends his day fearfully. Except fear, nothing mends the believer3.”

“You will not be true believer unless you are fearful (of God’s punishment) and hopeful (for His reward). You will not be true fearful and true hopeful unless you avoid what you fear and work for what you hope4.”

A wise man said: “How poor man is! Had he feared the fire of Hell in the same way as he feared poverty, he would have been saved from the both. And had he desired for Paradise in the same way as he desired for the worldly pleasures, he would have won the both. And had he feared God secretly in the same way as he feared people openly, he would have achieved happiness in this world and the world to come.”

A wise man said to al-Mahdi the Abbasid caliph who asked for an advice: “This seat that you are in now was occupied by your father and uncle before you, was it not?” “Yes, it was,” answered the caliph. “They had done some acts because of which you expect they will be saved, had they not?” asked the wise man. “Yes, they had,” answered the caliph. “They also had done some acts for which you are afraid they will be punished, had they not?” asked the wise man. “Yes, they had,” answered the caliph. “Now,” said the wise man, “you should do these acts because of which you expect they will be saved and you should avoid these acts for which you are afraid they will be punished.”

Fear between Ebb and Flow

The previous texts have depicted the importance of fear and its contribution in rectifying man and qualifying him to have the honor of God’s contentment. Like the other noble traits, fear does not deserve praise unless it is characterized by moderation away from shortage and excess. Excess fear impoverishes the personality and deprives of hope. Moreover, it causes despair, which, in turn, brings about perpetual deviation. Shortage of fear, also, causes negligence, shortcoming, and rebel against acts of obedience to God. By the balance of fear and hope, one’s self nourishes, conscience towers up,

and the spiritual energies go forward. Referring to this point, Imam as-Sadiq (a) said:

“Hope for Allah in a form that does not draw you to the commitment of acts of disobedience to Him, and fear Him in such a way that does not make you despair of His mercy⁵.”

Advantages of Fear

The values of the noble traits depend on levels of the virtuous concepts and principals of righteousness that they leave on personalities. Accordingly, fear occupies the first place among the noble traits. It has played a big role in the fields of belief since it is the main reason encouraging acts of obedience to God. Feelings of fear enhance the souls and take them to a lofty angelic position that imparts to the ideality of the angels. As he compared among angels, human beings, and animals, Amirul-Mu'minin (a) said:

“Surely, Allah has characterized the angels by intellect without sexual desire, and characterized animals with desire without reason. He exalted man by bestowing upon him both qualities. Accordingly, if man’s reason dominates on his desire, he rises to a state above that of the angels (because this state is attained by man in spite of the existence of hurdles which do not vex the angels), and if man’s desire dominates on his reason, he drops to a state below that of the animals⁶.”

Consequently, we notice that the fearful deem easy the sufferings they encounter because of acts of obedience to God and deem bitter the sweetness of the sins and acts of disobedience to Him, because they fear His wrath.

This in fact achieves mental and physical happiness in the same way as this cosmos, along with its components, is organized because of its submission to God:

“All righteously believing male or female will be granted a blessed happy life and will receive their due reward and more. (16:97)”

All the current calamities, such as commonness of disorder, spread of crimes, prevalence of mental perplexity, that humankind is suffering is only the result of going away from the course of the Creator and neglecting His constitution:

“Had the people of the towns believed (in Our revelations) and maintained piety, We would have certainly showered on them Our blessings from the sky and the earth. But they called Our revelations lies, thus Our torment struck them for their evil deeds. (7:96)”

How to Feel Fearful?

☞ It is necessary to fix the belief in God as well as the concepts of the Judgment Day, divine rewards, punishment, Paradise, and Hell. Fear is in fact one of the fruits of faith:

“When Allah is mentioned, the true believers begin to feel fear of Him in their hearts and when

His revelations are recited to them their faith strengthens. In Allah alone do they trust (8:2).”

- ☞ It is necessary to listen to the touching sermons and words of wisdom that creates fear and reverence.
- ☞ It is necessary to survey the manners of the fearful, including their states of reverence and submission.

Let us now provide the most fascinating picture of fear of God that is painted by Imam as-Sajjad (a) in one of his supreme supplications:

“I weep, and why do I not weep, while I do not know what will my destiny be? And I see my soul cheat me and my days deceive me and the wings of death are flapping near my head. Why then do I not weep? I weep for the departure of my soul, for the gloomy of my grave, for the narrowness of my sepulcher, for the interrogation of Munkar and Nakeer⁷, for my going out of my grave naked, humble, and overburdened. I will look once to my right and another to my left while the creatures each will have his own concern:

“For on that day everyone will be completely engrossed in his own concerns. Some faces on that day will be radiant, laughing and joyous, but others will be gloomy and covered by darkness (80:37-41).”

Stories of the Fearful

Imam al-Baqir (a) narrated:

“A very charming prostitute could charm some young Israelites one of whom said, ‘Had the worshipper so-and-so seen this lady, she would have surely seduced him.’ As she heard this statement, she decided to visit that worshipper for seducing him. That night, she went to his house. He refused to let her in, but she claimed that some young people were chasing her, and that they would rape her if they would catch her. Because of this claim, the man let her in. As soon as she entered his house, she undressed herself. When he saw her beauty and charm, he was seduced. He therefore struck her with his hand. Suddenly, he regained his conscience; hence, he ran to the hearth and put his hand in fire. ‘What are you doing?’ she cried. ‘I am burning my hand because it committed an ill deed,’ answered he. The woman left him hurriedly and told some people that she met of that worshipper’s deed. They ran to him, but found his hand was burnt⁸.”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) narrated:

“One of the ladies of the Israelites tried to seduce the worshipper who hosted her. He wanted to reach her, but whenever he tried to do it, he was putting one of his fingers in fire. He kept on doing so until morning. ‘Go out,’ he dismissed her, ‘you were the worst guest I have ever had.’”

¹. Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; vol. 15 part 2 page 113 (as quoted from al-

². Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 57 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

3. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 57 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
4. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 57 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
5. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 15/2/188 (as quoted from as- Saduq's al-Amali).
6. Quoted from Ilal ush-Sharaayi
7. Munkar and Nakeer: The two angels who interrogate the dead in graves.
8. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 5 (as quoted from ar- Rawandi's Qassas ul-Anbiyaa).

Hope For God

Hope is the expectation of a dear thing the arrangements of which are already done, such as hope for the yield of a land after it was seeded, watered, and superintended. In case the arrangements of a thing are not done, hope for it will be foolhardiness, just like hope for the yield of a derelict land that was not superintended properly. Hope, furthermore, is the second wing with which, along with fear, the believers fly in the horizons of the obedience of God. Although fear and hope support each other in disciplining the believers, hope is sweeter and fresher than fear, because its source is trust in God and the assurance of the extent of His mercy. To obey out of hope is better than obeying out of fear. In view of that, good tidings of hope are carried through numerous texts from the Quran and Sunna:

Warning against Despair

“(Muhammad), tell my servants who have committed injustice to themselves, ‘Do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Allah certainly forgives all sins. He is All-forgiving and All-merciful.’ (39:53)”

“And do not despair of receiving comfort from Allah; only the unbelievers’ despair of receiving comfort from Him. (12:87)”

The Prophet (S) said: “On the Day of Resurrection, Allah will gather the despondent of His mercy with their faces blackened. They will be given the name of ‘the despondent of Allah’s mercy¹.”

Amirul-Mu'minin (a) said to the man who was prevailed by despair of God’s mercy out of his many sins: “You, to despair of the mercy of Allah is the greatest sin that you have ever committed².”

Vastness of God’s Mercy and Pardon

“Your Lord’s mercy is completely overwhelming. (6: 147)”

“Your Lord, certainly, has forgiveness for the injustice of the people. (13:6)”

“Allah does not forgive the sin of considering others equal to Him, but He may choose to forgive other sins. (4:48)”

“When the faithful come to you, say to them, “Peace be upon you. Your Lord has decreed for Himself to be All-merciful. Anyone of you who commits a sin out of ignorance, then repents, and reforms himself will find that Allah is All-forgiving and All-merciful.” (6:54)”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “On the Day of Resurrection, Allah will extend His mercy so vastly that even Eblis will expect himself to be included with that mercy³.”

“On the Day of Resurrection, the guilty believers will be stopped before Allah Who will personally interrogate him. He will display before him his sins in details, and the believer will confess of them all. The Lord will then say: ‘In the worldly life, I covered these sins and, now, I will cover them for you.’ He then will order to change them into virtues. As the record of that believer will be shown to people, they will say, ‘How admirable this man is! He did not commit a single sin!’ This is the meaning of God’s saying:

“But only those who repent and believe and act righteously will have their sins replaced by virtue, (25:70)⁴”

Favorable Judgment about God

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “The last servant who will be sent to Hell will turn his face towards Allah. The Lord then will order the angels to bring him back. ‘Why did you turn your face, servant?’ the Lord will ask. ‘Lord,’ the servant will say, ‘I had another idea about you.’ ‘What did you think of Me, servant?’ the Lord will ask. The servant will answer, ‘I thought You would forgive me and allow me to live in Your Paradise.’ The Lord then will say, ‘My angels, I swear by My power, majesty, favors, tests, and exaltation, this servant had never thought good about Me for a single hour of his lifetime. Had he done so, I would not have sent him to Hell. Nevertheless, I will regard the lie that he has just told as true and allow him to be in Paradise.’ Allah will live up to the servant who thinks well of Him:

“This was how you considered your Lord, but He knows you better than you know yourselves. Thus, you are now lost (41:23)⁵.”

Imam ar-Rida (a) said: “Have favorable judgment about Allah, for He says: I am as My servant thinks of Me, whether good or bad⁶.”

Intercession of the Prophet and the Imams for their Adherents

The Prophet (S) said: “On the Day of Resurrection, we will be responsible for interrogating our adherents. Regarding the wrongdoings that are committed against Allah, we will issue a judgment about them and Allah will accept it for us. Regarding the wrongdoings that are committed against people, we will interfere so that the wronged party will forgive for our sake. Regarding the wrongdoings that are committed against us, we are the worthiest of forgiveness⁷.”

“He who dies on the love for Muhammad’s family will be treated as shahid. He who dies on the love for Muhammad’s family will be forgiven. He who dies on the love for Muhammad’s family will be (regarded as) repentant. He who dies on the love for Muhammad’s family will be perfectly faithful believer. He who dies on the love for Muhammad’s family will be given the good tidings of being in Paradise by the angel of death, first, and Munkar and Nakeer, second.

He who dies on the love for Muhammad’s family will be carried in procession to Paradise like brides. He who dies on the love for Muhammad’s family will have two doors taking to Paradise opened from his grave. As for him who dies on the love for Muhammad’s family, Allah will make the angels of mercy visit his grave regularly. He who dies on the love for Muhammad’s family will be regarded as follower of the Sunna and community of Muslims. But for him who dies on the hatred for Muhammad’s family, he will attend on the Day of Resurrection with the script, written on his forehead-- ‘This one is excluded from the mercy of Allah⁸.”

The Prophet (S) once, came to his companions with bright face like the halo of the moon. When Abdurrahman Ibn Awf asked him, the Prophet said: “I have just received the good tidings about my brother and cousin and about my daughter. I have just been told that Allah gave my daughter Fatima in marriage to Ali and ordered Ridwan; the doorkeeper of Paradise, to shake the Tree of Tuba, which carried muniments as many as those who have love for my family. Under that tree, Allah has created angels of light and given each one of them one of these muniments. When the Day of Resurrection will come and the angels will call at all the creatures, they will give each of those who have love for The The Ahlul- Bayt one of these muniments that will be documents of acquittance from Hell. Hence, my brother and my daughter will set many men and women of my umma free from Hell⁹.”

When God’s saying,

“The righteously striving believers are the best of all creatures, (98:7)”

was revealed, the Prophet (S) said to Ali: This is you and your Shia¹⁰. On the Day of Resurrection, you will be content and pleased, while your enemies will be angry and depressed¹¹.

Calamities and Diseases Cancel the Believers’ Sins

The Prophet (S) said: “God says: By My power and majesty I swear, I will not make the servant upon whom I want to have mercy depart this world before I punish him for every sin that he committed. I will punish him by means of an ailment that inflicts him, poverty that befalls him, or a state of fear that controls him. If this is not enough, I will make him suffer the agonies of death¹².”

“Depression and grief will not depart the believer before they eradicate all of his sins¹³.”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “Mufaddal, beware of committing sins and warn our adherents against so. By God I swear, you are the most targeted by sins. You may suffer the persecution of the ruling authorities.

This is because of your commitment of sins. You may be ailed. This is because of your commitment of sins. Your sustenance may be stopped. This is because of your commitment of sins.

You may suffer the agonies of death so severely. This is also because of your commitment of sins.”

As the Imam noticed that al-Mufaddal was highly touched by these words, he (a) commented: “You suffer all the previous in order that you will not be interrogated about your sins on the Day of Resurrection, since the punishment for such sins befall you in this world¹⁴.”

“The believer may suffer troubles in sleep as a punishment for his commitment of sins. He also may suffer a physical defect as a punishment for his commitment of sins¹⁵.”

Reality of Hope

Hope is meaningless unless reasons of its success are available. It is hence foolish to leave the courses of obedience and take in the courses of deviation and depend totally on hope. Such hope is surely void. It is noticeable that the great personalities, such as prophets, their successors, and the saints, spared no efforts in the fields of the obedience to God and devoted themselves to the acts of worship while they were the most favorable to God:

As he was told that some people were engrossed in the acts of disobedience to God while they claim that they hope for the mercy of Him, Imam as-Sadiq (a) said:

“They are liars. They are not our Shia. Those are the people whom are deceived by false hopes. He who hopes for something should work for it, and he who fears something should escape it¹⁶.”

Purpose of Hope and Fear

Some people can be mended only by means of hope while others can be rectified by means of fear. The disobedient who have felt regret for their excessive sins but they have despaired of His pardon should be treated by means of hope for God’s immense mercy. Those who destroyed themselves because of excessive performance of acts of worship should also be treated by means of hope for God. On the other side, the sinful tyrants who are plunging in acts of disobedience to God and are deceived by false hope should be treated by means of fear of God as well as severe reproach and painful punishment.

¹. Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; 2/451 (as quoted from ar- Rawandi’s an-Nawadir).

². Quoted from Jami us-Sa’adat; part 1 page 246.

³. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 3/274 (as quoted from Sheikh as-Saduq’s al-Amali).

⁴. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 3 page 274 (as quoted from al-Barqi’s al-Mahasin).

⁵. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 3/301 (as quoted from as- Saduq’s Thawab ul-Aamal).

⁶. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 59 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

⁷. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 3/301 (as quoted from Uyounu Akhbar ir-Ridha).

⁸. In his exegesis of the Verse, “(Muhammad), say: I do not ask you for any payment for my preaching to you except (your)

love of (my near) relatives, (42:23)” Az-Zamakhshari judges that this narration is uninterruptedly related and that it is beyond suspicion. Furthermore, many compilers of the books of the merits and virtues record this narration in different ways. (Excerpted from Sayyid Abdul-Hussein Sharafuddin’s al-Fusoul ul-Muhimma.)

[9.](#) Excerpted from Sayyid Abdul-Hussein Sharafuddin’s al-Fusoul ul-Muhimma; page 44. (In his book titled as-Sawaaiq ul-Muhriqa, p. 103, Ibn Hagar records this narration.)

[10.](#) Shia (lexicographically, adherents, party) is the other major religious group of Muslims, differing from the Sunni in the understanding of the Sunna and in their acceptance of Imam Ali (a), the Prophet’s son-in-law and the fourth caliph, to be the first true successor of the Prophet (S). Hence, they are called the Shia of Ali.

[11.](#) Excerpted from Sayyid Abdul-Hussein Sharafuddin’s al-Fusoul ul-Muhimma; page 39. (In the book titled as-Sawaaiq ul-Muhriqa, p. 96, this narration is recorded)

[12.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 172 (quoted from al-Kafi).

[13.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 172 (quoted from al-Kafi).

[14.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 3 page 35 (as quoted from Ilal ush-Sharayi).

[15.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 172 (quoted from al-Kafi).

[16.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 57 (as quoted from al-Kafi).

Deception

Deception means to be deceived by a devilish trickery or a wrong idea, such as spending the usurped property in fields of charity. It causes many people to believe in the validity of their acts, but if they examine them precisely, they will understand that their deeds were only delusion. Thus, deception is the most dangerous snare, weapon, and trickery of the Devil.

There are however different forms of deception varying according to the trends of the deluded individuals. Some people are deluded by the charming pleasures of this world and others are deluded by knowledge, leadership, wealth, worship, and the like.

Forms of Deception

Worldly Deception

Faithless individuals are mostly deceived by the false charms of this world. They neglect the inevitable termination of this world and forget that there is an endless life to come; therefore, they put two inaccurate reasons as the justification of their being deceived by this world:

FIRST, they claim that this world is cash while the life to come is credit.

SECOND, they claim that the pleasures of this world are certain, while the pleasures of the world to come are uncertain.

This is in fact a big mistake. Regarding the first claim, it is true that cash is better than credit if they are

equal in the measurement of benefit. But when the credit is preponderant to the cash, it becomes preferable. This is the big difference between the pleasures of this world and these of the world to come. As a matter of fact, the pleasures of this world will come to an end, while those of the world to come are everlasting.

Regarding the second claim, it is also inaccurate to doubt the life to come. The prophets, their successors, scholars, and many nations proved undoubtedly the existence of the life to come. Hence, to doubt it is insanity denied by religion and reason.

In the same manner, the sick believes in the benefit of the medicine that is prescribed unanimously by physicians. If he belies them, he is then dull and foolish.

“Know that the worldly life is only a game, a temporary attraction, a means of boastfulness among yourselves and a place for multiplying your wealth and children. It is like the rain, which produces plants that are attractive to the unbelievers. These plants flourish, turn yellow, and then become crushed bits of straw. In the life hereafter there will be severe torment or forgiveness and mercy from Allah. The worldly life is only an illusion (59:20).”

“The example of the worldly life is like the water sent down from the sky, which becomes mixed with the earth's produce that people and cattle consume. When the land becomes fertile and pleasant, people think that they have control over it. At Our command during the night or day, the land becomes as barren as if it had no richness the day before. Thus, do We explain the evidence (of the truth) for the people who reflect. (10:24)”

“Those who have rebelled and preferred the worldly life, Hell will be their dwelling. However, those who had feared their Lord and restrained their souls from acting according to its desires, Paradise will be the dwelling (79:37-41).”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “For him who begins and ends his day considering this world as his main concern, Allah will put poverty between his eyes, scatter his affairs, and he will not gain anything of this world except that which is decided for him. For him who begins and ends his day considering the world to come as his main concern, Allah will install richness in his heart and will manage all his affairs¹.”

Imam al-Kadhim (a) said: “Husham, the intelligent have abstained from the worldly pleasures and desired for the world to come because they have known that world, as well as the world to come, is demanding and demanded². This world will surely trace the seeker of the world to come to give him his provisions perfectly. The world to come will trace the seeker of the worldly pleasures when death overcomes him to deprive him of the pleasures of this world and the world to come³.”

[The Everlasting Law](#)

Unanimously, people have complained about this world, because they suffer its pains. Any pleasure in

this world is roiled by grieves and any rest is roiled by sufferance. It does not conform to anybody and no man can find true happiness in it. However, they have different courses about it. Some loved it maniacally, rushed madly upon its transient wreckage; therefore, they lived in states of enmity and wrangle. Others disregarded it and sought the refuge of the temples and places of worship escaping its charms and pleasure; therefore, they changed into scattered groups that lived in the margins of life.

In the midst of such two different tendencies, Islam, out of its comprehensive reformation, came to enact the everlasting law that combines the world and religion and unites the purposes of this life with the spiritual desires in such a high method befitting man's nature and guaranteeing pleasure and comfort.

In some situations, Islam has warned the adorers of this world against its deceptions so that they will be freed from slavery. In other situations, Islam has brought gradually the extremists who escape the charms of this world near its innocent sweets and pure desires so that they will not withdraw from the caravans of life and become the subject of poverty and humility.

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: "He who dedicates his worldly life totally to the world to come is not one of us, and he who ignores his world to come for sake of enjoying his worldly life is, too, not one of us⁴."

One of the Imams (a) said: "Work for your worldly life as if you will live forever, and work for the world to come as if you will die tomorrow⁵."

Following this law, the Islamic civilization flourished, and Muslims could find themselves places in the scales of perfection. In the light of this law, we can conclude the following facts:

To have the pleasures and legal desires of this world is not discommended so long as it does not contain a forbidden matter or extravagance:

"(Muhammad), ask them, "Who has made it unlawful to maintain beauty and to eat the pure foods which Allah has created for His servants? They are made for the believers in this world and are exclusively for them in the life hereafter." Thus do We explain Our revelations to the people who have knowledge. (7:32)"

Amirul-Mu'minin (a) said: "Know, creatures of Allah, that the God-fearing have shared the joys of this transient world as well as the next coming world, for they shared with the people of this world in their worldly matters while people did not share with them in the matters of the next world. They lived in this world in the best manner of living and ate the choicest food and consequently they enjoyed herein all that the people with ease of life enjoyed, and secured from it what the haughty and the vain secured. Then, they departed from it after taking provision enough to take them to the end of their journey and after doing a profitable transaction⁶. "

☞ To have the precious acquisitions of this world is not discommended unless they are usurped, ill-gotten, or diverting from the reference and the acts of obedience to God. To acquire such things for

dispensing with people or seeking the contentment of God, such as regarding the relatives, aiding the poor, or establishing charitable projects like schools, mosques, and hospitals, is among the best acts of obedience.

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “He who does not collect fortunes legally for dispensing with people, repaying his debts, and regarding his relatives is worthless⁷.”

As a man said he sought the worldly pleasures and hope he would collect them for sake of spending them on his dependants and himself, regarding others, and performing the hajj and umrah, Imam as-Sadiq (a) commented:

“This is not the seeking for this world. It is surely the seeking for the life to come⁸.”

☞ The desire to survive in this world is not discommended at all, since its purposes are acceptable. He who desires for survival in this world so as to provide more acts of obedience to God or have more virtues is praised, but he who desires for survival so as to commit sins is surely dispraised.

Imam as-Sajjad (a) said: “(O Allah) give me long life in this world so that I will spend it in the fields of Your obedience. But if it will be a hotbed for the Shaitan, then grasp my soul.”

Disadvantages of the Worldly Deception

- The most serious danger of deception is that it casts a screen between the intellect and reality and, therefore, the defects and shortcomings, such as gluttony, greed, madly rushing upon the false pleasures that cause disrespect, cannot be noticed.
- Deception causes unhappiness because it pushes into the midst of the life sufferance and closes the eyes before satisfaction.
- Deception is on the top in the list of the matters that distract from being ready for the life to come and taking along provisions of righteous deeds:

“Those who have rebelled and preferred the worldly life, Hell will be their dwelling. However, those who had feared their Lord and restrained their souls from acting according to its desires, Paradise will be the dwelling (79:37-41).”

Treatment of the Worldly Deception

It is recommended to keep in mind the Quranic texts and narrations that dispraise this world and display its horrible dangers, and to keep in mind the unanimous agreement of the prophets, their successors, and people of wisdom upon the inevitable termination of this world and the certain immortality of the life to come. Hence, man of reason should prefer that which will last forever to that which will inescapably come to an end, and should get ready for the everlasting pleasure and bliss:

“However, (the disbelievers) prefer the worldly life even though the life hereafter will be better and will last forever. This is what is written in the ancient heavenly Books; the Scriptures of Abraham and Moses (87: 16–9).”

It is also recommended to benefit by the sermons, maxims, and expressive stories that show the regret of the tyrants because of their having been deceived by this world. The most effective sermon in this regard is the word that Amirul-Mu'minin addressed to his son al-Hasan (a):

“Enliven your heart with preaching, kill it by renunciation, energize it with firm belief, humiliate it by recalling death, make it believe in mortality, make it see the misfortunes of this world, make it fear the authority of the time and the severity of some changes during the nights and the days, place before it the events of past people, recall to it what befell those who were before you and walk among their cities and ruins, then see what they did and from what they have gone away and where they have gone and stayed. You will find that they departed from (their) friends and lodged in the house of loneliness. Call in their houses: empty houses, where are your habitants? Then stop on their graves and say: ragged bodies and separated organs, how have you found the lodge in which you are living? Shortly, you too will be like one of them. Therefore, plan for your place of stay and do not sell your next life with this world.”

People of wisdom have shown a very fascinating picture that depicts man's madly rushing upon this world. They said: “The deceived by this world is like a person who is hanging in a well with a rope tied to his waist. In the depth of that well, there is a huge dragon waiting for his falling and opening its mouth for swallowing him. In the upper of that well, there are two black and white rats gnawing that rope continuously. Although that person can see that dragon and the gradual cutting of the rope, he pushes himself towards little honey found on the wall of that well and mixed with dust. In addition, there are many bees fighting for gaining that honey. In the midst of all this, that person engages himself in licking that honey and competing with those bees on it, without paying attention to the horrible situation above and under him as long as he could find sweet that licking.”

The person in the previous picture represents man, the rope is his age, the huge dragon is death, the two rats are day and night, honey that is mixed with dust is the worldly pleasures that are mixed with grieves and sins, and the bees are sons of this world who compete with each other for gaining its pleasures.

When the angel of death came to Prophet Noah (a), he was in sunlight. After greeting him, Noah asked: “Why are you here?” He answered: “To take your soul.” Noah asked: “Will you permit me to go to the shade?” The Angel did. Then Noah changed his position saying: “Angel of death! What happened to me in life is like the change of position from sunlight to shade, now perform your mission.”

In his final hours, al-Mansour; the Abbasid caliph said:

“We have sold our life to come with a single slumber.”

In his last agonies of death, Harun ar-Rashid¹⁰ was repeating (God's saying about the disbelievers):

"Our wealth has been of no benefit to us and our belief has destroyed us. (69:29)"

In his final hours, Abdul-Malik Ibn Marwan, the Umayyad caliph, was asked about his feelings. He answered: "I am as exactly as the saying of God:

Allah will say,

"You have come to Us alone just as We created you at first. You have left behind all those which We gave to you." (6:94)'

On the sea, Zaitoun, the wise man, saw a man excessively depressed due to the loss of worldly pleasures. He said to him, "Man, what for is this depression? Suppose you are greatly rich, and you are about to drown because the ship you have been on smashed up, will your one and only hope be salvation even if you lose all that which you have in possession?" "Yes, of course," answered the man. "Supposing you are a king," went on the wise man, "but you are surrounded by some people whose main intention is to kill you, will your one and only hope be to escape from them even if you lose all that which is under your control?" "Yes, of course," said the man. "Now," said the wise man, "you are that rich man and you, too, are that king."

These words made that man feel happy.

An expert asked a rich man about the way he had been seeking the worldly pleasures. "It has been very tense," asked the rich man. The expert asked, "Have you attained that which you want?" "No," answered the rich man. The expert said, "You have spent all your days for attaining the worldly pleasures, but you have not attained anything. How will you attain the world that you have not worked for?"

Such lessons and examples influence only the sound hearts and the aware intellects. On the other side, even the most profound sermons, examples, and lessons will not find any ground or welcome by those whom are enslaved by the worldly pleasures. A wise man said: "If a heart is sealed by the fondness of this world, any amount of sermons and admonitions will not influence it. In the same manner, any amount of medicine will not be useful for the body that is completely predominated by a malady."

Deception of Knowledge

Some people feel arrogant for their scope of knowledge. Such feelings may take them beyond the limits and make them compete hideously with each other for attaining high ranks. Such ones should have believed that knowledge is not a purpose. It is a means achieving self-discipline, self-perfection, and happiness in this world as well as the world to come. If knowledge does not achieve such aims, it turns into a waste effort:

“Those who were to carry the responsibility of the Torah but ignored, are like donkeys laden with books.” (62:5)

Knowledge is in fact like rainfall that drops on the fertile lands to change them into handsome gardens producing goodness and beauty. But if it drops on a barren land, it will surely be useless. In the same manner, knowledge spreads brightness on the virtuous people, while it only increases the naivety of the lowly.

Man should not take pride in his knowledge since he is not the only one in this field. In the old as well as modern ages, people recognized a great variety of noble men of knowledge who achieved great feats to humankind.

Knowledge should not be a subject of pride since responsibilities of people of knowledge are gravely serious. Moreover, people of knowledge are more answerable than the ignorant. Knowledge will be curse for those who do not take it as guide and do not apply it to themselves:

The Prophet (S) said: “All my people will be virtuous if two classes of them become virtuous and will be reprobate if these two classes become reprobate: the jurists and leaders¹¹.”

“As some people of Paradise will look at people of Hell, they will be astonished as they will find the instructors that taught them the religious affairs among them. They will ask, ‘How it is that you are in Hell while we are in Paradise only because we followed your instructions?’ They will answer, ‘That is because we did not apply these instructions to ourselves¹².’”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “Seventy sins of the ignorant will be forgiven before a single sin of the knowledgeable is forgiven¹³.”

Thus, people of knowledge must be good examples for others and must apply the high standards to themselves. In addition, they should do their best to avoid the slips of deception.

Deception of Authority

High rank and power are strong incentives of deception; therefore, we notice men of authority treat people arrogantly out of their feelings of pride. All over ages, people suffered so painfully such arrogance from the reigning authorities who missed the fact that Islam has denied the excessive conceit and selfishness and threatened horrible forms of torment for the conceited in this life as well as the life to come.

However, the high ranking people should employ their authorities for attracting the others’ attentions and admirations and increasing their popular accounts.

The strongest factor that alleviates the intensity of such category of conceit is to ponder deeply over the

vicissitudes of time. In fact, the powerful is as same as the rider of a lion: he cannot expect the time it becomes angry and wild.

Abdullah Ibn Abdurrahman narrated:

On Eid ul-Adha day¹⁴, I visited my mother and found an old lady with ragged clothes with her. That old lady was so eloquent. When I asked my mother about her, she answered that she was the mother of Ja'far Ibn Yahya the Barmakid¹⁵! Thus, I greeted her so warmly and said, 'How is it that time made you be in such a manner?' She answered, 'Yes, son. We were enjoying the loans of time, but it demanded us with them.' I then asked her to narrate to me some of her story. She said, 'Let me tell you in brief. On one of the past days of Eid ul-Adha, there were four hundred maidens in my service. At that time, I was claiming that my son was treating me impiously. Today, I am before you just for begging you for two skins of ewes so that I will use one as bed and the other as cover.'

I felt pity for her and gave her few dirhams that made her so happy¹⁶.

Harun ar-Rashid asked the preacher who visited him for an advice. The preacher asked, 'Supposing you are very thirsty and you cannot find water, how much will you buy a single drink of water?' 'I will buy it even with half of my kingdom,' answered the caliph. The preacher then asked, 'Supposing you cannot emit that drink of water, how much will you pay just for making that drink of water be emitted?' The caliph answered, 'I will pay half of my kingdom.' The preacher then said, 'Hence, you should not be deceived by the kingdom whose value is a single drink of water¹⁷.'

With no going back, the intelligent should realize that all the matters in which he takes pride, such as wealth, knowledge, and authority, are only graces the source of which is Almighty God. Consequently, gratitude, not pride, should be shown for them.

Authority between Praise and Censure

Seeking for authority is not absolutely deniable, since it varies according to its purposes. To seek authority for legal purposes, such as supporting the wronged, aiding the weak, and defending oneself, is a praised thing. On the other hand, to seek authority for overwhelming and controlling others is something dispraised.

Deception of Wealth

Wealth stimulates the latent of conceit and reflects the hideous pictures of cruelty that the wealthy hold in the hidden. It charms the wealthy seekers of authority and encourages them to give their ill-gotten wealth in fields of generosity, thinking they are doing well, whereas, in fact, they are only deceived.

Other wealthy individuals may show sympathy toward the needy in public while, in hidden, they treat them so niggardly for obtaining good reputation. In fact, such individuals are deceived by their fortunes.

Others refrain from defraying the fiscal rights, while they satisfy themselves with performing the rites of worship that do not need any expenditure, such as prayers and fasting. Deceptively, they convince themselves that the performance of such rites is sufficient. Such individuals are also deceived. Like acts of worship, it is unavoidably obligatory upon every individual to defray the fiscal rights of the Sharia. In the world of the belief and Sharia, each act of worship has its individual significance.

The Prophet (S) said: “Dinars and dirhams have terminated those who lived before you. In the same manner, they shall terminate you [18](#).”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “Eblis says: Son of Adam may triumph over me in every situation except three: seizing a fortune illegally, abstaining from defraying a fortune in an obligatory field, and exploiting a fortune in an unsuitable field [19](#).”

Wealth between Praise and Censure

Besides disadvantages, wealth has many advantages. It may be a means of happiness or a means of grief, according to the ways of its acquisition and the fields in which it is spent. It is the active means that achieve good livelihood. It is also the strong reason achieving dignity and disdain against the mean. Finally, wealth can be exploited for achieving religious goals.

On the other hand, there are many disadvantages that wealth brings about it is a strong reason causing involvement in suspicions and commitment of sins.

Furthermore, wealth is the strongest means that takes away from the reference to God and discourages readying for the life to come:

“Believers, do not let your wealth and children divert you from remembering Allah. Whoever is diverted will suffer a great loss (63:9).”

From the previous, we conclude that wealth is not something dispraised at all so long as its means of acquisition and fields of spending are noble. It becomes a subject of denial only when its means and purposes are ill. Because man’s nature is fondness of collecting wealth, it is important for the faithful believer not to be deceived by its glittering appearances. It is also proper for him to learn lessons from those who are excessively charmed by the collection of wealth to the degree that they become deprived of the rewards of the life to come.

Finally, such people will depart this life without taking anything of their fortunes with them. In other words, they will leave this world completely bankrupt! Hence, they are only honest keepers who suffered very much for collecting such fortunes, but they left them for their heirs who gained them so peacefully. The result is that the collectors of such fortunes will be completely responsible for these fortunes, while their heirs will enjoy them completely delightfully.

Deception of Lineage

Some people may feel conceited for their high lineage and their being the descendants of a noble family, such as the family of the Prophet (S). Such people may feel they are right and they will be saved only for their being the descendants of a noble family, even if they disregard following and imitating the acts and morals of their forefather. This is in fact an illusion.

God honors him who obeys Him even if he is 'Abyssinian' slave, and humiliates him who disobeys Him even if he is 'Koreishite' celebrity. The Ahlul-Bayt (a) have won such unparalleled ranks and everlasting virtues only because they worked diligently in the fields of obedience to God and devoted all their lives and efforts to seeking the satisfaction of Him.

To be deceived by the forefathers' reputation, without imitating them, is no more than daydream. It has never happened that an ignorant individual turns into knowledgeable only because he is the descendant of a knowledgeable man. God never accepts to treat the obedient and the disobedient equally, or regards the mujahid and the coward as the same.

The holy Quran tells about the story of Prophet Noah (a) when he implored to God to save his son from the sweeping flood that covered all the disbelievers on this earth. Nevertheless, such imploration came to nothing, because his son was disbeliever:

"Noah prayed to his Lord saying, "Lord, my son is a member of my family. Your promise is always true and you are the best Judge." His Lord replied, "He is not one of your family. He is a man of unrighteous deeds. Do not ask me about that which you have no knowledge. I advise you not to become an ignorant person." (11:46)"

The Prophet (S) also taught his family a never-ending lesson in the field of obeying and fearing God and avoiding depending upon their family relation to him:

Abu Ja'far Imam al-Baqir related that the Prophet (S) stood on Safa Mount and said: "O sons of Hashim and sons of Abdul-Muttalib, I am the messenger of Allah to all of you. I feel pity for you. I have my own deeds and you have your own deeds. Do not depend on the fact that Muhammad is from you and that you will be taken to wherever he is taken. By Allah I swear, my followers, whether they are from your clan or any other clan, are only the God-fearing. I will not admit you on the Day of Resurrection if you come to me burdened with the worldly disadvantages while others come with the advantages of the world to come. I am excused regarding my mission to you and the commandments of Allah for you²⁰."

¹. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 154 (quoted from al-Kafi).

². The world is demanding because it tracks its people till they reach the day on which they will depart it the world-. It is also demanded because people wish to have more than what is limited for them. The world to come is demanding people till trap them when the day on which they depart this life falls. It is demanded because everyone longs for winning the pleasure there.

³. Quoted from Tuhaf ul-Uqoul.

4. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 10 page 9 (quoted from al-Kafi).
5. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 10 page 9 (quoted from al-Kafi).
6. Quoted from Nahj ul-Balagha
7. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 10 page 9 (quoted from al-Kafi).
8. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 10 page 9 (quoted from al-Kafi).
9. Quoted from Nahj ul-Balagha.
10. Harun ar-Rashid (763–809) is the fifth Abbasid caliph of Baghdad 786–809.
11. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 1/83 (as quoted from Sheikh as-Saduq's al-Khissal).
12. Quoted from al-Wafi; (In the Prophet's commandment for Abu Dharr).
13. Quoted from al-Wafi; page 52 (as quoted from al-Kafi).
14. Eid ul-Adha: Feast of sacrifice. A festival marking the culmination of the annual pilgrimage (Hajj) to Mecca.
15. Ja'far ibn Yahya the Barmakid was the second personality, after the Abbasid caliph, in the state.
16. Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; vol. 2 page 609.
17. Quoted from at-Turkani's al-La'aali.
18. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 152 (as quoted from al-Kafi).
19. Quoted from as-Saduq's al-Khissal.
20. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 60 (as quoted from al-Kafi).

Envy

Envy stands for the wish that amenities of others were to lapse and move to the envious. To hope for having the same amenities of somebody is called emulation, and it is not ill-favored. It is a hideous vice that leaves the worst influence on morals. The envious in fact lives in incessant grief since he dissatisfies himself with acts of God. As the envious feels horrible malice towards the envied, all his endeavors came to nothing. He therefore encounters the results of his envy alone:

“In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. (Muhammad), say, “I seek protection from the Lord of the Dawn against the evil of whatever He has created. I seek His protection against the evil of the invading darkness, from the evil of those who practice witchcraft and from the evil of the envious ones (113: 1-5).”

The Prophet (S) said to his companions: “Surely, the malady of the past nations has crept to you. It is envy. It is shaving not the hair, but the religion. To be saved of it, you should control your hand power- and tongue wording-, and you should not insinuate evil into your faithful brother¹.”

“Envy consumes the good deeds in the same way as fire consumes wood²”

Amirul-Mu'minin (a) said: “I have never seen like the wrong envious who is most similar to the wronged. The envious lives in endless care with grieved heart and inherent sorrow³.”

Incentive of Envy

(1) Malignity

Some individuals have ill will and malignity as natures. Thus, you notice them feel miserable when others are happy, and feel happy when others are grieved. They envy the others for that which God has given to them out of His graces, even if there is no hostile situation between the two the envious and the envied, but only because of ill will.

(2) Enmity

Enmity is within the strongest incentives of envy.

(3) Competition

The competition of the owners of common interests and purposes is another incentive that arouses envy. Under this title lies also the envy among sons for the favor that one, or some, of them enjoy with fathers. The retinue of the ruling authorities also envy each other for the favor that some of them enjoy with the authorities. In few words, envy is common among the individuals of the same goals. It is absent among the individuals of divergent trends. The merchant, for instance, does not envy the engineer or the farmer.

(4) Selfishness

Envy may control some people because of their feelings of precedence and selfishness that prompt them to precede others and enjoy exclusive standings.

(5) Contempt

Envy may be arisen in the inner self of a person who despises others and regards as too much the graces that God confers upon them.

It happens that all the previous incentives of envy gather in the personality of an individual to change him into a volcano of oppression.

Disadvantages of Envy

Exclusively, envy is the most serious moral defect that inflicts the religion and the life of the individuals that they carry.

The worldly disadvantage of envy is that it roils the life and brings about care and grief. This is because the envious is disturbed when he notices graces of God shade people. Moreover, such scenes inflict him

with disastrous mental and physical defects. Envy, too, influences badly the dignity and reputation; therefore, we notice that the envious are the subject of dispraise. Besides, envy inflicts the moralities; hence, it is noticed that the envious does not refrain from trapping others by various nasty means of false accusations. The envious, also, does not spare any effort for arising seditious matters.

The famous and excelling personalities are the subjects of envy, because their standings are resented by the envious. This is the secret beyond the wrong treatment and deprivation of appreciation that most of the virtuous individuals have to suffer. It frequently happens that the envious does not hit the target; therefore, his share becomes only agony and grief, while the targeted individual wins good reputation and respect.

The religious disadvantage of envy is that the envious uses all wrong and nasty means for trapping the envied so as to impute dishonor to him. This will certainly make him encounter the wrath and punishment of God. In addition, the behaviors and feelings of the envious, such as rage and dissatisfaction with acts of God, are spiteful spunk.

Treatment of Envy

(1) One must avoid looking forward to gaining the graces enjoyed by those who are of higher ranks than he is, so that he will feel the divine care. Such feelings will surely alleviate the tendencies of envy.

(2) It is necessary to keep in mind the worldly and religious disadvantages of envy in addition to the various sorts of crises and misfortunes that it results.

(3) It is also necessary to keep God in mind, believe in the wisdom beyond His acts, submit to His plans, and beware of the initiatives of envy.

Fathers must avoid making any distinction among their sons in fields of custody so as to avoid seeding envy in their mentalities.

1. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 15/3/131 (as quoted from al- Majalis and al-Amali).

2. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 15/3 (as quoted from al- Majazat un-Nabawiyya).

3. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 15/3/131 (as quoted from al- Karajaki's al-Kenz).

Backbiting

Backbiting is to speak ill of a believer behind his back, including matters concerning his moralities, appearance, or personality. Not only is backbiting restricted to words, but also it includes every behavior and deed, whether suggestive or direct. The Prophet (S) defined backbiting by saying:

“Do you know what is backbiting? It is to mention things that your brother dislikes. To mention things that are really found in the personality of your brother is backbiting. To mention things that are not found in the personality of your brother is slander.”

Backbiting is however one of the meanest manners and most serious crimes and sins. God likens the backbiter to the one who eats the flesh of the dead:

“Believers, stay away from conjecture; acting upon some conjecture may lead to sin. Do not spy on one another or backbite. Would any of you like to eat the disgusting dead flesh of your brother? Have fear of Allah; Allah accepts repentance and is All-merciful (49: 12).”

“Allah does not love public accusation unless one is truly wronged. Allah is All-hearing and All-knowing. (4: 148)”

The Prophet (S) said: “Backbiting destroys the religion in a way that is more destructive than canker¹.”

“He who publicizes an ill matter is regarded as him who originated it, and whoever disregards a faithful believer for a matter will not die before that very matter sticks to him².”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “For him who publicizes an affair of a believer for disgracing and disrespecting him, Allah will dismiss him from His custody and deliver him to the Shaitan’s³.”

“Do not backbite (others) so that others will not backbite you. Do not dig a hole for making your brother fall in it, lest you yourself may fall in it. As you condemn others, others will surely condemn you⁴.”

Disregard of Backbiting

It is necessary to avoid being in conformity with the backbiters or listening to them, for the listener of backbiting is regarded as partner in the sin. To do so can be achieved by denying backbiting verbally, changing the subject into another innocent one, leave the session of backbiting, or, in the least, deny backbiting in heart, so as to be saved from the partnership of that sin.

A wise man said: “Try your best to avoid introducing yourself to the backbiter, because the greatest share of harm is burdened by the closest to him.”

In the same manner, it is important to honor the dignity of the believer who is backbitten.

The Prophet (S) said: “Paradise is unquestionably the share of him who defends the honor of his believing brother.”

It is worth mentioning, here, that the illegality of backbiting does not include the deviants and apostates.

Incentives of Backbiting

- Enmity and envy are the strongest incentives of backbiting.
- Joking is another incentive of backbiting, because it is regarded as fresh subject for arising joking and laughter at others.
- Boasting is also an incentive of backbiting, because the boastful, in most cases, tries to refer to the others' defects to prove that he disdains and does not enjoy such defects.
- It frequently happens that an individual who associates with backbiters tries to be in conformity with them by according them in their ill speech of others so that they may not reject him.

Disadvantages of Backbiting

Through its regulations, Islam intends to reinforce fraternity of Muslims to make it a never-ending constitution. Thus, it has gone on enjoining to cling to all matters that develop mutual amicability and achieve fraternity; such as well mannerism, truth, fulfillment of trusts, and paying attention to Muslims' affairs and general interests. Islam also has warned against any matter that roils the pure hearts or arises malice, such as lying, cheating, treachery, and contempt.

Since backbiting is a destructive element that devastates the social construction and spoils the tied up relations, the Islamic code has forbidden and regarded it as a grand sin. It sow's the poisonous seeds of spite among Muslims. When the ill speech reaches the one about whom it is said, it will arise the feelings of hatred in his inner self; so, he tries to revenge himself upon the backbiter by answering him by ill speech. In so many cases, backbiting has caused serious problems and unwelcome tragedies.

The Prophet (S) said: "On the Day of Resurrection, one of you will not find the good deeds that he did in his life in his record⁵ when he will be interrogated. He will ask the Lord about this, and the Lord will answer him: 'Your Lord never makes a mistake and never forgets. Because you backbit people, your good deeds were erased from your record.' Another one will find many good deeds that he did not do in his record. He will ask the Lord about such deeds, and the Lord will answer: "Because you were backbitten by so-and-so, I added his good deeds to you⁶."

Reasonable Grounds of Backbiting

Backbiting is decided as forbidden so long as it is intended to disgrace others, but if it is not intended for so or if a reasonable ground relies upon it, it is not forbidden. Muslim jurists have mentioned a number of reasonable grounds for backbiting:

- If backbiting represents the complaint of a wronged person so as to prove his right before a judge, it is

not forbidden, even if it includes the ascription of injustice and criminality to the other party.

- The person whose advice is sought in definite matters, such as marriage or trust, is permitted to backbite the other party by mentioning his defects-. It is also acceptable to warn a believer against the association with deviants, by referring namely to their defects, provided that such reference is intended to protect the believer. It is also acceptable to defame a testifier when it is necessary.
- Backbiting is acceptable when it is intended to disavow the claim of a false lineage.
- Backbiting is acceptable when it is intended to refute an untrue saying or an illegal claim.
- Backbiting is acceptable when it takes the form of testimony against wrongdoers.
- It is acceptable to mention certain epithets (such as ‘the blind’, ‘the one-eyed’, and the like) of certain people if this is necessary for introducing them.
- Backbiting is acceptable when it is intended to forbid evil, by mentioning the defects of a person before somebody who is able to guide him.
- It is acceptable to backbite those who declare publicly their commitment of sins, such as the drunk and gamblers, provided that such backbiting should not exceed the limits. It is said that to backbite a sinful is not offensive.

Finally, well intention and sound objective must be proposed. Likewise, it is improper to aim at evil intentions, such as enmity, envy, and the like.

Treatment of Backbiting

- It is necessary to keep in mind the foresighted disadvantages of backbiting.
- It is necessary to pay the greatest attention to self- discipline by applying the noble traits to oneself.

As he was asked about his educator, Muhammad Ibn al-Hanafiyya said: “It is my Lord Who educated me in myself. I have followed and imitated any element that is enjoyed by men of sense when I found good, and I have avoided any element that is practiced by the ignorant when I found ugly. Hence, I could attain the treasures of knowledge⁷.”

- It is advisable to speak of joyful things, such as pleasant stories and nice purposeful talks, instead of backbiting.
- It is worthwhile, finally, to control one’s wording and abstain from the initiatives of backbiting.

Penance of Backbiting

To make amends for it, one must feel regret and repent from the sins of backbiting. Then, he must curry favor with the one he backbit and ask him for acquittal. If the backbitten forgives, it will be satisfactory. If not, to curry favor with him and apologize will be equivalents of the commitment of backbiting. The previous acts should be done when the backbitten is alive and when such confessions before him do not arise his rage. If they do, or if he is dead, it is necessary to seek God's forgiveness to him.

The Prophet (S) said: "The penance of backbiting is to seek Allah's forgiveness to him the backbitten—whenever you mention him⁸."

- ¹. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; Kitab ul-Ashara, page 177 (as quoted from al-Kafi).
- ². Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; Kitab ul-Ashara, 177 (as quoted from Thawab ul-A'mal and al-Barqi's al-Mahassin).
- ³. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; Kitab ul-Ashara, page 177 (as quoted from Thawab ul-A'mal, al-Barqi's al-Mahassin, and as-Saduq's al-Amali).
- ⁴. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; Kitab ul-Ashara, 177 (as quoted from al-Amali).
- ⁵. 'Record', here, stands for the record of the good and bad deeds of every human being that will be shown to him on the Day of Resurrection and according to which he will be judged. In the holy Quran, there are indications to this record, such as in God's saying: (On the day when We call every nation with their leaders, those whose record of deeds are given to their right hands will read the record and the least wrong will not be done to them. 17:71)
- ⁶. Quoted from Jami us-Saadat; part 2 page 301.
- ⁷. Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; vol. 1 page 324.
- ⁸. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; Kitab ul-Ashara, page 184 (as quoted from al-Kafi).

Slander

As a completion of the subject of backbiting, let us refer to slander, which means to accuse a believer falsely. It is in fact more serious than backbiting:

"One who makes a mistake or commits a sin and ascribes it to an innocent person, he only burdens himself with slander and a grave sin. (4:112)"

The Prophet (S) said: "For him who accuses falsely a male or female believer or ascribes to them false things, Allah will detain him on a hill of fire, on the Day of Resurrection, unless he provides justifiable excuse¹."

- ¹. Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; 1/110 (as quoted from Uyounu Akhbar ir-Ridha)

Talebearing

Talebearing is to inform against people matters that they dislike to divulge, for the purpose of entrapping them. The talebearer is in fact the meanest and most malicious individual since he is characterized by backbiting, betrayal, hypocrisy, spoiling the mutual amicability, and seeding divergence among people:

“Do not yield to one persistent in swearing, backbiting, gossiping, obstructing virtues, a sinful transgressor, ill-mannered, and morally corrupt or that because he may possess wealth and children. When Our revelations are recited to him. (68: 14)”

“Woe to every slanderer and backbiter. (104: 1)”

The Prophet (S) said: “May I tell you of the vilest of you? They are the talebearers who sow enmity between associates and stick defects to those who are acquitted of defects¹.”

Imam al-Baqir (a) said: “It is forbidden for the revilers and the talebearers to be in Paradise².”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said to al-Mansour; the Abbasid caliph: “Do not accept the wording of those whom Allah forbid to be in Paradise and whom Allah decided to make Hell their eternal abode if they speak ill of your relatives and folks whose right is obligatory upon you. The talebearers are surely perjurers. They are the partners of Eblis in his efforts of exciting enmity between people. Allah says:

“Believers, if one who publicly commits sins brings you any news, ascertain its truthfulness carefully, lest you harm people through ignorance and then regret what you have done. (49:6)³”

Incentives of Talebearing

There are two incentives of talebearing:

- To defame the one against whom information are said, or
- To curry favor with and to flatter slavishly the one to whom information are carried.

Disadvantages of Talebearing

Talebearing is the result of two serious vices: backbiting and tattling. Every item of backbiting is tattling, but not every tattling is backbiting. Hence, the disadvantages of talebearing are more serious than those of backbiting, since it includes the divulgement of secrets and defamation of the one against whom tales are born. In certain cases, talebearing result in bloodshed, usurpation of properties, violation of sanctities, and abuse of dignities.

How to Deal with the Talebearer?

Because the talebearer is the most dangerous corruptive, it is necessary to beware of him, as well as his plots and corruption. This may be achieved by following the advices bellow:

- It is obligatory to belie the talebearers, because they are sinful and distrustful.
- It is necessary to avoid mistrusting one's faithful brother just because some information are told against him:

“Believers, stay away from conjecture; acting upon some conjecture may lead to sin. (49: 12)”

- One must not spy and inspect the talebearers' news:

“Do not spy on one another or backbite. (49: 12)”

- One must avoid bearing the tales of the talebearers, lest he becomes talebearer and backbiter in the same time.

It is related that, once, a man bore some tales about another before Amirul-Mu'minin (a) who said to him: “We will inspect that which you have born to us. If it is true, we will hate you. If it is not, we will punish you. If you like, now, we may overlook the matter.” The man asked Amirul-Mu'minin (a) to overlook it⁴.

Muhammad Ibn al-Fudhayl narrated that he asked Imam al-Kadhim (a) what he should do if trustworthy people inform him against a man, but that man would deny when he is faced. The Imam (a) instructed: “You should belie even your hearing and sight if they tell you something wrong about your believing brother. Moreover, if fifty swearing witnesses testify before you against your believing brother, but he would deny their testimonies, you should believe him and disapprove the fifty witnesses. Never inform against your believing brother anything that he dislikes to divulge or anything that defames his personality, lest you are one of those about whom Allah says:

“Those who like to publicize indecency among the believers will face painful torment in this world and in the life to come. Allah knows what you do not know. (24: 19)⁵”

¹. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 164 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

². Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 164 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

³. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; Kitab ul-Ashara, 190 (as quoted from al-Amali).

⁴. Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; vol. 2 page 613.

⁵. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; Kitab ul-Ashara, 188, as quoted from Thawab ul-A'mal.

Calumny

As a completion of talebearing, we provide calumny, which implies informing against people for the purpose of destroying them. On that account, calumny is regarded as the most hideous form of talebearing. In most cases, the victims of calumny are the celebrities and the high-ranking whom are envied for their virtues. As the envious cannot find any way to quench their thirst, they direct to informing against them before the authorities. In most cases, the efforts of such individuals become ineffective to cause them humility and punishment.

The Prophet (S) said: “The vilest people are the tri-destructive. They are those who inform the authorities of ill things against their friends; hence, they destroy themselves, their friends, and the authorities¹.”

¹. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; Kitab ul-Ashara, 191 (as quoted from al-Imama wat Tabsira).

Obscenity, Revilement and Defamation

Obscenity is the expression that is offensively and grossly indecent, such as the shameless and improper words used by the ignorant and avoided by the noble. Such expressions may be used metonymically by the respectful people. In the same manners, authors and polite people used to avoid using obscene expressions out of their civility and decorum; therefore, they use metonymy instead.

Revilement is to insult and curse others, such as calling bad names.

Defamation is to impute dishonor to others by definite expressions.

These three qualities, however, are the most hideous products of the tongue:

The Prophet (S) said: “For every obscene, indecent, and shameless individual who does not care for his speech or for what is said to him, Allah has banned him from being in Paradise. If you search for the family of such individuals, you will find them bastards or semi-sons of devils. There are devils among people. Listen to Allah’s saying (as an address to the Shaitan): And share with them in wealth and children^{1, 2}.”

“The vilest servants of Allah are those whose association is hated because of their obscenity³.”

“To revile at the believers is defection, to fight them is atheism, to backbite them is act of disobedience to Allah, and their wealth is as sacred as their blood (soul)⁴.”

Imam al-Baqir (a) said: "He who defames a believer shall suffer violent death and will not be in good manner at all⁵."

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: "Hell is the abode of him whose wording is avoided by people⁶."

"Shia! Be good examples as you represent us (by doing good deeds). Do not represent us in ill behaviors. Say good wording to people and have control over your tongues (i.e. wording). Stop uttering curious and obscene language⁷."

Imam al-Kadhim (a) said about two men who were showering insults on each other: "The originator of such revilement is the unjust party. He burdens his as well as the other's sin, unless the other party transgresses⁸."

Imam as-Sadiq (a) had a friend who was so close to him that he did not depart him at any situation. One day, they were walking in a mart and followed by a slave from Sind⁹. The Imam's friend turned his face three times to find his slave, but he could not. In the fourth, he could see the slave; so, he shouted at him: "son of a, where were you?"

As soon as Imam as-Sadiq (a) heard that expression from his friend, he slapped his forehead with the hand and said with astonishment: "Subhaanallah¹⁰!

How strange is that! How do you defame his mother?

In the previous, I thought you were pious. Now, I have known that you are impious."

The man said: "May God make me your sacrifice. His mother is only a polytheist woman of Sind."

The Imam said: "You should have known that every nation has a legal form of marriage." He (a) then asked the man to leave him. After that situation, Imam as-Sadiq (a) did not accompany that man at all¹¹.

Disadvantages of Obscenity

Vituperations are mostly resulted from enmity, envy, rage, and immorality, in addition to illiteracy and impoliteness. They divest man of the polite human traits to impute lowliness and savagery to him. They also originate enmity, instigate alienation, and expose to God's wrath.

Amirul-Mu'minin (a) said: "The tongue is a beast. It will raven if it is set free."

¹. The Holy Quran, Sura of Al-Israa (17) Verse (64): The whole meaning (that is mentioned in three Verses) is as follows: ((God said to the Shaitan, "Go away. All those who follow you will have hell as ample recompense for their deeds. Draw anyone of them you can into sin by your voice and by your cavalry and infantry, share their property and children with them and make promises to them. Your promises are all lies. You have no authority over My servants. Your Lord is a Sufficient Protector." 17:63-5))

- [2.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 160 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- [3.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 160 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- [4.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 160 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- [5.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 160 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- [6.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 160 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- [7.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 15/2/192 (as quoted from al- Amali).
- [8.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 160 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- [9.](#) Sind is a province of South East Pakistan, traversed by the lower reaches of the Indus.
- [10.](#) Subhanallah (Glory to God) is an expression of astonishment.
- [11.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 161 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

Sarcasm

Sarcasm is to imitate people's words, deeds, or gestures so as to degrade or mock at them. Because such deeds of sarcasm create enmity, malice, and spoiling of the social relations, Islam has forbidden them. It is quite strange for one to mimic, degrade, or find fault with a believer sarcastically since every individual, except the Sinless¹, must have some defects. Besides, every man may become the target of sarcasm and mimicry.

“Believers, let not a group of you mock another. Perhaps they are better than you. Let not women mock each other; perhaps one is better than the other. Let not one of you find faults in another nor let anyone of you defame another. How terrible is the defamation after having true faith. Those who do not repent are certainly unjust (49: 11).”

“The sinners had been laughing at the believers. When passing by them, they would wink at one another and, on returning to their people, boast about what they had done. On seeing the believers, they would say, “These people have gone astray” (83:29-32).”

The Prophet (S) said: “Do not inspect the flaws of the believers. Allah will surely inspect the flaws of him who inspects the believers' flaws. Allah will surely uncover the flaws of him whom He inspects, even if he hides himself in the middle of his house².”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “For him who mimics a believer for the purpose of disgracing him, abusing his personality, and making people disrespect him, Allah will dismiss him from His custody to the Shaitan's, who, too, will not accept him³.”

It is related that, “Allah hides His disciples among His servants; hence, you should not disregard any of the servants of Allah, for it happens that he is one of the disciples of Allah while you do not know his reality.”

¹. The Sinless are the prophets, the Twelve Imams, and Fatima az-Zahraa (a).

[2](#). Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 163 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

[3](#). Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 163 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

Good Wording

Any investigation of the social crises proves that the origin of most of such troubles is the initiatives of wording and the mutual obscenity that interrupt the social relations and arise hatred. On that account, it becomes very necessary, for the interest of individuals and societies, to control one's wording and habituate on good wording:

“(Muhammad), tell My servants to say what is best. The Shaitan sows dissension among them; he is the sworn enemy of human beings (17:53).”

“They should speak righteous words to people (2:83)”

“Virtue and evil are not equal. If you replace evil habits by virtuous ones, you will certainly find that your enemies will become your intimate friends (41:34).”

“Be moderate in your walking and your talking. The most unpleasant sound is the braying of donkeys (31: 19).”

“Believers, have fear of Allah and speak righteous words. Allah will reform your deeds and forgive your sins. (33:71-2)”

The Prophet (S) said: “Allah may have mercy upon the servant who utters righteous wording to gain its good result, or keeps peace against an evil to save himself^{[1](#)}.”

As a man asked him for an advice, the Prophet (S) instructed: “Have control over your tongue.” As the man asked for more, the Prophet (S) repeated the same instruction. In the third time, the Prophet (S) added: “You should know that nothing but the yields of tongues will turn people over on their nasals in Hell^{[2](#)}.”

Imam as-Sajjad (a) said: “Good wording increases the wealth, grows up the sustenance, postpones time of death, endears to the family members or the wife-, and takes to Paradise^{[3](#)}.”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “Ebbad! Do you, because you have controlled your stomach and genital parts from haram, feel saved? In His Book, Allah says:

‘Believers, have fear of Allah and speak righteous words. Allah will reform your deeds and forgive your sins. (33:71-2)’

Nothing of your good deeds will be accepted unless you utter good and just wording⁴.”

“Habituate your tongue on saying the good only, and you will gain its good. Surely, a tongue will follow that on which it is habituated.”

A man asked Abu al-Hasan (a) for advice, the Imam said: “Have control over your tongue and you will be powerful. Do not let others lead you, lest you will be humiliated⁵.”

Chaste wording has its great influence in the mentalities of both the friends and enemies. For the friends, it grows up love, perpetuates affection, and prevents devilish inspirations. For the enemies, chaste wording alleviates feelings of enmity and eases their mistreatments and trickeries. Thus, we find the great personalities practice control over their tongues so as to be protected from flaws.

It is related that four kings spoke in a meeting: The king of Persia said: “I have never felt sorry for the word that I have not said, but I have many times felt sorry for things that I have said.”

King of Rome said: “I can control the word that I have not said, but I cannot control that which I have said.”

King of China said: “I possess the word that I have not spoken, but the word that I have spoken possesses me.”

King of India said: “How strange those who utter a word that harms them if they say it and does not benefit them if they do not say it are!⁶”

Gossip, nonsense, and obscenity are the clearest evidences on stupidity.

As he passed by a man who was speaking nonsense, Amirul-Mu'minin (a) stopped and said to him: “You are dictating to the Keeping Angels⁷ a record that will be taken to your Lord. You therefore should say only that which concerns you and should leave that which does not concern you⁸.”

“Much speech leads to much erring. Much erring leads to decreased prudence. Little prudence leads to decreased piety. Little piety deadens the heart. The dead-hearted will be in Hell⁹.”

Imam al-Baqir (a) said: “Abu Dharr used to say: “Seeker of knowledge! Your tongue is the key to goodness and the key to evil. Hence, seal your tongue in the same way as you seal your gold and currencies¹⁰.”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “Silence is an abundant treasure. It is the adornment of the clement and the cover of the ignorant¹¹.”

It is related that Qiss Ibn Sa'ida asked Aktham Ibn Saifi¹², “How many flaws have you found in man?” He answered, “They are too numerous to be counted. But, I found one trait that may cover all the flaws of man if only he keeps to it. It is control over the tongue.”

- [1.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 15/2/192 (as quoted from al- Imama wat Tabssira).
- [2.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 85 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- [3.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 15/2/192 (as quoted from al- Khissal and al-Amali).
- [4.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 85 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- [5.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 84 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- [6.](#) Quoted from Mejani al-Adab.
- [7.](#) There are two angels, with each human being, whose mission is to record his/her good as well as bad deeds. The angels are standing on the right and the left shoulders of each human being. The angel on the right is charged with recording the good deeds, while the angel on the left is charged with recording the evil deeds.
- [8.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 85 (as quoted from al- Faqih).
- [9.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 15/2/187 (as quoted from Nahjul-Balagha).
- [10.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 85 (as quoted from al- Faqih).
- [11.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 85 (as quoted from al- Faqih).
- [12.](#) Qiss ibn Sa'ida and Aktham ibn Saifi were the two Arab personalities well known of their wisdom.

Inconveniences of Sins

A great similarity is noticed between physical diseases and sins. This similarity is notably observed in the origination of the two. Most diseases are the result of the violation of the physical constitutions and, in the same manner, sins are the result of the violation of the divine regulations. Each disease has its peculiar effects that reflect on the diseased in forms of mixtures and pathological complications. In the same manner, each sin has its bad result that causes various sorts of tragedies. It is true that diseases and sins participate in the bad results that they cause; however, sins are more harmful, because it is easy to treat the diseased bodies, but it is difficult to treat the ill mentalities.

On that account, sins are fatal poisons and lethal germs that spoil man and expose him to various sorts of dangers and perditions.

The Holy Quran provides horrible pictures concerning the inconveniences and dangers of the commitment of sins:

“When We decide to destroy a town We warn the rich ones therein who commit evil. Thus, it becomes deserving to destruction and We destroy its very foundations. (17:16)”

“Why do they not consider how many generations living before them We have destroyed. We established those nations in the land with abilities far beyond those given to you. We sent down plenty of rain from the sky for them and made streams flow therein, but, then, We destroyed them for their sins and established other nations after them. (6:6)”

“Had the people of the towns believed (in Our revelations) and maintained piety, We would have certainly showered on them Our blessings from the sky and the earth. But they called Our

revelations lies, thus Our torment struck them for their evil deeds. (7:96)”

“Allah does not change the favor that He has bestowed on a nation unless that nation changes what is in its soul. Allah is All-hearing and All-knowing. (8:53)”

“Whatever hardship befalls you is the result of your own deeds. Allah pardons many of your sins. (42:30)”

“Evil has spread over the land and the sea because of human deeds and through these Allah will cause some people to suffer so that perhaps they will return to Him. (30:41)”

The Prophet (S) said: “How strange he who diets so as to avoid maladies is! How does he not diet from committing sins so as to avoid Hell¹?”

“Allah says: Son of Adam! You can never be just with Me. I endear Myself to you through the favors that I confer upon you, but you make Me hate you through the acts of disobedience to Me that you commit. My goodness is descending to you, while your evil is ascending to Me. Every single day and night, a noble angel carries to Me your evil deeds. Son of Adam! If you hear that somebody else bears these very characteristics, you will surely hate him. (However, I completely know that you bear such characteristics, but I do not hate you.)²”

“If Allah is irate with a nation but they have not received His direct punishment, their prices will be exorbitantly expensive, their ages will be short, their trades will be profitless, their yields will not increase, their rivers will not be profuse, rainfall will not drop on them, and the vilest individuals will prevail on them³.”

Amirul-Mu'minin (a) said: “Be wary of committing sins. The reason of any misfortune, shortage in earnings, or even a scratch, injury or a wound is surely the commitment of a sin. Allah the Majestic says:

“Whatever hardship befalls you is the result of your own deeds. Allah pardons many of your sins. (42:30)⁴”

Imam al-Baqir (a) said: “Allah decides to settle the need of a servant in a definite time, whether near or remote. But when that servant commits a sin, the Lord orders an angel to cancel the decision of the settlement of that need, and says: ‘Deprive that servant of the settlement of his need, because he exposed himself to My wrath; hence, deprivation has become the punishment⁵.’”

“In the book of the Messenger of Allah (S), the following is recorded: If fornication spreads publicly after me, sudden death will spread. If deficient and unjust measures are given, Allah will afflict with shortage in food for years. If they refrain from defraying the zakat, they will be deprived of the blessings of the earth, such as yields, fruits, and minerals. If they rule unjustly, they will cooperate in fields of wrong and oppression. If they breach the pledges, Allah will give a free hand to their enemies over them. If they rupture their relations, their treasuries will be in the hands of the vilest people. If they neglect bidding

good and forbidding evil and following the pious men of my household, Allah will give authority to their evilest people over them, and when the righteous people among them supplicate to Him, they will not be answered⁶.”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “My father used to say: Allah decided conclusively that He will not seize the favor that He confers upon a servant unless that servant commits a sin due to which he exposes himself to the punishment of the Lord⁷.”

Imam ar-Rida (a) said: “Whenever the servants commit unprecedented sins, Allah creates unprecedented sorts of misfortunes for them⁸.”

The Devil may seduce some people by the false idea that if sins had been fatal and destructive, they would have destroyed those who commit sins incessantly while they are living in full luxury. To answer this false conception, we say that nothing at all can overcome God Who does not anticipate the escape of anyone. He only respites the disobedient and postpones the penalties that are decided for them out of His care for their interests, expecting that they may recover their senses and turn to Him in repentance, or that He gives them respite out of His sympathy with the innocent and weak individuals whom may be injured by such punishments. Finally, God may respite those who commit sins so that they will increase in acting disobediently to Him, and He then inflict them with severe punishment:

“The unbelievers must not think that Our respite is for their good. We only give them time to let them increase their sins. For them there will be a humiliating torment. (3: 178)”

“Were Allah to punish people for their deeds immediately, not one creature would have survived on earth. However, He has given them a respite for an appointed time and when their term comes to an end, let it be known that Allah watches over His servants. (35:45)”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “If Allah intends goodness to a servant, He inflicts him with a punishment after each sin he commits, and reminds him of seeking forgiveness. If Allah intends evil to a servant, He confers upon him with a grace after each sin he commits, so as to make him forget seeking forgiveness and exceed the limits in committing sins. This is the meaning of His saying:

“I shall lead them step by step to destruction, without their being aware of it. (68:44)⁹”

Imam al-Kadhim (a) said: “Allah appoints a caller whose mission is to say every day and night: Slow down, servants of Allah, in committing acts of disobedience to Him. Without the existence of grazing animals, suckling babies, and kneeling¹⁰ old men, punishment shall be poured upon you so heavily, and it shall bruise you¹¹.”

One may think that as long as the prophets are sinless, why do they suffer various sorts of ordeals and crises? To answer such wonderment, we say that sins are of various sorts. They vary according to the degree of faith, obedience, and worship. It happens that an innocent joy is considered as legal grace by

somebody, but considered as sin by somebody else, because he regards it as matter that diverts him from the reference to God. Because the prophets (a) are the highest examples in the fields of believing in God and acts of worship, they consider definite acts, which are legal for ordinary people, as sins and shortcomings.

It is said that good acts of the pious are regarded as sins for the intimate worshipers of God. Furthermore, to suffer ordeals does not necessarily originate from the commitment of sins. In some cases, the suffering of ordeals and misfortunes may be a means to test patience and steadfastness against acts of God. They also may be the means that increase the rewards.

- [1.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 15/3/155 (as quoted from as- Saduq's al-Amali).
- [2.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 15/3/156 (as quoted from Uyounu Akhbar ir-Ridha).
- [3.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 173 (as quoted from at- Tahtheeb and al-Faqih).
- [4.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; (as quoted from al-Khissal).
- [5.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 167 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- [6.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 173 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- [7.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 167 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- [8.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 168 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- [9.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 173 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- [10.](#) 'Kneeling' is an expression of offering prayers, which denotes rites of worship to God.
- [11.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 168 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

Repentance

Like the physical diseases that are treated by swallowing drugs and stopping eating delicious meals, sins should be treated by suffering repentance and turning to God and abstaining from the sweeping desires and the unruly whims so that the worldly and religious tragedies of the commitment of sins will not be encountered.

Reality of Repentance

True repentance can be achieved after it passes through three stages:

The first stage is the conscious awakening the guilty feels sorry for his acts of disobedience to God. When the soul is full of this aware feeling, it moves to:

The second stage, which is turning to God and the true intention to cling to the obedience to Him. When this feeling covers the soul, it moves to:

The third stage, which is self-purification from sins, remedying the sins by acting righteous deeds and avoiding evildoings. Thus, true repentance is achieved.

Repentance however is not a play or an utterance. It is the true turning to God and the real avoidance of acts of disobedience to Him.

Imam ar-Rida (a) said: "He who seeks Allah's forgiveness from a sin that he keeps on committing is deriding his Lord."

Merits of Repentance

The merits of repentance are greatly numerous. They are pictured in the holy Quran and pointed out in the texts of the Prophet and The Ahlul-Bayt (a). The Divine Care has refused to neglect the disobedient floundering in the glooms of sins without surrounding them with high sympathy and noble amnesty. The Lord therefore has drawn their attentions to the turning to Him and paved the way of repentance to them:

"When the faithful come to you, say to them, 'Peace be upon you. Your Lord has decreed for Himself to be All-merciful. Anyone of you who commits a sin out of ignorance, then repents, and reforms himself will find that Allah is All-forgiving and All-merciful.' (6:54)"

"(Muhammad), tell my servants who have committed injustice to themselves, "Do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Allah certainly forgives all sins. He is All-forgiving and All-merciful." (39:53)"

"Ask forgiveness from your Lord; He is All-forgiving. He will send you abundant rain from the sky, strengthen you by (providing) you wealth and children, and make gardens and streams for you. (71:10-2)"

"Allah loves those who repent and those who purify themselves. (2:222)"

The Prophet (S) said: "The repentant from a sin is as same as him who did not commit it."

"Nothing is more favorable to Allah than a male or female repentant believer¹."

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: "When a servant repents to Allah truly, He loves him; hence, He covers him up in this world as well as the world to come To cover him up means that Allah makes the two angels (who recorded his deeds) forget the ill deeds that they knew about him. He then reveals to the servant's limbs to conceal the sins that he had done and reveals to the areas of this earth (on which he had committed sins) to conceal his sins. That servant therefore will meet Allah as if he had done no single offense and nothing will testify against him²."

"Adam supplicated to Allah saying, 'Lord, You have made the Shaitan over me and made him run in my soul like blood. Give me something in opposite of this.' The Lord answered, 'Adam! If any of your descendants intends to do a wrongdoing, I will not allow to be recorded against him unless he practices it. If he does it, I will order to be recorded as a single evil deed. If he intends to do a good deed, I will order to be recorded for him as a single good deed. If he practices it, I will order to be recorded as ten

good deeds.’ Adam asked for more, and the Lord said, ‘Any of your descendants commits a wrongdoing then seeks My forgiveness, I will forgive him.’ Adam asked for more, and the Lord said, ‘I will accept the repentance of any of your descendants even if his soul reaches his nose (i.e. in the very final hours of his life).’ ‘That is enough,’ said Adam³.”

“Allah gives the believer who commits a sin seven hours as respite before he records that sin. If the believer seeks the Lord’s forgiveness during these seven hours, his sin will not be recorded. If he does not, a single evil deed will be recorded against him. The true believer remembers his offense twenty years after its commitment and seeks Allah’s forgiveness, and he is forgiven. The disbeliever forgets the offense that he commits very soon after its commitment⁴.”

“Any believer who commits forty grand sins on a single day and seeks Allah’s forgiveness, by uttering the following statement, with deep feeling of sorrow, Allah will forgive his sins. He who commits more than forty grand sins on a single day is hopeless. The statement is:

أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ بَدِيعُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ وَأَسْأَلُهُ أَنْ يُصَلِّيَ عَلَيَّ مُحَمَّدٍ
وَأَلِّ مُحَمَّدٍ وَأَنْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيَّ.

astaghfiru (a)llah allathi la ilaha illa huwa (a)lhayyu (a)lqayyoumu badee’u (a)ssamawaati wa (a)l-ardhi
thu (a)ljalaali wa (a)l’ikraami wa as’aluhu an yussalliya ala muhammadin wa aali muhammad wa an
yatouba alayy(a).

I seek the forgiveness of Allah; there is no god but Whom, the Everlasting, the Eternal, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and the Lord of Glory and Grace, and I implore to Him to send His blessings to Muhammad and his family and accept my repentance.)⁵”

Obligation and Immediateness of Repentance

The obligation of repentance is something beyond doubt, because logic and texts support it. Regarding logic, it is self-evident that protection against causes of harms is something logically necessary. On that account, it is obligatory to seek the guard of repentance against the bad results of sins in this life as well as the life to come. Regarding texts, the instructions of the Quran and hadith called unto repentance through various pictures of attraction and simplification.

The Prophet (S) said: “Anyone who repents a single year before death, his repentance will be accepted by

Allah. A year is very much. He who repents a month before his death, his repentance will be accepted by Allah. A month is also very much. He who repents a week before his death, his repentance will be accepted by Allah. A week is very much. He who repents a day before death, his repentance will be

accepted by Allah. A day is very much. He who repents before he closes his eyes for death, his repentance will be accepted by Allah⁶.”

“Allah possesses surpluses of His sustenance that He gives to whom he wills. With the rise of every dawn, Allah extends His hands for those who commit sins at night so as to accept their repentance (if they show repentance). With the sunset of every day, He extends His hands for those who commit sins in day so as to accept their repentance⁷.”

Repetition of Repentance

Some people find the right path after deviation and straighten up after aberrance. So, they try to make right the sins that they had committed by means of repentance and turning to God. Others, however, are deceived by the joys and seductions of this life; therefore, they commit new sins after repentance as they drift in the violent currents of offenses. Thus, they live in the midst of a brutal conflict between the intellect and desires. Once, they overcome their desires, but their desires prevail on them in other situations. This fact is the main reason that prevents many from repeating repentance, because they anticipate that they will anew return to the commitment of sins.

Such individual must understand that everyone is the subject of the seductions and sinful inspirations of the Devil, and that none may be saved totally from such inspirations except the Sinless (a). Accordingly, they should have turned and repented to God purely whenever such devilish inspirations attacked them, even if they go astray several times. They, finally, should have put before their eyes the saying of God:

“(Muhammad), tell my servants who have committed injustice to themselves, ‘Do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Allah certainly forgives all sins. He is All-forgiving and All-merciful.’ (39:53)”

In view of that, the Prophet and The The Ahlul-Bayt (a) affirmed the repetition of repentance and the incessant turning to God so as to save the victims of sins from plunging more in their offenses and to push them to put a new beginning to an honest life:

Mohammad Ibn Muslim narrated that Imam al-Baqir (a) said to him: “Muhammad Ibn Muslim, all the sins of the believer who repents to Allah will be forgiven. He therefore should put a new beginning for himself after his repentance and Allah’s forgiveness to him. By Allah I swear, this is peculiar for people of faith.” “What if one commits sins from which he had repented and then repeat his repentance?” I asked.

The Imam (a) wondered: “Muhammad Ibn Muslim, do you think that Allah does not accept the repentance of the believing servant who feels sorry for his sinning and seeks forgiveness and repents to Him?” I said: “What if that servant commits a sin repeatedly and repents to Allah repeatedly?” The Imam (a) answered: “Whenever a believer seeks forgiveness and repents, Allah accepts his repentance again. Allah is surely All-forgiving and All-merciful. He accepts the repentance and pardons the sins. You should never make the believers feel desperate of the mercy of Allah⁸.”

Abu Bassir related: I asked Imam as-Sadiq (a) about the exegesis of God's saying: 'Believers, turn to Allah in repentance with pure intention. (66:8)' He (a) said: "The pure repentance is to repent from the sin and decide not to commit it any more." I wondered: "None of us can give up a sin completely." The Imam (a) commented: "Abu Muhammad, Allah does love the servant who commits sins frequently and repents to Him very frequently⁹."

Courses of Repentance

The repentant must know the courses of repentance so that he can expiate each sin properly.

Sins, however, take various forms; some concern a servant and his Lord. These are classified into two parts:

- Negligence of the obligatory rites, and
- Commitment of forbidden acts.

As examples on the first, we cite the negligence of the obligatory prayer, fasting, hajj, zakat, and the like rites. The course of repentance from such sins is to work hard for settling them. Examples on the second are fornication, drinking of wines, gambling, and the like forbidden acts. The course of repentance from such acts is to feel sorry for committing them and intend truly to leave them.

Some sins concern an individual and people, such as usurpation of properties, killing respectful souls, and dishonoring the believers by means of revilement, beating, talebearing, and backbiting. These sins are the most dangerous and the most difficult in treatment. The course of repentance from such sins is to satisfy the other parties and give the usurped and seized properties back to their owners. If this is impossible, it is necessary to seek the forgiveness of God urgently, raise the balance of good deeds, and implore to God for making such wronged people be pleased with the wrong party on the Day of Judgment.

Acceptance of Repentance

The true qualified repentance is admissible. This fact is proved through many texts from the Quran and hadith:

"It is He who accepts the repentance of His servants, forgives their evil deeds and knows all about what you do. (42:25)"

"This Book is a revelation from Allah, the Majestic and All-knowing who forgives sins, who accepts repentance, whose punishment is severe, and whose bounty is universal. He is the only Lord and to Him all things proceed (40:2-3)."

The Prophet (S) said: “Had you not committed sins and sought the forgiveness of Allah, He would have created others who commit sins and then seek His forgiveness so that He will forgive them. A believer commits sins frequently, but repents to Allah very frequently. Listen to Allah’s saying:

“Allah loves those who repent and those who purify themselves. (2:222)”

- [1.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul–Anwar; 3/98 (as quoted from Uyounu Akhbar ir–Ridha).
- [2.](#) Quoted from al–Wafi; part 3 page 168 (as quoted from al– Kafi).
- [3.](#) Quoted from al–Wafi; part 3 page 184 (as quoted from al– Kafi).
- [4.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul–Anwar; vol. 3 page 103 (as quoted from al–Kafi).
- [5.](#) Quoted from al–Wafi; part 3 page 182 (as quoted from al– Kafi).
- [6.](#) Quoted from al–Wafi; part 3 page 182 (as quoted from al– Kafi).
- [7.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul–Anwar; 3/100 (as quoted from as– Saduq’s Thawab ul–A’mal).
- [8.](#) Quoted from al–Wafi; part 3 page 183 (as quoted from al– Kafi).
- [9.](#) Quoted from al–Wafi; part 3 page 183 (as quoted from al– Kafi).

Self–Judgment and Self–Control

Self–judgment is to call oneself to account every day regarding the good deeds and wrongdoings. If the scale of acts of obedience overweighs that of acts of disobedience, we must thank God, lest we must discipline ourselves.

Self–control stands for protecting oneself against breach of the obligatory religious rites and the commitment of the forbidden.

It is necessary for the rational to train himself on self– judgment and self–control, since all human souls are susceptible to evil. If they are neglected, they go away from the right, but if they are controlled by means of guidance, they shine with virtues:

“And (I swear) by the soul and that (Power) which designed it and inspired it with knowledge of evil and piety, those who purify their souls will certainly have everlasting happiness and those who corrupt their souls will certainly be deprived of happiness. (91:7–10)”

The Prophet (S) said “Before you do a matter that you intend, you should investigate its end result; if it is good, you then should keep on. If not, you should not do it¹.”

Amirul–Mu’minin (a) related: “When he received the warriors that he had appointed for a campaign, the Prophet (S) said to them: “Welcome to the people who performed successfully the minor jihad. Their mission now is to perform completely the major jihad. The major jihad is self–control. The best form of jihad is to strive one’s desires and whims².”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “If you want all your supplications to be answered, you should despair of people totally and hope for that which is in Allah’s hands only. When Allah knows that a servant’s intent is totally attached to Him, He will answer all his supplications. You therefore call yourselves to account before others call them. On the Day of Resurrection, there are fifty situations each of which takes one thousand years. This is the meaning of Allah’s saying:

“On that Day (of Judgment), long as fifty thousand years, the angels and the Spirit will ascend to Him (70:4)3.

“You have been appointed as the physician of yourself; the malady has been shown to you, the signs of recovery have been shown to you, and you have been guided to the remedy; hence, you should consider how you will treat yourself⁴.”

Imam al-Kadhim (a) said: “He who does not call himself to account every day is not one of us. When he does so, he must ask Allah for more if he notices that he has done a good deed, and if he notices that he has committed an evildoing, he must seek Allah’s forgiveness and must repent to Him⁵.”

Constitution of Self-Judgment

Ethicists have referred to the constitution of self-judgment in such a detailed method that it might be difficult for some to implement. I, however, can brief the matter in two precise and simplified points:

- First of all, to practice self-judgment properly, one must perform all the obligatory rites, such as the prayer, fasting, hajj, zakat, and the like. If such rites are performed properly, one must then thank God for so and hope for winning the great rewarding that He set for the obedient. If one, on the other hand, neglects such rites, he must remember the painful punishment with which God threatens the disobedient. He must also exert all efforts for settling them.
- Self-judgment must then be practiced on the sins that one committed, by means of severe reproach and censure. Regret and true repentance must then be felt so that they will help in avoiding the commitment of such sins.

The Prophet (S) set the most excellent example of self-judgment:

The Prophet (S), once, resided in a desert during a journey. He asked his companions to fetch firewood. They apologized that they were in a desert, but the Prophet (S) asked them to search and fetch whatever they might find. Hence, they scattered in every direction. Afterwards, each one fetched a small quantity of wood and threw on each other. On that scene, the Prophet (S) commented: “In this very way, sins are gathered. Beware of the insignificant sins, for there is an interrogator for each sin. That interrogator records ‘the deeds of human beings and their consequences. We keep everything recorded in an illustrious Book.’⁶”⁷

Some disciples practiced appreciative styles in the field of self-judgment. For instance, it is related that Tawba Ibn as-Summah used to call himself to account in most times of his life. One day, he counted his past age, and it was sixty years. As he counted the days, they were about 21500. He then shouted: “Woe unto me! I will meet Malik⁸ with twenty-one thousand sins.” Suddenly after that, he departed life⁹.

Seizure of Life's Opportunity

If man compares all desires and pleasures of this life to his age, he will find that the latter is more precious. He will also discover that nothing at all can come to the value of his age, since the pleasures of this world can be regained, while the lifetime cannot be elongated or extended to a single moment:

“All people can only live for an appointed time. When their term ends, they will not remain (alive) even for a single hour, nor will they die before the appointed time. (7:34)”

Likewise, it is impossible to regain the time that passes away in any way, including the possession of all the worldly pleasures. Because he is inattentive to his invaluable lifetime, man wastes his age uselessly, ignoring opportunities. For this reason, the Ahlul-Bayt (a) provided a great deal of instructions dealing with the importance of seizing the opportunities of life.

The Prophet (S) said: “Abu Dharr, You must be stingy with regard to your lifetime, not with your dirhams and dinars (i.e. money)¹⁰.”

“Exploit four things before the falling of four: exploit your youth before the falling of your old age, exploit your health before the coming of your illness, exploit your richness before the falling of your poverty, and exploit your lifetime before the coming of your death¹¹.”

Amirul-Mu'minin (a) said: “This world is only three days: one passed away with all its insides, the second is that you are living in; therefore, you should seize its opportunities, and the third is a day that you do not know whether you will catch it or not. The day that passed must be regarded as wise educator. The day that you are living in must be regarded as a departing friend. Regarding tomorrow, you have nothing of it except hope.”

“Every new day that comes upon man says to him: I am a new day and I will witness you. Hence, you should say only good wording and do only good deeds so that I will testify for your good on the Day of Resurrection, for you will not see me ever again¹².”

Imam as-Sajjad (a) said: “How poor son of Adam is!

Every day, he is inflicted with three misfortunes. Nevertheless, he does learn lessons from any. Had he learnt a lesson, all the misfortunes of this worldly life would have been easy in his sight. The first misfortune is that the day which comes upon him decreases his age. If a decrease occurs to his wealth, he will become so depressed, while he can cover the decrease of wealth, but he cannot regain the

decrease of his age. The second misfortune is that he takes the sustenance that is decided for him completely. If he gets it in a legal way, he will be interrogated about it, and if he gets it in an illegal way, he will be punished for it. The third misfortune, which is the most calamitous, is that each day that ends takes him a stage closer to the Hereafter, while he does not know whether his fate will be Paradise or Hell.”

“On the day of his birth, man is the oldest¹³.”

Imam al-Baqir (a) said: “Let not people deceive you in matters regarding yourself, because you exclusively will encounter your own matters. Do not spend your days with gossips and nonsense, for there are the angels who accompany you and record all your deeds. Do righteous deeds, because I have not seen anything better in result and remedying than a new good deed after an old sin¹⁴.”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “Be tolerant in the acts of obedience to Allah and steadfast against the acts of disobedience to Him. This world is no more than an hour. You will not find the pleasures of what has passed away and you will not be able to recognize what is coming. Be patient in that hour and you will attain bliss¹⁵.”

A wise man said: “Man is like a traveler who has to pass by six stations. He, however, has already passed by three: the first is the transition from nonexistence to his father’s loins and mother’s ribs. The second is the transition to the mother’s womb. The third is the transition from the mother’s womb to the world. The three stations that man has not passed by yet are the grave, the field of the Resurrection, and Hell or Paradise.”

We are now living in the third station whose distance takes our lifetime. Hence, days of our ages are miles, hours are meters and breaths are steps. Some of us have only few miles, others have only few meters, and others have only few steps.

¹. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 62 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

². Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 15/2/40, as quoted from al- Amali and Me’aani al-Akhbar.

³. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 62 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

⁴. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 62 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

⁵. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 62 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

⁶. This statement is quoted from the Holy Quran; (36: 12).

⁷. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 168 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

⁸. Malik is the angel in charge of Hell.

⁹. Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; part 1 page 488.

¹⁰. Quoted from al-Wafi; Part: The Prophet’s commandment for Abu Dharr.

¹¹. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 15/2/165 (as quoted from as- Saduq’s Kemal ud-Din).

¹². Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 63 (as quoted from al- Faqih).

¹³. This is because every single day that man lives in decreases his age. This nice maxim was not said by anyone before Imam as-Sajjad (a). Quoted from al-Mufid’s Alikhtissas.

¹⁴. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 168 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

¹⁵. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 168 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

Righteous Deed

In the previous discussion we referred to the invaluableness of time and proved that lifetime is more precious than the worldly pleasures. Such being the case, the rational must exploit time properly and spend it with matters that are as precious and significant as the age, such as righteous deeds:

The Prophet (S) said: “The intelligent should not take care for anything except three: seeking the worldly earnings, getting supplies for the life to come, and gaining a legal pleasure¹.”

Because man’s whims prompt him, in nature, towards gaining earnings and tangible pleasures as well as the affairs that preclude him from acting righteous deeds and readying for the life to come, many texts from the Quran and hadith have enjoined him to arrange for his life to come:

“Whoever has done an atom's weight of good, will see it and whoever has done an atom's weight of evil, will also see it (99-8).”

“All righteous-doers among the believing male or female will be granted a blessed happy life and will receive their due reward and more. (16:97)”

“Whoever commits evil deeds will be recompensed to the same degree. The righteously striving believer, male or female, will enter Paradise wherein they will receive their sustenance without any account being kept (40:40).”

“One who acts righteously does so for his own benefit and one who commits evil does so against his own soul. To your Lord you will all return (45: 15).”

The Prophet (S) said: “Abu Dharr, with the passing of days and nights, your age decreases and your deeds are recorded. Death comes suddenly. One who sows good will soon harvest good, and one who sows evil will soon harvest regret. In fact, each sower will gain that which he sows².”

”Qays, with dignity there is certainly humility, with life there is certainly death, and with this world there is certainly the world to come. Likewise, there is an interrogator for everything, there is a supervisor over everything, there is a reward for every good deed, there is punishment for every evildoing, and there is a deadline for every age. Moreover, Qays, there will definitely be a companion who will be buried with you alive and you will be buried with him when you are dead. If he is respectful, he will certainly respect you, and if he is disrespectful, he will certainly disrespect you. He will be resurrected with you and you will be sent with him, and you will be interrogated about nothing but him. Hence, you must make him righteous, because, if he is so, you will find pleasure with him, but if he is ill, you will feel an aversion for him. This is your deed³.”

“He who acts righteously in the coming of his age will not be punished for his past sins, but he who acts

disobediently in the coming of his age will be punished for the past, as well as the coming, sins.”

Amirul-Mu'minin (a) said: “When a servant is on his last day in this world and first step to the life to come, his wealth, sons, and deeds are presented before him. As he turns to his wealth, he says, ‘I was very stingy and niggardly for you, what do you have for me, today?’ His wealth will answer, ‘Well, you can take from me only your coffin.’ He then turns to his sons and says, ‘I have loved you very much, and I have protected you so excessively, what do you have for me, today?’ His sons will answer, ‘Well, we will see you off to your hole to bury you there.’ He then turns to his deeds and says, ‘By Allah, I have neglected you and you were so unwelcome for me, what do you have for me, today?’ His deed will answer, ‘Well, I am your companion in your grave and on the day of your resurrection until you, as well as I, will be stopped before your Lord (for interrogation).’

If that servant has acted righteously in this world and has been one of the disciples of Allah, his deed will come to him in the form of a sweet-smelling handsome man and will say to him, ‘I bear to you the good tidings of enjoying rest, happiness, and the beautiful Paradise, and you are coming to the best abode. When that servant asks about his personality, his good deed will answer, ‘I am your righteous deed, and I will move you from this world to the world to come⁴.’”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “As soon as a dead is put in his grave, a person comes to him and says, ‘we were three; one was your sustenance who ceased when your age was ceased. The other was your family who left you. The third was I; your deed, and I will stay with you. Nevertheless, I was the most disrespectful in your sight⁵.’”

¹. Quoted from al-Wafi part: The Prophet’s Commandments for Imam Ali.

². Quoted from al-Wafi (within the commandment of the Prophet (S) for Abu Dharr).

³. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 15 part 2 page 163 (as quoted from Meaani al-Akhbar, al-Khissal, and al-Amali.)

⁴. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 13 page 92 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

⁵. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 13 page 94 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

Obedience and God- Fearing

Humankind is a genuine element and distinctive being in this cosmos because of the numerous traits and donations that God has given exclusively to him so as to prefer him to the other creatures:

“We have honored the children of Adam, carried them on the land and the sea, given them pure sustenance and exalted them above most of My creatures. (17:70)”

God appointed human beings as His representatives on the earth and chosen some of them as messengers and prophets whose mission is to convey the codes as well as the principles that organize their lives. Unfortunately, most people are enslaved by illusive whims. They therefore go astray in the

lurks of disobedience to God and lose their ways in the glooms of deviation. Afterwards, they suffer horrible sorts of puzzlement and misery. If they respond to the calls of obedience to God and follow the divine regulations, they will certainly win great happiness:

“Had the people of the towns believed (in Our revelations) and maintained piety, We would have certainly showered on them Our blessings from the sky and the earth. But they called Our revelations lies, thus Our torment struck them for their evil deeds. (7:96)”

Because of its submission to God and pursuance to His regulations, this cosmos is working so consistently, its elements are working evenly, and its system is being applied to the millions of generations.

Because they follow the will of God, the lives of all existents on this earth are prospering and settling straight.

People, likewise, are applying the directions of the inventors of the mechanical devices so that they can guarantee their maintenance. To gain treatment and cure, people submit to the prescriptions of physicians and suffer hardships of treatment.

Why does man, then, avoid acting obediently to his Creator Who has full awareness of the hidden, benefits, and disadvantages?

It is absolutely impossible for man to win his goals by any way other than that of the obedience to God and application of His regulations:

“One who obeys Allah and His Messenger will certainly achieve a great success. (33:71)”

“Whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger will be admitted to the gardens wherein streams flow. Allah will make whoever turns away suffer a painful torment (48:17).”

God has made the good of this world as well as the world to come contingent on fear of Him. He has made the dearest hopes dependent on it. Let us refer to some aspects, which God has made contingent on fear of Him:

(1) Love of God:

“God loves the pious ones. (9:4)”

(2) Escape from misfortunes and arrangement of the sustenance:

“God will make a way (out of difficulty) for one who has fear of Him and will provide him with sustenance in a way that he will not even notice. (65:3)”

(3) Victory and support:

“God is certainly with the pious and the righteous ones. (16: 128)”

(4) Acceptance of deeds:

“Believers, have fear of Allah and speak righteous words. Allah will reform your deeds and forgive your sins. One who obeys Allah and His Messenger will certainly achieve a great success. (33:70–1)”

(5) Good tidings at death:

“Those who have faith and fear God will receive glad news both in this life and in the life hereafter. The words of God do not change. This alone is the supreme triumph (10:63–4).”

(6) Salvation from Hell:

“We will save the pious ones from the hell fire and leave the unjust people therein in crowded groups. (19:72)”

(7) Eternity in Paradise:

“Paradise, vast as the heavens and the earth, is prepared for the pious (3: 133)”

From the previous, we conclude that God-fearing is a great treasure containing various sorts of worldly and religious expectations.

Reality of Obedience and God-Fearing

Obedience implies submission to God and carrying out His orders. God-fearing implies self-guard against that whichever will cause harm in the world to come:

Imam al-Hasan (a) said: “Work for your world as if you will live forever, and work for your life to come as if you will die tomorrow. If you seek power without the need for a clan and dignity without the need of authority, you should leave the humility of the disobedience to Allah to the honor of the obedience to Him.”

Imam al-Baqir (a) said: “If you want to know whether you are good or not, you should test your heart; if it is inclined to the people of the obedience to Allah and detests the people of disobedience to Him, they you are good, and Allah loves you. But if it (i.e. your heart) hates the people of obedience to Allah and is inclined to the people of disobedience to Him, then you are empty of goodness and Allah hates you. Man, however, will be attached to the one he loves¹.”

“He who disobeys Allah does not know Him. You disobey the Lord and show his love. This is surely strange deed. If your love is sincere, you will obey Him. Certainly, the lover obeys the one he loves”

Al-Hasan Ibn Musa al-Wesha (of Baghdad) narrated: In Khurasan, I, once, was with Ali Ibn Musa ar-Ridha (a) while he was delivering a sermon in a session. Zaid Ibn Musa his brother was attendant, but he was addressing words of pride to a group of the attendants. As the Imam (a) heard Zaid's words, he turned to him and said: "Zaid, do you, because you have heard my wording in Kufa that Allah forbids Hell to consume the offspring of Fatima (a) since she preserved her chastity, take pride against others? By Allah I swear, my previous wording is peculiar to al-Hasan, al-Hussein, and the other direct descendants of Fatima (a). You are too humble, in the sight of Allah, to be regarded, on the Day of Resurrection, as same as Musa Ibn Ja'far Imam al-Kadhim (a); the father of Imam ar-Ridha and Zaid the addressee who used to spend his days with fasting and spend his night with worship to Allah while you act disobediently to Him. Ali Ibn al-Hussein Imam as-Sajjad (a) used to say, 'One who belongs to us and does righteously will be rewarded twice as others, and one who belongs to us and acts evilly will be punished twice as others.'"

Imam ar-Ridha (a) then turned towards me and asked about the way we recite Allah's saying:

"His Lord replied, "He is not one of your family. He is a man of unrighteous deeds. Do not ask me about that which you have no knowledge. I advise you not to become an ignorant person." (11:46)"

I answered that some people recite it in a way showing that son of Prophet Noah was illegitimate, while others recite it in a way showing that he was his son, but he used to act wrongly².

The Imam (a) commented: "No, by Allah. That son was Noah's. But Allah dismissed him from the family of Noah because he acted wrongly. In the same manner, he who belongs to us in family relations but does not obey Allah is not belonged to us. So long as you obey Allah, you are one of us the Ahlul-Bayt³."

Jabir related that Imam al-Baqir (a) said to him:

"Jabir, do you think that it is sufficient for those who claim being Shia to say that they cherish us; the Prophet's household?"

By Allah I swear, our adherents Shia- are only those who fear and obey Allah. Hence, you should fear Allah and work for the cause of obtaining that which He has in possession. There is no relation between Allah and anybody. The most favorable and honorable servants of Allah are the most God- fearing and the most pious.

Jabir, the only means through which a servant seeks to gain Allah's favor is the obedience to Him. We the Ahlul-Bayt - do not carry a patent for saving from Hell. Likewise, none of you has a claim against Allah. He who obeys Allah is only our disciple and whoever disobeys Him is our enemy. The loyalty to us cannot be gained except by means of diligent work and piety⁴."

Al-Mufaddhal Ibn Omar narrated the following:

“I, once, was with Imam as-Sadiq (a) when our subject of discussion was good deeds. I said, ‘My deeds are very few,’ but the Imam shouted, ‘What is this saying? You should seek Allah’s forgiveness. To have few deeds with God-fearing is better than many deeds that lack it.’ I asked him about the meaning of his words, and he said, ‘A man may serve food (to the poor), act leniently with his neighbors, and receive the guests hospitably, but as soon as a door to a forbidden act is opened before him, he enters there. This is the big deed that lacks God-fearing. Another man may not have such good deeds, but he keeps himself away from plunging in forbidden acts when he faces some. This is the few deed with God-fearing⁵.”

¹. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol 15 part 2 page 49 (as quoted from al-Kafi)

². To elucidate this point, we mention the following: Since the Arabic language depends on the vocalization of words, a change of a single vocality in a word may change the whole meaning and give a totally new one. Moreover, the Quran was written without the vocalization symbols on the letters; therefore, people had different views about definite Quranic words and expressions. This was exactly what happened in the Verse concerned. The word about which people differed is (a-m-l). Some people read it as (amalun). Accordingly, the Quranic text meant that that son was not Noah’s. Other people read it as (amileh), and, accordingly, the Quranic Verse meant that Noah’s son had acted unrighteously; therefore, he was not regarded as one of the family of Prophet Noah. However, the problem of numerous forms of reciting the holy Quran has no longer existed, because all the Islamic sects agree unanimously on a definite form of reciting every single word in the Quran, depending on basic principals and authentic traditions that are related to the Prophet (S), the Ahl ul-Bayt, and the most reliable companions and their followers (a).

³. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; (as quoted from Meaani al- Akhbar and Uyounu akhbar ir-Ridha).

⁴. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 60 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

⁵. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 61 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

Perseverance on Principles

Regulations and principles play a great role in the lives of societies and nations. The highness of the principles of any nation proves its civilization. Likewise, any feebleness that affects the principles implies the ignorance of that nation. The most favorable principles are those which contribute in normalizing the individuals’ lives and protecting their freedoms and dignities. Nevertheless, principles, no matter how great they are, cannot achieve the expectations of a nation unless there are individuals who embrace, protect, and carry them out in the various fields of life. Otherwise, they become of no value. On that account, perseverance on the principles is the holiest inevitable obligation, since it raises the morale, empowers values, and achieves expectations.

All over history, humankind has never known any principles more perfect than the Islamic, which obtained all virtues of mortality. They are the one and only principles befitting the sound natures and achieving the pleasure of this worldly life as well as the life to come. In a period of less than twenty-five

years, the Islamic principles could achieve matters that none else could do, through the conquests of faith and miracles of reformation. They also changed the Arab nation that was sinking in ignorance into the best nation ever seen by humankind in civilization, glory, knowledge, and morality.

Perseverance on principles is the only reason beyond the prevalence of the scientific civilization and leadership of the precedent Muslims who exerted all efforts and lost themselves in their principles. Likewise, the present disasters and incessant collapse of Muslims are the result of the negligence and going astray from their principles.

The holy Quran glorifies Muslims who show perseverance on principles and cling to the high values of faith:

“To those who have said, “Allah is our Lord,” and who have remained steadfast to their belief, the angels will descend saying, “Do not be afraid or grieved. Receive the glad news of the Paradise which was promised to you. We are your guardians in this world and in the life to come, where you will have whatever you call for, a hospitable welcome from the All-forgiving and All-merciful Allah” (41:30-2).

Giving the best examples of steadfastness for the sake of God, the Prophet Muhammad (S) was facing bravely and overcoming the increasing hurricanes of disasters and powers of unbelief. In this regard, he (S) said:

“If the sun is put in my right hand and the moon in the left so that I may leave this matter (i.e. the divine mission), I will not do it until Allah will give me victory or I will die in this cause.”

Like the Prophet (S), Amirul-Mu'minin (a) was the ideal in the field of perseverance on principles. When the leadership was given to him provided that he would follow the Book of God, the Prophet's Sunna, and the way of the two Sheikhs¹, he ejected because he adhered to his lofty opinion and genuine principle. He said:

“No, I rule on the bases of God's Book, the Prophet's Sunna, and my own elicitation.”

As some of his retinue, on another occasion, suggested to him importunately to ‘give some of these treasures exclusively to the celebrities of the Arabs and the Koreishites as well as every person that you anticipate he will leave you and join the camp of Muawiya,’ Amirul-Mu'minin refused their suggestion out of his perseverance on the principles and said:

“Do you command me that I should seek support by oppressing those over whom I have been placed? By Allah, I will not do so as long as the world goes on, and as long as one star leads another in the sky. Even if it were my property, I would have distributed it equally among them, then why not when the property is that of Allah².”

This unparalleled ideality crept into his choice friends to change them into nonesuch models of

perseverance on principles in spite of suffering various sorts of terror and persecution:

One day, al-Hajjaj Ibn Yousuf ath-Thaqafi³ said that he would like to arrest one of the companions of Abu Turab⁴ so that he would seek nearness to God through shedding his blood! The attendants said, 'As much as we know, Qanbar the servant had spent the longest period with Abu Turab.' Hence, al-Hajjaj ordered to arrest Qanbar.

When Qanbar was brought before him, al-Hajjaj asked: "Are you Qanbar?"

He answered: "Yes, it is I."

Al-Hajjaj asked: "Are you called Abu Hamdan?"

He answered: "Yes, I am."

Al-Hajjaj asked: "Ali Ibn Abi Talib was your master, was he not?"

Qanbar answered: "God is my Master and Ali was my benefactor."

Al-Hajjaj then asked Qanbar to declare his disavowal of the religion of Imam Ali (a), but Qanbar asked: "If I do, will you find me a religion better than his?"

Out of his anger, al-Hajjaj told Qanbar that he would kill him and that he might choose the kind of killing that he would inevitably encounter. Qanbar said: "I give you this right of choice. You should choose for me."

Al-Hajjaj wondered: "Why is that?"

Qanbar answered: "That is because I will certainly kill you in the same way you are going to kill me. Amirul-Mu'minin foretold me that I will be slain wrongfully."

Hence, al-Hajjaj ordered to slay him⁵.

To Abu al-Aswad ad-Du'ali⁶, Muawiya sent candy as a present so as to make him leave the wing of Amirul-Mu'minin (a) and join his. A little girl of Abu al-Aswad took a bite from that candy and swallowed. His father shouted at her to throw that bite away, and told her that candy was poison sent to them by Muawiya to take them away from their love and support for Ali Ibn Abi Talib and the Ahlul-Bayt (a). The little girl tried her best to vomit that bite until she could. She, then, said: "God may condemn Muawiya. Does he want us to leave the purified master through sending us such saffroned candy?

Woe to him who sends and who will eat such candy."

She then composed:

Son of Hind⁷, is it by means of saffroned candy You want us to sell our religion and Islam to you? God

forbid it! This will never occur so long as our master is Amirul-Mu'minin

Rashid al-Hajari was one of the intimate friends of Imam Ali (a). Ziyad the cursed (the governor of Kufa in the reign of Yazid Ibn Muawiya; the second Umayyad caliph) ordered to arrest him. When he was brought before him, Ziyad asked: "What did your friend (i.e. Amirul-Mu'minin) foretell you regarding our deed to you?"

Rashid answered: "He foretold that you would cut my hands and legs and would crucify me."

Ziyad said: "By God, I will belie this foretelling."

Hence, he ordered them to set Rashid free.

When Rashid was about to leave, Ziyad shouted: "Take him back to me. The best thing that I see as punishment for him is that which was foretold by his friend. This is because he will not stop doing evil to us so long as he is alive."

They took Rashid and cut his legs and hands. However, he did not stop declaring the right of Amirul-Mu'minin (a); hence, Ziyad the cursed ordered to be crucified⁸.

Let us now listen to the magnificent words of the companions of Amirul-Mu'minin (a) that express their great love for him, perseverance on their principles, and losing themselves for his sake.

Addressing to Amirul-Mu'minin (a), Amr Ibn al-Hamq said:

"By God I swear, Amirul-Mu'minin, I have loved you and declared allegiance to you, not because of a family relationship that links me to you, or because of expecting a fortune that you would confer upon me, or because of expecting a leading authority that you would give to me. I have loved you for five traits: you are the cousin of the Messenger of God, the first man who believed in his mission, the husband of the mistress of the women of this umma; namely, Fatima the daughter of the Prophet (S), the successor of the Prophet, the father of the Prophet's progeny that remained among us, the foremost to Islam, and the best mujahid among Muhajirs. Even if I move the unshakable mountains and dry out the oceans so that I may achieve a matter that contributes in strengthening one of your disciples or humiliating one of your enemies, I will not consider myself I have fulfilled my obligations towards you."

Having listened to these words, Imam Ali (a) supplicated to God: "O Allah, illuminate his heart with piety and guide him to Your straight path. Had I had one hundred soldiers like you⁹!"

It is related that Amirul-Mu'minin (a), one day, asked Hijr Ibn Edi at-Tae: "What will you say if you are ordered to disavow me?"

Hijr answered: "By God I swear, Amirul-Mu'minin, if I am torn to pieces by swords and thrown in flaming fire I will prefer so to declaring disavowal of you."

Amirul-Mu'minin (a) answered: "Allah may lead you to every good matter and reward you on behalf of the Ahlul-Bayt with good¹⁰."

Hashim al-Mirqal, who was the commander of the left wing of Amirul-Mu'minin's army during the battle of Siffeen¹¹, said:

"By God I swear, I do refuse to have in possession this earth along with all that which is on its surface and the heavens with all that which is under them if this leads me to support one of your enemies or antagonize one of your supporters."

As an answer, Amirul-Mu'minin (a) supplicated God to bestow upon him with martyrdom for His cause.

It is related that a black man confessed before Amirul-Mu'minin (a) that he had committed larceny.

Imam Ali (a) tried to provide excuses that may exempt him from the punishment of larceny. But, the black man insisted and confessed completely; hence, Amirul-Mu'minin (a) had to subject him to the doctrinal provision, which was cutting of the hand.

In his way back, that black man was murmuring, "My hand has been cut by the commander of the faithful believers, the leader of the pious, the chief of the white-forheaded honorable, the master of the religion, the head of the prophets' successors" As al-Hasan and al-Hussein heard these words, they conveyed them to their father, who summoned that black man to ask him about that praise. The black man said:

"Amirul-Mu'minin, you have purified me. Your love has been mixed with my flesh and blood so composedly that it cannot depart my heart even if you cut me into pieces¹²."

In the same field of perseverance on principles, Imam al-Hussein, his noble family members, and his decent companions elevated to the highest peak in spite of the criticality of their situation and the sufferance of the grossest disasters and terrors.

On the day of Ashura¹³, Imam al-Hussein, while was surrounded by thirty thousand warriors intending to humiliate and kill him, stood so bravely and shouted in their faces with that great reverberating cry, declaring his disdain and highness, through these everlasting words that are still rattling in the hearing of time and still adopted as a thriving constitution by the disdainful and free individuals:

"The bastard, son of the bastard, has forced me to choose one of two things either the religion or ignominy. Ignominy is impossible for us. Allah, His Apostle, the (faithful) believers, chaste laps, jealous noses individuals-, and noble souls personalities- refuse for us to prefer the obedience to the mean to the death of the honorable."

Preferring killing and sacrifice for the sake of the principles to the life of humility, Imam al-Hussein (a) said:

“By Allah I swear, I will not give you with my hand like the humble, and will not submit to you like slaves.”

“In my sight, death is only pleasure, while the life with the wrongdoers is only misery.”

Like their leader, the companions of Imam al-Hussein (a) provided the most ideal examples of steadfastness and perseverance on principles when they sacrificed their souls for their leader.

With a splendid wording of love, admiration, and pity, Imam al-Hussein (a) addressed a speech to his companions:

“So then, I have never known any companions more loyal or favorable than my companions are, and I have never known any family members more regardful and pious than my family members are. Allah may reward you in the best manner on behalf of me. I am sure that we will face these enemies very soon, and I permit you all to leave me and I release you from your obligations towards me. This night has covered you; therefore, you may use it as screen and each of you may put his hand in the hand of one of my household, then you can reach your hometowns until Allah relieves this ordeal. These people want me in particular, and if they can capture me, they will not pursue anyone else.”

Muslim Ibn Awsaja stood up to answer these words of the Imam (a). He said:

“How is it that we leave you alone? What is the excuse that we will provide justifiably before God with regard to the fulfillment of your right that is imposed upon us if we leave you? No, by God, I will not leave you before I stab my spear in the chests of the enemies and strike them with my sword so long as I can catch something in my hand. Even if I have no weapon to fight them with, I will throw stones at them. By God I swear, we will never leave you alone so that God will know that we have respected your representation of the Messenger of God (S). By God I swear, if I am foretold that I will be killed, then revived, then killed, then burnt, then scattered in the wind, then the same thing is redone to me seventy times, I will not leave you before I face death for your sake. I will surely face death for your sake when it is only a single time of death followed by the grandest never-ending honor.”

When it was his turn to speak, Zuhair Ibn al-Qain said:

“By God I swear, I wish I would be killed, then revived, then killed, then the same thing is redone to me thousand times, if it is that God will save you as well as these youths from your household from death.”

All the other companions spoke alike wordings. They said:

“We, by God, will never leave you alone. We sacrifice our souls for you. We will protect you with our necks, foreheads, and hands, so that we, if we are killed, will prove our being loyal to you and will fulfill the rights that are imposed upon us concerning you.”

We, Muslims of today, are in urgent need for learning lessons of jihad from such great personalities and

pursuing their examples in the fields of clinging to the religion and perseverance on principles as well as self-denial for the sake of supporting the right, so that we will be able to regain our seized rights and our usurped dignities, and will be able to save ourselves from the humility of the scandalous defeats and frequent losses.

- [1.](#) The two Sheikhs, in this regard, are Abu Bakr and Omar ibn al-Khattab.
- [2.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 9 page 533.
- [3.](#) Al-Hajjaj ibn Yousuf ath-Thaqafi (born in 661 in at-Ta'if and died in June 714, in Iraq), was the most despotic personality all over the history of Islam. In the reign of Abd ul-Melik ibn Marwan, the Umayyad caliph, he was appointed as the governor of Iraq, because this province was known of the frequent movements of rebellion against the Ummayyads. He exceeded all the limits in persecuting and mistreating the people of Iraq. Unfortunately, some modern writers honor and regard him as an administrative personality in the history of Islam. As a proof on the excessive criminality of al-Hajjaj, Omar ibn Abd ul-Azeez; the fair Umayyad caliph said about him: "If every nation in this world presents the most criminal person for competition of criminality, we will certainly overcome when we present al-Hajjaj."
- [4.](#) Abu Turab (father of dust) is one of the names of Imam Ali (a). The Prophet (S) used this name for him because, as traditionists said, he found him taking dust from the earth to disperse on his head, out of his fear of God, as he was acting a rite of worship.
- [5.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 9 page 630.
- [6.](#) Abu al-Aswad ad-Dauali is the originator of the syntax of Arabic. He was famous grammarian, poet, and man of virtue. He was one of the intimate companions of Amir ul-Mu'minin (a).
- [7.](#) Hi Hind (the daughter of Utba) was the mother of Muawiya. She was one of the well-known most notorious prostitutes in Mecca. In the battle of Uhud, she tried to swallow the liver of Hamza ibn Abd ul-Muttalib (a), out of her rage and malice, after she had given a great prize to a slave if he would kill him. (The daughter of Utba) was the mother of Muawiya.
- [8.](#) Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; vol. 1 page 522.
- [9.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 8 page 475.
- [10.](#) Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; part 1 page 226.
- [11.](#) When Muawiya, governor of Syria, refused to recognize Imam Ali (a) as the new caliph, calling instead for vengeance for the blood of his murdered kinsman, the third caliph, 'Uthman, Imam Ali (a) responded by invading Syria. The two armies met along the Euphrates River at Siffin (near the Syrian-Iraqi border), where they engaged in an indecisive succession of skirmishes, truces, and battles, culminating in the appearance of Muawiya's troops with copies of the Qur'an impaled on their lances--supposedly a sign to let God's word decide the conflict.
- [12.](#) Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; part 2 page 716.
- [13.](#) Ashura: The tenth of Muharram, celebrated as a day of mourning (the anniversary of the martyrdom of Imam Al-Hussein (a).)

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