

The Third Stream: About Dealing With The Kings

It is said about the justice and tyranny of kings that the welfare of the subjects of a kingdom depends much upon the fairness of its ruler. Therefore, The Prophet of Allah (S) has said, “My *Ummat* depends for its prosperity on two types of persons: the first the *Fuqha* (the jurists) and the second, the nobles.”

Also the Prophet (S) said: On the Day of Reckoning the Hell will address three categories of people:

1. The *Umra* (the nobles)
2. The *Quraa* (the reciters) and
3. The *Aghnia* (the rich).

It will tell to the *Umra* that Allah had given them the authority and you abused it for perpetrating tyranny on the hapless people. Now you have to pay for your deeds.

The Hell will tell the *Quraa* that to make a show of their prowess and to acquire false fame they were reciting the Qur'an and involved themselves in disobedience of Allah. Now they would have to taste the Hellfire.

The Hell will address the *Aghnia* that Allah had blessed them with wealth and they didn't spend it in any way to please Allah. How will they now bear the retribution.

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen Amir al Mu'mineen (as) said that obedience of a tyrannical and cruel ruler is a major sin. Obeying the *Ulu al Amr* who are the Infallible Imams is the bounden duty of the believers.

Disobedience of these Imams is a major sin. These Imams are Infallible and Allah is Just that He doesn't Ordain obedience of fallible rulers.

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) also said: Allah will send His Retribution to six types of persons for their foul traits:

On the Arabs for their bigotry.

The rich for their pride and conceit.

On the nobles and kings for their tyranny.

On the jurists and scholars for their jealousies.

On the traders for their unfair business practices.

On the rustics for their ignorance.

It is narrated from the Prophet of Islam (S) that there is a mill in the Hell that rotates perpetually. People asked him, “Ya Imam! What does this mill grind?” The Prophet (S) replied: It will grind the sinful scholar (*Ulema*), sinning reciters, tyrannical kings, untrustworthy viziers and dissimulating courtiers.

The Prophet of Islam (S) said: I curse seven types of persons. All the prophets (as) who came prior to me have also disapproved of such persons. These persons are:

One who adds or removes anything from the Book of Allah.

One who denies the Divine Decree (*Qaza wa Qadr*) and doesn't believe in the fate Decreed by Allah.

One who acts against my *Sunna* and creates hypocrisy (*Bidaa*) in Religion.

One who usurps the rights of my *Ahl-ul-Bayt*. Allah has termed such usurpation *Haram*.

One who imposes himself forcibly on the people and gives honor to those who have been disgraced by Allah and disgraces those who have been honored by Allah.

One who imposes himself on the material assets of the Muslims and considers himself the sole owner of everything.

One who decrees haram that which has been termed Halal by Allah.

It is authentically narrated from Imam Ar-Ridha' (as), “When the persons at the helm of affairs start lying and give partial and unjust decisions, then it stops raining from the skies. When the kings are tyrannical and unjust, their realms become weak. When people stop paying *Zakat*, the cattle start dying!”

Behavior Of People In Power

It is narrated that Ziyad Qandi came to the presence of Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as). The Imam (as) asked him, “O ziyad! Are you the chief appointed by those tyrannical caliphs?” Ziyad replied, “O son of the Prophet (S)! No doubt I am the chief. But I am considerate! I am not one of those who hoard riches. Whatever I get, I share with the deserving *Mu'mins*. I treat them equitably!”

The Imam (as) said, “If you do this, then it is very good. Remember! When your conscience takes you

towards unjust acts, and you have control over the conscience, then remember Allah's Rights. One who wreaks tyranny on people, Allah will wreak Retribution on him! When other people give you trouble, the trouble passes by! But when you unjustly terrorise others, the punishment will await for you!"

It is narrated from Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) that when Allah gives a kingdom to someone, he fixes the days, nights, months and years for which the realm would last. If the ruler is just, Allah orders the angel incharge of keeping the time for the epoch of the king to prolong it. Then the days, nights, months and years of the realm are revised upwards. When a king is unjust and cruel to his subjects, then Allah orders the angel to shorten his realm.

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen Amir'ul-Mu'mineen (as) told to Naufil Bakali, "O Naufil! Listen and act on my advice! Never accept chieftaincy, commission for collecting taxes and the position of a proclaimer (*Naqeeb*)."

One person came to Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) and said, "Ya Imam! I have been the chief over the people from the times of Hajjaj till now. Will my repentence be accepted by Allah?" The Imam (as) kept quiet and did not reply. The man repeated his question. Now the Imam (as) replied, "Your penitence will not be acceptable till you restore the right of every person you have wronged!"

It is narrated from the Prophet of Islam (S) that one had been unjust to someone and wishes to make amends, but the person is not traceable. In this event the repentent person should pray for the Deliverance of the wronged person and this way his sin might be pardoned."

The Prophet (S) then added, "The first to enter the Hell will be the chief who was unjust. The second person will be the rich man who did not distribute Allah's Right from his wealth. The third person will be the beggar who was proud of his penury."

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) told to one chieftain, "Abstain from tyranny and injustice! The suppreed overcomes the pangs of tyranny, but the tyrant faces Retribution for the tyranny for ever."

The Imam (as) further added: On the Day of Judgement three persons will be the dearest to Allah:

One who is not unjust to a person even in a state of acute anger.

One who is an arbiter in some matter and doesn't take sides unjustly.

One who tells the truth even at the risk of harm to his own person.

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) said, "One must be scared of doing an injustice to a person who has no helper in the world except Allah."

The Imam (as) further added, "The cruel person doesn't usurp as much value by usurping anything from the weakling than what the weak person takes away from the tyrants faith!"

"And when a person does wrong to anyone, he infact wrongs himself because, as you sow, so shall you

reap!”

The Rights Of The Rulers And The Ruled Over Each Other

Imam Zain-ul-’Abidin (as) says that since Allah has given authority to the kings and the emirs, it is imperative for them to be just and sagacious with their subjects. They should show affection for the subjects like the parents do for their children. They should be thankful to Allah for the position bestowed on them. In this regard the long epistles written to Malik al-Ashtar, Sahl bin Haneef and Muhammad bin Abi Bakr are worth perusal.

It is authentically reported that Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) said, “A fair person in authority over the affairs of Muslims deals with them justly. He keeps his doors always open for them, erects no curtain or obstruction between them and himself. He considers their affairs with keen interest and fulfills their legitimate needs. Allah will remove all his fears and give him admittance to the Heaven on the Day of Judgement.”

Remember, Allah has made every individual a sort of a king in his own way. It is in place to quote the following tradition here:

كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ.

“Everyone of you is a ruler and you will have to account for your subjects”

Questions will be asked and enquiries made. Like enquiries are made with a shepherd about his flock.

On the Day of Judgement everyone will be asked about how he treated his subjects. As Allah has given authority to kings over the subjects of his realm, the courties and nobles have authority over smaller numbers than the king, every house-holder has authority over his family, servants and slaves. The house-holder is responsible for the maintenance of the persons under his authority.

Similarly every individual is the master over his own limbs and body. He has to keep his senses in control that they don’t become the cause of Retribution for him on the Day of Reckoning. Allah has made the behaviour and habits subordinate to the individual. There is none in this world who is not a ruler in lesser or greater measure. Every person is bestowed with the power to rule according to his ability.

Allah expects him to be thankful and perform his task according to the Dictum of the Creator. If the person does his task properly, Allah will enhance his authority and bounty for him. One who goes in the contrary direction, Allah will withdraw the bounty from him. If the rulers are just to the subjects and express their thanks to Allah along with the subjects, Allah will extend the period of their dominance. Therefore he has said that even if the king is an infidel, but he deals with the subjects judiciously, his

realm will prosper. To the contrary the realm of a cruel Muslim king disintegrates.

About Helping Mu'mineen And Keeping Them Contented

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) says that making a *Mu'min* smile is a big virtue. There is no supplication more than making a *Mu'min* happy and helping him to meet his needs.

It is in the traditions that Prophet Musa (as) received a revelation from Allah, "O Musa! I have made the Heaven lawful for some of my creatures." Prophet Musa (as) asked, "Who are these persons?" Allah replied, "These are the persons who make their fellowmen happy!"

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) said that a *Mu'min* tired of the repression of the Muslim king flew to another realm of an infidel and took refuge there. The kind ruler there treated the *Mu'min properly and provided him all the necessary facilities. In the meantime the infidel king died. Allah revealed to him that but for his being an unbeliever He would have sent him to the Heaven. However the fire of the Hell was made cold for him.*

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) has said that one who pleases a *Mu'min*, it is like pleasing the Prophet of Islam (S). One who has pleased the Prophet (S), he has pleased Allah. And a person who pleases Allah, qualifies to enter the Heaven.

It is narrated from Sadeer Sarraf that once he was with Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as). At that meeting a discussion came up about the rights of brother *Mu'mins*. The Imam (as) gave his attention to me and asked, "If you wish I shall tell you about the rights?" Sadeer said, "Ya Imam! Kindly tell!" The Imam (as) said: When Allah orders the death of a person, the *Karamain Katibain* (the two angels who keep an account of the deeds of the person) go to the Firmament and tell to Allah, 'O Allah! This was your pious creature! He was always busy in your obedience and always abstained from anything that can be termed your disobedience! Now you have taken away his spirit. What is your order to us in his regard?'

Allah will say, 'You return to the world and sit praying near his grave and enter the reward for your prayers in his account till I raise him on the Day of Resurrection!' The Imam (as) added, "O Sadeer! Do you want to hear further of the virtues of a *Mu'min*?" He said, "Ya Imam! Kindly relate!" The Imam (as) said: At the time of raising the person from the grave, a pleasant looking apparition will emerge from the grave and go in front of him. When the person would get scared on seeing the manifestations of the Doomsday, this apparition would put his fears to rest. It will give him the tiding of the happiness and comforts in store for him and that he need not worry for anything. It will remain with the person up to the place where he will have to give the account of his deeds.

Allah will ease the process of accounting for the man. And will order his conduct to the Heaven. At that time the apparition will move in front of him. The *Mu'min* will tell to the apparition, 'May Allah be kind on you! You have kept company with me ever since I emerged from the grave and have been the harbinger

of good news at every step. You are now leading me to the Heaven! Tell me, who you are?' The apparition would reply, 'I am that happiness and comfort which you gave to such-and-such a *Mu'min*. Allah has created me on account of that happiness only that I keep giving you tidings of happiness coming your way!'

Mashal narrates that one year he went for the Haj. After the Haj he went to the presence of Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as). The Imam (as) inquired of him, "From where are you coming?" He said, "After performing the Haj." The Imam (as) asked, "Do you know that the felicity of performing the Haj for a person is that in his account of deeds, six thousand good deeds are recorded. Allah also pardons six thousand bad deeds of the person!" Masaal said, "Subhan Allah! There is so much reward for a Haji!" The Imam (as) said, "I shall tell you of an act that brings much more reward. The *Mu'min* who helps a brother *Mu'min* or makes him happy, gets reward equal to performing Haj ten times."

The Felicity Of Coming To The Help Of Mu'mins

It is narrated from Mufazzal bin Omer that Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) said, "O Mufazzil! Listen to what I say and act on the advice! Inform your pious *Mu'min* brothers too of what I am saying." Mufazzil asked, "Ya Imam! I offer myself in sacrifice for you! Who are the people who take pleasure in helping their brother *Mu'mins*?" The Imam (as) replied, "When a person helps fulfill one need of a *Mu'min*, Allah will fulfill his hundred thousand needs in the Hereafter. One of his wishes will be taking his next of kin, friends and relations to the Heaven. The only condition required of him will be that the persons on whose behalf he intercedes have not been hypocrites (*Nasibi*)."

It is narrated in another tradition that Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) told to Mufazzil, "O Mufazzil! Allah has selected one group from His creatures who attend to the needs of our poor Shi'as. In return for this Allah will award Heaven to them. Therefore, to the best of your ability help them and become a part of the chosen group!"

It is narrated from Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) when a *Mu'min* approaches him for help, and he thinks that the person coming to him is a matter of felicity, and helps him suitably, it will be the cause of our friendship for him. Our friendship is Allah's friendship. And if he turns down the request of the *Mu'min* for help, despite having the means to do it, Allah will put a fiery snake in his grave. This snake will trouble him till the Day of Judgement. Later on, it will be Allah's decision either to punish him or reward him.

It is narrated from Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) that in his view helping meet the needs of a *Mu'min* is better than performing twenty Haj pilgrimages when on each pilgrimage one has spent a hundred thousand Dirhams.

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) has said: If a *Mu'min* finds another in trouble, desires to help him, but is not in a position to come to his aid, Allah will award Heaven to such a person.

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) said that if a person himself takes the trouble of going to help a brother *Mu'min*, then seventy five thousand angels would provide the shadow of their wings over his head and for every step that he takes for this purpose, Allah will add one good to the account of his deeds and pardons all his sins. Allah will also raise the person's status by a degree. When the person returns after performing the good deed, the reward for performing a Haj and Umra is entered in his record.

The Prophet of Allah (S) has said: When a person doesn't come to the aid of a *Mu'min*, despite having the means of doing it, then Allah will demean him in this world and the hereafter.

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) says: There are four types of persons on whom Allah will Bestow Blessing on the Day of Reckoning:

One from whom someone bought something, but returned it and the person has willingly accepted back his merchandise.

One who comes to the rescue of a person in trouble.

One who frees a slave.

One who extends a helping hand for the marriage of a poor person.

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen Amir'ul-Mu'mineen (as) has said, "A person who removes the danger of fire, flood or the enemy from Muslims, Allah will pardon all his sins"

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) says, "One person was brought back to life from the grave by angels and told him, 'We shall inflict on you a thousand blows of the whip of Allah's Punishment!' The person said, 'I don't have the strength to bear so much flogging.' The angels said, 'All right! We shall reduce one blow!' He said, 'I don't have the strength to bear this severe punishment.' In this way the angels kept reducing the number of blows they wanted to give the person and he kept on pleading that he didn't have sufficient strength to bear the flogging. In the end the angels said, 'Atleast, we shall flog you once!' the man asked, 'You have not told me for what fault of mine you want to punish me?' The angels said, 'Once you had prayed without doing the mandatory ablution and on another occasion you passed by an old man who needed help, but you didn't help him.' Saying this the angels flogged him once, The blow was so intense that a small fire started in the grave."

It is narrated from the Prophet of Allah (S) that whosoever denies to fulfill the need of a needy person, despite having the means to help him, his sin will be like the sin of *Ashari*. Someone asked, 'Who is *Ashari*?' The Prophet said, "A sinner who is cursed by Allah, the angels and all the creatures every day and night. One who is accursed of Allah, can be helped by none."

Also the Prophet (S) said, "One who hides one fault of a *Mu'min*, Allah will overlook his seventy faults in the Hereafter."

The Prophet (S) said that Allah will not Reward one who embezzled. Someone asked, 'Who is an embezzler?' The Prophet (S) said, "He is one who is miserly in helping a brother *Mu'min*."

Censuring, Belittling Or Harming The Mu'mins

It is narrated from Imam Ar-Ridha' (as) that there were four pious persons (*Mu'mins*) during the period of the bani Israel. Three of them were one day having a tete a tete when the fourth knocked at the door. The slave of the house came out. The *Mu'min* asked him if his lord was at home. When the slave replied in the negative, the *Mu'min* went away. The master asked the slave of the identity of the caller. The slave replied that it was so-and-so and that he had told him that the master wasn't home. The master and the other two *Mu'mins* did not object to the slave's act. The next day the *Mu'min* visited the place when the three of them were emerging from the house. He greeted them and said that he visited the place the previous day too. The three of them laughed and didn't even express regrets for not being able to meet him. They then proceeded towards their farm. On the way a cloud hovered over the heads of the three persons. The angel Jibraeel called, 'O lightening of the cloud! Fall on the heads of the three persons and render them to ashes!' Lightening emerged from the cloud and burnt them to ashes.

The fourth *Mu'min* expressed deep sorrow and anguish for the tragedy that had befallen their friends. He went to the prophet (S) of those times, Prophet Yusha (as) and narrated the happening to him. He said that 'Allah dislikes one *Mu'min* belittling and making a laughing stock of another. Your three friends did that to you. You visited them the first day, they were at home and their slave had lied to you that they were not at home. They silently approved of what the slave did. On your second visit they didn't express any regret for the inconvenience caused to you. To the contrary, they belittled by laughing at you! You were not aware of their intentions, but Allah knows everything and He didn't like their behavior. They have been punished for their misbehavior!'

The *Mu'min* said, 'O prophet of Allah! I have pardoned my friends!' Prophet Yusha (as) replied, 'There is scope for pardon only before the arrival of Allah's Retribution! But there is no possibility of pardon after the Retribution has visited the sinners! It is possible that your friends may not be asked to account for this misdeed of theirs.'

Frightening A Mu'min

It is narrated from Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) that if a person views a *Mu'min* with a threatening look, Allah will frighten this person on the Day when there will be no succor other than Allah's Mercy for anyone! The Imam (as) also said that if a Muslim visits another person who neither admits him into his premises nor he comes out to meet him, then he will be under the Displeasure of Allah till he meets the visitor.

It is narrated from Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) that a person who frightens a *Mu'min* with his status and clout, and thinks of harming him, will earn a place for himself in the Hell. Moreover, if he causes physical

harm to the *Mu'min*, then he will be in the company of Pharoah and his progeny in the Hell.

In another narration it is mentioned that when a person utters a single word to harm a *Mu'min* and takes sides with the tyrant, he will have written on his forehead the following words on the Day of Judgement, 'This person is hopeless of My (Allah's) Forgiveness.'

It is narrated from Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) that there is a mountain in the middle of the Hell called *Sa-ada*. Along this mountain there is the valley of *Saqar*. There is a well in the valley by the name of *Habhab*. Whenever the curtain is raised from this well, the denizens of the Hell raise cries in remorse. The tyrants are the residents of the area in the neighborhood of this well.

The Imam (as) also added, 'One should not harm or ridicule others in a hurry! Who knows the subject of such treatment is a *Mu'min* of which fact he is unaware!'

Adopt softness and kindness in your attitude. Anger and stealth are the weapons of the Satan. Allah likes nothing more than softness and humility.

In another narration the Prophet (S) says, 'When a muslim slaps another, Allah will take asunder all his bones on the Day of Judgement and put him in the Hellfire with a collar around his neck.'

A person who attends on a tyrannical king with a whipcord in his hand, then Allah will turn the whipcord into a snake on the Day of Judgement. The snake will be of seventy yards in length and will enwrap around the body of the person.

When a person reports against a *Mu'min* to a tyrant and makes false allegations against him, the reporter would lose the Rewards for all his good acts, even if the subject doesn't come to any harm because of the reporter carrying malicious tales.

Amir-ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) asked the Prophet of Islam (S), 'Ya Rasool Allah! What will happen to a cruel ruler who doesn't treat his subjects in accordance with Allah's Dictates?' The Prophet (S) replied, 'He will be the fourth in the Hell after Satan, Qabeel and Pharoah.'

It is narrated from Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) that when a person slays a *Mu'min* for no fault of his, will be asked at the time of his own demise, 'Accept the death of a Jew, a Christian or a Fire-worshipper!'

The Prophet (S) said, 'A person remains a Muslim till he condescends to kill another Muslim! If he intentionally kills a Muslim, then his repentance will never be accepted by Allah!'

It is narrated from Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) that a murderer would be raised on the Day of Judgement as the worst offender and sinner. He will swear that he didn't ever kill anyone nor was he a party to bloodshed. Allah will reply, 'You reported maliciously against a particular creature of mine that became the cause of his execution!'

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) narrates that there are three types of persons who will never enter the Heaven: Those who shed blood for no valid reason, those who drink intoxicants and those who are backbiters.'

It is narrated from Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) that the first Judgement that Allah would deliver on the Day of Reckoning will be about the shedding of the blood of innocent Muslims. Prophet Adam (as)'s two sons will be the first to be questioned. Then the others involved in the killing of Muslims will come up for judgement. The killers will produce their victims before Allah in the condition they were at the moment of commitment of the crime; their bodies and faces smeared with blood. The killed persons would say, 'O Allah! This person has rendered me to this state!' The killer will not be able to deny his sin. Also, when a person kills an innocent person in this world, Allah will kill him in a similar manner a hundred times in the Hereafter.

The Prophet of Islam (S) also said, 'When someone kills a *Mu'min* intentionally for no fault of his, Allah will enter all the sins of the victim to the account of the killer.

It is narrated from the Prophet of Allah (S) that, 'On the Day of Judgement one person would go near another and smear his face and body with blood. The first person would say, 'What have I done to you to deserve this treatment?' He will reply, 'On such-and-such a day you had uttered a falsehood about me that became the cause of my execution!'

Authentic tradition mentions that Allah says, 'One who puts a *Mu'min* to ridicule would be tantamount to have rebelled against Me! 'In the eyes of Allah the worst sinner is one who has ridiculed or killed a *Mu'min*. When a person kills another innocent person Allah will transfer all the sins of the victim to the account of the killer.

The Rights Of The Rulers

Religiously upright rulers have plenty of rights over their subjects. This is because of the fact that they honor the rights and privileges of the people and protect them from enemies and help them in times of natural calamities.

It is narrated in an authentic tradition that just rulers have to be respected and adored. This act on the part of the subjects would be like respecting Allah. In certain other traditions a *sultan-e-adil* (just ruler) is referred to as *imam al-adil* (a just Imam).

It is narrated from Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) that when Nimrod pushed Prophet Ibrahim (as) into the fire, and he emerged safe and sound, he was exiled from the city and he reached the realm of the kings of *Qabt*. Accompanying him was *Sarah(r.a.)* hidden in a wooden chest that *na-mahrams* didn't set eyes on her. The inspectors at the border made a search of Prophet Ibrahim (as) and wanted him to open the chest for their scrutiny. He said that in the chest was his spouse who was also his maternal cousin. But they

forcibly opened the chest and discovered an extremely beautiful damsel emerging from the chest. They informed the king of the matter who ordered all his courtiers to assemble.

When Prophet Ibrahim (as) presented himself at the court, the king insisted on him to open the chest. Prophet Ibrahim (as) said ‘whatever tax you wish to levy, do take from me, but don’t ask me to open the chest. Any stranger (*na-mahram*) setting eyes on her is taboo for me. But the king didn’t give heed to Prophet Ibrahim (as)’s entreaties. When he saw the extremely beautiful Sarah(r.a.), he proffered his hand to her. Prophet Ibrahim (as) then prayed to Allah, ‘O my sustainer! Do protect my honor!’

The king’s hand suddenly dried up like the dead wood. He pleaded to Prophet Ibrahim (as) to pray to Allah that he got restored to his former condition. Prophet Ibrahim (as) prayed to Allah and the king’s hand was restored to the former condition. The king was full of remorse and treated Prophet Ibrahim (as) with respect. He presented to Prophet Ibrahim (as) with a slave-girl who was Hajar(r.a.) who was later to mother the prophet Ismail (as). Prophet Ibrahim (as) started from the place when the king accompanied him some distance as a mark of respect. Then Prophet Ibrahim (as) received a revelation that he should not demean the king by making him walk behind himself. Prophet Ibrahim (as) then told to the king that Allah didn’t like him walking ahead of the king of the realm and that he must walk behind the monarch. The king was much impressed with what Prophet Ibrahim (as) said and willingly embraced his Faith.

The Prophet of Allah (S) said that Allah exhorts one should not talk ill of kings that they are in their position with His Consent. The people get a ruler they deserve! If the people are unruly, disobedient to Allah, then they would get a tyrannical ruler. Therefore, instead of complaining against an unjust ruler, they should try to reform themselves that Allah appoints a just monarch over them.

The Disadvantage Of Nearness To A Ruler

Nearness to the kings and nobles are the cause of loss both in this world and the Hereafter. When a person gets recognition for being close to the rulers, he will be subject of ridicule for falling from the good books of the rulers, he will also be deprived of the Rewards of the Hereafter for upholding the wrong deeds of the ruler. This way he goes further and further away from Allah.

Being close to the rulers, one becomes party to the acts of omission and commission of his masters and secondly he has to maintain affection for the masters all the time. Allah’s dictates are definitely against this practice.

﴿وَلَا تَرْكُنُوا إِلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا فَتَمَسَّكُمُ النَّارُ وَمَا لَكُم مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ أَوْلِيَاءَ ثُمَّ لَا تُنصَرُونَ﴾

Don't get attracted towards the unkind? (11:113)

Doing this, one will taste the Hellfire.

Therefore, there are many traditions against maintaining closeness with such people. The person has to accede to the bad deeds of such people. This becomes an act of *shirk*. The person, observing the misdeeds of these people develops the proclivity to commit wrong deeds himself. He cannot sit quietly in the company of such masters and has to uphold their misdeeds. This in itself is disobedience of Allah and the Prophet (S). The person will have no power to oppose the master's wrong deeds and, therefore, will be abandoning *nahi an al munkar*. For his selfish ends the person has to force himself to follow their wrong example to protect his own honor. He also turns callous hearted because of living day and night in the company of the masters.

It is narrated from Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) that a parsimonious person is never happy. The jealous is deprived of the ordinary pleasures of life. The kings are never considerate. A liar is never thoughtful. A foolish person devoid of wisdom never achieves importance. The Imam also said that if a friend acquires power and pelf, his good behaviour towards you reduces nine times when comparing his attitude in the past. Even then, one should not deem him a bad friend!

Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) has been quoted authentically, 'Four things mar the heart and make a person unkind.

- Watching dances and listening to music
- Using foul language.
- Frequently visiting the kings and rulers.
- Being constantly in search of game.

It is narrated from the Prophet Of Islam (S) that one who keeps company of the kings, becomes a scheming person. The closer he goes to the king, the farther away he goes from Allah.

It is authentically narrated from Amir'ul-Mu'mineen Amir'ul-Mu'mineen (as) that a person who perpetuates unkindness and the one who helps and abets in this act will both be sinners.

The Prophet of Allah (S) has said: A person who praises an unkind ruler and for the sake of worldly gains behaves in a submissive manner, he will be the companion of that ruler in the Hell. One who shows the way of unkindness to a tyrant, he will be thrown into the Hell with *Haaman*. One who picks up quarrel with others in support of an unkind person, the *Malak al Maut* (the angel of death) will tell him at the time of his death, 'I give you foreboding of Allah's curse and a place in the Hell!'

It is narrated from Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) that one should not go to a company where a tyrannical ruler might punish or kill people. This is advised because one will not be able to come to the rescue of the downtrodden. It is mandatory to go to the rescue of a person who is the subject of tyranny.

When one is not present in such a situation, nor will there be the chance of getting news of any such harsh treatment, then the person will not be under any obligation to act.

Helpers Of The Cruel People

After getting fatally struck by the assassin's weapon, Amir'ul-Mu'mineen (as) made the following will to Imam Hasan (as), "My son! Befriend a virtuous person for the sake of his virtues; maintain acquaintance with the transgressor (faasiq) only to the extent necessary that your Faith is guarded against his evil designs. Your heart should beware of the transgressors."

It is narrated that those who willfully help the cruel will remain under fiery curtains on the Day of Judgement. An angel will herald on the orders of Allah asking for the cruel people and their helpers and abettors who put wool (*sauf*) in their ink-pots, sealed their hampers of wealth and provided them with other kind of help. Such abettors too would be counted amongst the cruel.

It is also mentioned in the traditions that, 'One doesn't come closer to a king, unless he moves away from Allah. None becomes very rich that it becomes harder for him to render account on the day of Judgement. A person doesn't have more followers and hasn't Satans in his following.'

It is narrated from Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) that one should guard himself from evil by adopting piety and virtue. One should strengthen his Faith by recourse to *Taqiyyah* (permitted subterfuge). Instead of approaching kings for succor, one should supplicate to Allah. Learn to be contented. A *Mu'min* who cringes before a king or a faithless person for worldly gains, Allah considers him as His enemy! The worldly possessions of such a person lose their value. He will not get any reward for performing Haj and Umrah, nor for freeing of slaves!'

Meeting The Men In Authority

Although it is not desirable for *Mu'mins* to become regular retainers at the courts of kings and nobles, there are definitely certain conditions under which maintaining such contacts becomes imperative. These conditions are:

If there is danger to life and property by keeping totally away from persons in authority. In such circumstances, keeping contact with them under *Taqiyyah* is allowed. This was the reason that the Holy Imams (as) never tried to antagonize the rulers.

Maintaining relations with rulers is allowed when securing help for a *Mu'min* or getting him relief from some hardship is achieved through such contacts.

If the persons in authority are cruel but are amenable to mellow their stance through good advice, then it is desirable to keep good rapport with them.

It has been narrated in the traditions that the *Zakat* for holding office of authority is providing help to the *Mu'min* brothers. As wealth increases by virtue of taking out *Zakat*, similarly the authority and respect of a person enhances if he helps *Mu'mins* through his authority and position.

In another tradition the Prophet of Islam (S) has said: I would rather fall from a hill and shatter into pieces than getting imposed on people as the representative of a tyrannical ruler or condescending to set foot in such a court. I might agree to go there only if a *Mu'min* finds relief with my initiative in going there or someone gets absolved of false and serious charges or his debts get cleared with my intercession.

The Prophet (S) added, 'remember! The least punishment for the abettors of the tyrants is that they will have a curtain of fire in front of them till the time when Allah Has taken the full account of their deeds.'

Further the Prophet (S) told to Ziyad bin Qalaad, 'O Ziyaad! When you are appointed to a position of authority by cruel rulers show kindness to your *Mu'min* brothers. Perhaps that would become the cause of your deliverance!'

It is authentically narrated from Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as), 'There is no cruel and unjust ruler who is not having a *Mu'min* administrator on his rolls. Allah administers justice to *Mu'min Shi'as* through him. and saves them from the cruelty of the tyrant. But the reward for that *Mu'min* on the day of Judgement would be the least. Of all other *Mu'mins*. This, because of his proximity to the tyrant during his living years!'

Luqman (as) used to visit kings and nobles to give them sermons and advice. He used to take pity on them observing them surrounded by umpteen calamities. He used to wonder over their craving for the worldly riches. He always derived lessons from the aberrations in their characters and behaviors. This way the Prophet (S) used to keep his worldly desires in control.

About Good Morals

It is authentically narrated from Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) that the Faith of such *Mu'mins* is perfect who have excellent morals.

The Prophet of Islam (S) says, "On the Day of Judgement nothing would be rated better than the good behavior of the people."

It is narrated from Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) that in the eyes of Allah no action of a person is more acceptable than making others one's followers through good behavior.

In another tradition it is mentioned that good moral behavior takes one to the status of the person who had fasted all his life and offered prayers late into the nights.

It is narrated from the Prophet of Islam (S), "The major cause of my people achieving Heaven will be

abstention from things termed taboo by Allah and adopting piety and good behavior.”

Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) has said that good moral behavior melts away sins like the rays of sunlight melt the snow.

He further said that doing good to fellowbeings and living amicably amongst the people, keeping the dwellings inhabited enhances longevity.

In another tradition he said that good behavior is a Gift from Allah. There are certain traits of behavior that are hereditary and there are certain others that are cultivated by the person. The narrator asked, ‘Ya Imam! Which is better of the two?’ The Imam (as) replied, ‘The traits that are there in the person from birth that they are the fortunate ones whom Allah has endowed with these good traits and he cannot act contrary to these. One who adopts good traits by practice has to control his mind and actions as a penance to gain the Pleasure of Allah! There is much reward for such effort!’

In another tradition that Allah give reward equal to that of Jihad to creatures who behave well with their fellow-beings.

It is narrated from Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) that one day the Prophet (S) was in the mosque when a slave-girl of one of the Ansar came and caught hold of the lapel of his robe. The Prophet (S) stood up with the thought that the girl wished to say something. But the girl remained mum. She acted similarly three times. When the Prophet (S) rose a fourth time, the slave-girl cut away a corner of his robe.

The companions were upset at the impertinence of the girl and said, ‘O girl! Why did you trouble the Prophet (S)?’ She said, ‘There is a sick person at our place. My master has asked me to fetch a small piece of the Prophet’s raiment that with it’s aura the ailing person would get well. Whenever I tried to clip a piece of the raiment, the Prophet (S) rose and I felt shy of doing the task. Alas! In the fourth attempt I took courage in my hands and am going home with the clipping in my hand!’

Discourtesy

It is narrated from Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) that illtemper and bad manners spoil faith and neutralize the good deeds of a person the way vinegar spoils the honey.

The Imam (as) also said that the penitence and repentance of an ill-mannered person is not accepted because while he is repentant of one bad deed, he perpetuates another through his misbehavior!

The Imam (as) added that a *Mu’min* has always to be good mannered, soft spoken and of amiable disposition. An infidel, to the contrary, is ill tempered and harsh in his behavior.

Someone asked the Prophet (S), ‘Ya Imam! What is the guage of good behavior?’ The Prophet replied, ‘Keep your temperament soft that no one feels hurt from your attitude. Adopt soft and sweet language

that pleases others. When you meet your *Mu'min* brothers, meet them with warmth and pleasantness!’

Amir’ul-Mu’mineen (as) has said,’ If you cannot please all the people in the world with your wealth, then make them your friends with your good behavior and temperament!’

It is narrated from Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) that when the Prophet (S) got the news of the death of Saad bin Maaz Ansari, he proceeded along with the companions to join the funeral procession. He stood near Saad while he was given the ritual final bath. When the bath was over, he accompanied the bier without footwear and bare-head as is the custom of the mourners. He sometimes carried the bier on his right shoulder and at other on his left.

On reaching the graveside, the Prophet (S) himself descended into the pit and with his own hands lowered Saad into the grave. Then he arranged the bricks in the grave and put soil to fill the grave. While putting soil into the grave the Prophet (S) said, ‘Saad’s mortal remains will get lost in the soil but Allah likes that the deeds one does are good and durable!’ When the Prophet (S) was giving the last touches to the grave of Saad, the dead companion’s mother cried,’ O Saad! Greetings on your achieving the Heaven!’

The Prophet said, ‘O mother of Saad! Keep quiet! At the moment Saad is undergoing the pressures (*Fishaar*) of the grave!’ When the Prophet returned from the grave- yard, the companions asked him,’ Ya Imam! The way you have attended Saad’s funeral, we have not seen you do any time in the past. You went bare-footed. You kept your head uncovered.’ He replied,’ I saw the angels do likewise and I followed suit. The companions asked,’ Sometimes you carried the bier on your right shoulder and at others on the left?’ The Prophet replied,’ I was with Jibrael, whichever side he went, I went the same way!’ The companions asked, ‘You have yourself given bath to Saad, led the funeral prayer, lowered him into the grave and in the end said that he was undergoing the *Fishaar* of the grave!’ The Prophet replied, ‘Saad was undergoing the *Fishaar* because he used to treat the people of his house and friends with ill-temper.’

It is narrated that the Prophet (S) has said, ‘Two traits should not be there in Muslims, the first is miserliness and the other bad temper.’ The Prophet said,’ O Abu Dharr! The sign of a *Mu'min* is that he is good mannered. An ill-tempered person is never a friend of Allah! A good mannered *Mu'min* is far better than the pious person who is rude to other fellow beings.

The Prophet of Islam(S) has said,’ Good manners are the pleasant behavior of a *Mu'min* towards others by way of warmth in looks and talk. He offers help to a brother *Mu'min* in times of need and proffers gifts on him that please him!’ The Prophet (S) added, ‘O Abu Dharr! A good and clean word is a sort of charity. If the word has benefited a *Mu'min*, the one who uttered it would get rewarded!’

The Prophet (S) said, ‘O Abu Dharr! Going to a mosque and sitting there is futile unless one does these three things: Offers prayers, recites the Qur’an and teaches or learns the things about religious rites.” O abu Dharr! Allah is not limited to time and space! He doesn’t need any house! Hypocrites are those who

say that He is everything while everything is the reflection of His Intrinsic Traits (*Sifaat al-Kamaliah*). One can only imagine His Greatness looking at things around oneself. The *Kaaba*, constructed out of bricks and mortar, which has neither gold nor precious stones embedded in it, is the place of prostration for the monarchs and the populace. The old and dilapidated mosques resembling the Kaabah are so much revered that even the rugged mats in them are better than the tributes of Caesar and Qaqaan. Of all the benefits derived from the mosques, the one most valuable is that they are the places for congregations of the Muslims. These are the places where people gather and exchange greetings and news about each other.'

The Benefits Of Congregational Prayer

It has appeared in the traditions that space should not be left vacant in the rows of the congregational prayers; it is said that the Satan occupies such vacant positions.

There is another version that one should not stand in prayer at a distance from the congregation because, if a sheep grazes at some distance from the flock, there will be the likelihood of the wolf devouring it.

It is authentically narrated from the Prophet of Islam (S), 'On the land there are rows of my followers like there are rows of the angels in the Firmament.' Then he (S) added, 'One genuflection (*Rakat*) in congregation is equivalent to the 24, each of which genuflection is superior in the eyes of Allah to continuous prayer offered over a period of forty years. The day when Allah will gather all the creatures from the Day of Creation to the end, He will protect from the hardships of the Day of Reckoning one who has taken even a step to go and join the Congregational Prayer. To such a person Allah will provide a place in the Heaven.

In another tradition the Prophet (S) says, 'Whoever offers the *Fajr* (morning) prayer in congregation and then recites the supplications till the sunrise, Allah will award him seventy echelons in the Heaven. Every echelon will be equal to the distance traversed by a fast steed in seventy years. One who offers the *Zuhr* prayer in congregation,, Allah will grant him fifty echelons in the Garden of Eden. The distance of each echelon will be equal to the distance traveled by a fast horse in a period of fifty years. One who offers the *Asr* prayer in congregation, his reward will be equal to freeing eight thousand slaves from the progeny of Prophet Ismail (as). A person who prays *Maghrib* in congregation, on his name will be entered reward equal to performing a Haj and Umrah. One who prays *Isha* in congregation, his reward will be equal to the prayers of *Lailat al Qadr*.'

It is narrated that the Prophet of Allah (S) told to his companions, 'Do you wish to be informed of an act that can obliterate the effects of your sins and the virtues enhance in the consideration of Allah?' They all said in unison, 'Ya Imam! Please do tell!' The Prophet (S) said, 'Perform ablution thoroughly, unmindful of coolness of weather or water, go for the prayer in the mosque and tarry there for the next prayer. One who goes to the mosque after doing the ablutions, prays in congregation and awaits arrival of more

people there for the next congregation, the angels pray for him, “O Allah! Forgive him! Be kind on him and shower Your Blessings on him!”

In another tradition it is mentioned, ‘When a person leads a congregation, with the consent of the gathering, he should maintain moderation during the prayer. He should recite verses keeping in mind the physical status of the group joining the prayer. Allah will reward him equal to the combined reward for the congregation and there will be no reduction in their rewards too.’ And said, ‘As many steps as a person takes to go and join a congregation in a mosque, seventy thousand virtues will be added to his record for every step taken. He will be raised seventy stages in his status. If a person dies while going for a congregation, Allah will appoint seventy thousand angels to visit him in the grave and remain with him and pray for him till he is raised from there.

It is said in another tradition, ‘A person who hears the *Adhaan* and comes out of the mosque for no valid reason, is a hypocrite.

It is authentically narrated from Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) that one must keep a good opinion about a person who prays in congregation five times a day. One should accept the witness of such a person.’

In another tradition the Prophet of Islam (S) said, ‘One who offers the *Fajr and Isha* prayers in congregation, will remain in Allah’s Care. If someone inflicts hardship on such a person, it will be like inflicting hardship on Allah. One who breaks a promise given to such a person, it will be like making a promise to Allah and breaking it.’

One congregational prayer is equivalent to twentyfive prayers offered individually.

Seek sustenance from Allah from the time of commencement of *Fajr* till sunrise. Its effect is more pronounced than traveling in search of trade.

O Abu Dharr! More knowledge is definitely superior than more prayer without knowledge. Without piety even if you pray to the extent that your back hunches with the exertion, even then it will not benefit you if there is no piety in your effort. Those who abstained from taboo things, adopted piety and abstained from worldly wishes, are certainly Allah’s friends and His select beings!

Piety and Abstinence

There are many stages of piety and abstinence.

The first stage is avoidance of disbelief and hypocrisy. These acts will be the cause for one burning in the Hellfire. One who doesn’t overcome disbelief and hypocrisy, cannot go any further on the path of piety. The prayer and supplication of such persons will be futile.

The second stage of piety is abstinence from all taboo things.

The third stage of piety is avoiding things that are not taboo but should better be avoided. These are termed the *makroohat*. A pious person who has reached the third stage will not be attracted to anything other than riveting his attention on the Creator, Allah. The first two stages of piety are the formative stages of a person perfect in piety.

The more a person excels in these two stages, the more acceptable he becomes in the consideration of the Creator. His acts reflect nearness to Allah, love for Him, understanding of the Creator and exemplary behaviour with fellow-creatures. It is said in the Holy Qur'an, "*Attaqullaha haqqa tuqatehi*". While doing commentary on this verse, Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) has said, "True piety is that men obey Allah and don't commit sins. They remember Allah every moment of their lives and don't ever forget Him! They thank him profusely for His Bounties and abstain from ungratefulness to Him!

Someone asked Amir'ul-Mu'mineen (as), "Ya Imam! Which is the best of acts?" He said, "Piety and abstinence!"

It is narrated from Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as), "Little action with piety is better than excessive and unpious deeds."

The Imam (as) also said, "Avoid things that are termed taboo by Allah! Strive in the way of prayer and obedience! Remember, effort at prayer without avoiding the taboo is always futile!"

Omer bin Sayeed asked Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) to give him some advice. The Imam (as) said, "Abstain from taboo acts! Adopt piety. Abstain from everything that Allah forbids you to do! Strive in prayer and Remembrance of Allah. Be sure that any effort at piety is futile if the taboo are not avoided!"

It is narrated from the Prophet of Allah (S) that protecting oneself from *Haram*, which is termed *wara*, is binding on Muslims. There is no reward for good deeds in the court of Allah without *wara*.

It is narrated from Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) that among all the prayers, *wara* is the most difficult. *Wara* means saving oneself from doing haram acts.

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) said, Only those are counted my companions who are more pious and pray to Allah with hope for Rewards from Him.

It is narrated in a tradition that a person should be termed a *Mu'min* who fulfils our commandments. He will have the desire in his heart to follow our instructions. One very important requirement to be met by such a person is that he is pious and abstinent. He should make piety his adornment that he craves for Allah's Bounties and with *wara* he saves himself from the guiles of our enemies. He avoids doubtful things, offers more prayer and dutifully observes the mandatory commandments.

The most pious is one who abstains from the taboo.

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) narrates that "It is necessary for Muslims to practice *Wara* by abstaining from

taboo and suspicious acts. *Wara* is a component of the Faith that we uphold and that is the basis of our prayer to Allah. We expect the same from our friends and Shi'as. Therefore, don't commit Haram acts and put us to the trouble of interceding on your behalf on the Day of Judgement! Intercession in such a situation will be very difficult!"

The Prophet of Islam (S) has said, "Allah has not given respectability to anyone who lives in ignorance and has never belittled anyone for his simplicity and affability."

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) has said: A person who has three traits will be awarded *Hur al-'Ayn* in the Heaven:

He controls his anger gets wounded fighting in the way of Allah and keeps calm.

Despite opportunities presenting themselves for making illegitimate (*Haram*) earnings, he abstains from it for the fear of Allah.

Authentic sources narrate from Imam Ar-Ridha' (as) that, "Allah sent a revelation to one of His Prophets (as) that 'when you stir out tomorrow morning, you must eat the first thing that comes in your view!'. Secondly, whatever you see, hide it away. Thirdly, whatever presents itself to you, accept it. Fourthly, Whatever comes before you, don't d'sappoint it! Fifthly, run away from the thing.' At dawn the Prophet stirred out. The first thing that met his eyes was a mountain. He wondered that Allah has ordered him to eat the first thing that he saw. He again thought that if he had no ability to do the thing, Allah would not have ordered him to do it.

With this thought he went nearer the mountain to eat it. The nearer he went, the smaller the mountain became. When he touched the mountain, it was the size of a morsel. The Prophet ate it and found it very delicious. The Prophet went a little further and noticed a tray made of gold. Since he was under instructions to hide it, the Prophet dug a small pit and buried the tray in the ground. He proceeded a little further.

When he turned back, he noticed the golden tray jutting out a little from the ground. He thought, I have fulfilled Allah's order about the tray and that he had no more concern about it. Travelling a little further, the Prophet found a bird flying. He also found a hawk hot in pursuit of the bird. The bird sought the Prophet's protection from the hawk. The Prophet therefore opened his sleeve for the bird to take refuge there. The hawk approached the Prophet and complained that it was trying to hunt the bird for quite sometime and that now he was depriving it of its food. The Prophet was under instructions not to disappoint anyone. Therefore he carved a portion of the flesh from his own loin and gave to the hawk.

The Prophet went a little further and noticed a putrifying animal carcass. Vermin were crawling out of the carcass. He was under instructions to run away from it. Therefore the Prophet moved away from there and proceeded towards his home. In the night he dreamed that Allah was saying, 'O my Prophet! You have done whatever I had instructed you to do! But you didn't realize what these things were in reality?'

The Prophet said, ‘Yes! I don’t know.’ Allah replied, ‘O my Prophet! The mountain that you saw was the human trait of anger. When a person gets angry, he goes out of control and forgets himself. But, if he controls his anger, then the result will be like the delicious morsel that you consumed! The golden tray was an example of good deeds. However much you hide them, Allah exposes them to view that you get respect in this world and Reward in the Hereafter. The example of the bird and the hawk is that when someone seeks help from you, don’t disappoint him. The example of the putrifying carcass is like back-biting and carrying of tales which must be avoided.’”

The Affability of The Imams (as)

Amir’ul-Mu’mineen (as) says that the Prophet used his own cloak as his bedding and the skin of sheep filled with the bark of datepalm as the pillow while sleeping. One night the cloak was folded double to make the bed more comfortable. At this the Prophet (S) said, ‘Because of sleeping on a softer bed I couldn’t rise early in the morning and was delayed for the prayer. In future don’t fold the cloak while making my bed!’

It is not a hidden fact that Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) faced untold hardships at the hands of the Prophet’s companions and of his own companions. But, despite the capability and authority he bore all this ungrudgingly. A case in point is the Battle of the Camel (*Jang al-Jaml*). In this battle his favorite companions were martyred. But after victory in the battle Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) pardoned the litigants. He had the complete authority to punish the combatants. He sent Um-ul-Mu’mineen Ayesha with due respect to Medina. He sent a retinue of seventy women to accompany her. He released Marwan bin Hakm despite all his impertinence. Abdallah bin Zubair was taken prisoner and released. He was a sworn enemy of Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) and had behaved very badly with the Imam.

Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) gave similar treatment to the *Khawarij of Nehrwan*. When the accursed Ibn al-Muljim mortally wounded Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as), he didn’t order immediate execution of the culprit. He instructed Imam Hasan (as) not to inflict more than one blow of the sword to the accused. He also asked him not to sever the ears and the nose of Ibn al-Muljim, as was the custom of dealing with such criminals those days. He told that he should be provided with the same food that the Imam partook of. During the time of Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) there were thousands of *Khawarij* who openly used to accuse him of infidelity and criticized him in several ways. But the Imam (as) forgave them and never took them to task.

It is narrated that one day Amir’ul-Mu’mineen (as) noticed a woman carrying a canister full of water on her shoulder. He took the canister from her and told her that he would help her carry it to her home. On the way the Imam (as) inquired about her affairs. The woman said, “My husband was deputed by Amir’ul-Mu’mineen (as) to the field of battle where he was martyred. Now I am left with my orphaned children. I am left with no means of maintaining them. I do small tasks with the neighbors and try to eke a living from what little I earn.”

The Imam (as) left the canister at the woman's house and returned home. The whole night he was worrying about her and the orphans. At dawn he took a sack full of flour, dates, meat and other eatables and headed for the woman's house. The companions said, "Ya Imam! WE shall carry the burden!" The Imam (as) said, "You can certainly carry the burden here. But who will carry my burden on the Day of Reckoning?" Carrying the sack, the Imam (as) knocked at the door of the woman. The woman opened the door and asked, "Who are you, please?"

The Imam (as) said, "I am the person who helped you carry your water canister yesterday! Now I have fetched some provisions for your children!" The woman said, "May Allah give you Reward for your kindness and may Allah also Judge between me and 'Ali (as)" The Imam said, "To earn a little more reward, I wish to dough some flour and make bread for your children. Either you take care of the children in that time or I shall tend the children and you bake the bread!" The woman said, "I can make better bread. If you take care of my children, I shall do that comfortably!"

Therefore the woman got busy with her work and the Imam (as) cooked some meat and also looked after the kids by giving them some dates to eat. When the meat was done, he fed small morsels to the children and said, "O kids! Forgive 'Ali for being the cause of depriving you of the love of your father!" When the dough was done, the woman asked, "Kind sir! Please light the oven that the dough is ready." Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) started warming the oven when a woman from the neighborhood visited. This woman knew Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) She told to the lady of the house, "What has happened to you?! You are asking the Amir'ul-Mu'mineen (as) do these small tasks for you!" Hearing this, the woman ran and fell at the feet of Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) and said, "Ya Amir'ul-Mu'mineen! With what face can I go infront of Allah! Please forgive me!" The Imam said, "To the contrary, I am ashamed! With what face I can approach Allah for the hardship I have caused to you and your children!"

It is narrated that one day Muhammad bin Hanafia (r.a.) and Imam Hasan (as) had some difference of opinion. Muhammad bin Hanafia(r.a.) wrote a letter to Imam Hasan (as), "Brother! Your and my father, is Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as). But your mother is Lady Fatima Zahra (as), the daughter of the Prophet (S). If the entire world turns to gold and comes in the possession of my mother, even then she cannot claim equality with Lady Fatima Zahra (as). As soon as you read this letter, please come to me and make up the difference we have between us! I am asking you this because you are much higher than me in the status; greetings!" When Imam Hasan (as) received the letter, he immediately went to Muhammad bin Hanafia(r.a.) and reconciled the difference with him. They never again had any differences between them.

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen (as) said: Three things elevate a person: performing ablution in cold weather, waiting in the mosque for the next congregation after joining one congregation, participating in every congregational prayer.

The Prophet of Allah (S) has said, "I shall ask 'Ali (as) to torch every person's house who missed a congregational prayer without any reason whatsoever!"

The Prophet (S) said, “O Abu Dharr! Adopt piety that no good deed is as useful as being pious.” Abu Dharr asked, “O Prophet (S)! What is piety?” The prophet (S) replied, “A person does good deeds, feeds the hungry, take care of the neighbor. But on the other hand commits sins. Piety is doing all the good deeds and not committing sins!”

The Prophet of Islam (S) said, “The most virtuous person is one who forgives the tyranny of the tyrant, he does good to a person who has harmed him, he is generous to one who caused him loss!” Then the Prophet (S) added, “*Muttaqi (pious)* is one who bears ill-treatment with calm and controls his anger in obedience to Allah! He is steadfast in Jihad!”

The Prophet of Allah (S) never illtreated his worst enemies. He always forgave them. One person came from the Prophet (S)’s rear and forcefully pulled his shawl. This sudden jolt caused a sprain in the neck of the Prophet (S). He (S) turned back and asked, “What is the matter?” The man said, “Give me some help!” The Prophet (S) immediately fulfilled his want.

After the conquest of Mecca the infidels were certain that the Prophet (S) would wreak revenge against them. To the contrary the Prophet (S) pardoned all of them and even gave help to many of them.

Amir’ul-Mu’mineen (as) was asked, “Who is the most powerful?” The Imam replied, “On who is the most affable and gentle?” Then he (as) was asked, “Who is the most affable?” The Imam replied, “One who can control his anger the best!”

There was no limit of affability and gentleness of the Last of the Prophets (S). He could pardon the cruel woman who chewed the liver of his martyred and adorable uncle, Hamza(r.a.). The Prophet (S) also gave the house of his mortal enemy the status of the place of amnesty in the city of Mecca. From the day of his proclamation of Prophethood till his death, the Prophet (S) faced untold hardships with great equanimity. The Intensity of these hardships was such that he had himself observed that no Prophets of the yore had faced such opposition in their times. But he (S) faced the hardships without any complaints.

Similar was the attitude of his Vicegerent, Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as). The hardships that he faced after the departure of the Prophet (S) were not bearable for any lesser mortal. He proved to the world that ‘Ali bin Abi Talib (as) was not only the most chivalrous but had the greatest quality of patience and equanimity in adversity. It was his ken that he bore patiently the hardships heaped on the beloved daughter of the Prophet (S). In the Battle of Jaml Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) achieved victory over his mortal enemies and magnanimously pardoned them. It was his greatness that he sent the vanquished lady to Medina in the care of seventy armed female guards. When his assassin was arrested, Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) ordered cool beverage to be served to him to set his wracked nerves at rest.

An authentic source quotes that one day Muawiya was holding court. Zarar bin Hamza was present there. Muawiya asked him to recount the qualities of Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as). Zarar said, “By Allah! ‘Ali (as) was extremely thoughtful and firm in the way of Allah! Whatever he said, used to be the truth! Whatever he ordered, always served the path of justice! From all his sides the sea of Allah’s Knowledge

used to flow! His thoughts used to be full of learning. His eyes used to be wet in the love of Allah and supplication to the Creator! He always wore coarse cloth and didn't relish delicious food. Amongst us, he used to be one of us! When we approached him, he would gently ask us to sit near him. But because of his indescribable aura, we were not able to speak to him!

When he smiled, his teeth shone like the pearls. He respected the persons with learning and showed love to the poor and needy. By Allah! I have seen him supplicate to Allah with such bathos as one bitten by a snake or a scorpion cries! I have heard that mostly he used to say during his supplications the following words, 'o world! Don't attract me! Go and mislead someone else! You cannot decoy me! I have divorced you thrice! O world! Your life is very short! You can't be faithful to anyone! It is futile to crave for you!'" Zarar had reached in his narrative up to this point when tears started flowing from Muawiya's eyes and all those present in the court too started crying.

Abu Dharr Ghiffari narrates that Ja'far bin Abi Talib(r.a.) bought a slave-girl from Abyssinia for four hundred Dirhams and presented to Amir'ul-Mu'mineen (as). But Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as), to please Lady Fatima Zahra (as), freed the slave-girl and gave away four hundred Dirhams in charity. At this juncture a Revelation came to the Prophet (S), "Of Prophet (S)! Tell 'Ali (as) that for the act of releasing the slave-girl we have gifted to him the Heaven and for giving four hundred Dirhams in charity we have given him the charge of the Hell. Whosoever 'Ali (as) wants to send to the Heaven, he has the right to do! Similarly, whoever he decides to consign to the Hell, he can do it!" Abu Dharr continued, "From that day Amir'ul-Mu'mineen (as) used to say that he was the *Qaseem al-Naar wa Jannat*, the Distributor of the Hell and the Heaven.

Similarly, the patience and forbearance that Lady Fatim (as) manifested after the departure of her father is exemplary. Books of history are full with the description of her forbearance. The breaking of the door of her house and the martyrdom of Mohsin through miscarriage was no less a calamity!

Imam Husayn (as) has set an example for the annals of human history by offering the supreme sacrifice in the cause of Allah. He saw his friends, relatives, brothers, nephews, sons getting martyred one after the other in the course of one day! On his own body there were innumerable wounds inflicted by spears, arrows and swords by the inhuman enemy! Under the dagger of the assassin the Imam (as) offered a prayer of thanks to his Creator, Allah!

The Affability of Imam Husayn (as)

It is narrated from Imam 'Ali bin al Husayn (as) that, "When I proceeded along with my revered father from Medina towards Kerbala, I noticed that he used to talk a lot about Prophet Yahya (as) wherever he halted or departed. One day he said, 'The world in the eyes of Allah is such a futile thing that the severed head of the prophet Yahya (as) was given to a fornicating woman of Bani Israel as a gift!' The affability of the Imam (as) was of such intensity that although his entire entourage was martyred in his presence and, despite the fact that all the angels, jinns and wild beasts were at his beck and call, he

never for once thought of wreaking revenge on his enemies! Nor did he pray to Allah cursing the enemy!

According to a narration, three hundred and sixty deep wounds were found on his martyred body. Another narration says that there were one hundred and eighty wounds inflicted with spears, and four thousand wounds from the arrows that were literally rained on his body! Even then the Imam didn't raise his hands to pray for the punishment of his cruel tormenters! He continued to make efforts to lead them to the path of righteousness till his last breath! With Allah's strength and the valor inherited from Haidar al-Karar, the Imam (as) dispatched many an infidel to Hell with his swordsmanship on that fateful day! In some narratives it is said that he killed one thousand nine hundred and fifty wretches! The number wounded by him is in addition to this number!"

It is narrated that whenever Imam Husayn (as) sat in a dark place in the night, his forehead and neck used to radiate so much that people used to notice his presence there.

The Affability of Imam Zain-ul-'Abidin (as) and Others

It is narrated that one day a crystal bowl slipped out of the hands of a slave girl of Imam Zain-ul-'Abidin (as) and shattered into pieces. The girl was shaking with fear. The Imam said, "Why are you so much afraid? Go, I have freed you in the name of Allah!"

One day a person used undesirable language against Imam Zain-ul-'Abidin (as). When he ignored the matter, the person reminded the Imam that he was the subject of the outburst. The Imam said, "I have forgiven you and overlook your mistake!"

It is narrated that Imam Zain-ul-'Abidin had freed one of his slaves and gave a small farm in his charge. One day the Imam (as) went to inspect the farm and found to his dismay that the man, owing to his neglect, had spoilt the crop. The Imam was upset and hit the person once with a whip as a measure of reprimand. The Imam was very unhappy over what he had done in anger. He went home and called the person. When the man reached there, he found the Imam (as) without his shirt and the whip in his hand. The man was scared that more punishment was on its way.

The Imam picked up the whip and gave to the man saying, "Today I have committed an excess against you! The way I whipped you, the same way you should whip me back!" The slave said, "O Master! I was thinking that you have called me to give me more punishment for my carelessness! Whatever punishment you mete out to me is justified!" The Imam again insisted that the slave should whip him back. The slave said, "May Allah protect me! I have forgiven you my *Qasas*!" When the Imam saw that the person was not budging an iota from his resolve, he told him, "All right! As a compensation I give you the ownership of the farm on which you are working!"

It is narrated that one day a few persons were invited for a meal at the place of Imam Zain-ul-'Abidin (as). The slave, who was detailed to serve the fare, was carrying a hot victual to the table. The tray in

which the slave was carrying the hot dish slipped off his hands and fell on the Imam's little baby who was crawling in the room. The burn was so severe that the child instantly expired. The slave was mortified with fear. The Imam said, "Don't be afraid! You have not done anything intentionally! Go, I have freed you!" Then the Imam partook the meal with his guests. After the guests left, the Imam (as) attended to the last rites of the dead child.

It is narrated from Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) that Allah sent a Revelation to the Prophet (S) that when He didn't give to a *Mu'min* anything that he wished for, there is always his best interest in the denial. The person must remain contented with what he has received. He should be equanimous in hardships. Thank Allah for His bounties.that he gets counted amongst the truthful!

In another tradition the Imam (as) narrates that whenever something happened, the Prophet (S) never said that it would be better if the incident happened in a different way! The Prophet would say, "A person who talked in this manner is never a *Mu'min* because this way he would be questioning the Will of Allah. A person who resigns himself to the will of Allah, I witness that his prayers will definitely be answered!"

It is narrated that someone asked Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as), "Ya Imam! What is the way of recognizing a true *Mu'min*?" The Imam (as) said, "From the way he submits to Allah's will; whether in difficulty or in ease!"

It is narrated from the Prophet of Islam (S) that Allah says, "O sons of Adam! Obey me and don't remind Me of things that are of advantage to you! I know them better than you do!"

It is narrated from Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as), "Affluence and respectability are in circulation! Wherever they find affability, they settle down and make a place for themselves!"

The Imam (as) said at another place that Allah sent a Revelation to the Prophet Dawood (as), "O Dawood! When a person trusts me, is righteous, and turns his face from the populace, despite all the hurdles from the earth and the sky, I shall create the way of freedom for him. When a creature trusts my other creatures, I know the condition of his heart. I shall extinguish his means in the sky and obliterate his passages on the earth. Then I shall not care in which wilderness he gets killed!"

The Imam said in another tradition: When a person pays attention to tasks that please Allah, Allah will get attracted towards him and provide to him the things he likes to have. Whoever seeks help from Allah to abstain from sins, Allah will help him. One who receives the attention of Allah, never worries whatever calamities confront him! Because of his piety and abstention he is in a group of people that is in the care of Allah. Therefore, Allah says,

﴿إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي مَقَامٍ أَمِينٍ﴾

Doubtless, the pious are in the place of peace! (44:51)

It is narrated from Amir'ul-Mu'mineen (as), "Instead of craving for the thing you wish to have, think of Prophet Musa (as) who saw the light and went in search of fire from his spouse and became the *Kaleem* and achieved Prophethood! The queen of Sheba, Bilqis, went on an outing and adopted Islam. The magicians in Pharaoh's court came there to give him respect and themselves came to get the respectability of True Faith!"

It is narrated from Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) that Prophet Musa bin Imran (as) addressed Allah, "O Lord! You send me out and leave behind my infant sons!" Allah replied, "O Musa! Are you not satisfied that I am their guardian and provider of sustenance!"

It is authentically narrated from Amir'ul-Mu'mineen (as) that Luqman (as) advised his son, "O son! A person who doesn't trust Allah in search of sustenance, he must pity himself. He should think that Allah has created him and gave him sustenance in three situations where there is no provider other than Allah. Therefore, in the fourth stage, none other than Him will provide the livelihood!"

The Prophet of Islam (S) said, "O Abu Dharr! If you wish to become the strongest person, then adopt patience, forbearance and affability!"

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) said, "A *Mu'min* is one who is contented both in plenty and in penury!"

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen (as) has said that man should thank Allah in all circumstances because His Bounties are unaccountable.

Luqman (as) advised his son, "O son! There are four stages of the human life. Three stages are such that a person has none to help him. Allah Himself provides the person the sustenance during these stages. He saves the person from the heat and the cold in the mother's womb. In the second stage when the person emerges from the mother's womb, then Allah arranges the streams of milk for him. Then Allah creates the love of the child in the hearts of the parents that they strive hard to maintain him. When the same person grows into a full-fledged man, why should he have any doubts Allah's kindness! He should now believe that Allah helped him when he was totally dependent and even at present He is more kind and loving than his own parents!"

Trusting On Allah

It is narrated from Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) that Satan claims that all the people are in his control excepting five types whom he cannot influence:

Those who honestly trust in Allah for their tasks.

Those who are busy supplicating to Allah day and night.

The *Mu'mins*, who desire for other *Mu'mins* what they wish for themselves.

Those who do not wail and cry in times of difficulty.

Those who remain contented with whatever they earn and don't complain of scarcities.

It is narrated by an authentic source from Imam Ar-Ridha' (as) that Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) inquired about a companion who was not present at his meeting. The companions said, 'Ya Imam! He is unwell!' Therefore, the Imam went to the house of the person to inquire about his health. When he saw him, the Imam (as) noticed that the person was about to expire. The Imam sat near his head and said, 'Have faith in Allah!' The man replied, 'I have strong faith in Allah, but I am extremely worried about my sons. They are the reason for my ailment!' The Imam (as) said, 'The One whom you ask to forgive your sins and enhance your virtues, depend on Him in the matter of your sons too!

The Prophet of Allah (S) has said, 'On the Night of Meraj, while I was passing through the *Sidrat al Muntaha* and looked at its branches and leaves, I noticed that from some leaves udders were hanging and milk was oozing from them. Honey dripped from some leaves and oil from some others. From certain other leaves flour and fruits of different types were falling to the ground. From some branches rich raiments were hanging. I thought from where all these things are coming. At that time Jibrael was not with me that I could ask him for an explanation for these things. I was, at that time, beyond the jurisdiction where Jibrael was permitted to go!. Then Allah communicated to me, 'O Muhammad (S)! I have grown these things at the elevated place with the purpose of providing sustenance to your children! Tell the fathers of the sons that they should not be disheartened at their penury. As I have given birth to them, so shall I provide them their sustenance!

The Prophet of Allah (S) has narrated that Allah has said, "One who has no faith in My Will and doesn't believe in what I have ordained, he should look for some other sustainer! Whatever is written in your fate in the world, shall come to you however weak you might be! Whatever hardship is ordained for you, you shall have to face it even if you are the strongest person in the world. If you give up hope of getting back whatever you have lost, you will remain happy thereafter.' One who is contented with whatever sustenance Allah has provided, he will always be happy."

Someone asked Imam Ar-Ridha' (as) about Contentment with Allah's Wish (*Tawakkal ba khuda*), The Imam (as) replied, "*Tawakkal* means the conviction that when Allah is with us, there is no reason to be afraid of anything else! We remain contented in all circumstances—whether there are comforts of life available to us or we are faced with hardships! Depending on others than Allah even for small things is termed *Shirk al-khafi* or minor hypocrisy!"

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) said: Shifting a ring from one finger to another as a remembrancer for some task to be done too is a *Shirk-Khafi*. This is so because the person depends on the finger to keep him reminded of his task.

It is authentically narrated that the Prophet of Islam (S) asked Jibrael (as) the meaning of *Reliance upon Almighty*. Jibrael (as) said, “This means that men should know that they don’t have absolute control over the profit or loss in their matters. They can neither give anything nor can they stop anything from changing hands. Therefore, they should stop having expectations about things happening to them. One who does this, will do everything depending on Allah’s Will. He will not expect anything from anybody else. He will be afraid of none else than Allah. Such a person will never envy others for their possessions. With a thankful heart he will receive whatever he gets from Allah. He will have the conviction that whatever Allah does for him, is for his best!”

Someone asked Bahloul about his condition. Bahloul replied, “Ask him about his condition, on whose orders the universe is rotating! On His orders the earth will stand still and whatever is happening on the earth and the firmament is on His express orders!” People said that Bahloul has turned an infidel. Bahloul said, “Listen! The day when I acquired senses, I have entrusted my will to the Creator! I consider His will as mine! Therefore whatever He is doing with His Wish, it is my wish too! But everything that happens is only with His Wish! Whatever Allah has written in a person’s fate, he will certainly get it! However much a person runs away from the sustenance destined for him, he will get it!”

Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) has said, “In the view of Allah, forbearance is like the head of a person and the faith is like his body. If there is no forbearance (*Sabr*) in a person, then the faith will remain as a lifeless body!”

Abiding By Allah’s Will

It is authentically narrated from Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) that whosoever bears with equanimity the hardships and travails of the world will certainly go to the Heaven. One who pursues his carnal desires in the world, will end up in the Hell

It is narrated from Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq that when a *Mu’min* is put into the grave, then his prayers (*namaz*) would be on his right, the *Zakat* that he distributed on his left, the good that he had done for his parents and relations near his head and his forbearance on his side. The two angels, *Munkir and Nakeer*, will visit the grave to question the person at this juncture. At this point forbearance addresses its companions *namaz, Zakat and good deeds thus*, ‘Now is the time to come to the help of our master! If you cannot do it, I shall help him!’

It is narrated from the Prophet of Islam (S), “A time will come when power and pelf will be impossible to achieve without blood-shed. Affluence will not be possible without robbing others and practicing parsimony. Mutual friendship among people will not develop except by abandoning the faith and following the dictates of vile desires. Those of you who remain contented with penury in those times despite having the means of getting rich through foul means, who are troubled by others for following the right path. Allah will Award to such persons reward of fifty truthful ones who bore witness on my behalf!”

Types of Forbearance

It is narrated from the Prophet of Islam that there are three types of forbearance:

Forbearance on the toil undergone in Allah's obedience: One who exercises forbearance in obedience to Allah, Allah will award him six hundred echelons. The distance between two consecutive echelons will be equal to distance between the ends of the earth and the sky.

Forbearance in avoidance of committing sins: One who exercises forbearance in avoiding sins, Allah will award him nine hundred echelons and the distance between two consecutive echelons will be equal to the distance between the earth and the Firmament.

Forbearance in bearing hardships and calamities: One who bears hardships Allah will award three hundred echelons. The distance between two echelons will be equal to the distance between the earth and the sky.

It is narrated from Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) that when a *Mu'min* is afflicted with some difficulty and bears it with equanimity, Allah will give him reward equal to that earmarked for a thousand martyrs.

It is authentically narrated from the Prophet of Allah (S) that on the Day of Judgement when Allah will gather all the creatures at one place, then a herald would announce on His behalf. Where are those persons who exercised patience and forbearance! One group of people will come forward. The angels will welcome them and ask them, "In what circumstance did you exercise forbearance?" They will reply, "We exercised forbearance in bearing the hardships in praying to Allah, we bore hardship in avoiding sins!" Then a herald will announce on behalf of Allah, "These creatures are truthful! Let them enter the Heaven in large numbers!"

It is narrated from Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) that Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) had lot of affection for his slave Qanbar (r.a.). When Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) went out, Qanbar (r.a.) used to carry a sword in his hand as a measure of protection for his master. One moonlit night Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) emerged from his residence. On the way he noticed that Qanbar (r.a.), as usual, was following him. He asked, "Qanbar! Why have you come?" Qanbar (r.a.) said, "I have come, lest someone harm you!" Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) asked him, "Do you intend to protect me from the creatures of the other world or from those on the earth?" Qanbar said, "I can protect you from the creatures that are on the earth!" Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali said, "Unless Allah wills, none on this earth can harm me. Go back home in peace!" Qanbar (r.a.) went back home as ordered by his master.

Imam Ar-Ridha' (as) has said, "*Iman* (Faith) is one stage more superior than *Islam* (bearing witness to Allah and His Prophet). *Taqwa* (piety) is one stage superior to *Iman*. For the progeny of Adam, Allah has not gifted anything more valuable than *Yaqeen* (firm belief)." Someone asked, "What is *Yaqeen* or firm belief?" The Imam (as) said, "Dependence on Allah, implicitly obeying Him, exercising forbearance on

what He has Willed for the person and entrusting everything to Allah!”

The tradition narrated by Abu Dharr (r.a.), “Four traits are found only in *Mu’mins*. 1. Quietness: This is the first form of prayer to Allah. 2. Politeness (*Tawazoh*); that is, humility in front of Allah or showing politeness to the creatures of Allah for His sake! 3. In all circumstances remembering and talking about Allah. 4. Bearing with equanimity the paucity of means.

O Abu Dharr! Strive for good deeds and virtuous acts, even if you fail to achieve them! This is better than getting your name listed amongst those who are negligent.

O Abu Dharr! One who keeps control over what lies between the loins and what lies between the jaws from *haram* (illegitimate) acts, will enter the Heaven.

Abu Dharr asked, “Ya Imam! Do we have to account for what we utter from our tongues?” He (as) replied: O Abu Dharr! What else will take people to the Hell except the words uttered by them through their tongues! You will be safe till you open your mouth! If you uttered a good thing, you will be rewarded. To the contrary, if you uttered something foul, the record for your punishment will be updated!

O Abu Dharr! When a person speaks in a meeting and makes them laugh, he will be taken to a stage in the Hell the distance of which will be equal to the distance between the earth and the sky.

O Abu Dharr! Death and the Hell is for one who talks falsehoods! For him who talks to make others laugh is the Hell. One who kept quiet got his deliverance! Whenever you talk, you must tell the truth. Don’t utter falsehoods from your mouth! Abu Dharr asked, “What is the penitence for the person who has been lying purposefully?” He (as) replied: Repenting over the past untruthfulness and praying five times regularly. This will wash away his sins. A truthful person never misses his mandatory prayers and always abstains from taboo acts. A person, during his prayers, tells ten times to Allah. ‘We pray to You and seek only Your succor

Lies Condemned

It is evident from innumerable traditions that a lie, whether told in jest or in seriousness, is taboo act. But in certain special circumstances telling the bare truth is not good. Similarly there are circumstances when one must perforce uphold a lie. For example, telling a truth is *haram* when there is the likelihood of harming a *Mu’min* through its utterance. Conversely, if one has to tell a lie to save the life of a *Mu’min*, he must do it. Suppose a *Mu’min* has kept with someone an amount in trust. If a tyrant claims that amount from the person who has been entrusted the safekeeping, then the person can go to the extreme extent of making a false oath that the money is not with him.

It is narrated from Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) that when a person speaks the truth, his acts too will be pure and popular.

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen (as) was once sitting under a dilapidated, leaning wall giving a sermon. One person said, "The wall near which you are seated is dilapidated. It might collapse." The Imam (as) replied, "Death is the keeper!" When the Imam (as) rose and moved from there, the wall collapsed.

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) said, "The first to bear witness of the truthful person will be Allah! Then He will bear witness that what He says is always the truth!"

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen (as) says: The adornment of words is the truth. Tell the truth. The truthful persons are remembered by Allah with the sobriquet of *As-Sadiqeen*! He is always with the truthful. Save yourselves from falsehood. Falsehood takes one away from the Faith. The truthful is at the threshold of deliverance. The one who lies will be in the abyss of shame and destruction.

It is narrated from Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) that Allah has provided locks for sins and hypocrisy is their key. Telling lies is worst than consuming alcohols.

Then the Imam (as) said, "Telling lies is tantamount to spoiling one's faith!"

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) says that telling lies about Allah and his Prophet (S) is a major sin.

It is narrated from Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) that the first to bear witness about a liar will be Allah. Then will follow the witness of the two angels who keep a record of the words and deeds of every person. In the end the person himself will confess to his lying.

It is narrated from Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) that Prophet 'Isa (as) said, "The face of a liar will lose its radiance and good looks!"

Contentment and Opulence

The Prophet of Allah (S) said, "O Abu Dharr! Adopt contentment that you raise yourself in the consideration of Allah!" Abu Dharr asked, "Ya Imam! What is *Ghina* or contentment?" The Prophet (S) replied, "The contented person is one who has two square meals for the day and the night!"

The Prophet of Allah (S) said, "O Abu Dharr! One who is happy with the frugal sustenance provided by Allah, Allah will be satisfied with his small acts!"

Abstain From Untruths

The Prophet of Allah (S) has said, "One who protects that which lies between his two jaws and that which is between the two loins, Allah will give him a place in the Heaven!" Protection of the tongue consists in abstaining from telling lies. There should be truth both in the words and deeds of a person.

A man who prays regularly, atleast repeats the following words ten times a day: "We only worship You and seek help only from You." As a matter of fact they are not telling the truth because whatever they do,

they seek help of persons other than Allah. When they perpetuate any wrong acts, they register the help of the Satan.

Allah curses the liars and befriends the truthful. He exhorts people to join ranks with the truthful. Telling lies is not only an abhorrent act but is also a major sin. Telling a lie even in jest is a sin. But certain times telling lies is permissible. If one can save an innocent person from execution by telling a lie is considered a noble act. In a similar situation, if someone tells the truth and becomes the cause of the killing of an innocent person, then he has committed a major sin. If a rapprochement can be arranged between two litigant *Mu'mins* by telling a lie, it can be done.

The Prophet of Islam (S) has said that telling lies in three circumstances is not a sin: In the war breaking a covenant with the enemy, lying to one's own spouse for the purpose of peace at home and trying to establish amicability between two friends who have been fighting.

The Prophet (S) also said: The biographies of kings (*Shah-nameh*), tales of the Fire Worshipers, stories of Laila Majnoon etc, although true, should not be read or retold.

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) narrates from the Prophet of Islam (S) that 'talking of 'Ali (as) is prayer. This, because talking of him is like talking of me; and talking of me is like talking of Allah. And talking of Allah is prayer in itself.'

Someone asked Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq about the stories told by the mendicants. The Imam (as) replied, "When one gives ears to the teller of the tales, he is in a way worshipping him! If the person is talking about Allah, then it will be the worship of Allah. If the person talks about the Satan or false things, then the listener would be worshipping the Satan!"

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