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O All□h, Cure Every Sick Person

أَللّٰهُمَّ اشْفِ كُلَّ مَرِيْضٍ

Meaning

The Arabic word *mar□d* literally means 'one who is sick or disordered.' It originates from its infinitive :'*marad*' which means

الْخُرُوْجُ عَنِ الاِعْتِدَالِ الْخَاصِّ بِالإِنْسَانِ وَذٰلِكَ ضَرْبَان : الأَوَّلُ مَرَضٌ جِسْمِيٌّ...وَالثَّانِي عِبَارَةٌ عَنِ الرَّذَائِلِ...

to exit from the state of the equilibrium particular to the human being1; and this is of two kinds: (1)..." bodily sickness... (2) vices."2

Therefore, in reality, marad is another extension (*misd□q*) of the state of disequilibrium (*fas□d*), and thus .can be discussed under the previous verse of the supplication too

Extensions of Illnesses

In the Holy Qur'□n and traditions the word "*marad*" (illness) has been mostly employed to denote one of :the abovementioned kinds of human disequilibria. Look at the following

:The Holy Qur'□n [26:80] narrating the words of Prophet Ibr□h□m (as), says .1

وَإِذَا مَرِضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِ

"And when I turn ill, He (alone) cures me"

Two points should be noted here:

i) The above verse does not imply that the Prophet (s) would not seek the natural means for the cure. What the verse means is that the Principal Curer (*al-Shāfī*) is only Allāh. This is because the existence, subsistence, and effect of the agent of cure is entirely by His Will and Permission.

ii) Apparently what is meant in this verse is the physical extension of illness, for Prophets of Allāh (as) are free from spiritual illnesses. They are infallible in their thoughts, words and actions. And that enables them to be propagators and Messengers of God.

2. The Holy Qur'ān [2:8-10] describing the hypocrites says:

فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللَّهُ مَرَضاً

"In their hearts is a sickness; and Allāh increased their sickness"

The sickness referred to here is hypocrisy, which concerns the heart and not the body. Therefore marad is not limited to physical ailments.

3. Prophet 'Īsā (as), is reported to have said:

...مَا مَرِضَ قَلْبٌ بِأَشَدَّ مِنَ الْقَسْوَةِ...

"...The heart did not fall sick with [a malady] more severe than the hardness of the heart."[3]

4. Imām 'Alī (as) is reported to have said:

لاَ مَرَضَ أَضْنَى مِنْ قِلَّةِ الْعَقْلِ.

"There is no malady more debilitating that the paucity of intellect."[4]

Here the 'silliness' or simplicity of a person is considered to be another kind of sickness. Therefore

.marad can also employed to denote the dull-wittedness of a person

.5 And he (as) is also reported to have said:

أَلْحِقْدُ خُلْقٌ دَنِيٌّ وَمَرَضٌ مُرْدٍ.

Resentment (*al-hiqd*) is a degenerate characteristic and a destructive illness."5"

Therefore, in short, marad is not limited to physical illness, but covers mental and spiritual illnesses as well.

Supplication for a Sublime Purpose

Health, like any other Divine blessing is meant for a sublime purpose. To underutilize it would be tantamount to unthankfulness on the part of the human being. Our supplications for the betterment of ourselves and others should be purposeful: we must pray for health as a means to affect equilibrium in our souls. Were we to pray for health for the sake of sheer material enjoyment, we would be unthankful to Almighty Allāh, since the practical reality of shukr is to employ the Divine Blessing for the purpose it was created.

Imām al-Sajjād in his well-known prayer manual al-Sahīfat al-Sajjādiyyah prays:

فَمَا أَدْرِي يَا إِلٰهِي أَيُّ الْحَالَيْنِ أَحَقُّ بِالشُّكْرِ لَكَ. وَأَيُّ الْوَقْتَيْنِ أَوْلَى بِالْحَمْدِ لَكَ.
أَوَقْتُ الصِّحَّةِ الَّتِي هَنَأْتَنِي فِيهَا طَيِّبَاتِ رِزْقِكَ وَنَشَّطْتَنِي بِهَا لِابْتِغَاءِ مَرْضَاتِكَ
وَفَضْلِكَ وَقَوَّيْتَنِي مَعَهَا عَلَى مَا وَفَّقْتَنِي لَهُ مِنْ طَاعَتِكَ...

For I know not, my God, which of the two states deserves more my thanking You, And which of the two" times is more worthy for my praise of You: the time of health, within which You Make me delight in the agreeable things of Your provision, through which You Give me the joy to seek the means to Your Good Pleasure and Bounty, And by which You Strengthen me for the acts of obedience which You Have Given me success to accomplish..."6

Here the Imām (as) teaches us that health should be sought to achieve Allāh's pleasure (*libtighā'i mardātika*) and to perform acts of His obedience (*waffaqtanā lahu min tā'atika*). Therefore, when we seek the well-being of every member of the human race, we should do so because we would like the means of their perfection to be facilitated and not because they can regain their health to continue more damage to themselves or others.

The delight of our eyes, Sayyid Rad□ al-D□n bin T□w□s in section 7 of his *Fal□h al-S□'il*, where he enumerates the characteristics of a supplicant, says:

مِنْ صِفَاتِ الدَّاعِي: أَنْ يُرِيْدَ بِالدُّعاءِ مُرَادَ اللّٰهِ جَلَّ جَلاَلَهُ بِهِ، وَيُقَدِّمُ إِرَادَةَ اللّٰهِ عَلَى إِرَادَةِ نَفْسِهِ. وَمِثَالُهُ: إِذَا مَرِضَ لاَ يَكُوْنُ قَصْدُهُ مِنَ الدُّعَاءِ بِعَافِيَتِهِ مُجَرَّدَ بَقَاءِهِ لِشَهْوَتِهِ وَعَاجِلَتِهِ وَدُنْيَاهُ الشَّاغِلَة عنْ آخِرَتِهِ، بَلْ لِيَبْقَى عَلى مُرَادِ اللّٰهِ جَلَّ جَلاَلَهُ فِيْ طَاعَتِهِ.

And among the characteristics of a supplicant is that he should seek through his supplication what All□h" wants of Him and prefer All□h's desire over his. For example: when he becomes ill, the purpose behind his supplication for his well-being should not be merely subsistence for the sake of lustful desire, temporal enjoyment and worldly existence that disengages him from his Hereafter, rather it should be for the purpose of living according to what All□h wants, which is His Obedience."7

Beyond the Immediate Causes of Illnesses!

Although it is true to say that we must seek the natural causes of the various maladies to eradicate them, our aspiration should be loftier then to merely search for the immediate causes. Physicians categorize "illness prevention" into four stages:

1. Primordial prevention

The Holy Qur'□n says:

□ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ لاَ يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنفُسِهِمْ... □

All□h does not change what is with a community save that they change what is in them."8"

Primordial prevention is to avoid the emergence and establishment of social, economic and cultural patterns of living which are known to elevate risk of disease.

This is certainly the most important of all kinds of prevention. The human being is taught that his lifestyle can indeed determine what kind of future awaits him. To establish those social, economic and cultural patterns that would secure the health of the human being largely depends on the validity of the political body that governs the human society. Only an Islamic government subservient to the principles of Islam, can create a physically healthy environment. This is because the social, economic and cultural patterns

would be defined by God, Who Created the human being for prosperity in both this world and the Hereafter, and Knows what laws would lead him to this prosperity. There is an interesting anecdote :(narrated about the situation prevailing in the Muslim community during the time of the Holy Prophet (s

During the Holy Prophet (s)'s time, the king of Egypt sent a skilled doctor to the Holy Prophet (s). He lived one year with the Arabs but found no one approaching him for treatment. He therefore came to the Prophet (s) to complain. The Holy Prophet (s) explained to him that the reason behind the situation was that his people had adopted a path of moderation: they did not eat unless their appetite for food overcame them, and (ii) They stopped eating while they still had some appetite for food left. Hearing this, the doctor said: 'This is the cause of [their] health.' Then he kissed the earth, and left.9

:In other words, they obeyed the Holy Prophet (s) and applied his well-known saying

كُلْ وَاَنْتَ تَشْتَهِي وَاَمْسِكْ وَاَنْتَ تَشْتَهِي.

Eat while you have the appetite, and refrain from eating while you still have the appetite."10"

If the laws of Almighty All□h prevailed in the environment they would deter the human being from engaging in sin, which leads to a substantial number, if not most of the prevalent illnesses. In a society where capitalism and consumerism prevail, what should one expect save the culture of overindulgence? In an environment where the woman is used as an item of advertisement and sale, what can one anticipate save sexual perversion? And these two major factors contribute to a great number of .illnesses. In such a situation primordial prevention is a far fetched phenomenon

One must understand that the fundamental unit for the realization of primordial prevention, is the government. It is the ideology of the ruling power that determines what kind of society it would like and .what kind of lifestyle it encourages

2. Primary Prevention

:The Holy Qur'□n says

وَ لاَ تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلى التَّهْلُكَةِ

Do not lay yourself into destruction."11"

Primary prevention is action taken prior to the onset of disease, which removes the possibility that a disease will ever occur. For example the preventive measures taken to avoid diseases such as heart

attacks, high cholesterol levels, ulcers, etc. is called primary prevention. Often these simple measures .are not taken seriously, which leads us to the second stage of prevention i.e. secondary prevention

In primary prevention, the human being refrains from the causes that would amplify the vulnerability of illness. Abstinence [abstaining from sex beyond marriage], consuming low cholesterol foods, nominal sugar, etc. are known to be kinds of primary prevention. This kind of prevention is also difficult for those suffering from spiritual maladies such as avarice, overindulgence, etc. The following traditions :emphasize the important role of denial before sickness

:i) Im□m Am□ru'l Mu'min□n (as) is reported to have said

الْمَعِدَةُ بَيْتُ الأَدْوَاءِ، وَالْحِمْيَةُ رَأْسُ الدَّوَاءِ. لاَ صِحَّةَ مَعَ النَّهَمِ.

The stomach is the house of maladies, and denial is the principal medicine, and there is no well-being" in greed."[12]

:ii) And he (as) has also said

صَلاَحُ الْبَدَنِ الْحِمْيَةُ.

In denial is the equilibrium of the body."[13]

:iii) Im□m Ab□ Ibr□h□m al-Kazim (as) is reported to have said

لَيسَ الْحِمْيَةُ أَنْ تَدَعَ الشَّيْءَ أَصْلاً، وَلُكِنَّ الْحِمْيَةَ أَنْ تَأْكُلَ مِنَ الشَّيْءِ وَتُخَفِّفَ.

Denial does not mean that you avoid a thing totally, and do not eat it; rather, it means that you have a" light consumption of something."[14]

:iv) And Im□m Abu'l Hasan al-Rid□ (as) is reported to have said

رَأْسُ الحِمْيَةِ الرِّفْقُ بِالْبَدَنِ.

The peak of denial is to treat the body gently and with friendliness."[15]

To deal with the body in a friendly manner does not mean to eat whatever you want. This wise dictum of Im□m al-Rid□ (as) calls us to identify those things that the body needs and provide it with the same. Overindulgence in eating would therefore be contrary to what our body requires. Although it would give utter pleasure to the taste buds of our tongues, but its consequences are detrimental to our bodies. Uncontrolled sexual activity is the same. The utmost pleasure can be sought from these acts, but the .consequences are harmful for the body

There is a beautiful poem attributed to Avicenna where he considers the secret of medicine in the :moderation of food consumption and sex

:He says

إِسْمَعْ جَمِيْعَ وَصِيَّتِيْ وَاعْمَلْ بِهَا فَالطِّبُّ مَجْمُوْعٌ بِنَظْمِ كَلاَمِي

اَقْلِلْ جِمَاعَكَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتَ فَإِنَّهُ مَاءُ الْحَيَاةِ تَصُبُّ فِي الأَرْحَامِ

وَاجْعَلْ غَذاءَكَ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ مرّةً وَاحْذَرْ طَعَاماً قَبْلَ هَضْمِ طَعَامِ

Listen to all what I have to advise, and act accordingly
For medicine is gathered in the poetry of my word
Lessen your copulation as much as you can
For verily it is the water of life that is placed in the wombs
And make your meal once a day
And beware of eating before the digestion of what you have eaten

3. Secondary Prevention

:Im□m Ab□ ‘Abdill□h al-Sadiq (as) is reported to have said

إنَّ نَبيًّا مِنَ الأَنْبِيَاء مَرِضَ فَقَالَ: لاَ أَتَدَاوَى حَتىّ يَكُوْنُ الّذِيْ أَمْرَضَنِي هُوَ الَّذِي يَشْفِيْنِي. فَأَوْحَى اللّهُ تَعَالى إِلَيْهِ: لاَ أَشْفِيْكَ حَتىّ تَتَدَاوَى، فَإِنَّ الشّفَاء مِنّي.

One of the Prophets [once] got ill, whereupon he said: I shall not cure myself until He Who made me“ sick treats me Himself. Thereupon Almighty All□h revealed unto him: I will not cure you, until you treat yourself, for surely ‘cure’ comes from Me.”16

Secondary prevention is action, which halts the progress of a disease at its incipient stage and prevents complications. Treating diseases with medicines constitutes secondary prevention. The health programs

.initiated by governments are usually at the level of secondary prevention

Islam does not encourage one to immediately seek medicine for illnesses that only need time to disappear. As long as the human being can bear the difficulty and pain of a certain sickness like mild flu, he or she is encouraged to do so. To immediately resort to medicine is not a wise course. Instead, one is highly advised to seek the natural foods that have a medicinal effect on the body. Yes, there are illnesses, which should be controlled at their incipient phases. If one is in doubt or detects such an .illness, he should immediately seek medical treatment so that the situation does not get worse

4. Tertiary Prevention

Tertiary prevention is a preventive measure used late in the stage of the disease. It includes limiting .disabilities and carrying out rehabilitation programs

?Can Illness Be Totally Avoided

With scientific advancement, the causes of many illnesses and their remedies have been discovered. But can we limit the causes of the various illnesses to what has been discovered so far? Both the scientist and the philosopher will respond in the negative. This is because there is always a probability of there being other unknown causes of certain maladies. The scientist has no right to limit the causes of a certain malady to what the latest empirical data suggests, since there is always a chance of discovery of other causes to different maladies. The scientist can also not claim that no psychological or spiritual factor is responsible for physical illnesses, for he does not comprehend the link between the body and .the soul, and cannot transcend the senses

Imم m al-Sم diq (as) was once asked by an atheist as to why is it deserving for a small child to suffer from ailments and sicknesses while he is sinless and has committed no crime. The Imم m (as) :responded saying

إِنَّ الْمَرَضَ عَلَى وُجُوهٍ شَتَّى: مَرَضُ بَلْوَى، وَمَرَضُ الْعُقُوبَةِ، وَمَرَضٌ جُعِلَ عَلَيْهِ الْفَنَاءُ، وَأَنْتَ تَزْعُمُ أَنَّ ذٰلِكَ مِنْ أَغْذِيَةٍ رَدِيئَةٍ وَأَشْرِبَةٍ وَبِيئَةٍ أَوْ مِنْ عِلَّةٍ كَانَتْ بِأُمِّهِ، وَتَزْعُمُ أَنَّ مَنْ أَحْسَنَ السِّيَاسَةَ لِبَدَنِهِ وَأَجْمَلَ النَّظَرَ فِي أَحْوَالِ نَفْسِهِ وَعَرَفَ الضَّارَّ مِمَّا يَأْكُلُ مِنَ النَّافِعِ لَمْ يَمْرَضْ، وَتَمِيلُ فِي قَوْلِكَ إِلى مَنْ يَزْعُمُ أَنَّهُ لاَ يَكُونُ الْمَرَضُ وَالْمَوْتُ إِلاَّ مِنَ الْمَطْعَمِ وَالْمَشْرَبِ، قَدْ مَاتَ أَرَسْطَاطَالِيسُ مُعَلِّمُ الأَطِبَّاءِ، وَأَفْلاَطُونُ رَئِيسُ الْحُكَمَاءِ، وَجَالِينُوسُ شَاخَ وَدَقَّ بَصَرُهُ وَمَا دَفَعَ الْمَوْتَ حِينَ نَزَلَ بِسَاحَتِهِ.

Indeed, illnesses are of various kinds: the illness of Divine tribulation, the illness of Divine punishment," and illness as a means for death. You think that the reason behind the illness is the partaking of rotten food and contaminated water, or a malady that was present in the child's mother. You think that whosoever manages his body properly and takes good care of the conditions of his spirit and distinguishes the harmful foods from the advantageous will never fall sick? Your thinking resembles one who imagines that sickness and death do not occur save through food and drink; surely Aristotle, the mentor of physicians and Plato, the chief of the philosophers died; and Galen became old and his eyesight failed, and he could not repel death when it came to him."[17]

Therefore even if one puts great efforts in observing hygiene as well as primary prevention, he cannot guarantee himself immunity from illness.

Illness – a Means of Self-Purification

The apparent form of physical illness may seem to be affliction and trouble, but its kernel manifests nothing but love, mercy and attention. In our traditions, illness for a believer plays the role of a detergent of the human soul that purifies it from the burden of sins so that the soul can qualify to be receptive and perhaps start the journey to Almighty Allah.

Following are some of the many traditions that clearly show how illnesses can be an advantage to the believing souls:

1. The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said:

إنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيَكُوْنُ لَهُ الدَّرَجَة عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ لاَ يَبْلُغُهَا بعَمَلِهِ يُبْتَلى ببَلاَءٍ فِي جِسْمِهِ فَيَبْلُغُهَا بذٰلِكَ.

Indeed a person may have a station near God which he could not attain only by his actions, (and thus) he would be afflicted by an ailment in his body by which he would attain the station."[18]

2. Imam 'Ali (as) is reported to have said:

إذَا ابْتَلى اللّٰهُ عَبْدًا أَسْقَطَ عَنْهُ مِنَ الذُّنُوْبِ بِقَدْرِ عِلَّتِهِ.

When Allah afflicts His servant with a calamity, He reduces his sins in accordance with his malady."[19]

3. Imam al-Rida (as) is reported to have said:

الْمَرَضُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِ تَطْهِيْرٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ، وَلِلْكَافِرِ تَعْذِيْبٌ وَلَعْنَةٌ...

Sickness is purification and mercy for the believer and a punishment and curse for the disbeliever…”20“

:Im□m al-S□diq (as) is reported to have said .4

صُدَاعُ لَيْلَةٍ تَحُطُّ كُلَّ خَطِيْئَةٍ إِلاَّ الْكَبَائِر.

A night’s headache removes all of one’s sins, save the major ones.”21“

Mediation by those who possess Existential Influence

The human being has an ability to soar to such heights that he can influence the world of contingent existence (*takw□n*) by the permission of Almighty All□h. As for the Prophets of Almighty All□h, this is a :(fact that one can observe in different places of the Holy Qur’□n. An example is that of Prophet ‘□s□ (as

:Almighty All□h says

﴿ وَإِذْ تَخْلُقُ مِنْ الطِّين كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ بِإِذْنِي فَتَنفُخُ فِيهَا فَتَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِي وَتُبْرِئُ الأَكْمَهَ وَالأَبْرَصَ بِإِذْنِي وَإِذْ تُخْرِجُ الْمَوْتَى بِإِذْنِي... ﴾

and when you fashioned out of clay a thing like the form of a bird by My permission, then you…“ breathed into it and it became a bird by My permission, and you healed the blind and the leprous by My permission; and when you brought forth the dead by My permission….”22

In all the abovementioned wonders that Prophet ‘□s□ (as) was able to perform, he required Divine permission to lay his influence on contingent existents. That is why the phrase “by My permission” is .iterated after every wonder described

As regards the infallible Im□ms of the Ahlu’l Bayt (as), we do have reports of such influence by them and there is enough evidence to indicate that such phenomena are normal and simple for them, since they enjoy *al-wil□yah al-takwiniyyah* (the powers to lay influence in contingent existence), and they are intermediaries of Divine Grace (*was□’it al-fayd al-il□h□*) as well. Following are some instances worthy of :contemplation

Uprooting the door of Khaybar is a phenomenon that is beyond the scope of science to explain. No .1

strong human being can do this with his bodily strength. While explaining to Sahl bin Hunayf how he managed to uproot the heavy door of Khaybar, Im□m (as) said:

وَاللّٰهِ مَا قَلَعْتُ بَابَ خَيْبَرٍ وَقَذَفْتُ بِهِ وَرَائِي اَرْبَعِيْنَ ذِرَاعًا لَمْ تَحُسّ أَعْضَائِي بِقُوّةٍ جَسَدِيّةٍ وَحَرَكَةٍ غَرِيْزِيَّةٍ بَشَرِيَّةٍ، وَلٰكِنّي أُيّدْتُ بِقُوَّةٍ مَلَكُوْتِيَّةٍ وَنَفْسٍ بِنُوْرِ رَبِّهَا مُضِيْئَةٌ.

"I swear by All□h, I did not uproot the door of Khaybar and throw it 40 forearms away while the members of my body did not feel anything, with bodily strength, or nutritive momentum, but I was supported by celestial power and the spirit which is radiant with the Light of its Lord."[23]

2. History tells us that once in the gathering of the 'Abbasid Caliph Ma'm□n, Ham□d bin Mahr□n, a supporter of the Caliph, belittling Im□m al-Rid□ (as) tried to challenge him saying that his prayer for rain which was followed by heavy rains after a long drought was something ordinary and that rain came at its normal season. He said that if the Im□m (as) could perform miracles which were beyond the powers of ordinary men, then he should order the pictures of the two lions that were painted on the curtains of the court of Ma'm□n to become real lions and jump on him and swallow him up. The Im□m (as) pointed to the two pictures and they became real lions, and pounced at Mehr□n and ate him up and then turned toward Ma'mun and started gazing at him. Thereafter facing the Im□m (as) the lions said to the Im□m: what do you order us to do with this one (i.e. Ma'm□n)? On seeing this, Ma'm□n fell unconscious. The Im□m (as) said to the lions to return where they came from.[24]

These were instances that transpired through the Im□ms□(as). However, is this possible also with other human beings who attain heights of perfection? Do the *Awliy□'ull□h* (near ones to God) possess such power too? Can they cure a sick person without employing the conventionally known methods?

Let us look at the Holy Qur'□n and find the answer:

﴿ قَالَ الَّذِي عِنْدَهُ عِلْمٌ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ فَلَمَّا رَآهُ مُسْتَقِرًّا عِنْدَهُ قَالَ هٰذَا مِنْ فَضْلِ رَبِّي لِيَبْلُوَنِي أَأَشْكُرُ أَمْ أَكْفُرُ وَمَنْ شَكَرَ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ رَبِّي غَنِيٌّ كَرِيمٌ ﴾

"Said one who had knowledge of the Book: "I will bring it to you within the twinkling of any eye!" Then when (Solomon) saw it placed firmly before him, he said: "This is by the grace of my Lord! To test me whether I am grateful or ungrateful! And if any one is grateful, truly his gratitude is (a gain) for his own soul; but if any is ungrateful, truly my Lord is Free of All Needs, Supreme in Honor!"[25]

According to the traditions of the Ahlu'l Bayt (as), the 'one who had knowledge of the book' in the above verse, was the minister of Sulaym□n called □saf bin Barkhiyyah26. He was the person who with Divine consent brought the throne of queen Bilq□s within the twinkling of an eye. He was known to possess knowledge of *al-Ism al-A'zam* (the great Name of All□h), and therefore could perform such powerful .feats

We must understand however that according to authoritative Muslim scholars, neither does the *al-Ism al-A'zam* (Great Name) actually consist of letters and words, nor is the knowledge of the Great Name the conceptual or mental knowledge of a certain word or specific letters as the majority of the laity imagined and believed so far. The knowledge of *al-Ism al-A'zam* is a maq□m and station that the human being attains after self-purification and attaining human perfection. 'All□mah Tab□tab□'□ in volume 7 of his exegesis, *al-M□z□n* has explained this fact at length.27

Salm□n al-Muhammad□ and his Powers

One of the companions of the Holy Prophet (s) who enjoyed the station of *al-wil□yah al-takw□niyyah* was Salman al-Farsi, who was also known as Salman al-Muhammad□ by the Ahlu'l Bayt (as). Being utterly subservient to the Ahlu'l Bayt (as), he was also known to be from among them. Once Salm□n al-F□rs□'s name was mentioned near Im□m Muhammad al-B□qir (as), and he said:

لا تَقُولُوا سَلْمَانَ الْفَارِسِيَّ، وَلَكِنْ قُولُوا سَلْمَانَ الْمُحَمَّدِيَّ. ذَاكَ رَجُلٌ مِنَّا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ.

Do not say Salm□n al-Fars□, but say Salm□n al-Muhammad□, for he is a man from us, the Ahlu'l Bayt" (as)."28

It is important and necessary for us to realize and understand that ma'rifah and gnosis are of various levels. Those who attain the lower levels cannot comprehend the higher levels. Rather, the matter becomes so intricate that if those of lower levels were to hear what the exalted ones have to say, they would have termed them as disbelievers and done things worse than that. Salm□n al-Muhammad□ enjoyed a very high rank, such that Im□m Zayn al-'□bid□n is reported to have said about him:

وَاللَّهِ لَوْ عَلِمَ أَبُو ذَرّ مَا فِي قَلْبِ سَلْمَان لَقَتَلَهُ.

I swear by All□h, if Ab□ Dharr knew what was in the heart of Salm□n, he would have killed him."29"

And Im□m Muhammad al-B□qir (as) is reported to have said:

دَخَلَ أَبُو ذَرٍّ عَلَى سَلْمَانَ وَهُوَ يَطْبَخُ قِدْراً لَهُ، فَبَيْنَا هُمَا يَتَحَادَثَانِ إِذَا انْكَبَّت الْقِدْرُ عَلَى وَجْهِهَا عَلَى الأَرْضِ، فَلَمْ يَسْقُطْ مِنْ مَرَقِهَا وَلاَ مِنْ وَدَكِهَا شَيْءٌ، فَعَجِبَ مِنْ ذٰلِكَ أَبُو ذَرٍّ عَجَباً شَدِيداً، وَأَخَذَ سَلْمَانُ الْقِدْرَ فَوَضَعَهَا عَلَى حَالِهَا الأَوَّلِ عَلَى النَّارِ ثَانِيَةً، وَأَقْبَلاَ يَتَحَدَّثَانِ فَبَيْنَمَا هُمَا يَتَحَدَّثَانِ إِذَا انْكَبَّت الْقِدْرُ عَلَى وَجْهِهَا فَلَمْ يَسْقُطْ مِنْهَا شَيْءٌ مِنْ مَرَقِهَا وَلاَ مِنْ وَدَكِهَا، قَالَ فَخَرَجَ أَبُو ذَرٍّ وَهُوَ مَذْعُورٌ مِنْ عِنْدِ سَلْمَانَ، فَبَيْنَمَا هُوَ مُتَفَكِّرٌ إِذْ لَقِيَ أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (ع) عَلَى الْبَابِ، فَلَمَّا أَنْ بَصُرَ بِهِ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (ع) قَالَ لَهُ: يَا بَا ذَرٍّ! مَا الَّذِي أَخْرَجَكَ وَمَا الَّذِي ذَعَرَكَ؟ فَقَالَ لَهُ أَبُو ذَرٍّ: يَا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ! رَأَيْتُ سَلْمَانَ صَنَعَ كَذَا وَكَذَا، فَعَجِبْتُ مِنْ ذٰلِكَ. فَقَالَ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ(ع): يَا أَبَا ذَرٍّ! إِنَّ سَلْمَانَ لَوْ حَدَّثَكَ بِمَا يَعْلَمُ لَقُلْتَ رَحِمَ اللَّهُ قَاتِلَ سَلْمَانَ!

"Ab□ Dharr once came to Salm□n while he was cooking in a cooking pot; while they were conversing with each other, the cooking pot overturned and fell down on the ground, but not a drop of its curry or cooking fat fell down; Ab□ Dharr was highly amazed at seeing this; Salm□n picked up the cooking pot and placed it on the fire the second time, and they began conversing once again; while they were talking to each other, the pot overturned again, and nothing of the curry or cooking fat spilled, Abu Dharr then left Salm□n in the state of great astonishment , and while he was deep in thought, he suddenly met Am□r al-Mu'min□n (as) at the door. When the Im□m (as) saw Ab□ Dharr's state of amazement, he said to him: O Ab□ Dharr, what made you leave the presence of Salm□n? And what made you frightened? Ab□ Dharr said to the Im□m (as): O Am□r al-Mu'min□n, I saw Salm□n doing such and such a thing, and I was amazed by that. Thereupon Am□r al-Mu'min□n (as) said to him: O Ab□ Dharr, If Salm□n were to tell you what he knows, you would have said: May All□h have mercy on the killer of Salm□n."[30]

This incident reveals much. It is important to note the following:

1. *□m□n* (belief) and *ma'rifah* (knowledge of God) have different levels. Those who enjoy the lower levels cannot bear the knowledge of the high ranking ones like Salm□n al-Muhammadi. Im□m Muhammad al-B□qir (as) is also reported to have said:

سَلْمَانُ بَحْرُ الْعِلْمِ لاَ يُقْدَرُ عَلَى نَزْحِهِ.

"Salm□n is an ocean of knowledge, which cannot be drained and exhausted."[31]

Ab□ Bas□r is reported to have said that he heard Im□m al-S□diq (as) saying:

إِنَّ سَلْمَانَ عَلِمَ الإِسْمَ الاَعْظَمَ.

"(Surely Salm□n knew the Greatest Name of God (*al-ism al-a'zam*".

And as we said, this name is not a word to be memorized but an exalted spiritual state. Men of gnosis describe it as the state of exemplifying in oneself the beautiful attributes of Almighty All□h according to one's limitations.

2. Salm□n al-Muhammad□ had powers that enabled him to lay influence in existence, and that is why not a drop of curry spilled off even if the vessel overturned. Other incidents are also narrated about him, which we have not considered here, due to the limited scope of this work.

3. The statement that if Ab□ Dharr would have known what Salm□n knew he would have said 'May All□h have mercy on the killer of Salm□n' should not make us imagine that the belief of Salm□n and Ab□ Dharr contradicted each other. Not at all. It is the stages of knowledge, as 'All□mah Majis□32 and Mawl□ Fayd al-K□sh□n□33 allude in their works, that differ. A narrow receptacle cannot contain more that its capacity. Can you fill a bucket full of water in a small cup? Otherwise, Ab□ Dharr was one of the great companions of the Holy Prophet (s) about whom it is narrated from the Holy Prophet (s) that:

مَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَنْظُرَ إِلَى زُهْدِ عِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ (ع) فَلْيَنْظُرْ إِلَى أَبِي ذَرٍّ.

"Whosoever would like to look at the *zuhd* (detachment of the world) of 'Is□ (as) bin Maryam, should look at Ab□ Dharr."34

الْجَنَّةُ تَشْتَاقُ إِلَيْكَ يَا عَلِيُّ، وَإِلَى عَمَّارٍ وَسَلْمَانَ وَأَبِي ذَرٍّ وَالْمِقْدَادِ.

"O' 'Al□, verily Paradise yearns for you and for 'Amm□r, Salm□n, Ab□ Dharr and Miqd□d."35

In short, both the examples of □saf bin Barkhiyyah and Salm□n al-Muhammad□ reveal that other human beings too, are able to attain a station that can enable them to do things that those far away from God cannot do.

Ibn S□n□ in his great work Remarks and Admonitions, says: "You may receive information about the gnostics that almost runs counter to custom, and then you begin to disbelieve. And this is like saying a knower ('□*rif*) sought rain for people, hence, they received rain; or sought recovery for them, hence, they recovered; or wished them ill, hence they were cast down, inflicted by earth tremors, or perished in another way. This is also like saying he wished them well, hence they were emancipated from diseases,

murrain, torrential stream and flood; or a beast submits to some of them, or no birds flees from them, or other similar things occur that do not count as belonging to the kind of things that are clearly impossible. Stand still and do not rush into rejecting these things, for such things have causes in the mysteries of nature. Perhaps it will be possible for me to relate some of these causes to you."36

Does Seeking Help from the Ahululbayt (as) for Curing Our Maladies Amount to Shirk?

Human beings have different degrees of power and strength. It is an obvious phenomenon that the less powerful seek assistance from the more powerful. When seeking support and assistance from other human beings, do we commit *shirk* (polytheism)? Certainly not, for we do not seek assistance from the strong ones and at the same time consider them to possess independent power. We are also not certain whether they would complete the job. Why? This is because they do not have anything of their own. They are contingent and dependent beings. They and their acts all depend and subsist by the All-Powerful Being. This truth is understood by contemplating on the adjective "al-Qayy□m" in the well-known verse of the Throne (□*yat al-Kurs*□):

﴿ أَللَّهُ لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ ﴾

All□h; Except Him there is no God; He Alone is All-living and All-Subsisting."37"

Al-Qayy□m is defined as *al-Q□'imu bidh□tih wa al-Muqawwimu lighayrih*, which means "One who is Essentially Subsisting and every other entity and being subsists by Him38. Therefore no one can ever claim to have any kind of independent perfection whatsoever. Consequently, seeking assistance from anyone other than Him in any limited degree, with the intention that every power solely comes from Him and belongs to Him is nothing but tawh□d.

The Holy Qur'□n says:

﴿ وَ اللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَ مَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴾

But All□h created you and what you do."39"

The same applies with regard to the Infallible Im□ms (as) of the progeny of the Holy Prophet (s), who have more power than others and have access to the higher realms too. Should we consider seeking their support to be shirk? The answer is clear: shirk is out of question because we do not consider them to have independent power. We certainly know that every effect that they would lay would be entirely

:with Allāh's leave. This reality is aptly stated in the verse of the Throne of the Holy Qur'ān

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلاَّ بِإِذْنِهِ

Who can mediate near Him save by His permission."40"

.It should be noted that shafā'ah and mediation here refers to existential mediation

:Allāmah Tabātabā'ī in his *al-Mīzān* says'

وقد فاتهم أولاً أن ثبوت التأثير سواء كان مادياً أو غير مادي في غيره تعالى ضروري لا سبيل إلى إنكاره، وقد أسند تعالى في كلامه التأثير بجميع أنواعه إلى غيره، ونفي التأثير عن غيره تعالى مطلقاً يستلزم إبطال قانون العلية والمعلولية العام الذي هو الركن في جميع أدلة التوحيد، وفيه هدم بنيان التوحيد. نعم، المنفي من التأثير عن غيره تعالى هو الاستقلال في التأثير ولا كلام لأحد فيه، وأما نفي مطلق التأثير ففيه إنكار بديهة العقل والخروج عن الفطرة الإنسانية.

They however did not realize the following: establishing influence, be that material or immaterial with" regard to other than Allāh is necessary and inarguable. Further, God has attributed in his speech all kinds of influence to other than Him; and the absolute negation of influence from other than Him necessitates the annulment of the [intellectually established] universal law of causality [every effect necessitates a cause] which is a fundamental principle in all the proofs of monotheism; and in that [i.e. .the annulment of..] is the destruction of the foundation of monotheism

Yes, that influence which is unacceptable from other than God is 'Independent Influence' and there is no contradiction in this. However, negating 'influence' in the absolute sense is contradicting the rationally self-evident and transgressing the bounds of the human disposition (*fitrah*)..."41

Visiting the Sick: A Manifestation of True Concern

One of the manifestations of true concern for the sick is to visit them and seek information about their well-being. To verbally pray for them but be indifferent of their condition seems to be somewhat paradoxical. Of course this is different from a situation in which one does pray for sick people, but has .no opportunity to visit them due to his or her important schedule

Besides psychological research, which proves that visiting the sick confers a lot of solace and

sometimes can radically improve the condition of the ailing one as well, our traditions enumerate lots of blessings for visiting sick people. Following are traditions worthy of contemplation:

i) The Messenger of Allah is reported to have said:

عَنِ النَّبِيِّ (ص) قَالَ: يُعَيِّرُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عَبْداً مِنْ عِبَادِهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَيَقُولُ: عَبْدِي مَا مَنَعَكَ إِذَا مَرِضْتُ أَنْ تَعُودَنِي؟ فَيَقُولُ: سُبْحَانَكَ سُبْحَانَكَ! أَنْتَ رَبُّ الْعِبَادِ، لاَ تَأْلَمُ وَلاَ تَمْرَضُ. فَيَقُولُ: مَرِضَ أَخُوكَ الْمُؤْمِنُ فَلَمْ تَعُدْهُ، وَعِزَّتِي وَجَلاَلِي لَوْ عُدْتَهُ لَوَجَدْتَنِي عِنْدَهُ ثُمَّ لَتَكَفَّلْتُ بِحَوَائِجِكَ فَقَضَيْتُهَا لَكَ، وَذٰلِكَ مِنْ كَرَامَةِ عَبْدِيَ الْمُؤْمِنِ، وَأَنَا الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ.

On the Judgment Day Almighty Allah would reproach a servant among his servants, and say: 'O My servant, what hampered you from visiting Me when I fell sick.' The servant thereupon would say: 'Free from imperfections are You! Free from imperfections are You! You are the Lord of the people, neither do You sense any pain, nor do You fall sick.' Thereupon Allah would say: 'Your mu'min brother fell sick, and you did not visit him; I swear by my Invincibility and Majesty, were you to visit him, you would have found Me near him, and I would have taken the responsibility of attending to your needs and would give them to you; and this is due to the nobility of My believing servant, and I am the All-Beneficent, the All-Merciful.'"[42]

2. Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (as) is reported to have said:

كَانَ فِيمَا نَاجَى بِهِ مُوسَى (ع) رَبَّهُ أَنْ قَالَ: يَا رَبِّ مَا بَلَغَ مِنْ عِيَادَةِ الْمَرِيضِ مِنَ الأَجْرِ؟ فَقَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: أُوَكِّلُ بِهِ مَلَكاً يَعُودُهُ فِي قَبْرِهِ إِلَى مَحْشَرِهِ.

Among those things that Musa (as) whispered to his Lord was : 'O Lord inform me the extent of reward" that a person who visits the sick would get?' Allah said: 'I would entrust an angel over him who would visit him in his grave until his resurrection [on the Judgment Day].'"[43]

3. Imam Abu 'Abdillah al-Sadiq (as) is reported to have said:

مَنْ عَادَ مَرِيضاً شَيَّعَهُ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ مَلَكٍ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لَهُ حَتَّى يَرْجِعَ إِلَى مَنْزِلِهِ.

Whosoever visits a sick person, 70,000 angels escort him while they seek for forgiveness for him, until"

he returns back to his house."[44]

Despite all the above merits, a selfless and concerned human being would visit the sick because his .innate disposition (*fitrah*) calls him to do that, and not due to the attraction of the reward

Visiting the sick, however, should be brief as has been indicated in various traditions, and one must also try to observe the etiquette of visiting the sick. Due to the brevity of the present work, we will avoid going into details about this. However, those who are interested to know the details can refer to traditional texts .such as vol. 81 of *Bih*r *al-Anw*r of 'All mah Majlisi

"h" is One of the Names of All h

Both the Holy Qur'n as well as the traditions of the Ahlu'l Bayt (as) greatly emphasize that one should not complain in the state of sickness and affliction. And whosoever observes patience is promised great :reward. Look at the following traditions

:The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said .1

أَرْبَعٌ مِنْ كُنُوزِ الْجَنَّةِ: كِتْمَانُ الْفَاقَةِ، وَكِتْمَانُ الصَّدَقَةِ، وَكِتْمَانُ الْمُصِيبَةِ، وَكِتْمَانُ الْوَجَعِ.

Four things are from among the treasures of Paradise: to hide one's need; to give sadaqah secretly, to" hide one's calamity, and to hide one's pain."[45]

:Abdull h bin Mas'd is reported to have said' .2

بَيْنَا نَحْنُ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ (ص) إِذْ تَبَسَّمَ، فَقُلْتُ لَهُ: مَا لَكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ تَبَسَّمْتَ؟ فَقَالَ (ص): عَجِبْتُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِ وَجَزَعِهِ مِنَ السُّقْمِ، وَلَوْ يَعْلَمُ مَا لَهُ فِي السُّقْمِ مِنَ الثَّوَابِ لأَحُبَّ أَنْ لاَ يَزَالَ سَقِيماً حَتَّى يَلْقَى رَبَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ.

While we were in the presence of the Holy Prophet (s), when he suddenly smiled. So I asked him: What" happened; why did you smile O Messenger of All h? He said: I am surprised at the believer and his apprehension due to his illness; were he to know what reward there is for him in the illness, he would have loved to be ill until he meets his Lord, the Invincible and Majestic."[46]

:The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said .3

مَنْ مَرِضَ يَوْماً وَلَيْلَةً فَلَمْ يَشْكُ إِلَى عُوَّادِهِ، بَعَثَهُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مَعَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلِ الرَّحْمٰنِ، حَتَّى يَجُوزَ الصِّرَاطَ كَالْبَرْقِ اللاَّمِعِ.

Whosoever is ill for a day and night but does not complain about his situation to his visitors, All□h would" raise him on the Judgment Day with Prophet Ibr□h□m (as), the Friend of the All-Merciful, so that he would cross the path like radiant lightening."47

The meaning of complaint and *shik□yah*, however, should be understood properly. One who expresses the sensation of pain that he encounters cannot, for example, be known to be complaining against Almighty All□h. In fact in some traditions of the Ahlu'l Bayt (as) the expression "□h" from the ailing one is considered as one of the Names of Almighty All□h. Observe the following:

Ja'far bin Yahy□ al-Khuz□'□ is reported to have narrated from his father that he said:

دَخَلْتُ مَعَ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع) عَلَى بَعْضِ مَوَالِيهِ يَعُودُهُ، فَرَأَيْتُ الرَّجُلَ يُكْثِرُ مِنْ قَوْلِ آهِ. فَقُلْتُ لَهُ: يَا أَخِي، اذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ وَاسْتَغِثْ بِهِ. فَقَالَ أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع): "آهِ" اسْمٌ مِنْ أَسْمَاءِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى، فَمَنْ قَالَ آهِ، اسْتَغَاثَ بِاللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ.

I accompanied Im□m al-S□diq (as) who came to visit one of his [ailing] slaves, and I saw the slave" saying "□*h*" many times. So I said to him: O my brother, remember your Lord and seek His Support. Thereupon Im□m al-S□diq (as) said: '□*h* is a Name among the Names of All□h, and whosoever says "□*h*" seeks the Help of All□h, the Invincible and Majestic.'"48

It should be known that expressing the sensation of pain by employing the word "□*h*" is in reality expressing one's poverty and need for perfection and bodily equilibrium. And it is a known fact that NONE but the All-Affluent and the Principal Curer (*al-Sh□f□*) can relieve the ailing patient.

Prophet Ibr□h□m (as) says:

□ وَ إِذَا مَرِضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِ □

And when I turn sick, then He Alone Cures Me."49"

Therefore in reality, one is seeking the support of the Almighty, and is well-aware that no doctor or nurse or anyone whatsoever can relieve him from any kind of malady independently. Hence by saying '□h' he is in reality calling '*al-Sh□f□*' (the Curer) or '*Ghiy□th al-Mustagh□th□n*' (the Helper of the Seekers of

.help) and Allah is the All-Knowing

The Suffering Believer in the Garden of Paradise

There are purified souls who have been bestowed with inner vision and can thus behold the reality of different people. They need not to wait for the Hereafter to know the inner reality. Almighty Allah has already gifted them with the knowledge thereof in this world. One such personality is Imam ‘Ali (as) who :expressed this reality in the following dictum

لَوْ كُشِفَ الْغِطَاءُ مَا ازْدَدْتُ يَقِيناً.

If the curtains are unveiled no conviction would be added to what I have.”50“

In other words, nothing among the higher realities such as Paradise and Hell was hidden for the Imam .(as). He could behold things that others could not

:There is an interesting narrative in which Imam ‘Ali (as) is reported to have said

وُعِكَ أَبُو ذَرٍّ فَأَتَيْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ (ص) فَقُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! إِنَّ أَبَا ذَرٍّ قَدْ وُعِكَ. فَقَالَ (ص): امْضِ بِنَا إِلَيْهِ نَعُودُهُ. فَمَضَيْنَا إِلَيْهِ جَمِيعاً، فَلَمَّا جَلَسْنَا قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (ص): كَيْفَ أَصْبَحْتَ يَا أَبَا ذَرٍّ. قَالَ: أَصْبَحْتُ وَعِكاً يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ. فَقَالَ (ص): أَصْبَحْتَ فِي رَوْضَةٍ مِنْ رِيَاضِ الْجَنَّةِ...

Abu Dharr [once] fell sick; so I came to the Messenger of Allah and said: O Messenger of Allah, verily“ Abu Dharr has fallen sick. He said: let us go to visit him. So, all of us together went to visit him. And when we sat besides him, the Messenger of Allah asked him: O Abu Dharr, how did you confront your morning? He said: I have confronted the morning in sickness. The Holy Prophet (s) thereupon said: Surely you have confronted the morning while you are in a garden among the gardens of Paradise...”51

Here the Holy Prophet (s) beheld the kernel of Abu Dharr’s situation, and informed him of his higher rank .which he could not vision

Sadaqah – A Powerful Means of Curing the Sick

The human being due to his limited knowledge cannot perceive all the means to the cure of the different maladies and diseases. Further, since he or she perceives the world of matter and cannot witness the

celestial realm (*‘ilam al-malakūt*) or beyond that, he or she is oblivious of so many other ways to the cure of maladies. This is where the important role of *wahy* (revelation) and Imāmate comes. Those entrusted with Divine secrets, acknowledging the need of unveiling them, have informed us of much to learn. With regard to curing the sick, we have traditions worthy of contemplation. Observe the following:

1. Imām al-Ṣādiq (as) is reported to have said:

دَاوُوا مَرْضَاكُمْ بِالصَّدَقَةِ.

Treat your sick by giving *sadaqah*."[52]

2. He (as) is also reported to have said:

ذِكْرُنَا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ شِفَاءٌ مِنَ الْوَعْكِ وَالاَسْقَامِ وَوَسْوَاسِ الرَّيْبِ.

Remembering us the Ahlu'l Bayt (as) is a cure from illness and diseases as well as from the insinuation of doubt."[53]

One should note however that giving *sadaqah* (alms) has some etiquette, a most important of which is *al-mubāsharah* which means that the sick person should himself or herself give the sadaqah. Observe the following tradition:

Imām al-Ṣādiq (as) is reported to have said:

يُسْتَحَبُّ لِلْمَرِيضِ أَنْ يُعْطِيَ السَّائِلَ بِيَدِهِ وَيَأْمُرَ السَّائِلَ أَنْ يَدْعُوَ لَهُ.

It is recommended for the sick person to give a beggar with his own hands and tell him to pray for him."[54]

Why are Spiritual Illnesses Worse than Physical Maladies?

One of the very important discussions that the *‘ulamā* of *akhlāq* present in their ethical texts is how spiritual ailments are more dangerous to the human being than the physical illnesses. Mawlā Muhammad Narrāqī, the great ethician in his ethical corpus *Jāmi‘ al-Sa‘ādāt* says in his introductory discussions on ethics:

اعلم أن الإنسان منقسم إلى سر وعلن، وروح وبدن، ولكل منهما منافيات وملائمات، وآلام ولذات، ومهلكات ومنجبات. ومنافيات البدن وآلامه هي الأمراض الجسمانية. وملائماته هي الصحة واللذات الجسمانية. والمتكفل لبيان تفاصيل هذه الأمراض ومعالجاتها هو علم الطب. ومنافيات الروح وآلامه هي رذائل الأخلاق التي تهلكه وتشقيه. وصحته رجوعه إلى فضائلها التي تسعده وتنجيه، وتوصله إلى مجاورة أهل اللّه ومقربيه. والمتكفل لبيان هذه الرذائل ومعالجاتها هو (علم الأخلاق). ثم إن البدن مادي فانٍ، والروح مجردٌ باقٍ، فإن اتصف بشرائف الصفات كان في البهجة والسعادة أبداً، وإن اتصف برذائلها كان في العذاب والشقاوة مخلداً...

Know that the human being is divided into “the kernel” (*sirr*) and “the apparent” (*‘alan*) and [or in other“ words] “the spirit” and “the body” and for each of these two dimensions there are incompatibilities (*mun□fiy□t*) and compatibilities (*mul□yim□t*), pains and pleasures, elements of destruction and salvation. The incompatibilities of the body and its pains are the physical illnesses whereas its compatibilities are good health and physical pleasures. And the discipline that caters to expound the details of these illnesses and their treatments is medicine. And the incompatibilities of the soul and its pains are bad characteristics that destroy it and make it wretched, and its wellbeing is to return towards good morals that bring it felicity and emancipate it and make it attain the neighborhood of the people of God and His Near ones, and the discipline that caters to expound these evil characteristics and their treatment is the discipline of ethics. Then it should be known that the body is material and prone to destruction, whereas the spirit and soul is eternal, and therefore if the soul characterizes itself with noble qualities it would be in the state of joy and felicity forever, but were it to characterize itself with evil ethics it would be in the state of punishment and wretchedness forever....”55

Therefore since the spirit has always to remain, one should be very careful and purify it before it is too late. The material body on the other hand would have to stay in this world and probably turn into earth .after burial

Spiritual Illnesses Is The Principal Cause

If one were to understand the aim of human life, the gravity of spiritual sickness over physical sickness would become more apparent. In fact, if we painstakingly ponder over the causes of the different illnesses, we would come to realize that the principal cause of many of the physical illnesses stem from spiritual illnesses, either from oneself or from others: sometimes the source of physical illnesses is oneself, sometimes others, and at times, a product of cooperation with others. An example of the first is when a person has no sense of temperance and allows his faculty of desire to prevail over his faculty of

intellect, and engages in overindulgence in eating, copulation, etc. Such a lifestyle would be replete with illnesses. Sometimes however, you are invited to a friend's house and served with delicious food, but because your friend did not observe some religious or hygienic precautions while cooking, you turn ill. If you are invited by one who, for example, does not care whether the meat he buys is from a believer or non believer or whether he earns through lawful or unlawful means, you would undoubtedly be affected spiritually. This can then be a basis for immoderation, which would lead to physical illnesses. An example of the third situation is when genetically made food is produced, and you show your cooperation in purchasing the same. Here the fault is both yours and the producer's. If your purchase is due to your mundane attachments and you know that the producer's aim is nothing but to satisfy his capitalistic demands, you would have cooperated with him to cause physical illnesses in your self. Here greed and avarice enveloped your intellect and you were led to physical illnesses. However, if the circumstances are such that you have to cope with these foods and you have no option, then you remain .in danger of the physical illnesses but can be free from spiritual maladies

The Traveling Physician

Im□m 'Al□ (as) is reported to have described the Prophet (s) in the following manner in one of his :sermons compiled in the *Nahju'l Bal□ghah*

طَبِيبٌ دَوَّارٌ بِطِبِّهِ، قَدْ أَحْكَمَ مَرَاهِمَهُ، وَأَحْمَى مَوَاسِمَهُ، يَضَعُ ذٰلِكَ حَيْثُ الْحَاجَةُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ قُلُوبٍ عُمْيٍ وَآذَانٍ صُمٍّ وَأَلْسِنَةٍ بُكْمٍ، مُتَتَبِّعٌ بِدَوَائِهِ مَوَاضِعَ الْغَفْلَةِ وَمَوَاطِنَ الْحَيْرَةِ.

The Prophet (s) was like a traveling physician who has set ready his ointments and heated his" instruments. He uses them wherever the need arises for curing blind hearts, deaf ears, and dumb tongues. He went with his medicines to the places of negligence and places of perplexity."56

One of the excellent methods of treating the ailing ones is to go to them for treatment. Am□r al-*tab□bun daw□run bitibbih*- A traveling طَبِيْبٌ دَوَّارٌ بِطِبِّهِ (Mu'min□n 'Al□ (as) calls the Holy Prophet (s physician. Physicians who deal with the human body normally treat others in return for payment. This is because it is a means of their livelihood. Nevertheless, not all physicians have the same financial status. Whereas some work in certain hospitals or clinics, others own hospitals and clinics themselves. There are different poverty-stricken areas in the world where due to indigence, people do not have the privilege of getting treated from illnesses. Physicians who truly have concern for all the poor to get cured would either personally arrange a team of doctors to visit the area, and thereafter treat the various patients, or if resources do not permit, try to form a friendly circle of doctors who would voluntarily contribute what they can. By visiting these poverty-stricken areas, not only would they practically show

their concern for the ailing ones, but also practise the Prophet's way of life in the physical dimension. Hence, although this beautiful narrative of Im□m 'Al□ (as) refers to the spiritual dimension, it can also be applied in the life of the physicians of the body too.

A very interesting narrative is reported in the historical text al-S□rah al-Nabawiyyah of Ibn Hish□m, where the practical import of Im□m 'Al□'s (as) statement is brilliantly reflected. Ibn Hish□m quotes Ibn Ish□q to have said:

فَكَانَ رَسُولُ اللّٰهِ (ص) يَعْرُضُ نَفْسَهُ فِي الْمَوَاسِمِ إذاَ كَانَتْ عَلى قَبَائِلِ العَرَبِ، يَدْعُوْهُمْ إِلى اللّٰهِ، وَيُخْبِرُهُمْ أَنَّه نَبِيٌّ مُرْسَلٌ، وَيَسْئَلُهُمْ أَنْ يُصَدِّقُوْهُ...

"The Messenger of All□h (s) would present himself to [to the people] in [different] occasions; and when he would confront the Arabs, he would invite them to All□h, inform them that He is an Apostle of All□h, and seek their verification...."[57]

And in the same book Ibn Ish□q is reported to have said:

وَحَدَّثَنِيْ حُسين بن عَبْد اللّٰهِ بن عُبَيْد اللّٰهِ بن عَبَّاس، قاَلَ: سَمِعْتُ رَبِيْعَة بن عباد، يُحَدِّثُهُ أَبِي: قال إِنِّي لَغُلاَمٌ شَابٌّ مَعَ أَبِي بمنى، وَ رَسُولُ اللّٰهِ (ص) يَقِفُ عَلى مَنَازِلِ الْقَبَائِلِ مِنَ الْعَرَب، فَيَقُوْلُ: يَا بَنِي فُلان، إِنِّي رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ إِلَيْكُمْ، يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَعْبُدُو اللّٰهَ وَلاَ تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئاً، وَ اَنْ تَخْلَعُوْا مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُوْنِهِ مِنْ هٰذِهِ الأَنْدَادِ، وَاَنْ تُؤْمِنُوا بِي، وَتُصَدِّقُوْا بِيْ، وَتَمْنَعُوْنِي حَتّى أُبَيِّنُ عَنِ اللّٰهِ مَا بَعَثَنِيْ بِهِ.

"Ubaydull□h bin'Abb□s narrates: I saw my father telling Rab□'a bin 'Ubb□d: "During my youth I was once together with my father in Min□; I observed that the Holy Prophet (s) would visit the different tents (*man□zil*) of the Arabs, and say: 'O children of such and such personality, certainly I am a Messenger of All□h towards you, who invites you to worship All□h and that you must not associate anyone with Him, and renounce the [imaginary] partners that you worship other than Him, and believe in Me and accept me and protect me so that I may expound for you from All□h that which He has sent me with.'"[58]

It is interesting to note that in his propagation to Ban□ '□mir, a person called Fir□s bin 'Abdill□h is reported to have said about him:'I swear by All□h, if I would have this youth from Quraysh, I would have ruled over the Arabs by him. Thereafter addressing the Holy Prophet (s) he said that we can only pay our oath of allegiance to you on the condition that you make me your successor after you. Here was a very sensitive moment. If the Holy Prophet (s) was merely after gaining support of his personal fame, he

would have consented to this transaction. But it was not a matter of personal interests. The Holy Prophet said (s):

أَلأَمْرُ إِلـى اللّٰهِ يَضَعُ حَيْثُ يَشَاء...

The matter is with Allah, He would place in whoever's hand He wishes..."[59]

As a result, they did not listen to the Holy Prophet (s) and remained adamant in their disbelief.

Our *muballighun* should emulate this highly important tradition of the Holy Prophet (s) within their own limitations. There is a law, we must understand, which prevails all the verses of this supplication:

لاَ يُكَلِّفُ اللّٰهُ نَفْساً إِلاَّ وُسْعَهَا

Allah does not burden a soul save what it can bear."[60]

Hence, each one of us is responsible according to his or her abilities. The resourceful, for example, would undertake great ventures to disseminate Islam in different parts of the world, and thus try to treat the maladies of the spiritually sick, whereas those who have limited resources could struggle to do the most from the least that they have at their disposal. There is another very beautiful law in the holy Qur'an that implicitly tells us how to make advantage of the limited resources at our disposal. The secret is 'struggle.' The lazy carpenter by making small things, would worry about his financial status and perhaps seek unlawful means, but the diligent carpenter who possesses the similar tools would struggle hard and increase his tools so that he can produce better wooden items and develop himself financially. The Holy Qur'an says:

وَ أَنْ لَيْسَ لِلإِنْسَانِ إِلاَّ مَا سَعـى

And there is nothing for man save that which he strives for."[61]

We should remember that the extent of the struggle would reflect the firmness of our resolution to assist the ailing ones and the intensity of our concern for their well-being.

?How Can We Contribute in Dispelling Illnesses from Others

It should be well understood by now that seeking the well-being of others is not limited to prayer only. Our contributions would vary according to the ability that we have. Further, we should understand how grave is our need for spiritual well-being. Therefore, we should not be oblivious of this fundamental and .decisive dimension of the human beings

Those who can create conditions that would obliterate illnesses from the society are responsible to do the needful, those who can assist others in guiding them to observe precaution before they suffer dangerous illnesses have the duty to do so, those who can financially afford to assist others in getting their sickness treated should take the noble step of doing so; and those who do not have any of the preceding status due their limited powers, are expected to pray for the ailing and visit them as well. For those who have more power, they are required to play a greater role in all the areas that determine the .treatment of the ailing ones

As we humbly pray to All□h for the well-being of everyone, we should not forget ourselves, for although we may enjoy very good physical health, but have we tried to diagnose ourselves spiritually yet? Are we sure that we do not suffer from any of the spiritual illnesses? Is spiritual illness so insignificant due to the absence of any immediate physical pain? If one looks at the depth of the matter, he or she would realize .that eternal salvation is entirely dependent on the spiritual well-being of a person

Our prayers should be continual. This is because persistence in prayer is a corollary of "true concern". One who has no concern would not be persistent in his prayer. In fact, as we said in our introduction to the first volume of this commentary, du'a is a reflection of one's true state. There is complete harmony .between one's spirit and the prayer that one utters

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[Some have also translated the word 'mar□d ' as 'disordered ' [See E.W.Lane Arabic-English Lexicon .1

Mufrad□t Alf□zi'l Qur'□n, pg. 765 .2

Mustadrak al-Was□'il, v. 12, pg. 94 .3

Ghuraru'l Hikam wa Duraru'l Kalim, pg. 55 .4

.Ibid .5

.al-Sah□fat al-Sajj□diyya, Supg. 15, pg. 54, His supplication when Sick or Visited by Distress or an Affliction .6

Fal□h al-S□'il wa Naj□h al-Mas□'il, pp. 102-103 .7

Holy Qur'□n, 13:11 .8

Mas□'il-e-Darm□n□, v. 2, pg. 73 .9

Was□'il al-Sh□'ah, v. 16, pg. 540 .10

Holy Qur'□n, 2:195 .11

Mustadrak al-Was□'il, v. 16, pg. 452 .12

Ghuraru'l Hikam, pg. 320 .13

Was□'il al-Sh□'a, v. 25, pg. 229 .14

Fiqh al-Rid□, pg. 340 .15

Bih□r al-Anw□r, v. 59, pg. 66 .16

17. al-Ihtij□j, v. 2, pg. 225
18. Bih□r al-Anw□r, v. 81, pg. 174
19. Ibid., v. 81, pg. 176
20. Ibid.
21. Bih□r al-Anw□r ,v. 81, pg. 200
22. Holy Qur'□n, ch. Al-M□'idah (5), v. 110
23. □yatull□h Hasan Z□deh □mol□, Sarh al-'Uy□n F□ Sharh al-'Uy□n, pg. 730
24. Bih□r al-Anw□r, v. 49, pg. 184
25. Holy Qur'□n, 27:39
26. al-M□z□n, v. 55, pg. 370
27. Ibid., v. 7 pp. 354-355
28. Bih□r al-Anw□r, v. 22, pg. 349
29. Ibid., v. 22, pg. 343
30. Bahj al-Sab□ghah F□ Sharhi Nahj al-Bal□ghah, v. 3, pg. 402
31. Bih□r al-Anw□r, v. 22, pg. 347
32. Ibid., v. 22, pg. 343
33. al-Mahajjat al-Bayd□', v. 1, pg. 65
34. Bih□r al-Anw□r, v. 22, pg. 243
35. Ibid., v. 22, pg. 243
36. Al-Ish□r□t wa al-Tanb□h□t (Ibn Sina and Mysticism), tr. by Shams Inati, pg. 104
37. Holy Qur'□n, 2:252
38. Sharh al-Asm□', pg. 363
39. Holy Qur'□n, 37:96
40. Holy Qur'□n, 2:255
41. al-M□zan, v. 10, pg. 295
42. Was□'il al-Sh□'a, v. 2, pg. 417
43. Bihar al-Anw□r, v. 81, pg. 218
44. M□z□n al-Hikmah, v. 4, pg. 2888
45. Bih□r al-Anw□r, v. 81, pg. 208
46. Ibid., v. 81, pg. 206
47. Ibid., v. 81, pg. 203
48. Bih□r al-Anw□r, v. 81, pg. 202
49. Holy Qur'□n, 26:80
50. Bih□r al-Anw□r, v. 40, pg. 153
51. Mustadrak al-Was□'il, v. 1, pg. 57
52. Bih□r al-Anw□r, v. 81, pg. 203
53. Ibid., v. 81, pg. 203
54. Bih□r al-Anw□r, v. 81, pg. 209
55. J□mi' al-Sa'□d□t, v. 1, pg. 5
56. Nahj al-Balaghah, sermon 108
57. al-S□rah al-Nabawiyyah, v. 2, pp. 35-36
58. Ibid., pg. 36
59. Ibid., v. 2, pg. 38
60. Holy Qur'□n, 2:286
61. Holy Qur'□n, 53:39

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